



**Board of Senior Secondary Studies  
Policy and Procedures Manual**

**2018**



Last Updated: December 2018



**Note:**

Significant policy changes from 2017 are indicated with a vertical bar in the outside margin.

Amendments to the Policy and Procedures Manual during the current year are indicated by grey background shading.

Policy changes that are old versions and apply to this year's graduating cohort but are not implemented for subsequent years are indicated by yellow background shading.

Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2017

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## Foreword

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies publishes this manual as a record of policy and procedures relating to its functions of accreditation and registration of courses, assessment and certification.

In preparing the 2018 manual, the 2017 edition has been altered to include changes and additions arising from decisions made at Board meetings during 2017 and other minor edits to clarify policies and procedures. Changes and revisions of Board policy from 2018 will be incorporated into the manual following each Board meeting.

Previous Policy and Procedures Manuals should no longer be used. Printed copies will show the date of the last update on the coversheet. Users should ensure they are using the latest version, which is available on the ACTBSSS website.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by staff of the Office of the BSSS, Board members, members of Board committees, principals and others to the preparation and maintenance of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

The manual is published electronically on the ACTBSSS web site at <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au>  
Inquiries regarding this manual should be directed to the Office of the BSSS, (02) 6205 7181.



Rosemary Follett AO Chair

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

December 2017

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# 1 ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

## 1.1 Functions and Principles

### 1.1.1 Functions

The principal functions of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS, the Board) are:

- to accredit or register courses taught by recognised educational institutions
- to approve, consistently with national agreements, recognised educational institutions for teaching vocational education courses
- to establish guidelines for the development of courses by the Board or by a recognised educational institution
- to establish principles and procedures for the assessment of attainments of students and the moderation of these assessments
- to provide to people who have undertaken courses, or units of courses, certificates and transcripts of their attainments, including the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

### 1.1.2 Principles

The Board is committed to:

- a general education of high quality providing equal opportunity for all students
- freedom of choice of courses for students.

The Board's functions support a model of student learning which integrates course design and implementation, pedagogy, assessment and certification of student achievement. The model is underpinned by the following set of Learning Principles:

- Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings and skills (*Prior knowledge*)
- When learning is organised around major concepts, principles and significant real world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures (*Deep knowledge and connectedness*)
- Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts (*Metacognition*)
- Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affects learning (*Self-concept*)
- Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations (*High expectations*)
- Learners learn in different ways and at different rates (*Individual differences*)
- Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn (*Socio-cultural effects*)
- Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one (*Collaborative learning*)
- Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress. (*Explicit expectations and feedback*)

### **1.1.3 Student Capabilities**

Programs of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should enable students to become:

- creative and critical thinkers
- enterprising problem-solvers
- skilled and empathetic communicators
- informed and ethical decision-makers
- environmentally and culturally aware citizens
- confident and capable users of technologies
- independent and self-managing learners
- collaborative team members

and provide students with

- a comprehensive body of specific knowledge, principles and concepts
- a basis for self-directed and lifelong learning
- personal attributes enabling effective participation in society.

## **1.2 Governance**

### **1.2.1 Role of the Chair**

The role of the Chair is to:

- provide leadership and encourage individual members of the Board to work as a team and be sure that they have access to all relevant information in a timely manner
- develop and maintain good relations with the Minister, Board members, chief executive officer and senior executives in administering departments
- facilitate the effective consideration of Board business
- ensure that a quorum is present
- open and close meetings
- accept motions and amendments
- control debates, including ensuring that all Board members have an opportunity to adequately contribute to the discussion on individual motions
- oversee voting, including casting deliberative and casting votes as necessary
- adjourn disorderly meetings
- sign minutes following their endorsement by the Board.

### **1.2.2 Role of Board Members**

Members of the Board have the responsibility to act in the interests of the Board. It is expected that Board members will abide by the code of conduct they sign as members and will perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way.

Board members are required to:

- exercise their powers and discharge their duties with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person would expect
- make judgments in good faith, for proper purposes, without material or personal interest in the subject matter and only after informing themselves about the subject matter
- exercise their powers and discharge their duties in good faith in the best interests of the Board and for proper purpose
- not improperly use their position to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else
- not improperly use information to gain advantage for themselves
- not be reckless or be intentionally dishonest in exercising their powers and discharging their duties.

### **1.2.3 Role of the Executive Director**

The role of the Executive Director is to:

- be responsible for the implementation of the Board's recommendations
- be responsible for the Board's legislated functions on behalf of and under the guidance of the Board
- report back to the Board on the implementation of the recommendations in accord with its legislation
- prepare Board papers
- keep the Board informed and up to date with current educational trends.

### **1.2.4 The Board's Seal**

The Board has a seal. The seal can only be affixed to an agreement following a resolution of the Board and the fixing of the seal is to be signed by the Chair and one other Board member, or by two Board members.

### **1.2.5 Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interest**

The agenda of each meeting should contain an item "Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interest".

### **1.2.6 Board Members' Training**

Members of the Board should receive appropriate induction training on the first occasion they are appointed and subsequently as necessary. A BSSS Members' Handbook is provided to members on appointment to the Board.

## **1.3 Operation**

### **1.3.1 Advisory Bodies**

The Board has the power, under Section 6 of the *BSSS Act*, to "appoint the committees and advisory panels that it considers appropriate". This includes the determination of terms of reference and membership. At each February meeting the Board Chair will nominate a chair for each of the Board's committees. Membership of the Board committees lasts for two years from

the time of appointment. Organisations can nominate both a member and an alternate member who can attend meetings when members are unavailable. The attendance of alternates should occur only in exceptional circumstances.

Committee and advisory panel members are appointed from defined constituencies of the ACT community for their expertise and with the expectation they consider the whole system and all students when providing advice to the Board.

### **Assessment and Certification Committee (ACC)**

The terms of reference are:

- subject to a reference from the Board, provide advice to the Board on assessment and certification policies and procedures
- to advise the Board on issues which may lead to a reference
- to provide the Board with an Annual Report on the overall direction of assessment and certification in Years 11 and 12.

Membership will comprise one representative from each of:

- the Board (to be the Chair)
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Principals' Association
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations *or* Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools
- an outside expert on educational assessment and other members co-opted by the Board.

### **Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)**

The terms of reference are:

- subject to a reference from the Board, provide advice to the Board on national and ACT curriculum matters
- to advise the Board on issues which may lead to a reference
- to provide the Board with an Annual Report on the overall direction of curriculum in Years 11 and 12.

The membership will comprise one representative from each of:

- the Board (to be the Chair)
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Principals' Association
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools
- Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
- Business and Industry representative organisations
- a local university



- other coopted members with particular expertise, as appropriate.

## **Vocational Education and Training Committee (VET)**

The terms of reference are:

- subject to a reference from the Board:
- advise on vocational education and training issues, particularly those relating to national agreements, including quality
- provide consultative arrangements with ACT industry
- advise the Board on post-school linkages with the VET sector.
- to advise the Board on issues which may lead to a reference.
- to provide the Board with an Annual Report on vocational education and training issues and initiatives for secondary education.

The membership will comprise one representative from each of:

- the Board (to be the Chair)
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools
- ACT Principals' Association
- an industry adviser
- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Trades and Labour Council (ACT), trading as Unions ACT
- Business and Industry representative organisation
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations *or* Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools

## **Innovation Committee (INC)**

The terms of reference are:

- To advise the Board on the implementation of the Board's Strategic Plan
- To recommend to the Board additions to the Strategic Plan
- To advise the Board of innovative practices in senior secondary education in other jurisdictions and internationally
- To provide the Board with an Annual Report.

The membership will comprise one representative from each of:

- the Board (to be the Chair)
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Principals' Association
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools
- A local university
- A Business and Industry organisation

- Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools
- Catholic School Parents Council
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
- Other coopted members with particular expertise, as appropriate

### **Principals' Meetings**

The Board convenes regular meetings with principals. Principals advise the Board in its decision making processes.

### **Board Appeal Committee**

The Board will form an appeal committee following a request for a review of a college assessment or appeal procedure. The membership will comprise:

- a Board member (the Committee Chair)
- a teacher experienced in the supervision of student assessment
- the third member will be a teacher experienced in assessment of the subject under appeal and appointed at the time of the appeal.

No member of the appeal committee should have had any direct dealings with the matter of appeal at an earlier stage.

The Board Appeal Committee may be assisted by a legal practitioner. The Committee will report its decision to the Board. (Refer to 7, [Review and Appeals Procedures](#))

## **Discipline Committee**

The Discipline Committee will contain three members. The Chair will be a Board member, appointed by the Board. The Board Chair will appoint the other members.

The Discipline Committee may be assisted by a legal practitioner. Refer to 6.10.3 [Right of Appeal to the Discipline Committee](#).

## **Accreditation Review Committee**

This is a committee established by the Chair of the Board following a request for review of a Board decision (refer to 3.3.7 [Review of Decisions](#)) to:

- accredit a course subject to a condition, or
- refuse to accredit a course.

The membership shall be made up of three disinterested persons, one of whom shall be designated chair of the committee by the Board Chair.

The committee will make a recommendation to the Board.

## **1.3.2 Monitoring**

### **1.3.2.1 General Principle**

The Board monitors all aspects of the senior secondary curriculum including training packages, related student assessment procedures, moderation, certification and communication with the system's users and beneficiaries.

### **1.3.2.2 Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment**

The role of the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment includes monitoring procedures in colleges. The Board recognises the importance of having a person of sufficient seniority in the system to perform that role.

### **1.3.2.3 Colleges**

The Board publishes statistics concerning the distribution of course scores, unit grades and VET qualifications and monitors the appropriateness and acceptability of those distributions.

### **1.3.2.4 Courses**

In considering whether or not courses are of an appropriate educational standard, the Board needs not only to monitor the developments in each area of the curriculum in the ACT, but also to be aware of the standards adopted nationally and internationally. Vocational training packages are delivered to the standard of the relevant national competencies and monitored by the national VET regulator ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority).

## **1.4 Communications/Publications**

The Board produces a variety of publications, including brochures to ensure the dissemination of appropriate and accurate information to colleges, students and the community.

In some cases these are issued to colleges, panels or other relevant bodies to indicate the manner in which the Board expects its policies to be implemented. Most publications are on the BSSS website at <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/>. Key publications include:

- Board of Senior Secondary Studies Policy and Procedures Manual
- BSSS Guidelines for the Development and Accreditation of A, T and M Courses
- BSSS Guidelines for the Development and Accreditation of Courses that lead to

Nationally Recognised Vocational Qualifications

- AST — Instructions for the Conduct of the Test
- General Schedule of Meetings and Events
- Year 12 Study and Vocational Education Study
- Information brochures

## **1.5 Feedback and Complaints**

The Board encourages and welcomes both positive and negative feedback as part of its continuous improvement strategy.

The Board is committed to responding to complaints in a timely and open manner. Its complaints handling procedures are designed to provide efficient, fair, accessible and transparent mechanisms for resolving complaints in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The BSSS Feedback and Complaints Management policy is included as Appendix 8.

## 2 Educational Institutions

### 2.1 Recognised Educational Institution

A Recognised Educational Institution is an educational institution that is established or registered under an Act or a law of the Commonwealth, a State or another Territory, which provides, or offers to provide, courses that are suitable for senior secondary education.

Recognised Educational Institutions are responsible for education programs that document the curriculum of the school. Curriculum is the planned learning opportunities offered to students and the experiences students encounter when that curriculum is implemented.

Teachers delivering BSSS accredited or registered courses through non-school recognised educational institutions are required to be registered with the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI).

Where a person is unable to gain registration with the TQI due to his/her qualifications, skills and abilities, and/or English language proficiency, the BSSS may accept a TQI Permit to Teach as meeting the requirement.

A Permit to Teach will be accepted if the person is able to demonstrate that his/her qualifications, skills and abilities, and/or level of English language proficiency would enable him/her to deliver the BSSS accredited/registered program to students in years 11 and 12 in accord with BSSS policies and procedures.

### 2.2 Outside Provider

Recognised Educational Institutions may choose to have a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or other educational institution, e.g. a university, deliver part or all of a course of study. These external organisations are deemed Outside Providers.

The Recognised Educational Institution remains responsible for the course of study.

### 2.3 Specialist Education Provider

The Board is responsible for registering Specialist Education Providers that provide study in a specific area. The Board will keep an up to date list of approved Specialist Education Providers.

There are two positions (position numbers 2160 and 2609) within the Office of the BSSS that have been designated as authorised assessors for any Specialist Education Provider seeking registration with the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Specialist Education Providers seeking to be registered with the Board will need to obtain a copy of the document *Guidelines for Registration of Specialist Education Providers*. This document is available from the BSSS website or from the Office of the BSSS.

