The transition from secondary to tertiary studies for overseas students in Australia is facilitated by the guidance provided by high schools and partnerships with universities. **Gillian Evans** reports.

"We are constantly trying to look at new ways to prepare our students for life after school," asserts Louise Skul at Woodcroft College www.woodcroft.sa.edu.au in Morphett Vale, SA. "We want them to be successful learners and also successful members of the community."

Overseas students enrolled at high schools in Australia already benefit from full immersion in English, experience of the Australian academic system and time to acclimatise to the new host culture. In addition, certain entry requirements may be bypassed. For example, if students complete year 12 at an Australian high school they do not, according to Skul, require an entrance exam such as IELTs for study in Australia. Another benefit is that the curriculum followed by high school students provides them with study skills in preparation for university. Carol Baker at St Hilda's School www.sthildas.qld.edu.au in Southport, QLD, says that although they do not specifically provide university study skills classes, "the expectations of learning and study during the years 11 and 12 are preparing them for university success."

Most independent schools in Australia do, however, provide assistance and guidance on university entrance. All Saint Anglican School www.asas.qld.edu.au in Merrimac, QLD, for example, organises tours of universities. In addition, says Michael Bartlett, Director of International Education, "We assist students in the actual application process and also help them predict the likelihood of successful entry into different universities and courses, [and] offer careers advice. We also track students after graduation, in case they need further assistance and advice."

All Saints Anglican School is made up of five per cent international students, and around 80 per cent of them go on to study at university in Australia. "We guide students through the tertiary application process and advise on the suitability of choices they make in regard to their performance at our school," relates Bartlett.

"Most independent schools provide guidance on university entrance"

Similarly, Skul reports, "Every year we take students on tours and to information sessions in a variety of schools within the universities. This way students know much more about what is available to them. We also assist all our students to apply for university with one-one assistance, group information sessions, and individual counselling sessions."

At St Hilda's School, students benefit from careers classes which include advice on universities. Baker elaborates further, "Our careers consultant works with students one-on-one, as well as in timetabled careers classes where the girls learn how to apply through the university admission centres and how best to order their preferences for university programmes," she says. "Students are encouraged to become fully informed by doing their own research. Thus, when applications are being processed by the national admissions services, they can drive their own applications to make changes as required to secure the best possible offer."

In addition, each year 12 student has a careers interview where they discuss the student's results and suitable universities and entry requirements, as well as alternative pathways to achieving their career goals.

Matthew Rawes, Manager, Student Recruitment, at Prince Alfred College www.pac.edu.au in Kent Town, SA, says that they "offer careers counselling and have regular university information nights where local, national and global universities present to our students. He adds, "[We are] always looking to provide our students with the best possible options for university success."

As well as university advice, Woodcroft College prides itself in the extra pastoral support given to students. "We give our students extended pastoral care and a contact in case of emergencies; we assist with applications and acceptance of offers; take them to the universities and the facilities, and we encourage them to go to orientation sessions," says Skul. The college also teaches students how to "cook cheap, nutritious and easy meals" to help them live independently at university, and takes students to the University of Adelaide and Flinders University to teach them how to use the library systems.

While independent high schools in Australia offer good guidance and preparation to international students who want to go to university there, they are constantly looking to improve their provision. Partnerships between universities and independent schools (see box) are a very efficient way to improve university preparation for students, and the trend towards such relationships in Australia is growing. Baker reports that St Hilda's has partnership agreements with three universities, while Skul says, "We are always open to new ideas...and are currently working with universities to see how we can best work together to assist with student success at university."