




Cochlear Family Guide



**Practical advice
for starting tertiary
education**



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Introduction

Your high school days are coming to an end, but the closing of this chapter of your life means that there is a new unwritten chapter waiting to be explored. This is a period of transition and with that comes a multitude of different emotions and experiences. For some, making the decision to pursue tertiary education and selecting an area of study can feel a bit daunting. For others, it's a chance to embrace the freedom of choosing something they are truly interested in.

Whether you choose to go to university, a technical college or study a trade, remember that this is a time of your life that's bursting at the seams with possibility and opportunity. The opportunity to discover what field of study ignites your passion and excitement, and a chance to find an educational institution that best meets your needs and goals for the future.

No matter what your decision may be, we want to help you feel prepared. In this guide, you will find tips to get you started with tertiary education, practical advice on optimising hearing and support information to guide you through this period of transition. We also share the experiences of other recipients from around the world that have recently graduated high school and started tertiary studies.

“I decided to choose audiology so that I could help minimise the problems of people with hearing loss like me and give them hope. I want to show others with hearing loss that they should enjoy a good life. [I want to] tell them that they they should have no obstacles if they really want to do something.”

- Yaren, 24-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Masters of Audiology student.

Practical advice for starting tertiary education

Choosing your area of study isn't always easy when there are so many career paths to explore and a variety of options available to you. To help with your decision-making process, we've prepared five steps to get you started.

“I have always been very interested in social causes and knowing that, in a way, through my studies, I can bring a benefit to people through justice, makes me immensely happy.”

Ana, 19-year-old Baha® System recipient and Law student.



Tips for choosing your area of study

- 1 Investing in additional years of study is a big commitment of your time, energy and money. So, it's important that you choose an area of study that both excites and interests you. Think about the subjects you enjoy the most at school, your hobbies outside of the classroom and look at courses, programs and qualifications that align with those interests.

Talk to your career advisors

- 2 If your high school offers career counselling, we recommend booking in some time to speak to your advisor. Come prepared to discuss your interests, your favourite subjects, the extracurricular activities you are involved in and current academic performance. Be open to uncovering what your strengths and weaknesses may be.

If your school doesn't offer career counselling, we recommend arranging time to speak with a teacher that you have good rapport with.

You don't have to decide on the exact course or qualification you should study, but your teacher or advisor may help to narrow down the different fields you should explore further.

Talk to your family and friends

- 3 Your family and friends won't be able to make this decision for you, but it's good to get the support of those closest to you. They may be able to give you another perspective on the areas you excel the most in, and help you gather and digest all the information you collect whilst doing your research.

Do your research

- 4
- When planning your future, it's important to be informed. So, we recommend investing some time in researching the courses or qualifications you are interested in. Some of the ways you can do further research is to:
1.

Look at the subjects you will be studying as part of the degree or qualification you are interested in. You can find this by looking at the course prospectus and curriculum.
2.

Consider your career prospects and what options your area of study will provide you at the end of your studies. A way you can do this is by going onto job seeking websites. Look at the future salary, work locations, the type of work you will be doing and the number of jobs being advertised.
3.

Attend course open days or job fairs. This will give you the chance to learn more about the area of study, talk to students studying the course and potentially speak to lecturers or tutors. It will also give you the chance to attend campus tours.
4.

Create a shortlist: Build a spreadsheet with the pros and cons. Start off by listing the top five courses you are considering and look at six key areas. We've prepared an example spreadsheet that you can copy below. You can add to it when you start looking at educational institutions.

	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
Duration of study					
Course content					
Job prospects					
Earning potential					
Interest in the subject matter					
Entry criteria*					

* Consider if there are minimum academic, physical or skill-based requirements required for admission.

5. Volunteer or arrange work experience: This may give you a better idea of what your day-to-day will look like in the future. It's also a great way to decide if the work excites you and aligns with your interests.

If your high school has work experience programs, speak to your teacher or advisor about building this into your studies.

Being informed when making a decision is a great place to start, but try not to let the decision making process overwhelm you. Research in the US shows that about 30% of students change their study path within the first three years of enrolment¹. It's important to remember that the area of study you choose initially, doesn't necessarily have to be the degree or qualification you graduate with.