Provisional registration for Specialist Education Providers will be for the first 6 months of operation and full registration after this time, following successful completion of all compliance checks.

As a condition of registration, the following requirements must be met as a Specialist Education Provider:

- (a) continuing to offer the present or similar program accredited by the BSSS;
- (b) continuing to use the present facilities for delivery of the BSSS accredited program; and
- (c) contacting the BSSS if there is a change in staff or the legal entity and providing copies of

relevant qualifications and police checks as required by legislation.

Teachers delivering BSSS accredited courses through Specialist Education Providers are required to be registered with the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) and to hold current Working with Vulnerable People Registration.

Teachers delivering programs through Specialist Education Providers must be competent in English so that they can fully understand the BSSS' policies and procedures, communicate with staff in the Office of the BSSS and participate effectively in moderation procedures. This is necessary even if they are teaching another language to the students.

Where a person is unable to gain registration with the TQI due to his/her qualifications, skills and abilities, and/or English language proficiency, the BSSS may accept a TQI Permit to teach as meeting the requirement.

A Permit to Teach will be accepted if the person is able to demonstrate that his/her qualifications, skills and abilities, and/or level of English language proficiency would enable him/her to deliver the BSSS accredited program to students in years 11 and 12 in accord with BSSS policies and procedures.

## **3 Accreditation and Registration of Courses**

### **3.1 Responsibilities**

The Board is responsible for establishing frameworks and guidelines to support the development, accreditation and registration of units and courses, and ensuring the application of national agreements in relation to the accreditation of vocational education and training courses, where appropriate.

The Board determines the accreditation and classification of all courses on the advice of accreditation panels.

The Board will maintain a register of all units and courses accredited or registered by the Board. Only units and courses on the register will appear on certificates issued by the Board.

#### **3.1.1 Vision**

The Board is committed to a curriculum that:

- promotes quality teaching and learning
- is flexible by enabling ACT colleges and teachers to determine how best to plan, teach and assess students according to needs of those students
- inspires young adults to learn and become confident, creative, active and informed citizens who make a valuable contribution to society
- reflects coherence and cohesion.

#### **3.1.2 Principles**

The Board is committed to a curriculum that:

- provides a platform for high quality learning
- upholds high expectations for achievement of all young adults and makes provision for diverse learners
- is rigorous and displays consistency, purpose, and quality design

- is responsive to community expectations and developed collaboratively
- provides opportunities for all young adults to develop ethical and intercultural understandings
- ensures multiple pathways for all young adults to attain work and life skills including functional literacy and numeracy.

## 3.2 Definitions

### 3.2.1 Frameworks

Frameworks are system documents for years 11 and 12 which:

- provide the basis for the development and accreditation of any course within a designated area
- provide a common basis for assessment, moderation and reporting of student outcomes in courses based on the framework
- articulate with Australian Curriculum F-10 and Every Chance to Learn: Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools P-10
- take account of national directions in curriculum and assessment
- enable reporting of industry standards as appropriate
- are inclusive of different courses and different student groups
- support innovation in curriculum
- will be evaluated as needed or every five years.

### 3.2.2 Course Areas

A Course Area is a general classification that groups courses into subject areas when they are accredited or registered by the board. The Course Area for each course is specified in the course document and on the adoption form for the course. When a college adopts a course the Course Area applies to all students studying that course. (Refer to 8.5 [Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#) and 8.7 [Types of Packages](#))

### 3.2.3 Common Curriculum Elements

The Common Curriculum Elements have been developed by the board to improve student achievement through:

- informing the development of curriculum and assessment tasks
- developing assessment that achieves greater correlation with the AST
- providing stimulus for discussion about quality assessment.

The Common Curriculum Elements are listed in Appendix 2.

### 3.2.4 Accreditation

Accreditation is the result of consideration and acceptance by the Board of a course of study as educationally sound and appropriate for students in years 11 and 12. The Board will determine the nature of an accredited course of study and under what conditions courses should be accredited.



### **3.2.4.1 Accreditation Panel**

An accreditation panel is a committee formed by the Board. (Refer to 3.4 [Accreditation Panels](#))

## **3.2.5 Classification of Accredited Courses/Units**

Courses will be accredited on the basis that they meet the following requirements for classification. Courses may meet the requirements of a number of classifications.

### **3.2.5.1 A Courses**

A classification is given to courses that have been deemed by the Board to be educationally sound and appropriate for students in years 11 and 12.

### **3.2.5.2 T Courses**

T classification is given to an accredited year 11 and 12 course that is considered by the Board to prepare students for higher education.

### **3.2.5.3 M Courses**

M classification is given to an accredited course which is considered by the Board to provide appropriate educational experiences for students who satisfy specific disability criteria.

### **3.2.5.4 C Courses**

C classification is given to a Board accredited vocational education and training program that is appropriate for students in Year 11 and 12. It is delivered and assessed by a Registered Training Organisation (RTOs) that has been approved by the BSSS (section 5 (b) *BSSS Act 1997*) and registered by the national VET regulator ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority) under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

### **3.2.5.5 Vocational Programs**

A vocational program delivers training in workplace specific skills and knowledge which can lead to a vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The content of the vocational program is based on the competencies defined in the relevant industry developed Training Package and follows the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Vocational programs accredited by the Board may be classified as A, T, M, or C.

#### **3.2.5.5.1 W Units**

Structured Workplace Learning units (which can be found in vocational programs) are classified as W units (refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#))

### **3.2.5.6 Definitions: Language courses**

Language courses are to use the following nomenclature and definitions.

Beginning courses - are intended for students who have no previous knowledge of the language.

Continuing courses - are intended for students who have completed two or three years study of the language in high school.

Advanced courses - are intended for students who have had considerably more exposure to the target language than the average high school student.

The BSSS Language Eligibility Form is available on the BSSS website at:

<http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum>

All students must complete the BSSS Language Eligibility Form as a requirement for studying a senior secondary language course. This applies from year 11, 2018.

It is a requirement that the completed BSSS Language Eligibility Forms are filed in the official records maintained by the college.

### **3.2.6 Registration**

Colleges may apply to the Board for registration of a course to be taught at the institution. The Board may also register courses that are accredited by other educational institutions. Registered courses must comply with the relevant guidelines of the Board.

### **3.2.7 Classification of Registered Courses/Units**

#### **3.2.7.1 H Courses**

H classification is given to a year 11 and 12 course which is designed and accredited by an Australian higher education provider and where successful completion of the course will be recognised towards an undergraduate degree with that provider.

(Refer to 9 [University Programs](#))

#### **3.2.7.2 E Courses**

E classification is given to all externally delivered courses which lead to a nationally recognised vocational qualification (VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment) delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

E classification is also given to Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) for:

- Structured training and on-the job training provided by an external RTO
- On-the-job training for an ASBA undertaking the structured training at school, where the school is the RTO.

#### **3.2.7.3 R Units or Courses**

A registered (R) unit or course is an organised learning experience designed to develop capabilities (refer to the General Capabilities). Students develop capabilities through engagement in College-based, Work exploration, Cultural, Sport & Recreation or Community service courses.

R units enable students to receive credit for the time they are engaged in an organised learning experience. An R unit is a discrete area of learning. R units outline goals, content descriptions and assessment. R units include electives. For example, Rugby is an elective of the Sport R unit. Elective titles will be generic and not specify particular organisations, events or personalities. The goals, content descriptions and assessment will be common for electives in a unit. Colleges develop a program of learning based on the R unit.

The R unit and elective title will be recorded on the academic record. For example, Sport & Recreation – Bushwalking.

R units are delivered by the home college or conducted in partnership with external organisations\*.

\* A partnership is a formal arrangement between the college and organisation that exists beyond the educational setting. A partnership is recognised by a written agreement outlining the activity and signed by the college principal.

#### **3.2.7.4 Development of R Units**

A request to develop an R unit will be considered by the Executive Director, BSSS. Guiding principles for development of R units are:

R units are developed co-operatively by representatives of more than one college, unless there are exceptional circumstances which have the approval of the Executive Director, BSSS.

The development of R units will conform to the R Unit Design Specifications endorsed by the Board.

### **3.2.7.5 Registration of R Units**

R units are registered in values of 0.2, 0.5 and 1.0. R units greater than 1.0 are registered in multiples of 1.0.

R courses are registered for a period of 5 years in each R unit course.

It is the responsibility of the college to monitor student attendance and implementation of R units.

## **3.2.8 Course**

A course consists of a combination of units with coherence of purpose. This coherence must be perceived before the student commences the course of study.

### **3.2.8.1 Courses**

Courses are developed co-operatively by representatives of more than one college, unless there are exceptional circumstances which have the approval of the Executive Director, BSSS.

### **3.2.8.2 Course Duration**

- *Minor* course - is a minimum of 2 standard units
- *Major* course - is a minimum of 3.5 standard units
- *Major minor* course - is a minimum of 5.5 standard units
- *Double major* course - is a minimum of 7 standard units.

Each course document will state the minimum number of units required for each course type as appropriate to the implementing college's timetable or other in-house practices. With panel approval, a unit may be accredited in more than one course provided that course coherence is maintained.

## **3.2.9 Unit**

A unit is a combination of structured learning activities taken over a specified period which present content, teaching and learning experiences and assessment strategies organised around a particular theme or within a particular discipline.

### **3.2.9.1 Unit values**

- A standard unit has a value of 1.0 and is delivered for a minimum of 55 hours generally over one semester. Any accredited unit must have a value that is a multiple of 0.5
- A unit includes assessment weeks (where timetabled) and excludes time between classes, public holidays and data entry time
- Standard units in multiples of 0.5 will be awarded in C courses based on BSSS agreed hours of training and assessment undertaken as a structured education program
- Standard units in multiples of 0.5 will be awarded in E courses. E courses are undertaken as a structured education program
- Standard units in values of 0.2, 0.5 and 1.0 will be awarded in R courses. R units greater than 1.0 are registered in multiples of 1.0.

### **3.2.9.2 Unit Delivery**

Colleges are responsible for selecting the most appropriate strategies for the delivery of units taking into account issues such as access, availability of relevant resources and teacher expertise. These strategies could include all or a mix of timetabled classes, scheduled contact times, flexible on-line learning<sup>1</sup>. Where these activities are delivered outside a timetabled class environment, procedures must be in place to monitor student participation and progress.

To maintain the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, principals are responsible for ensuring that BSSS policies on unit values and course duration are met and that courses are delivered as accredited.

## **3.3 Accreditation and Classification Process**

### **3.3.1 Frameworks**

The essential basis for the development, accreditation and classification of courses is the Framework covering the proposed subject area (refer to 3.2.1 [Frameworks](#)). Framework documents include:

#### **3.3.1.1 Introduction**

The Framework includes the Board-endorsed generic statement of Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and Cross Curriculum Priorities and a model of learning, underpinned by learning principles.

#### **3.3.1.2 Rationale**

The Framework includes an outline of the nature and scope of the subject area and makes explicit the reasons for its place in the curriculum.

#### **3.3.1.3 Goals**

The Framework includes a statement of intended student learning outcomes.

#### **3.3.1.4 Concepts, Knowledge and Skills**

This statement describes the essential concepts, knowledge and skills of the subject area. It includes reference to vocational programs, where appropriate.

#### **3.3.1.5 Teaching Strategies**

This section discusses teaching and learning strategies consistent with the Board's Learning Principles which are particularly relevant to the subject area.

#### **3.3.1.6 Common Curriculum Elements**

This section lists the Common Curriculum Elements approved by the Board for inclusion in ACT courses. The CCE's are listed in Appendix 2.

#### **3.3.1.7 Assessment**

This section includes a table of Assessment Task Types, with examples of tasks that provide evidence of student achievement of the goals of the course and Assessment Criteria (the dimensions of quality that teachers look for in evaluating student work). This section also provides

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<sup>1</sup> Flexible Learning provides learners with choice, convenience and personalisation to meet the needs of the learner. In particular, flexible learning provides learners with choices about where, when and how learning occurs.

additional assessment advice, as appropriate.

### **3.3.1.8 Achievement Standards**

Achievement Standards describe unit levels of achievement against the assessment criteria.

### **3.3.1.9 Moderation**

The Framework describes the system of moderation in place under the ACT system of senior secondary education. (Refer to 5 [Moderation](#))

### **3.3.1.10 Bibliography**

The Framework includes a list of references for course development.

### **3.3.1.11 Framework Development Group**

The Framework includes an acknowledgment of people who have worked on the Framework document.

## **3.3.2 Board Endorsement of Frameworks**

The Board endorses a Framework on the advice of its Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC). Board members are given access to the draft framework and are invited to attend the CAC meeting at which the framework is being reviewed, or submit written comments to the CAC Executive Officer prior to the meeting. The CAC committee meets with a representative from the framework writing team to discuss the draft framework and negotiate any change as required. The framework is then submitted to a Board meeting for endorsement.

