



Studying for the Higher School Certificate

This is a brief summary of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) HSC rules. For full details on all of the NESA rules you should look up the Assessment Credentialing and Examination (ACE) manual which is available through your school or on the NESA website – a link is provided on the Oatley Campus website.

1. Pattern of Study Requirements

Each course in the Senior School is comprised of two components - a Preliminary (Year 11) and a HSC (Year 12) course. Satisfactory completion of the Preliminary course is a prerequisite for entry into an HSC course.

The Preliminary course consists of Term 1, 2, & 3 of Year 11. The HSC course begins in Term 4 of Year 11. Candidates for the Higher School Certificate must undertake a program of study comprising at least:

- 12 units of Preliminary course; and
- 10 units of Higher School Certificate courses.

Both the Preliminary course pattern and the HSC course pattern must include

- at least six units of Board Developed Courses;
- at least two units of a Board Developed Course in English;
- at least three courses of two units value (or greater); and
- at least four subjects.

Each Board Developed Course is worth 2 Units which is approximately 4 hours per week of study. All courses offered are 2 units although English and Mathematics have a 1 unit extension course available for Year 11 study.

No more than seven units of courses in Science can contribute to Higher School Certificate eligibility.

The current two year program of study is the usual method of completing the HSC, however under Pathways, students have the flexibility to accumulate the HSC from between three to five years. Decisions about students who demonstrate the need to use this system of accumulation will be made by the Principal after negotiation with students and their family.

2. Credentialling

Records of Achievement

These will be issued for both Preliminary and HSC courses provided all course work in a subject is complete.

HSC Testamur

All eligible students will also receive an HSC. To be eligible, students must follow the required pattern of study, attempt the HSC examinations, achieved the HSC minimum standards in literacy and numeracy and have been assessed in the prescribed manner.

Course Report

A report will be issued for each course. The report will include:



- an HSC mark located in one of the performance scale bands with a description of the knowledge, skills and understanding typically demonstrated by students in that band.

This mark is derived from an average of the exam mark and school based assessment.

- an assessment mark out of 100
- an examination mark out of 100.

The Principal will be required to certify satisfactory completion of HSC courses, as evidenced by attendance, course participation and progress.

HSC / TAFE Credit Transfer

You can use your HSC and Assessment Marks to complete a TAFE course more quickly ie. gain Advanced standing.

Advanced standing means that students completing some HSC courses at a satisfactory level may count these towards a TAFE award. They will then not have to study certain subjects or modules in the TAFE course. It may allow you to gain your TAFE qualification faster.

Depending on the types of subjects studied in the HSC, students may be granted up to 75% advanced standing.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

If you wish to go to University you must apply for a ATAR. The requirements for the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) are determined by the universities. The ATAR is calculated by the Technical Committee on Scaling on behalf of universities in NSW and the ACT. A candidate's ATAR is calculated from the scaled aggregate of the marks in the best ten units in Board Developed HSC courses, subject to the following restrictions:

- at least two units of English must be included;
- at least three Board Developed courses of two units value or greater must be included;
- courses from at least four subjects must be included
- at most, two units of category B courses may be included in the calculation of the ATAR.

The universities categorise Board Developed courses as Category A or Category B. Most Board Developed Courses are Category A and are unrestricted in their eligibility for inclusion in the calculation of the ATAR.

Category B courses include all VET framework courses including framework courses taught by TAFE - Financial Services, Human Services, Electrotechnology, Automotive, Tourism Travel and Events. The universities allow no more than 2 units of these courses to be included in calculation of the ATAR. English Studies and Mathematics Standard Course 1 are also Category B Courses.

All other courses, including TAFE courses Content Endorsed Courses and locally designed Board Endorsed Courses, are excluded from contributing to the calculation of the ATAR.

(For more detailed information on the ATAR refer to current Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) publications.)

3. Types of Courses

Board Developed Courses

- are designed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)
- have a unit value of 2 Units (Mathematics and English also have 1 Unit extension units in Year 11)
- are assessed by a HSC external examination as well as school based assessment
- contribute to the ATAR.

Board Endorsed Courses (BEC)

- are designed by other providers
- are endorsed by the NSW Education Standards Authority for inclusion in the HSC
- can be 1 or 2 Units studied over one or two years
- are assessed by the school

- appear on the HSC but do not contribute to the ATAR
- include Board Endorsed University courses offered at Oatley Campus.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) Courses

- can be delivered by schools, TAFE or other providers
- are accredited by industry and the workplace
- are competency based
- can be framework courses
- can be assessed by an HSC external exam
- can contribute to the ATAR (2 units only)
- have a mandatory workplace component
- are category B Courses
- can be non framework courses
- appear on Preliminary or HSC Record of Achievement
- may have internal assessment only.

4. Assessment and Reporting

For all Board Developed Courses, results at the end of Year 12 will appear on the HSC Record of Achievement in two parts:

- a school assessment mark
- an examination mark.

All schools are required to submit assessments of student achievement that include a measure of those course outcomes not tested by the HSC examination.

The school assessments for each course are moderated on a common scale so that they can be compared with those of other schools.

School assessment contributes 50% to the final HSC mark.

For VET framework courses, results at the end of Year 12 will

- appear on the HSC Record of Achievement as an examination mark
- be recorded on the NESAs website for credentialing purposes as achieved competencies
- credentialled by the NSW Education Standards Authority on behalf of Australian Skills Qualification Authority (ASQA)..