“What I love most about my course is that I get to hear first-hand from professors during lectures about their ongoing research in life sciences.”

Vanessa, 23-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Life Sciences student.

Image credit: Channel News Asia



Tips for choosing your educational institution

Similar to choosing your area of study, finding the educational institution that best suits you and your hearing needs will require some consideration. To help you with this process, we've created a list to consider when looking at various educational institutions.

Location

- 1
- Where do you plan to live while you are studying? Will you need to relocate? This bring us to the next area for consideration – cost.

Cost

- 2
- In addition to the tuition fees, are there living expenses and course-related expenses that you need to consider. For example, if you go into a trade what tools will you need? If you decide to go to university, will you need to purchase a new computer?

Accessibility of hearing support

- 3
- Does the educational institution have programs or provisions in place for students with hearing loss? For example, are there allowances for exams or coursework, note takers, live captioning, preferential seating or disability support councillors/officers?

Check funding options

- 4
- Depending on where you live and your circumstances, you may be able to access funding for additional support and assistive technology. We recommend looking into government, disability, and philanthropic funding that you may be able to access. Check with your hearing healthcare professional or your educational institution to see if they can provide you with assistance in this area.

Careers services, placements or apprenticeships

- 5
- Check if your educational institution can support you with finding internships or apprenticeships.

Reputation in your field of study


- 6
- We recommend taking a deeper look at the reputation of the institution specific to the course or area of study you're interested in. We also recommend looking into job placements and the success rate of employment post graduation.

Societies and clubs

- 7
- Academic achievement is important, but it's also important to find a balance between study and your social life. Research has identified social support as the most prominent contributing factor in aiding adjustment to university life and encouraging academic persistence^{2, 3}. You may wish to join student societies or clubs when you first start tertiary education. Check if any align with your interests. Also consider checking if clubs exist for students with hearing loss.

Once you have considered the above, update your shortlist to include these considerations.

Course or Qualification	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
Duration of study					
Course content					
Job prospects					
Earning potential					
Interest in the subject matter					
Entry criteria*					
Institution name					
Location					
Cost					
Hearing support					
Careers services					
Reputation					
Societies and clubs					

A young man with short brown hair and glasses is smiling broadly, looking slightly upwards and to the right. He is wearing a black and white checkered button-down shirt. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green foliage and a clear blue sky.

“University is so different from school; the responsibility is on you to get the work done.”

Zoe, 21-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Science and Advanced Studies student.

Getting the most out of your education

Strategies to optimise learning

Starting tertiary education will be an exciting phase of your life, you will meet new people and learn new skills or concepts. However, there are a number of things you will take some adjusting to. To help you prepare for the transition from high-school to tertiary, we've listed some of the ways tertiary education may differ from high school.

You will have more responsibility

- 1 Tertiary education institutions will expect you to take more responsibility for your work and attendance. It's important to plan your time carefully, keep track of class timetables, develop self-study regimens, and stay on top of assessment and exam dates.

Teaching styles and class sizes will differ

- 2 It may take some adjusting to the different approach to teaching in tertiary education. Depending on the course, you may find class sizes are much larger or smaller than your high-school classes. As a rule of thumb, your lecturers or teachers in tertiary are not there to discipline you or keep track of your work. They are subject matter experts in their field and will generally be happy to discuss coursework with you, but it's likely you will need to arrange an appointment to meet with them.

You will have to take more responsibility for hearing in class

- 3 Similar to having more responsibility for your learning, you will also be more responsible for ensuring your hearing needs are met and communicated. Don't be afraid to ask for help or seek out student support services to help you achieve your educational goals. You may also wish to make an appointment to speak with your teachers or lecturers and talk to them about your hearing needs. Such as, asking what support may be available for that unit of study, the use of assistive listening technology, use of closed captioning and provision of supplementary learning materials. It also helps to get to know your technology.

“I don’t go to some lectures because it’s too hard to hear, so I make use of the captioned recorded lectures when I get home. I go to science labs for practical classes. The tutorials have many students working together and sometimes it is hard to hear. I’m trying to overcome the difficulties of these situations by using my FM device in creative ways.”

– Zoe, 21-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Science and Advanced Studies student.