## **3.3.3 Proposals for Frameworks and Courses**

Developers contact Curriculum Officers to discuss proposal for new frameworks and courses. Proposals for new frameworks may be submitted to the BSSS Executive Director. A submission for a new framework and course must address the following criteria:

- an educational rationale
- pathways for students
- an environmental scan of curriculum nationally and internationally
- mapping for duplication of content with existing BSSS endorsed frameworks and accredited courses
- principal/s endorsement.

The BSSS Executive Director may approve proposals for new frameworks or courses. Alternatively, the BSSS Executive Director may refer the proposal to the Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC).

Commencement of development of new frameworks or courses is at the discretion of the BSSS Executive Director pending approval of proposal. Generally, course development must be in line with the Framework and Course Development Schedule.

### **3.3.3.1 Course Design Specifications**

All courses and units written under the English, History, Mathematics and Science Frameworks 2013 must be developed according to the design specifications, as outlined in the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Curriculum Design Paper Version 3.1

June 2013:

[http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/07\\_04\\_Curriculum\\_Design\\_Paper\\_version\\_3+1\\_\(June\\_2012\).pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/07_04_Curriculum_Design_Paper_version_3+1_(June_2012).pdf)

Extension units in courses written under the English, History, Mathematics and Science Frameworks:

- will enable students to complete a major minor or double major in the course. Units 1-4 from the Australian Curriculum will be compulsory core units in the courses that integrate AC; in the other courses written to these frameworks, the four compulsory core units will be specifically identified and be the basis for the development of the Extension units.
- Extension units are in-depth studies of themes, concepts or theories introduced in the core units; they must not significantly duplicate content in the core units.

### 3.3.4 Panel Processes

The Panel receives a draft from the Office of the BSSS for consideration.

The panel meets with the OBSSS Curriculum officers:

- To formally consider the course against the specified criteria
- makes a recommendation to the Board on the accreditation of the course.

The developers:

- engage in discussion regarding recommendations by the panel and make amendments as advised

The panel chair:

- engages in discussion and provides written advice to the developer
- provides a clear expectation and reasonable time schedule for completion of amendments
- informs the developers of the progress of course accreditation
- ensures that the appropriate signatures for classification are secured
- provides a copy of the agreed Final Version of the course to the Executive Director for accreditation. (Refer to 3.4 [Accreditation Panels](#))

### 3.3.5 Board Determination of Accreditation

The Board determines the accreditation and classification of all courses, on the advice of its accreditation panels and the Executive Director.

#### 3.3.5.1 Accreditation

The Board considers the panel's recommendation for accreditation of a course, including vocational programs. The Board may accredit a course subject to a condition(s), for example a shorter than normal period of accreditation.

Where a panel member disagrees with the majority recommendation on accreditation or classification, a minority report should be submitted to the Executive Director with a statement by the chair on behalf of the panel.

#### 3.3.5.2 Accreditation of courses developed and/or accredited by other state or national education authorities

On the advice of the panel chair, the Board's Executive Director will recommend for accreditation courses developed and/or accredited by other state or national education authorities.

In exceptional cases where the advice of the panel chair is not available, the Executive Director can recommend for accreditation courses developed and/or accredited by other state or national education authorities.

Courses must be adapted to accord with relevant Board policies.

### **3.3.5.3 Duplication of content across courses**

A course will not be accredited where there is significant duplication of content with other BSSS accredited courses.

A new course may be accredited when an existing BSSS accredited course exists, with the following conditions:

- A course that specialises in an area providing that there is not significant duplication of content and is supported by an educational rationale
- To make provision for alternative recognised curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

### **3.3.5.4 Accreditation of vocational programs**

(Refer to 10 [Vocational Programs](#))

### **3.3.5.5 Accreditation of integrated A/T courses**

Where A and T courses have a similar philosophy, commonality of content and a college context which supports such an approach, they may be submitted to the Board to be accredited as two courses in a single, integrated document.

For integrated A and T courses the following points should be noted by developers and panels:

- the A course should be seen as the basis on which the T course is built
- a Course Accreditation Form must be provided for each course
- developers should clearly identify the target group for the two courses remembering that A and T course are taken by all students. The target groups may be defined in terms of previous experience, specific interests, academic and career aspirations, or other suitable criteria
- the rationale should indicate the reasons for choosing to present the courses together
- the essential coherence of each course must be clear to both reader and user
- the differences between the goals and the achievement standards must be clear to both reader and user
- the assessment must be differentiated between the A and T courses.

Panels could, in appraising course documents, consider the college context along with other points stated above.

Developers may also wish to select specific content to differentiate between the two courses. An integrated document could, for example, begin with a unit or units with common content and then indicate A and T options.

Accreditation Panels may recommend provision to draw a unit(s) from other courses to form a course, providing they are written under the same Framework and supported by an educational rationale.

### **3.3.5.6 Accreditation of Integrated Courses**

Integrated Courses may be interdisciplinary or within the same discipline. Integrated courses are created from accredited units in existing courses, which are combined to form a new course. The Integrated course must be presented to the Board for accreditation in a new course document.

Integrated courses:

- must have coherence of purpose and be based on units with demonstrable cohesion in goals, content and assessment
- combine accredited units from existing courses, only the names of which are incorporated into the new course document
- have the approval of an integrated panel, comprising representatives of each relevant panel and tertiary representatives, where required
- are available as minors, majors, major-minors and double majors and
- will be accredited as long as the original course accreditation from which the units are drawn, is valid.

The operational requirements are:

- Integrated courses must take into account the need for depth of study and ensure nil or minimal duplication of content occurs
- Colleges must be aware of policies concerning transfer of units and whole courses. (Refer to: 4.3.14.2.2 [Units in Other Courses](#) to another course and policies relating to Scaling Groups and 5.4.1 [Course Combination into Scaling Groups](#))
- Integrated courses and requirements must be clearly identified in student handbooks
- Courses that form the basis of an Integrated course will be in the same course area as the Integrated Course
- Courses that form the basis of an Integrated course will be in the same scaling group within each college that adopts the Integrated course.

### **3.3.5.7 Accreditation of negotiated and independent study units**

Negotiated curriculum has a place in senior secondary courses as part of a unit, or as a whole unit, and is defined as a pedagogical approach that includes students in making decisions about implementation of the elements of an accredited course of study. This aspect of negotiation is in accordance with the individual Framework. Not included for negotiation are the goals of the course/unit and the assessment criteria.

#### **3.3.5.7.1 Negotiation as part of a unit**

There must be procedures that clearly outline decisions made as a result of the negotiation process. It is expected that decisions would be agreed within two weeks of the commencement of a unit of work and be published in the Unit Outline. (Refer to 4.3.6.1 [Unit Outline](#)) This then becomes the document from which students and teacher operate for that unit. Any further negotiation would be of a minor kind e.g. due dates of assessment tasks.

#### **3.3.5.7.2 Negotiation of a whole unit**

An Independent Study Unit is a self-directed study program decided upon by a student in consultation with the teacher. Parameters for the negotiation of an Independent Study Unit should be clearly explained in the course document. Pre-requisites for Independent Study Units are that students have completed at least 3 standard units of the course.

### **3.3.6 Board Determination of Classification**

To be accredited or registered by the Board, courses must be deemed to be educationally sound



and appropriate for students in years 11 and 12.

(Refer to 3.2.5 [Classification of Accredited Courses/Units](#) and to 3.2.7 [Classification of Registered Courses/Units](#) for definitions of all courses and vocational programs)

Specific classifications (T, H, M, C or E) are determined through the following processes.

#### **3.3.6.1 T classification**

The Board will decide on the award of T classification to a course when the panel recommendation includes the signature of the university representative on the panel or signatures of representatives of both universities where both are represented, or if the panel recommendation is endorsed by a designated delegate of the relevant vice chancellor.

#### **3.3.6.2 H classification**

The Board will decide on the award of H classification to a course on the advice of the panel chair and university panel representative(s). (Refer to 9.2.1 [Registration of H Courses](#))

#### **3.3.6.3 M Classification**

The Board will determine the award of M classification to a course or unit/s on the advice of the proponent and the panel. In determining the M classification of a course, consideration is given to the goals, course content and/or assessment.

#### **3.3.6.4 C Classification**

The Board will decide on the award of C classification to a course on the advice of the panel chair and the panel industry representative. At the time of accreditation, the BSSS agreed hours will be determined for each qualification and unit of competence delivered as part of a structured education program. (Refer to 10 [Vocational Programs](#))

#### **3.3.6.5 E Classification**

The Board will decide on the award of E classification on the advice of the Executive Director. The method by which students are awarded standard units for E courses will be determined by the volume of learning (indicated by estimated course duration) of the partial or full qualification by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and undertaken as part of a structured education program. (Refer to 10 [Vocational Programs](#))

#### **3.3.6.6 Other Vocational Programs**

Refer to 10 [Vocational Programs](#).

### **3.3.7 Review of Decisions**

#### **3.3.7.1 Resolution of disputes**

It is expected that most differences of opinion between panels and developers will be resolved through normal negotiation processes. When an unresolved dispute arises, the panel chair and/or the course proponent must notify the Executive Director, BSSS. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the dispute and will inform the Board that a dispute exists.

If the Executive Director is unable to resolve the dispute in time for the course to be accredited, s/he will invite statements from both the panel and the proponent to reach the Office of the BSSS at least two weeks before the relevant Board meeting. The Board will consider the course documents and other relevant documentation before making its determination.

In the case of T classification, where there is disagreement between the university representatives on an accreditation panel, the Board Chair will refer the matter to the Chairs of the Academic Boards of both universities for negotiation and a recommendation.

### **3.3.7.2 Review of Board Decisions**

Any party to the accreditation process may request that the Board review its decision on accreditation, classification, or accreditation subject to a condition(s). This request must be lodged with the Executive Director, BSSS, within one calendar month of the Board's decision. Within one month of the receipt of a request, the Board Chair shall establish a committee for the purpose of advising the Board in relation to the request.

To begin the process of review, the committee shall read the relevant written statements and documentation and interview the parties in dispute. In the case of a review of courses, this will mean the panel chair or tertiary representatives as appropriate. Further advice will be sought from both universities where the request for review is on T classification and from the industry representatives where the request for review is on Vocational classification. The committee will make a recommendation to the Board. As soon as practicable after receiving the advice of the committee, the Board shall review the original decision.

The Board shall advise the party in writing of its decision.

### **3.3.8 Conditions of Accreditation**

#### **3.3.8.1 Period of Accreditation**

Courses can only be taught within their period of accreditation. The period:

- is for a fixed number of calendar years
- commences from 1 January in a given year
- expires on 31 December in any given year.

The normal period of accreditation is five years or in alignment with the review cycle.

Note: The accreditation of courses impacted by national curriculum will be considered as they fall due for review.

#### **3.3.8.2 Extensions of Accreditation**

Colleges can seek an extension of accreditation for a course for one year only. There are two types of extensions:

- a general extension for both year 11 and 12 students
- a year 12 extension to allow students to complete a course begun in year 11.

Extensions of accreditation can be sought for the following reasons:

- a new or revised course, having been considered by a panel, is still in need of substantial reworking
- a reasonable transition arrangement cannot be made for continuing students.

Note: Extensions must be in line with the Framework and Course Development Schedule, as detailed in the BSSS Guidelines for the Development and Accreditation of A, T and M Courses.

### **3.3.9 Course Development**

A college is the proponent of a course of study

#### **3.3.9.1 Role of the Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies**

The Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (OBSSS) guides course development. The OBSSS performs the following functions:

- calls for expressions of interest to develop courses

- appoints course developers
- organises course development meeting times
- provides advice and materials to developers
- manages schedule for course development
- prepares, in consultation with course developers, draft course for public consultation
- collates and communicates responses to developers
- prepares, in consultation with course developers, publishes draft courses for panel accreditation
- publishes courses.

Only colleges that are authorised providers of the International Baccalaureate are permitted to deliver courses integrating the International Baccalaureate and Australian Curriculum.

### **3.3.9.2 Role of the College**

A college is the proponent of a course of study.

A college performs the following functions:

- encourages appropriate teachers to participate in course development
- provides relief for teachers engaged in course development
- encourages relevant staff to provide feedback on courses published for public consultation.

### **3.3.9.3 Variations to existing BSSS Accredited Courses**

A college may submit a request for a minor variation to an existing BSSS accredited courses. Requests for minor variations to existing BSSS accredited courses will be considered by the Executive Director, BSSS if the changes:

- make provision for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities
- correct irregularities or inconsistencies in specific unit goals and content
- comply with requirements of externally developed courses (eg changes to training packages or the International Baccalaureate)
- accommodate a three session structure featuring three reporting periods
- address variations to physical resources.

