Vocational pathways to higher education strengthened by new state-wide agreements

VET students will have improved pathways to higher education thanks to agreements recently signed between TAFE SA and Flinders University, the University of Adelaide, the University of South Australia and Charles Darwin University.

The new agreements will deliver improved integration of vocational and higher education in South Australia; strengthening existing study pathways in a unique Australian model that commits the public VET provider and the state public universities to collaborating to achieve a more connected tertiary sector for South Australia.

Office of TAFE SA Chief Executive, Ms Elaine Bensted says the new systematic approach is redefining how TAFE SA works with the tertiary sector right across the state, making it easier for students to upgrade or expand their qualifications no matter where they live.

“The ‘tertiary’ education sector recognises the greater alliance between post-secondary institutions that will enable industry linked training and education through the ready upgrading of skills,” Ms Bensted said.

“Collaboration is being carefully planned in line with the interests of each institution and with each agreement taking advantage of opportunities in specific program areas and regions in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

“The joined system sees a range of initiatives including some instances of guaranteed admission to bachelor degree programs for students with certain VET qualifications.”

Figures show a strong interest from prospective students in an online database that gives information about credit transfer and articulation agreements to bachelor degrees, with the database receiving 42,300 hits during its first full year of operation in 2010.

Flinders University Professor Michael Barber said Flinders University welcomes this strengthened collaboration with the university and vocational education sector, which will further enhance education opportunities in South Australia.

“Flinders has already recorded a substantial intake of prospective students through its Foundation Course which will now be jointly offered by the University and TAFE SA,” Professor Barber said.
University of Adelaide Professor Pascale Quester, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) said the University of Adelaide is working hard to open up more opportunities for tertiary education. We now have over 200 pathways available from TAFE qualifications into our courses - more than five times the number of pathways we had three years ago.

“This agreement will help us to develop even more pathways for students with closer collaboration on programs, curriculum and delivery. New partnerships will help to widen access to rural and remote students and increase participation from Indigenous and students with disadvantaged backgrounds,” Professor Quester said.

Acting UniSA Vice Chancellor Professor Joanne Wright said in a local and national environment where academic and skills education are vital in underpinning economic health and prosperity, UniSA is delighted to reaffirm its relationship with TAFE.

“These important relationships are pivotal for broadening opportunity and delivering an education system that delivers the best outcomes to students and society,” Professor Wright said.

One student who has taken advantage of smoother pathways is Robert McArthur, 28, who completed an Advanced Diploma of Marketing at TAFE SA Adelaide City Campus in July 2010 and moved straight into a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Adelaide, using credit transfer and articulation arrangements.

“Going from TAFE studies onto university was an easy transition. I didn’t need to worry about waiting to enrol or for transcripts of credit transfer to be sent from one institution to the other; their arrangements made the process flexible and as easy as filling in a form,” Mr McArthur said.

Mr McArthur is convinced the opportunities presented to him through combined vocational and tertiary study will give him the best chance at entering his profession quickly and successfully.

“I feel confident in both fields of marketing and commerce, due to the combined studies and the connections I’ve made. TAFE alone would not have been sufficient, university alone would not have been sufficient; but the combination of the two has been just right,” Mr McArthur said.

For further information existing credit transfer arrangements visit http://www.tafesa.edu.au/apply-enrol/credit-transfer.aspx