It’s normal to feel tired

- 4 When you are learning something new, it’s normal to feel a little more tired than usual. In the first few weeks, you will be learning to adjust to the new way of learning, your new environment and new coursework. Consider the strategies for learning in the coming pages to help manage cognitive and listening fatigue.

Find a healthy balance

- 5 The learning material in tertiary education is often more demanding than high school. So, it’s important to find the right balance and learn to take time for yourself. An important skill to develop is to take a step back and find ways to de-stress. Don’t feel guilty if you need to take a break and watch television, read a book, listen to music or catch up with friends.



“Sit in the front. I sat in the front row of each class, in the seat closest to the professor. I stopped caring about looking too over eager, I wanted to do well.”

Karina, 26-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Communications graduate.

Strategies for classroom learning

For classroom style or lecture-based learning, we've prepared some tips to help you optimise your hearing in class and reduce listening fatigue.

Think about where you are seated

- 1 Position yourself in the class or lecture theatre so that you are able to access the best auditory and visual input from your teacher or lecturer. We recommend sitting toward the front of the room where you can clearly see the presentation slides, are closer to the speaker's voice and can clearly see their face. Try to ensure loud noise sources, like air-conditioning units are behind you.

Optimise your technology

- 2 Speak with your hearing healthcare professional to ensure that your device settings are optimised to hear in classroom or lecture hall environments. For example, being able to focus on sounds and voices in front of you or reduce background noise. Also ask about wireless streaming.

“I recommend emailing or approaching the lecturer before class to explain your hearing condition.”

Vanessa, 23-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Life Sciences student.

Take advantage of any support on offer

- 3 Check what support is on offer for your classes. Ask about access to a note taker, transcribing services, if supplementary lesson information or aids can be provided, the availability of live captioning and if additional tutoring is available.

Your educational institution can help guide you in the right direction and help you find answers to your questions.

Strategies for group or practical-based learning

Group and practical based learning can be a more challenging environment to navigate with hearing loss, particularly if your lessons involve group discussions or if background noise is present. Below are some tips to help you in these environments:

Be open about your hearing loss

- 1 If you find that hearing is impacting the way you participate in group discussion or during classes, don't be afraid to disclose your hearing loss and explain how others can help. Generally, people are more than willing to help if they know how.

"Your peers are more likely to judge you if they think you are ignoring them versus if you tell them about your hearing loss. Chances are, they'll be more welcoming."

Karina, 26-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Communications graduate.

Get to know your accessories

- 2 During group lessons or practical-based learning, it can be hard to follow what each person is saying.

If you have a wireless assistive listening device place it in the middle of the group discussion. This may help improve speech clarity and understanding.

If your sound processor has direct streaming capabilities, depending on the type of smartphone you have, you can pair it to stream sound directly to your sound processor.

Take advantage of support on offer

- 3 Similar to face-to-face learning in larger class sizes, ask about hearing support you can access in smaller or practical class-based settings.

Find a learning partner or friend for each class:

- 4 Putting yourself out there to make friends isn't easy for everyone and may require you to step outside your comfort zone. However, you may find classes are more enjoyable when you find people to connect with and friends in class can help you if there's something you may have missed.



E-learning or online classes

One of the key positives to online learning is that you have control over your environment. However, online learning and group video calls can come with their own set of challenges like audio delays, video lagging and poor internet connection. So, even in an online environment, it is important to understand any provisions for e-learning. We've prepared some tips below to help you get the most of online lesson or meetings:

Optimise your environment

- 1 Check the acoustics of the room where you are doing your online classes or independent e-learning. Consider a room that has carpeted floors or more soft furnishings. Hard surfaces can create reverberation and distort sound quality. Check that the room you use for your studies has good lighting and check the settings on the device you are accessing your e-learning on.

Good lighting will also help you more easily access visual cues to supplement your hearing.

Prepare in advance

- 2 If course notes are available, print these before you start your online learning. You can refer to the learning materials and make it easier to follow the topics discussed in the lesson. Another thing to remember, is that most online platforms have live captioning. Check if you can access this feature and familiarising yourself with how to activate it.