## **3.4 Accreditation Panels**

### **3.4.1 Role**

Accreditation panels consider draft courses and make recommendations to the Board on the accreditation of courses for the system.

### **3.4.2 Responsibilities**

An accreditation panel is appointed for a course. Panels are responsible to the Board for maintaining consistent standards in curriculum across the system.

### **3.4.3 Panel Membership**

Panel membership will be for a three year period. The Board reserves the right to consider panel membership and practice from time to time.

The Board receives nominations from the relevant higher education institutions, industry representatives, teachers and community groups for membership of panels. These are considered with regard to:

- qualifications
- relevant experience
- needs of panels
- gender balance.

Note: Educational representatives will be drawn from practitioners in the relevant subject area.

Each accreditation panel will have the following membership and representation comprising up to ten members in total:

- a maximum of four practising ACT teachers (one teacher is appointed Chair/Coordinator)
- no more than two higher education representatives; and no more than four members representing (where applicable):
  - industry
  - ACT Education Directorate
  - the community and/or
  - Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).

Note: panel composition is constrained by the need for the signatures of:

- higher education representatives for T classified courses
- CIT representatives for courses proposing articulation to CIT
- industry representatives for vocational courses.

### **3.4.4 Panel Chairs**

Where possible, practising teachers are appointed as panel chairs. They:

- provide leadership to complete the BSSS quality course criteria accreditation form
- liaise with the Office of the BSSS as needed
- negotiate with course proponents and developers during the accreditation process
- approve written documentation to developers of all advice given and agreements reached in negotiations
- ensure that a code of conduct is provided
- deal sensitively with all the individuals involved in the accreditation process
- inform the Executive Director, BSSS when disputes occur, providing relevant documentation
- ensure that Final Version requirements are met
- maintain an accurate record of attendance of all members.

### **3.4.5 Panel Operation**

The operation of all panels is subject to the following requirements:

- Support by BSSS Curriculum Officers to ensure Board policies are adhered to
- 60 per cent attendance for a quorum
- for T Courses — higher education representatives must be in attendance
- for Vocational courses — industry representative must be consulted and provide written approval
- the provision of written advice to developers.

### **3.4.6 Payment of Panel Members**

Honoraria will be paid to panel members on the basis of attendance and the number of courses considered. An additional sum will be paid to the chair.

### **3.4.7 Eligibility**

The following will not normally be eligible for panel membership:

- members of the Board unless there are exceptional circumstances
- permanent officers of the Office of the BSSS.

## **4 Assessment**

### **4.1 General Principles**

The Board endorses the Australasian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) *Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity*. (Refer to [Appendix 3](#))

Colleges are responsible for the education and assessment of students.

Assessment in ACT colleges is criterion and standards referenced. Criterion-referenced assessment describes a student's achievement against specified criteria, for a specific task or a single competent/not yet competent standard (competency standard), as in competency assessment.

Standards-referenced assessment describes a student's performance in terms of a defined standard of achievement for a unit. The standards describe a range of levels of achievement (achievement standards), as in the Frameworks.

Assessment in ACT colleges is also used by teachers to produce rank orders of achievement (unit and course scores) thus describing a student's performance relative to the performance of others in the group. The Board recognises that course scores, a ranking generated by colleges and embodying consideration of students' achievement over an appreciable period of time, should be the basis of the calculation of the final scaled scores.

### **4.2 Board Responsibilities**

#### **4.2.1 Board Forums**

The Board hosts regular forums at which participating educational institutions and interested stakeholders are provided with information and discussion opportunities on matters pertaining to curriculum, assessment, moderation and certification.

#### **4.2.2 Assessment**

In undertaking its accreditation and certification functions, the Board determines methods appropriate for the assessment of students.

The Board investigates techniques of assessment, providing a forum for discussion and supporting specific research.

#### **4.2.3 Moderation**

The Board affirms the significance and importance of moderation processes and determines procedures for moderation of assessments across the system. Current procedures include consensus-based peer review of grades and statistical moderation of scores. The policy and procedures for moderation are subject to annual review by the Board. (Refer to 5 [Moderation](#))

### **4.3 School-based Assessment - College Responsibilities**

#### **4.3.1 Assessment Data Required by the Board**

The Board requires that colleges provide the following data for the presentation of Senior Secondary Certificate results:

- for any T course (or combined group of courses), a set of marks that correctly represents the relative performance of students in the group
- for each unit studied, grades on the scale A-E, or Pass (P), or Participated (Q) (others may also be used in special situations, e.g. V, S, R)
- a list of students who have met the requirements, (as specified in the course document) for the award of vocational certificates for vocational courses.

The Board's policies on the ethical storage and release of assessment data must be observed. (Refer to 4.4 [Storage and Release of Assessment Data](#))

#### **4.3.1.1 Home College Principal Responsibilities**

Where students are studying at more than one educational institution, the home college principal is the principal of the institution in which the student is studying the majority of her/his units.

The home college principal is responsible for decisions on matters such as ensuring that for each unit of study, students receive a written (hard copy and/or electronic format) Unit Outline.

(Refer to [Unit Outline](#))

Home college principals are also responsible for:

- identifying students with English language difficulties in relation to AST (Refer to 6.6.8 [Students from Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds](#))
- the accuracy of the Senior Secondary Certificate
- the award of status, recognition or exemption
- the removal of duplicate units.

Where students have records from more than one institution the Board delegates the responsibility of accepting previous studies to the home college principal with the following provisos:

- that in the event of the principal being in doubt about recognition of study completed elsewhere and being unable to make decisions, it should refer the matter to the Board for resolution
- that in the event of a principal determining that previous studies cannot be recognised, the student should have the right of appeal to the Board. (Refer to 4.3.6.5 [Exemption \(X\) Grade](#) and 4.3.6.7 [Recognition \(R\) Grade](#))

#### **4.3.2 Conflict of Interest**

Staff<sup>2</sup> in colleges hold positions of trust, and there is a community expectation that they will act with integrity. This requires that they:

- act with probity
- do not take or seek to take improper advantage of their position in order to obtain a benefit for themselves or any other person and
- avoid conflicts between their professional responsibilities and private interests.

A perceived or potential conflict of interest occurs when a person is performing at least two overlapping roles, and where the responsibilities, obligations and privileges of one role may

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<sup>2</sup> Staff or staff member means any employee, contractor, subcontractor or agent of a college including a teacher, executive teacher, principal, deputy principal, secretarial or administrative staff, student records officers or counsellors.

appear to prejudice the full discharge of that person's responsibilities and obligations in at least one of the others. This could apply to a teacher or a support officer, such as a student administration official.

#### **4.3.2.1 Purpose**

For the Board, the purpose of identifying potential conflicts of interest in colleges is aimed at ensuring the integrity, fairness and credibility of the ACT senior secondary assessment and certification system.

The Board acknowledges that the college is the entity responsible for employment issues and the management of staff, including supervision of principal and college responsibilities with respect to conflict of interest issues referred to in this policy.

The Board acknowledges that it is neither seeking to nor has powers to enforce any disciplinary action towards staff of colleges in relation to any conflict of interest issues through this policy.

#### **4.3.2.2 Procedures for Dealing with Conflict of Interest**

The college should:

- have in place procedures for staff to declare all potential conflicts of interest related to assessment of students in years 11 and 12; and
- declare to the BSSS those potential conflicts of interest referred to in sections 4.3.2.3 [Declaration of any Conflict of Interest](#) and 4.3.2.4 [Assessment Guidelines](#) prior to such conflict of interest occurring.

#### **4.3.2.3 Declaration of any Conflict of Interest**

A college should ensure that staff who knowingly have a potential conflict of interest related to assessment of students in years 11 and 12 complete a BSSS Conflict of Interest Declaration Form (refer to [Appendix 1](#)) and provide a copy of the completed form to the principal. The declaration form should include a description of the nature of the potential conflict and the procedures for addressing the potential conflict of interest agreed by the principal of the college. The form is to be held in the college's official records and a copy provided to the Office of the BSSS upon request.

In situations where the principal of a college has the potential conflict of interest, the college should ensure that s/he provides a statement in writing to the Executive Director of the BSSS of the potential conflict of interest and the procedures in place in the college to address it.

The identification of the potential for conflict of interest does not imply an identification of impropriety, nor should it be construed as a lack of trust.

#### **4.3.2.4 Assessment Guidelines**

To avoid a conflict of interest, a college should ensure that a student in years 11 and 12 is not assessed (marking or grading of work) by a Relative<sup>3</sup> or a Close Family Friend<sup>4</sup> unless any alternative arrangement would cause serious disadvantage to the student or other students

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<sup>3</sup> Relative means any of the following persons in relation to a student at a college:

a) a father, mother, guardian, grandfather, grandmother, step-father or step-mother; or

b) a son, daughter, grandson, grand-daughter, step-son or step-daughter; or

c) a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister; or

d) an uncle or aunt; or

e) a nephew or niece; or

f) a cousin; or

g) any other kind of relationships similar to those described in paragraphs (a) to (f) above arising by marriage, defacto relationship or other similar living arrangements of any persons described in those paragraphs.

<sup>4</sup> Close Family Friend means a person who has been a close friend of the student or student's father, mother or guardian for more than five years.



studying the course. In such circumstances the college should notify, in writing, the Executive Director of the BSSS prior to the assessment occurring.

The Board may approve specific arrangements regarding circumstances contemplated above. Notification should occur in time for the BSSS to consider such a specific arrangement.

A college should ensure that any staff member who has a Relative or a Relative of a Close Family Friend as a student in the college is not solely responsible for data entry of assessment results for those students.

A college should ensure that disclosure regarding any conflict of interest related to assessment of a student in years 11 and 12 is properly managed, normally by disclosure to staff and students in an appropriate manner.

In abiding by this policy, principals of public colleges are also referred to the *Public Sector Management Act 1994 (section 9)*, and the ACT Education Directorate *Teachers' Code of Professional Practice*. Principals of non-government colleges are referred to similar policies for their respective systems.

### **4.3.3 Assessment under Frameworks**

Colleges are required to use Frameworks and unit achievement standards as the basis for assessment and reporting of units.

Achievement standards are developed for Year 11 and Year 12. Year 11 and 12 achievement standards reflect teachers' different expectations of each year group.

All units studied by a student must be assessed using the achievement standards that correspond with their year group.

When courses are developed they are written with the Assessment Criteria and Weightings from the current Framework. At times new Frameworks are developed before the courses have expired. The new Framework criteria and weightings will apply to courses developed under that framework but not to pre-existing courses. Teachers must continue to use the Assessment Criteria and Weightings that are contained in their course document not the criteria and weightings from a more recently developed Framework.

### **4.3.4 Assessment in Vocational Programs**

(Refer to 10 [Vocational Programs](#))

### **4.3.5 Assessment Tasks**

For each assessment task specified in the Unit Outline, students are to receive clear statements about what is required and under what conditions it will be undertaken, and the assessment criteria/marketing scheme.

This includes:

- Course Title
- Unit Title, Value, Semester and Year
- Due date or time allowed, as appropriate to the task
- Weighting, as specified on the Unit Outline (except for C courses)
- Clear instructions regarding the nature of the task
- Clear statement of conditions under which the task will be undertaken, including any policy around the submission of drafts

- Explicit task-specific criteria for assessment and/or marking schemes

Reference to BSSS policies on penalties for late submission and plagiarism (where applicable)

- Where work is completed out of class, reference to the requirement for the student to include a statement that the work presented is their own
- Clear statement where competencies are attached to specific questions or aspects of the task (VET only).

These details will normally be specified on a task sheet for out of class assessment instruments or on the test/exam.

## **4.3.6 Units**

### **4.3.6.1 Unit Outline**

For each unit of study, by the end of the second week following commencement of the unit students are to receive a written (hard copy and/or electronic) Unit Outline that states:

- Course name
- Unit name
- Unit value
- Date ( Semester, Year)
- Summary of the content
- Assessment tasks
- Assessment criteria
- Dates on which the assessment tasks are due

Weightings of tasks (except for C courses)

- VET Competencies (For vocational programs)
- Training Package qualification name and code (For vocational programs)

And where the following information relevant to the unit can be readily accessed\* by the student (where applicable):

- Achievement standards
- Moderation procedures (internal and external)
- Meshing procedures where required
- Method of unit score calculation.
- Penalties for late and non submission of work
- Appeals processes
- Plagiarism penalties
- Course information , including any course requirements and pre-requisites
- Procedures for calculating course scores.

\* This information can be made available to the student in a handbook (hard copy and/or electronic) and/or hardcopy on a locked noticeboard and/or on a website. The method of distributing Unit Outlines is at the discretion of the home college principal. Unit outlines must be provided in a manner and form that is timely, accurate and accessible, regardless of the format

and delivery method adopted by the college. Unit Outlines, in hard copy, must be available where a student's particular circumstances prevent them from accessing the electronic version.

