

# MATCHING FOR SUCCESS

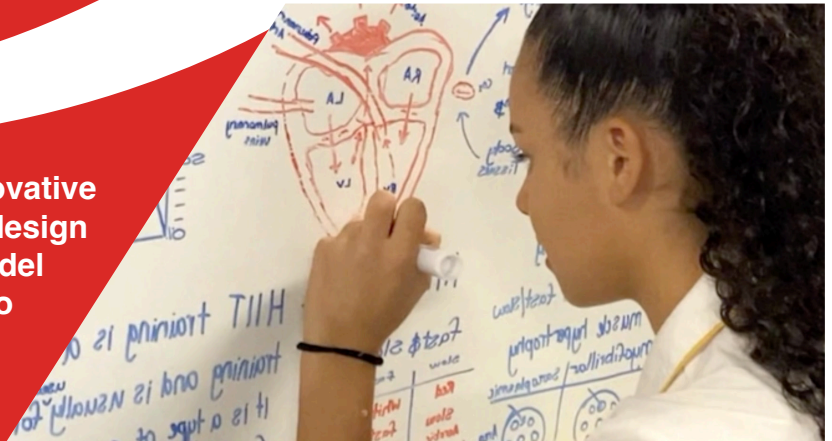
**Big Picture**  
LEARNING AUSTRALIA

**A next-generation approach for selecting school leavers for university**

**Led by Melbourne Metrics at the University of Melbourne**

**You are invited to be involved in an innovative research project that is pioneering the design of a new, valid and efficient national model to select school leavers for admission to tertiary courses.**

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Based on the concept of 'matching rather than ranking', the research focuses on matching a broader array of learners' unique strengths and complex competencies to specific tertiary course requirements to determine 'course fit' between a student and a university, rather than relying on the ATAR ranking system.

The approach builds upon new and personalised school-based learning and assessment measures already developed by the project partners where learner attainment is captured in rich 'learner profiles' and, in the case of Big Picture Learning, in its **International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC)**.

By better matching student capabilities with course requirements, this research project aims to improve access to tertiary study, especially for disadvantaged students, and thus achieve a student mix that will better represent the Australian population and ensure that all young people have the opportunity to thrive.

## Why is this project needed?

Though long assumed 'fair' and 'objective' for recruitment purposes, the ATAR system does not factor in: lack of availability of school subjects in regional, rural and remote schools; ill-defined support networks for low SES students; the narrowing of curriculum to knowledge-based content; or the competitive pressure that depresses true engagement in learning.

Moreover falling completion rates of tertiary study indicate that the ATAR is not in fact a reliable indicator of 'fit' between an applicant and a course of study.

The **Matching for Success** approach will support more confident, informed decisions by both student applicants and tertiary selectors.

In the AI-driven economy, learners will increasingly need a broader range of transferable skills and knowledge in place of mastery of discipline content and technical knowledge. Those who can demonstrate a capacity for independent thought and collaborative action, take responsibility for directing their learning and channel their interests and needs into furthering their goals are more likely to generate success in both tertiary study and work. The IBPLC is designed to capture such skills and knowledge.

**The tertiary sector needs to be attracting these types of learners.**

## What are the aims?

The project will gather evidence on the effectiveness and scalability of new assessment and admissions methods across different courses and student groups.

For Big Picture Learning Australia, this project is an important opportunity to strengthen the credibility and recognition of the IBPLC.

Success will be measured through student outcomes (pass and completion rates, engagement) and stakeholder satisfaction with course fit and readiness.



## Who is involved?

This collaborative project brings together:

- **Melbourne Metrics, the University of Melbourne**
- **Big Picture Learning Australia**
- **Education Services Australia Limited**
- **State education departments (SA, TAS)**
- **Tertiary Admissions Centres (UAC, VTAC, SATAC)**
- **Koshland Education Innovation Ltd**

Since 2019, **Melbourne Metrics** has collaborated with **Big Picture Learning Australia** and its network of 50 schools around Australia to develop and implement its **new secondary school credential, the IBPLC**, already accepted by 18 Australian universities. This has enabled the partners to develop robust capability-based assessment frameworks based on the Big Picture Learning Goals, as well as moderation practices, psychometric analyses and a secure assessment platform known as Ruby.

Melbourne Metrics has further cultivated a range of 'New Metrics' schools that have also been trialing ways of capturing the performance of complex competencies in 'learner profiles' that will assist the research partners to track the success of several 'matching for success' models.

## What questions will be explored?

- Can school-generated, performance-based assessments (such as the IBPLC), be consistent and trusted enough for use in university admissions at scale?
- Can stakeholders view these approaches as transparent, rigorous, and trustworthy, and are they supported by appropriate regulatory frameworks?
- Do the assessment results captured in IBPLC progress reports and transcripts help learners and selectors better understand strengths, pathways and 'course fit'?



## How will it work?

This will involve a 3-year validation study, involving up to 100 schools, tracking the success of learners as they progress, and examining different models of 'matching for success' and examining stakeholder perceptions.

The evidence base will be built by combining data from participating:

- **Schools**
- **Students**
- **Tertiary Admission Centres**
- **Universities**
- **Regulatory authorities**

## What is required from schools and students?

- **Schools:** school demographic data; IBPLC assessment data; perceptions of leaders on the methods and measures for recruiting and selecting learners; levels of trust they generate, unintended consequences they cause.
- **Students:** demographic information, course selection information; perceptions of the usefulness of their IBPLC transcript/results data, perceptions of their match to course selected; unintended consequences they cause.

The data will be analysed to refine and provide evidence for the validity of the model and measures. This will result in the development of methods to improve the decision-making involved in the selection and recruitment of school leavers into tertiary courses.

## Where to next?

If you are interested in being part of this innovative research, please contact:

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