Video for group calls

- 3 For group online learning, ask fellow participants to turn on their cameras. Not only does it promote engagement, it can make communication much easier. It will allow you to draw upon the visual cues, such as the speaker's lip or facial movements, gestures and body language. It will also make it much easier to follow the conversation and identify who is speaking at any given time.
 - Don't be afraid to encourage other participants to face the camera when speaking, speak one at a time, speak up or speak more slowly.
 - You can also request that others on a video call to use a headset or earphones during the call. This can help optimise the clarity and quality of their speech.

Chat function for group calls

- 4 Make use of free technologies such as instant messenger or the chat function to supplement verbal communications.
 - During group calls, you could also ask someone to take down meeting minutes to send to share afterwards.

Use direct streaming

- 5 Depending on your sound processor and how you access e-learning and video calls, direct streaming without an intermediary device can be achieved using compatible Apple® and Android™ devices**. Refer to your user manual for more information.

“[My friends] are very attentive to my hearing needs and never hesitate to repeat what I missed during classes. It was their patience and kind understanding that made me treasure them so much as friends and they definitely made school way more fun and fulfilling.”

Vanessa, 23-year-old Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Life Sciences student.

Communication and advocacy tips

Advice to support your move to tertiary education

Along with the practical considerations of moving from high school to tertiary education, this move may impact on other areas of your life. It will take some time to adapt to your new environment and the new approach to learning. To get the most out of your education, you may have to self-advocate for your hearing and listening needs. Here are some tips to get started:

Practise at home with family and friends

- 1
- Self-advocacy doesn't come naturally to everyone and it's normal to feel a bit apprehensive when you first get started. The good news is, the more you do it, the easier it will become. Before you have meetings with your teachers or have conversations with your new friends, try practising some basic sentences at home with your family or long-standing friends.

“If you're not used to speaking up for your needs with peers and teachers, take the time to practise what you want to say. It can help settle any of the nervousness you might be feeling.”

Karina, 26-year-oldCochlear™ Nucleus® recipient and Communications graduate.

Be prepared

- 2
- Before you arrange meetings with teachers, lecturers or instructors have some talking points ready. They want to you to succeed in your studies and will be more motivated to help you if they understand your needs. Be ready to explain your needs, how important hearing is to your success and some potential solutions to help address your needs. If you are nervous about having these conversations, being prepared can help manage some of those emotions.

Don't be afraid to educate others

- 3
- There are a lot of different factors that can influence how well conversation flows. Some people with normal hearing can be unsure of how to best communicate when speaking to someone with hearing loss. Don't be afraid to help educate them on what works best for you. For example, if your communication partner is covering their mouth during conversation and you are struggling to follow what they are saying, you can say:

“Excuse me James, can you please lower your hand from your mouth? Thank you, that makes it easier for me to lipread and follow what you are saying.”

Remember, it's important to be courteous, make your request specific and explain why you are making the request. For more specific strategies that you can try using during conversations, refer to the *Communication Strategies for Tertiary and Education Guide* in this series.

Stay connected

- 4
- It is important to stay connected with a community of people who understand what you are going through. Clubs and societies at your educational institution, Cochlear events, online and offline community groups and the Cochlear Family community are just some of the ways to stay connected. Not only does this give you the opportunity to connect with others who have hearing loss, but more importantly, they can be a much needed source of support during this new phase of your life.

Starting Tertiary education is a significant milestone and there are many pathways and options to reach your future goals.

The Cochlear Family team want to be there to support you as you embark on this new and exciting chapter of your life. We hope this guide will help you prepare for your first day and during your first few months at your new educational institution.

For more information on Cochlear resources to help support you, visit [cochlear.com](https://www.cochlear.com) or contact your local customer service team.

Cochlear Family

Hear now. And always

Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a world full of hearing. As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, we have helped more than 700,000 people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to next generation technologies. We collaborate with leading clinical, research and support networks to advance hearing science and improve care.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company.

www.cochlear.com

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Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always follow the directions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information.

Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear Technology.

** For compatibility information, visit www.cochlear.com/compatibility.

Cochlear™ Nucleus® implant systems are intended for the treatment of moderately severe to profound hearing loss. Baha implant systems are intended for the treatment of moderate to profound hearing loss Cochlear, Hear now. And Always, the elliptical logo, True Wireless, Nucleus, ForwardFocus*, Kanso and Baha are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Cochlear group of companies. Apple, iPhone and iPad are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Android and Google Play are trademarks of Google LLC.