Where the delivery of the unit is through flexible learning (refer to 3.2.9.2 [Unit Delivery](#)), the Unit Outline must state how the delivery and participation will occur.

The published Unit Outline may only be varied by the teacher in exceptional circumstances in consultation with the classes concerned and the head of department. All changes to a Unit Outline must be made in writing.

If appropriate, the student should also receive a Training Record Book for vocational programs.

#### **4.3.6.2 Procedures for Calculating Unit Scores**

The premises for reporting unit scores are that:

- unit scores should be comparable from unit to unit throughout the course
- unit scores should be comparable across courses/subjects in a particular half semester/semester
- unit scores are to be reported on a scale which will result in course scores with a mean of seventy (70) and a standard deviation of twelve (12) for the system.

For the first unit of year 11, the mean and standard deviation of unit scores for each Scaling Group are to be derived from historical parameters, using professional judgement. In subsequent quadrimesters/semesters the unit scores for the Scaling Group are to be backscaled onto the previous half semester/semester.

Unit scores are to be calculated by adding weighted assessment items (or Z scores) as specified in the course document after applying Board policies to assessment items for the late or non-submission of work. Each assessment item must clearly identify the assessment criteria and the maximum number of marks available. No student response can be awarded more than the maximum number of marks available. The maximum number of marks should be of sufficient magnitude to allow appropriate discrimination. No bonus marks are to be awarded for individual assessment tasks or units.

Unit scores of all students in the unit are to be calculated using the same method. Apart from standardisation procedures using means and standard deviations, there must be no alteration of unit scores on an individual basis. There is to be no "tucking up" of the bottom unit scores. In the re-scaling of course scores, the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will ensure that, where possible, the minimum scaled course score will be 76 or above.

##### **4.3.6.2.1 Display of Unit Scores**

At the end of each assessment period, unit scores with the student-ID for each scaling group, printed from the ACT Certification System (ACS), should be displayed with the mean and standard deviation of each group. Students should be made aware of the location of each display.

##### **4.3.6.2.2 Storage of Unit Assessment Data**

It is expected that all record keeping will be in an ACS Markbook. There should be one Markbook for each unit in any one assessment period. A Markbook can be used to process unit scores for more than one unit in an assessment period. For T units the Markbook will include raw marks, standardised scores, Z scores and the addition of all assessment items (in the correct weightings).

Records for A units should include results for all assessment items.

Marks altered must be documented in the Markbook. The reason for alteration must be included in the documentation. The awarding of V grades and Status must also be explained.

All students enrolled in a particular unit must have a record in the correct Markbook. No student or assessment item should be deleted.

Changes to raw unit scores as a result of meshing different units and courses in a scaling group must also be documented in Markbooks.

Markbooks should be complete within two teaching weeks of the end of the assessment period and in the case of the end of year 12 on the day that course scores are due or at a date negotiated with the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment.

#### **4.3.6.3 Unit Grades (A-E), Participated (Q), Pass (P)**

A student's achievement in A, T, and M courses is reported on the Senior Secondary Certificate using a five point A to E scale, relative to the unit goals and against Framework achievement standards. (Refer to 8.3.1 [Generic Achievement standards](#))

Grades are awarded on the proviso that the assessment requirements have been met. Teachers will consider, when allocating grades, the degree to which students have demonstrated their ability to complete and submit tasks within a specified time frame.

In an R unit, the grade P is awarded if the student has satisfied the requirements for the unit, otherwise a V grade is awarded.

In a C course or a Structured Workplace Learning unit:

- students are awarded a Pass if they have achieved at least one of the competencies in the unit and have met the attendance (refer to 4.3.8 [Attendance/Participation](#)) and assessment (refer to 4.3.9 [Completion of Assessment Items](#)) requirements. The actual competencies achieved by the student are recorded on the vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment
- students are awarded the grade Participated if they have complied with the BSSS requirements relating to attendance (refer to 4.3.8 [Attendance/Participation](#)) and completion of assessment items (refer to 4.3.9 [Completion of Assessment Items](#)) but have not achieved any of the competencies in the unit.

In an E course, a student's achievement will be shown as a Pass for each registered unit awarded. The Board does not prescribe the distribution of Unit Grades. It does publish distribution statistics. (Refer to 9.2.3 [Unit Grades in H courses](#))

#### **4.3.6.4 Not Assessed (V) Grade - (Units do not Count)**

A V grade is awarded when a student does not satisfy the assessment or attendance requirements of a unit. While a V grade will appear on some printouts it will not appear on the Senior Secondary Certificate or Statement of Achievement. Refer to 4.3.8 [Attendance/Participation](#) and to 4.3.9 [Completion of Assessment Items](#) for policies that may require the award of a V grade.

#### **4.3.6.5 Exemption (X) Grade - (Units do not Count)**

Exemption (X grade) from the study of a unit (s) is granted by a college when a student:

- is deemed to have acquired the knowledge and skills appropriate to a unit (s) prior to the commencement of Year 11 or by means other than formal education; or,
- studies a unit common to more than one course. The unit need only be studied once and may only be counted once. The student must study separate, distinct units to form each course.

When granting exemption the grade X in a specified unit is recorded. Units for which exemption is granted:

- should be grouped with the course to which they are related when being reported but they do not contribute towards the formation of the course
- do not contribute towards satisfying the unit requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate nor for the requirements for the award of the Tertiary Entrance Statement.

#### **4.3.6.6 Status (S) Grade**

Colleges may award a grade of Status (S) when a student is unable to complete work in a unit because of illness or misadventure. (Refer to 4.3.13 [Special Consideration](#) and 8.9.3 [Students with Major Disabilities](#))

Illness and misadventure refer to events, such as documented sickness or injury, depression, bereavement, mishap, calamity or disaster, that have directly affected the performance of a student in a particular unit of study. Misadventure does not include a lack of understanding of English.

The award of the Status (S grade) should be seen as a “last resort” and only awarded if a student has completed insufficient work in a unit to justify the award of a grade on the A-E scale. A grade of Status (S) should not be given for any other reason.

Status can be awarded in C courses. If Status is given, the students will not be credited with any competencies for the relevant unit.

In situations where a student is suffering from long term illness, colleges should develop a long term strategy that can encourage study that will be graded A-E and scored (where T unit). Colleges are encouraged to take a “case management approach” to long term illness and not an “ad hoc” semester by semester approach. Situations of long term illness can be addressed through part-time study, study over 2-5 years or deferment of study.

All instances for the award of Status (S) should be documented within the college.

If the grade S is awarded, the unit counts towards the formation of courses and the units needed for the award of a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement, within the requirements specified under section 4.3.6.9 Number of Status (S) and Recognition (R) Units Awarded.

Requirements relating to the awarding of a Status grade can be waived in exceptional circumstances with the permission of the Executive Director, BSSS.

#### **4.3.6.7 Recognition (R) Grade**

The grade Recognition (R) is awarded to units recognised for studies completed in other jurisdictions.

#### **4.3.6.8 Units from Other Systems**

Refer to 8.9.2.1 [Transferring within the ACT system](#), 8.9.2.2 [Transferring from other systems within Australia](#), other than the ACT system and to 8.9.2.3 [Transferring from outside Australia](#).

##### **4.3.6.8.1 Recognition in Specified BSSS Units**

Recognition may be awarded in Board units where a student has studied work deemed by the principal to be equivalent to year 11 or 12 studies offered by the college. (Refer to 4.3.14.4 [Courses from Other Jurisdictions](#)) The actual unit awarded in the first instance should be a specified Board unit.

#### **4.3.6.9 Number of Status (S) and Recognition (R) Units Awarded**

Units with a grade of Status (S) and Recognition (R) as described above can be given with the following guidelines:

For all accredited (T, A and M) courses, with the exception of 4.3.14.4 [Courses from other Jurisdictions](#).

A minor course must include a minimum of one standard unit for which an A-E grade is awarded, and a score if a course score is to be awarded.

A major course must include a minimum of 2 standard units with an A-E grade, and a score if a

course score is to be awarded.

A major/minor course must include a minimum of 3 units with an A-E grade, and a score if a course score is to be awarded.

A double major course must include a minimum of 4 standard units with an A-E grade, and a score if a course score is to be awarded.

Units with a grade Status (S) and Recognition (R) cannot be awarded to students completing an abridged package.

At least 8.5 of the A, T, M, H, C, E or W units being used to meet the minimum units required for the issue of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate must not have Status grades.

#### **4.3.6.10 Addition/Deletion of Units**

A unit not completed must not be added to a student's record. Units completed must not be deleted.

(Refer to 4.3 [School Based Assessment – College Responsibilities](#))

#### **4.3.6.11 Changing Levels in a Subject**

When a student changes a level of study within a subject within a college, the student must maintain the unit titles, grades and scores of the units studied.

### **4.3.7 Group Assessment**

The Board recognises that it is an appropriate educational goal for senior secondary students to be encouraged and guided to:

- develop and demonstrate their capability to work as an effective member of a team
- share in identifying appropriate group objectives, the setting of feasible goals, time lines and procedures
- identify and implement appropriate roles and responsibilities.

If teamwork and group work are proposed as goals of a year 11 - 12 course, then the nature of the group work should be articulated in the teaching/learning strategies and in the types of assessment tasks listed for that course. The criteria by which the quality of student achievement will be judged should be clearly articulated.

Documentation of group work should clearly delineate in what respect a student's assessment will be as an individual within the group, or in what way the group will be assessed as a whole. There may be limits on the extent to which the assessment of an individual may take place within a group.

Factors such as the group size, and the nature and complexity of the assessment task may need to be considered. All group work needs to be assessed through the use of criteria, clearly stated in the course document. If group work forms a significant component of a unit, more than one teacher should be involved in marking that work.

### **4.3.8 Attendance/Participation**

It is expected that students will attend and participate in all scheduled classes/contact time/structured learning activities for the units in which they are enrolled, unless there is due cause and adequate documentary evidence is provided. Any student whose attendance falls below 90% of the scheduled classes/contact time or 90% participation in structured learning activities in a unit, without having due cause with adequate documentary evidence will be deemed to have voided the unit. However, the principal has the right to exercise discretion in special circumstances if satisfactory documentation is supplied.

Colleges are responsible for implementing procedures to monitor participation in structured learning activities.

### **4.3.9 Completion of Assessment Items**

Students are expected to substantially complete and submit all assessment items.

Exemption from an item and/or alternative assessment without penalty is available to students providing adequate documentary evidence.

In order to meet the minimum assessment requirements of a unit, a student must substantially complete and submit at least 70% of the total assessment.

However, the principal has the right to exercise discretion in the award of a grade or score in special circumstances where satisfactory documentation is supplied.

### **4.3.10 Late Submission of Assessment Tasks**

Students are encouraged to submit work on time as this is a valuable organisational skill. Students are also encouraged to complete work even if it is late as there are educational benefits in so doing. The following policy is to ensure equity for all students:

- All assessment tasks are expected to be submitted by the specified due date
- Where marks are awarded for assessment tasks, a late penalty will apply unless an extension is granted. The penalty for late submission is 5% of possible marks per calendar day late, including weekends and public holidays, until a notional zero is reached. If an item is more than 7 days late, it receives the notional zero. Submission on weekends or public holidays is not acceptable. Calculation of a notional zero is based on items submitted on time or with an approved extension (Refer to 4.3.11 [Notional Zeros](#))
- Where marks are not awarded and a grade only is given for an assessment task, teachers will take into account the extent to which students have demonstrated their ability to complete and submit the task by the due date (taking into account any extensions granted) in awarding the grade
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, students must apply for an extension to the specified due date in advance, providing due cause and adequate documentary evidence for late submission
- It may not be possible to grade or score work submitted late after marked work in a unit has been returned to other students
- The principal has the right to exercise discretion in the application of the late penalty in special circumstances where satisfactory documentation has been provided.

The policy is to be stated on assessment tasks and drawn to the attention of students.

### **4.3.11 Notional Zeros**

Where students fail to hand in assessment items for which marks are awarded, they will be awarded a notional zero for that assessment item. The notional zero will be a score, which lies between 0.1 of a standard deviation below the lowest genuine score for that item and zero.

Note: if the lowest genuine score is zero, the notional zero is zero.

### **4.3.12 Plagiarism and Dishonesty**

The Board is committed to a system of school-based assessment and views seriously any breach of the rules or instructions governing that assessment.

Any cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty, alteration of results or improper practice in relation to any school-based assessment in any subject accredited or registered by the Board shall constitute a breach of discipline. This includes any tampering with the assessment data on computer files by a student.

In designing assessment tasks, teachers should ensure that the tasks do not easily lend themselves to plagiarism.

Colleges should also monitor the various forms of social media to reduce the incidence of electronic forms of cheating.

#### **4.3.12.1 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing or summarising of work, in any form, without acknowledgement of sources, and presenting this as a student's own work.

Examples of plagiarism could include, but are not limited to:

- submitting all or part of another person's work with/without that person's knowledge
- submitting all or part of a paper from a source text without proper acknowledgement
- copying part of another person's work from a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks
- submitting materials which paraphrase or summarise another person's work or ideas without appropriate documentation
- submitting a digital image, sound, design, photograph or animation, altered or unaltered, without proper acknowledgement of the source.

#### **4.3.12.2 Student information**

Colleges are responsible for informing students about what constitutes plagiarism and the appropriate ways of acknowledging sources. Positive advice should also be offered about how students can avoid plagiarism. Advice on plagiarism should be provided to students well before their first assessment item is due.

Colleges must also inform students that any incident of plagiarism will be treated as a serious breach of discipline in assessment and the penalties that may be imposed.

BSSS brochures on plagiarism are available from

[http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information\\_for\\_students/whats\\_plagiarism\\_how\\_to\\_avoid\\_it](http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/whats_plagiarism_how_to_avoid_it) to provide advice to students.



#### **4.3.12.3 Verification**

Colleges are required to institute a system whereby work submitted includes a statement from the student on each assessment item done outside class time to the effect that the work presented is their own.

#### **4.3.12.4 Breaches of Discipline in Relation to Assessment**

Colleges need to ensure that they have appropriate procedures for dealing with breaches of discipline in relation to school-based assessments. Details of the college's procedures must be published by the college and drawn to the attention of students and parents.

College procedures are to incorporate the following steps:

- Any suspected breach of discipline in relation to assessment is to be investigated initially by the teacher
- If there is evidence of a breach of discipline, the student must be interviewed by the teacher and the head of faculty and given the opportunity to explain his/her case before a penalty is determined
- If a breach of discipline is shown to have occurred, then the teacher in conjunction with the head of faculty should determine the penalty taking into account the principles and the penalty schedule outlined in the following section on Penalties
- Colleges should ensure that there is a common understanding across the school of the different categories of plagiarism and the penalties to be applied
- The student must be advised in writing within five working days (except in Semester 2 of Year 12, where it is two working days) of any penalty imposed and informed that he/she has the right to appeal the decision to a College Appeal Committee
- The principles of natural justice must be applied at all stages in the process

The Executive Director of the BSSS must also be consulted, in advance, if the recommended penalty is the cancellation of all completed assessment in a course

- Colleges are to keep a file of all significant breaches of discipline in relation to school-based assessments and provide the Executive Director of the BSSS with those details when a student appeals to the Board.

#### **4.3.12.5 Penalties: Advice to Colleges**

Any one or more of the following actions could be taken for a breach of discipline in relation to assessment:

- a. reprimand of the candidate, except in cases where the candidate would have derived benefit from such breaches
- b. the making of alternative arrangements for the assessment (e.g. through a reassessment)
- c. the assessment marked without the material subject to the breach being considered
- d. imposition of a mark penalty appropriate to the extent of the breach
- e. cancellation of the result in the particular component of the college assessment concerned
- f. cancellation of the total college assessment result in the unit/course concerned
- g. cancellation of all the candidate's results for years 11 and 12 in assessments conducted.

The following is a guide to the penalties to be imposed by colleges. These penalties apply irrespective of the unit/subject/course in which the incident(s) occur.

Categories	Penalties
1. First incident of breach of discipline	One or more of the following penalties to be imposed subject to the degree of the infringement: Penalties (a) to (f)
2. Subsequent breach(es) of discipline	One of the following penalties to be imposed subject to the degree of the infringement and previous breach(es) of discipline: Penalties (b) to (g)

Counseling of students is a key component of the process. After the first incident of a breach of discipline, the letter to the student must include a warning about the consequences of subsequent breaches.

### 4.3.13 Special Consideration

Special consideration at the assessment item level is the ‘first resort’ that schools should use if a student’s assessment performance is affected by illness or misadventure.

Status through the awarding of an S unit grade for more than one occurrence is the ‘last resort’ when the school determines that, due to a student’s illness or misadventure, there is insufficient evidence in assessment items to grade and rank. (Refer to 4.3.6.6 [Status \(S\) Grade](#))

In the event that a student has suffered short-term illness or misadventure, the school should document procedures for special consideration for specific assessment items and comment the action against the correct Markbook entry.

For any assessment item, affected by special consideration, at least one of the following alternatives will be adopted:

- Alternative assessment items
- Modification of existing assessment items
- Extension on submissions of work of that item
- Deferring assessment of that student until an assessment item/s required for critical assessment can be completed. (Does not apply to the last assessment period in year 12)
- Sitting assessments at times different from other students, with adequate security/controls
- Extra time allowed for assessment items
- Exemption from completing particular assessment items.

The Board expects that schools will establish documented protocols for the selection of appropriate alternatives, taking into account student needs, unit requirements and school constraints.

In a unit where some assessment items are estimated, and an A to E grade is awarded, a minimum of 50% of assessment, by weight, must be substantially completed by the student. This applies from Year 11 2019.

In a unit where some assessment items are estimated, and an A to E grade is awarded, a minimum of 25% of assessment must be substantially completed by the student. This applies from Year 11 2018.

The primary aim is to provide assessment opportunities for that student to demonstrate evidence for grading and ranking in an environment that is not only fair to the student who has suffered the illness or misadventure, but to all students.

Situations, other than illness and misadventure, may involve the use of special consideration in the form of extensions of deadlines and alternative assessment items. Other situations for example would include significant sports representation. It is the principal's responsibility to determine what constitutes the use of special consideration for other events that are not classed as illness or misadventure. These situations should address the need for students to show evidence of performance. The awarding of Status is not appropriate in these cases.

Schools should keep adequate documentation when determining all cases of special consideration.

Consideration should be based on enabling a student's performance in assessment items relevant to that unit of study.

**Note** also that consideration does not imply the subjective alteration of marks on assessment items.

### **4.3.14 Courses**

#### **4.3.14.1 Reporting Units Associated with Courses**

Units studied as part of a course are to be grouped together and reported with that course on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. A student must be credited with the highest level of course possible.

Note:

- 'level' is to be interpreted as accreditation/registration classification (refer to 3.2.5 [Classification of Accredited Courses/Units](#) and to 3.2.7 [Classification of Registered Courses/Units](#)) before course duration (e.g. minor, major)
- no unit that should be associated with a completed course may be reported in Ungrouped Units
- no completed T course can be deleted or reduced in course type by placing the units in another T or A course, with the following exceptions:
  - where course accreditation allows, all the units from a completed course may be transferred, unchanged, to provide credit in another course which is in the same Scaling Group
  - where the units have been accredited as part of an Integrated course. (Refer to 3.3.5.6 [Accreditation of Integrated Courses](#))
  - in problem situations the principal should approach the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment for permission to make an individual change.

#### **4.3.14.2 Course Score Calculations**

Students are awarded a course score for each T and H course completed. These scores indicate the relative ranking of students within a group and are not designed to show a level of achievement in that course.

Course scores are not reported on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Scaled scores for T and H courses are reported on the Tertiary Entrance Statement.

The distribution shape and the rank order of the group given by the college are maintained. The premises for calculating and reporting course scores are:

- course scores should be based on unit scores reported over the duration of the student's program of study
- at the individual student level there should be discounting of lower unit scores
- at the Scaling Group level all units are to be of equal weight
- the same method of calculation should be used by all colleges
- the final course ranking and spacing reflected in the course scores should be validated by professional judgement
- principals are responsible for ensuring that the course scores reflect the relative achievement of students in the course.

Under the following circumstances a unit may not contribute towards the calculation of a course score.

- award of a status or recognition grade
- the unit not being from the home college of the course
- the accreditation type of the unit not being T or H
- the school choosing not to use a unit in the calculation (see below)

The school may choose not to use a unit in the calculation of a course score where special consideration has been afforded to the student and in the principal's judgement the student's achievement in that unit is not representative of the student's achievement in the course. In such case a written explanation must be provided to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment.

A unit that is included in the course but cannot contribute a unit score is termed discounted.

Course scores are calculated from those unit scores that comprise the best 80% of the minimum number of units required for that course type, excluding discounted units. When there is less than 80% of the minimum course type with non-discounted unit scores, then the course score will be the weighted average of the unit scores completed at the home college.

(Refer to [3.2.8.3 Course Duration](#))

Special attention should be given to the ranking provided by the course score of a student who is eligible for special consideration (which may include the awarding of status) at any time during a course.

For each instance where the above policy was not followed in the calculation of a course score, the principal must provide a written explanation to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment by the date course scores are due. (refer to General Schedule)

#### **4.3.14.2.1 Units Common to Two Courses**

Where an individual unit is common to two courses studied by a student the unit can only be reported with one course and contribute to the type and calculation of course scores for that course. It can, however, be considered as satisfying prerequisite requirements in the second course.

#### **4.3.14.2.2 Units in other Courses**

Where a course allows, a maximum of 1.0 standard unit (or equivalent) from a separate course can be counted towards a major in another course. In such circumstances the score from the borrowed unit will only inform the course score in the major unless the units have been meshed and standardised in the same Scaling Group.

Where a student has completed less than a minor in a Tertiary accredited course and also some units in the corresponding Accredited course the Tertiary accredited units can be moved into the

Accredited course.

Where a student has completed less than a minor in an Accredited course and also some units in the corresponding Modified course the Accredited units can be moved into the Modified course.

When a course is rewritten the units from the old course can be placed under the new course heading in order for the student to obtain one combined course.

Refer to 4.3.14.5 [Duplicate Courses and Content](#)

#### **4.3.14.2.3 Structured Workplace Learning in Courses**

Refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#).

#### **4.3.14.2.4 Mathematics Course Scores**

The Board requires the meshing of results in mathematics at the college, both at the unit and course level, so that student outcomes in Specialist Mathematics, Specialist Methods, Mathematical Methods, Further Mathematics and Mathematical Applications are reported on a common scale.

All institutions using the certification services of the Board are required to use objective evidence, obtained as described below, to inform the meshing of students' scores in Specialist Mathematics, Specialist Methods, Mathematical Methods, Further Mathematics and Mathematical Applications.

Results in Specialist Mathematics, Specialist Methods, Mathematical Methods, Further Mathematics and Mathematical Applications are to be meshed using the following process:

Historical information should guide the choice of parameters used to determine scores in the initial units in all three courses.

Additional information used to inform the choice of these parameters must include, but is not limited to:

- information on the relative performance in the three courses, of students in this particular cohort, based on results in at least one common assessment task or meshing test across some or all of the three levels
- information on any significant changes from previous years in the proportion of the cohort studying the various courses
- As with all other Scaling Groups, subsequent units should be backscaled onto previous units in the same Scaling Group, except with the express permission of the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment. The meshing parameters obtained in part 1 above are to be verified on two subsequent occasions, one in the latter half of year 11 and one in the first half of year 12
- As with all Scaling Groups the scores must satisfy the requirements for calculating unit scores. (Refer to 4.3.6.2 Procedures for Calculating Unit Scores)
- Course scores are calculated as per other courses (Refer to [4.3.14.2](#) Course Score Calculations)

#### **4.3.14.2.5 Meshing of English as a Second Language (ESL) Course Scores**

The Board requires the meshing of ESL results with either English or European language/s, both at the unit and course level, so that student outcomes in ESL and English or European language/s are reported on a common scale.

Results are to be meshed using appropriately documented procedures.

#### **4.3.14.2.6 Display of Course Scores**

At the end of Year 12, course scores with the student-ID for each scaling group, printed from the ACT Certification System (ACS), should be displayed with the mean and standard deviation of each

group. Students should be made aware of the location of each display.

#### **4.3.14.3 Collapsed Courses**

If a college has to collapse a course the Executive Director, BSSS may approve the transfer of the affected students into the most appropriate alternative course.

#### **4.3.14.4 Courses from Other Jurisdictions**

Recognition for a course may be granted when a student has completed at least the equivalent of two (2) standard units of study towards the course outside the ACT.

Where a student receives recognition (refer to 4.3.6.8 [Units from Other Systems](#)) for studies in year 11, which they are not continuing in the ACT, the unit accreditation type of T or A should reflect the rigour that is being recognised, however, the course shall be an A course with no course score.

Where a student receives recognition for a course completed in year 12 in another jurisdiction, the accreditation type of both the units and course should reflect the rigour that is being recognised.

In both cases these courses will be labelled *Course – Jurisdiction*.

Where a student has completed courses in other states that generate that state's equivalent to a course score, then the student is entitled to have a course score calculated that will appear on their Tertiary Entrance Statement. Colleges should pass copies of relevant documents to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment. The Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will calculate an appropriate ACT course score based on documentation and correspondence with the original state.

#### **4.3.14.5 Duplicate Courses and Content**

Identification of duplicate content in courses is generally done at the course accreditation/registration stage. However, the responsibility for preventing undesirable overlap of content studied by a student rests with the principal of the student's home college.

Where a student undertakes two or more courses which the Executive Director, BSSS determines to be substantially alike, only one of the courses or applicable units will be reported on and count towards the requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement.

- If one or more of these courses is being studied at an institution other than the student's home college, the home college course will be the one counted and reported on the certificates
- If all courses are being studied at the home college the principal will decide which course/units are to be retained
- If two or more courses which have significant overlap of content are being studied at institutions other than the home college, the principal of the student's home college will determine which course/units are to be reported on and count towards the student's certificates.

In making the decision on which course/units to retain, the principal should take into account the accreditation type of the course and the course type completed by the student.

The Office of the BSSS will inform colleges of any cases of apparent duplication or overlap of courses which come to notice.

## **4.4 Storage and Release of Assessment Data**

### **4.4.1 College-Based Information**

The data used to compile the unit grades or scores and course scores should be retained or disposed of by colleges in accordance with the Territory Records Act 2002, the Territory Administrative Records Disposal Schedule (TARDiS) and the policies and procedures of the relevant sector authorities. Unit reports to students that contain the unit grade/score and the teacher comment are held by colleges. Colleges' faculty records, lists of units or courses and certification data should be held in accordance with the procedures referred to in this section. These should be retained or disposed of in accordance with Territory and sector requirements.

#### **4.4.1.1 College Responsibilities Relating to Changes in Data**

Colleges are responsible for developing and documenting procedures for tracing and recording edits to a student's academic record.

#### **4.4.1.2 Security and Privacy of Student Data**

Principals are responsible within colleges for ensuring the security and privacy of all student personal data and academic records and for managing them in accord with all applicable legislation.

### **4.4.2 Board Information**

The Board retains all data held on the computer system for the compilation and reporting of the information contained on all BSSS certificates. This data is stored under conditions designed to ensure its security and privacy. A second copy of the data and all BSSS Certificates are archived, providing a back-up master.

#### **4.4.3 Access to Data**

The Executive Director, BSSS is responsible for the use of any system-wide assessment data and decides if access should be granted.

#### **4.4.4 Release of Year 12 Information**

Information about individual students should only be provided to tertiary institutions and to those government departments with a recognised need for the data (e.g. Department of Education and Training).

All students must be given access to as much information as is reasonably practicable. Data used to calculate scores (e.g. the rescaling equations for Scaling Groups) should be available on request.

The Year 12 Study is published each year for research purposes.

## 5 Moderation

The Board requires that colleges undertake procedures necessary to achieve comparability of results through in-school moderation where required and participate in system-wide moderation of grades. The Board also undertakes statistical moderation of course scores for the purpose of calculating Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks (ATARs).

### 5.1 Purpose

Moderation systems:

- ensure system wide comparability of grades on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate
- ensure system wide comparability of scaled course scores on the ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement
- form the basis for valid and reliable assessment in senior secondary schools
- involve the Board and schools in cooperation and partnership
- maintain the quality of school-based assessment and the credibility, validity and acceptability of Board certificates.

### 5.2 In-School Moderation

Where different units in the same course are taught in an assessment period to students at the same year level, e.g. year 11 or year 12, or where approval has been given by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment for different courses to be combined into the one Scaling Group, a college must use appropriate, reliable and documented meshing procedures to combine scores from the different units/courses.

*A Best Practice Guide on Meshing Procedures* is available from the Office of the BSSS.

### 5.3 System Moderation of Grades

#### 5.3.1 Structured, Consensus-Based Peer Review

To ensure system wide comparability of grades on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and monitor standards across the system, the Board uses a process of structured, consensus-based peer review.

Common assessment criteria, unit grades and achievement standards in each subject enable teachers from different colleges to judge the level at which students are working and to come to consensus about the standard of the work. In the monitoring process, the quality of the assessment is reviewed and unit grades are moderated against system-wide criteria and standards. Advice is given to schools to assist them with, and/or reassure them about, their assessment program and judgments against the standards.

Refer to 10.2.9 [Moderation of Vocational programs](#).

#### 5.3.2 Moderation Procedures

##### 5.3.2.1 Moderation of Accredited Courses

All colleges offering programs of study accredited by the Board and presenting students' results obtained under those programs for Board certification are required to present for moderation



sample portfolios of student work accompanied by mark schemes, rubrics, answer keys and other relevant explanatory support materials (College Course Presentations). A portfolio consists of one individual student's responses to a group of tasks (e.g. essay, oral presentation, multiple choice responses, model, digital platforms etc) each of which assesses the student's performance against the criteria in a given Framework. College Course Presentations are submitted for processing prior to each Moderation Day, in the manner and at the time set down by the Office of the BSSS. They then form the basis of the review process on Moderation Days.

#### **5.3.2.2 Moderation of Vocational Programs**

Refer to 10.2.9 [Moderation of Vocational Programs](#).

#### **5.3.2.3 Moderation of H Courses**

Refer to 9.2.2 [Moderation of H Courses](#).

#### **5.3.2.4 Moderation Days**

Moderation Days are the days on which peer review of student portfolios of student work occurs on a system-wide basis. All colleges offering programs of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate are required to participate in this process.

The objectives of Moderation Days are:

- through consensus, apply and maintain standards for unit grades as defined in the Frameworks
- provide teachers with the professional development and range of information required to ensure that grade standards as defined in Frameworks are commonly understood and applied across all colleges operating under the ACT education system.

There are two Moderation Days per year. On Moderation Day 1 the work of year 11 students from Semester 2 of the previous year is reviewed. On Moderation Day 2 the work of year 12 students from Semester 1 of the current year is reviewed.

Work from A, T, C and M courses and accredited vocational programs will be reviewed on the two annual Moderation Days.

#### **5.3.2.5 Moderation Day Participants**

All teachers of A, T, C, V or M courses at years 11 and 12 are required to attend Moderation Days and participate in the moderation process. Librarians who are not also teaching such courses will make separate arrangements, in consultation with the Office of the BSSS.

#### **5.3.2.6 Moderation Day Facilitators**

The process used on Moderation Days involves teachers working in Framework subject groups under approximately nine key learning areas. Moderation Venue Coordinators direct operations at each site. Subject Group Leaders facilitate the moderation process and Assistant Group Leaders are appointed to assist the Subject Group Leaders. Training workshops and/or moderation seminars are conducted for Moderation Venue Coordinators, Subject Group Leaders and Assistant Group Leaders prior to the Moderation Days.

#### **5.3.2.7 Attendance Exemptions**

Exemptions from attending Moderation Day must be requested for each Moderation Day. Requests must be made in writing by the principal to the Executive Director, BSSS by the nominated date. The Executive Director will communicate decisions on each request in writing to the principal.

### **5.3.2.8 Presentation Review Exemptions**

Exemptions for presenting portfolios on Moderation Day must be made to the OBSSS through ACS by the nominated date. Requests will be considered by the Executive Director or delegate. BSSS will communicate decisions on each request through ACS to the college.

### **5.3.2.9 Right of Reply and Review**

Where a teacher is not satisfied with some aspect of the subject review received after Moderation Day, the teacher should discuss this with the college principal. The principal may then send a written statement to the Office of the BSSS outlining points of disagreement with the moderation review.

The written response will be noted and filed at the Office of the BSSS. Appeals are recorded in ACS.

Where it is considered that the review judgements are seriously in error, the principal may choose to re-submit the presentation to the Office of the BSSS for a further independent review. The presentation must be accompanied by a letter outlining the point/s of disagreement. Requests for a supplementary review must be received by the Office of the BSSS within one month of the original Moderation Day review.

Serious errors would include one or more of the following:

- evidence of reviewer misunderstanding of Board policy
- evidence of reviewer misunderstanding of subject documentation
- disagreement with changes to college grade judgement where reviewer reasoning is not valid.

Where there is a grade disagreement of two or more standards (e.g. A – C) between the college assessment and the reviewers at Moderation Day, there will be an automatic supplementary review organised by the Office of the BSSS.

Two expert teachers from the same discipline will undertake each supplementary review. The findings of this further review will be made available to the college through ACS, and the results will override the previous review recorded in ACS.

### **5.3.2.10 Moderation Incident Lodgement Report**

Persons wishing to make a complaint about conduct on Moderation Day should lodge a Moderation Incident Lodgement Report. The Office of BSSS Quality Assurance Officer will provide the form and advice to the complainant. Incidents must be reported within twenty days of the Moderation Day. The Executive Director, BSSS will follow up all Moderation Incident Lodgement Reports.

### **5.3.2.11 College Action Plans**

Following each Moderation Day colleges will receive reports based on reviewers' feedback. All participating colleges will then forward to the Office of the BSSS, a College Action Plan that addresses the issues raised from the moderation process. This should be completed in ACS within one month of receiving the reviewers' feedback.

### **5.3.2.12 Moderation and Accountability**

The Office of the BSSS implements processes to deal with accountability issues arising from moderation requirements. The accountability issues include compliance with the requirements for materials and attendance, and peer concerns of poor assessment practice and unsupported judgments of student grade standards. These processes will include:

- written advice and web site advice to schools/colleges on moderation requirements before each Moderation Day

- a Pre-Moderation report to principals to identify non-compliance issues before the Moderation Day
- an opportunity for teachers to address issues and provide additional documentation and evidence before the Moderation Day
- written advice to principals where pre-moderation issues are unresolved
- provision of college reports to principals after each Moderation Day based on collated reviewer comments
- in response to this report, colleges are required to develop and implement a College Action Plan to address issues of concern. This should be completed in ACS within one month of the receipt of the reviewers' feedback
- advice to and discussion with principals where issues are unresolved over two Moderation Days
- advice to and discussion with sector authorities about unresolved issues
- advice to the Board on unresolved issues
- a review of each unresolved case by the Board and action in accordance with Board legislation.

## 5.4 Statistical Moderation of Scores

To ensure comparability of course scores across subjects and across colleges, the Board uses a statistical process of Other Course Score (OCS) scaling. (Refer to 8.6.3.1 [Other Course Score \(OCS\) Scaling](#)) This statistical process uses students' results from the ACT Scaling Test (refer to 6 [ACT Scaling Test \(AST\)](#)), as well as college scores, to facilitate the comparison of T course groups across the ACT.

For the purposes of OCS scaling, courses are placed into Scaling Groups. Where possible each course is placed in a separate Scaling Group unless a combination of courses into the one group has been approved by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment. The exceptions to this are

- Mathematics courses which are to be in the one Scaling Group
- ESL which is to be combined with English or a European Language(s)

### 5.4.1 Course Combination into Scaling Groups

- Where possible courses will be scaled on their own
- At the beginning of year 11, the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment may approve a college combining courses with fewer than 50 students who are attempting a T package. There must be appropriate, reliable and documented meshing procedures to combine these courses
- At the end of year 12, a course with 10 or fewer T qualified students is referred to as a small group. Such groups should only exist where the college cannot provide appropriate meshing procedures to combine this group with a larger group. (refer to [5.4.2 Small Group Procedures](#))
- Where courses are combined into a Scaling Group, a copy of the meshing procedures must be provided to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment
- Details of where the meshing procedures can be readily accessed by the student must be included on the Unit Outline distributed to students at the beginning of each unit.

## **5.4.2 Small Group Procedures — Groups of 10 or Fewer Students with T Package**

- For groups of 10 or fewer students with a T Package, special procedures apply in the calculation of scaled course scores. Such groups should exist only if the college cannot combine the group in an appropriate manner into a large group
- For groups near the 10 cut-off, Small Group Procedures may be applied to determine the scaled score if the Small Group Adviser has completed the operation before it is clear that the group has more than ten students
- Small Group Procedures will be used in all cases of Small Groups except where there is only one small group in the subject across the system
- Where there is only one small group (10 or fewer T qualified students) across the system and colleges are unable to provide meshing procedures for the students at their college to combine into another group, then the group will be scaled by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment using known information, such as AST results and the students' scores in other subjects.

### **5.4.2.1 College Responsibility**

It is a college's responsibility to notify the Office of the BSSS of possible small groups by a date determined by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment and published annually in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events*.

### **5.4.2.2 Teacher Responsibilities**

It is the class teacher's responsibility to:

- rank her/his students, with appropriate discrimination
- notify the officer in the college responsible for year 12 certification, early in the year, of the expected number of students with T Packages completing a minor in year 11

Teachers of small groups likely to be involved in the Small Group Procedures are required to keep a complete folio of each student's work from years 11 and 12 and present the portfolios for all students in the group to the Office of the BSSS, at the time(s) set down by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment, The folio should include for each assessment period:

- Unit Outlines showing the weighting given to each assessment item
- copies of all student work; there must be sufficient material to form a picture of the standard of the course
- a copy of the instructions and conditions under which each assignment was completed (This is not applicable to all groups, teachers should check with the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment)
- written statements of the basis for assessment of oral work and performances, i.e. the criteria and how they were applied.

### **5.4.2.3 Small Group Adviser Responsibilities**

Wherever possible, Small Group Advisers are selected from teachers who do not themselves have a small group and who have had considerable experience in the relevant course.

Specific responsibilities are to:

- rank and spread all students in the specific T Course
- locate these students on a ranking scale comparable to the adviser's own large group

- base their decision on work provided by the colleges for the particular area in question.

Example

Small Group Adviser's College		Small Group College 1		Small Group College 2	
100.0	John Smith				
97.5	Mary Fuller				
96.5	Teresa Green				
93.6	Harry Kewell				
		92.6	Michael Agiss		
				91.5	John Sandy
90.0	John Black	88.5	Mal Johnstone		
88.0	Sue Smith				
86.0	Kerry Johnstone				
81.5	Arthur King			81.0	Roger Jones
		79.0	Ricky Steyne		
				78.0	Rafael Simpson
77.6	Sally Jewell				

The report should also include written comments related to each student.

Small Group Advisers should comment on the relevant standard of the assessment items in the courses examined in each college. It is not the adviser's role to change the rank order of students within a college. However, if the adviser disagrees with the college ranking it should be noted in the written report.

#### 5.4.2.4 Board Responsibilities

The mean and standard deviation of the scaled courses scores for a small group will be determined by the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment using the following information:

- the AST scores of the students
- the Scaling Score of the students
- the student's scaled course scores from all their courses
- the Small Group Adviser's comparison of the students with those in a larger group in her/his college.

Colleges should contact the Office of the BSSS in the event of any problems with the operation of small group procedures.

## **6 ACT Scaling Test (AST)**

### **6.1 General Principles**

The Board conducts the AST for use as a moderating device in the scaling of college-based assessments for the calculation of university entrance ranks, currently the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Colleges have a responsibility to ensure that students are well prepared for each component of the test. BSSS guidelines for schools on AST preparation programs are at Appendix 6.

Any year 12 student in their final year of schooling in an educational institution undertaking BSSS Certification may sit the test.

A year 12 student seeking a Tertiary Entrance Statement must sit the AST and make a serious attempt at all three components of the test. (Refer to 8.7.1.2 [Tertiary Entrance Statement](#) and to 6.4 [Serious Attempt](#))

### **6.2 Description of the AST**

#### **6.2.1 AST**

The AST is conducted on the first Tuesday and following Wednesday in September each year. The AST comprises a Multiple Choice Test of 80 questions (two and a quarter hours), a Writing Task (two and a half hours) and a Short Response Test (one and three quarter hours). It is employed to facilitate the comparison of T Course groups across the ACT, both within and between colleges. The AST measures skills necessary for success at university. The AST enables students to be compared equitably, regardless of the college they attend or the course group to which they belong.

The items in the Multiple Choice Test are partitioned into two sub-tests, the Quantitative and Verbal or the Q and V Sub-tests. Results in the Short Response Test and Writing Task are reported as single scores. The total AST score used in the scaling process is made up of a combination of these four scores.

#### **6.2.2 Trial AST**

Student Information Bulletins with trial sample questions and a sample version of the Writing Test will be supplied to colleges for distribution to students.

All students who wish to sit the AST should have the opportunity to sit at least one trial AST, organised by their college. The trial should introduce students to the procedures for the conduct of the test as well as the nature of the test itself. Colleges have been provided with a number of previous papers to use in trials or as appropriate.

The marking of any trial AST is the responsibility of the respective college.

Use of any trial AST for any purpose other than familiarising students with test procedures, questions, format and mark-sense answer sheets, would be improper.

## 6.3 Sittings

### 6.3.1 First Sitting

If students are to obtain a Tertiary Entrance Statement (with an ATAR), they must attend the first sitting of the AST except in documented cases of illness or misadventure.

### 6.3.2 Second Sitting

The second sitting is provided for students who are unable to attend the first sitting, due to illness, misadventure or other exceptional circumstances. The Executive Director of the BSSS will consider all applications for the second sitting of AST received by the due date. Approval to attend the second sitting will not be granted automatically.

Approval to attend the second sitting will be granted when a request is received from the principal indicating that:

- the student needs to sit AST to complete the tertiary package and
- there were sound, documented reasons (which have been investigated and accepted) as to why the student did not undertake one or more papers at the first sitting.

Note:

A candidate who has already sighted all or part of the Multiple Choice or Short Response papers will not be permitted to sit the particular paper a second time. (Refer to 6.5.2 [Illness During a Test Paper](#)) A student who has sighted the Writing Task paper in the first sitting can apply to sit the Writing Task paper in the second sitting.

### 6.3.3 Overseas AST

Arrangements may be made through the Office of the Board for students to sit the AST at an overseas location. Students are required to complete an application form and pay the appropriate sitting fee and expenses.

Applications for permission to sit the AST at an overseas location close in early May, as published annually in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events*.

A student applying for permission to sit the AST overseas should be advised that arrangements cannot be made until the Office of the Board is advised of her/his location, test centre and overseas supervisor.

Students should also be advised that they are responsible for the return postage (by courier or registered airmail) of test papers and for payment of any supervisor's fees associated with their sitting of the test.

Application forms will be available from the Office of the BSSS from March.

## 6.4 Serious Attempt

An AST result will only be awarded to students who make a serious attempt at all three components of the test, including

- Writing Task - Students must write an original and substantial response to the stimulus material of a minimum of 200 words
- Short Response Test - Students must make an original and substantial response to questions worth at least half of the total allocated marks for the test.



- Multiple-Choice Test - Students must respond to questions without any apparent systematic selection of answer options or strings of choice and must answer at least half of the questions.

The Executive Director, BSSS will identify any student who has not made a serious attempt on one or more component(s) of the AST and notify the student and his/her college in writing of the decision. The student has 14 days from the date of the notification to seek a review of the decision by the Board Chair. The student and the college will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

## **6.5 Illness/Misadventure**

### **6.5.1 Illness Before a Test Paper (First sitting)**

Where a candidate is unable to attend any session of the AST (first sitting) due to illness s/he must notify the college and obtain a medical certificate, within 24 hours of the test except in exceptional circumstances. The candidate should then apply for approval to sit the second sitting for the paper(s) concerned.

Where a candidate arrives at the college but is genuinely ill prior to the commencement of a paper, the Supervisor-in-Charge or the AST Coordinator should determine whether the candidate is well enough to undertake the test.

If the candidate is judged to be too ill to attempt the paper, s/he should:

- be counselled not to attempt the paper
- seek medical attention and obtain a medical certificate within 24 hours
- apply for approval to attend the second sitting for the paper concerned. This application should be supported by the medical certificate and a college statement.

The candidate will be permitted to take the second sitting of the paper concerned, provided an application is made by the due date and supported in the above manner. The incident report from the Supervisor-in-Charge must accompany the application if the student has already entered the exam centre.

If, after counselling, the candidate elects to sit the paper, s/he will not be eligible for the Second Sitting of the paper concerned and will not receive special consideration in the calculation of AST scores. (Refer to 6.5.2.3 [Special procedures for calculating AST scores in the event of illness.](#))

### **6.5.2 Illness during a Test Paper**

#### **6.5.2.1 Temporary absence during any AST sitting**

Short absences from the test room may be permitted if such absences may result in a cure for a temporary illness, provided the candidate is accompanied at all times by a supervisor. There will be no extension of time granted, without prior approval.

#### **6.5.2.2 Illness during the AST any sitting**

If a candidate becomes ill during any AST paper at the first or second sitting:

- the candidate must inform the Supervisor-in-Charge at the test centre they are ill, whether the paper was completed or not, before leaving the centre
- the candidate will be allowed to leave the test centre early, if necessary
- an Incident Report will be submitted by the Supervisor-in-Charge
- the candidate must seek medical attention within 24 hours and obtain a medical

certificate which must be received by the school AST co-ordinator by the Friday of test week

- this documentation must be received at the Office of the BSSS by the Friday of the test week
- a candidate requesting permission to sit any part of the test at the Second Sitting, if applicable, must apply by the due date for approval to sit the remaining paper(s).

#### **6.5.2.2.1 Illness during Multiple Choice and Short Response Tests**

- If a candidate becomes ill during a Short Response or Multiple Choice paper, the candidate will be permitted to sit any of the remaining paper(s) at the First Sitting
- the candidate will NOT be allowed to sit an uncompleted paper again, no matter how brief the contact has been.

#### **6.5.2.2.2 Illness during the Writing Task (First Sitting)**

- If a candidate becomes ill and is unable to complete the Writing Task or feels their performance was seriously affected by the illness s/he should be encouraged to apply for the Writing Task component of the Second Sitting.

#### **6.5.2.3 Special procedures for calculating AST score in the event of illness**

- Special procedures may be adopted in the calculation of the total AST score and the sub-scores when a candidate has been ill during the test
- no consideration will be given if a student was advised not to sit the paper due to illness but chose to disregard this advice
- a student who has completed all or part of a test paper but requires special consideration due to illness at the time of the test may be given such consideration for one test paper only
- all procedures outlined in 6.5.2.2 must be followed for any consideration to apply.

### **6.5.3 Misadventure**

Misadventure is defined as an unforeseen mishap, calamity or disaster. If an event, such as a death in the family, prevents a candidate from attending a sitting of the AST, the candidate must notify the school immediately. Official, independent documentation of the event must be provided to the school as soon as possible and must accompany any request for permission to sit the second sitting or for special consideration.

## **6.6 Special Case AST Students**

### **6.6.1 Students with Functional Difficulties Due to a Disability or Impairment**

The Board approves special AST assessment conditions, in advance, for students with functional difficulties such as visual impairment or deafness, for those who have restricted movement and for those with a specific learning and behavioural difficulty, provided an application has been made by the due date.

The special provision is made to minimise the impact of a student's functional difficulty upon her/his assessment performance. At the same time the Board ensures that the same academic requirements and standards are applied to all students. Special provisions are designed to place all students on an equal footing, not to give particular students an advantage. All students are expected to undertake the same three components of the AST.

### **6.6.2 Eligibility for Special Provisions**

A student, who during the course of her or his year 11 and 12 studies, experiences significant hardship of a temporary or permanent nature may be eligible for the award of special provisions for the AST.

A student is considered to be eligible if she or he is considered to:

- be disadvantaged by a functional disability or impairment
- have been affected to a significant degree by illness, factors related to personal environment, or other serious cause
- Special assessment conditions are not available to students for whom English is a second language solely on the basis that they have difficulty with reading and writing English. Section 6.6.8 details the arrangements for students from Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds.

### **6.6.3 Principles Underpinning the Award of Special Provisions**

Special provision arrangements should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment and must not compromise the integrity of the AST.

A special provision must not give one candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates. A student's assessment results should reflect performance, not potential.

### **6.6.4 Applications for Special Provisions.**

Before making application for special assessment conditions it may be appropriate for a college to:

- consult specialist external advisory services
- consider whether the particular disability or impairment is likely to alter before the AST.
- Decisions about the special assessment conditions requested should be made in the light of teachers' knowledge about the functional difficulties the student has demonstrated in comparable test situations, and where appropriate, the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom. Teachers are well situated to recognise the kinds of functional difficulties their students suffer long term

- Early identification and verification of the type of special provisions sought is essential. It is important that a student has had experience of, and practice in, the use of any special assessment conditions that are requested. Students who are granted use of a scribe or reader will need to have had opportunities to practise under these special assessment conditions
- Requests for special assessment provisions for the AST must be made on the Board's application form(s) and the required documentation provided by the due date, unless these are exceptional circumstances
- The formal application form must be completed by the student and signed by the college principal
- The nature of the special assessment conditions for the AST will be determined by the Executive Director, BSSS according to the assessment needs of the individual candidate
- The Executive Director may seek advice or evidence from any source he/she considers relevant. Where appropriate, opinion external to the system may be sought. This may involve consulting health experts, specialists in learning disorders, psychiatrists, interstate Boards of Studies or other appropriate bodies
- Special provision arrangements will not be considered without formal, current and relevant documentation. Appropriate documentation supporting the special provision request must be supplied at the time when the special provision is requested by the college. Additional relevant comments from a student's class teachers are encouraged. The nature of the student's disability or impairment must be stated as clearly and precisely as possible on the application form and accompanying supporting documentation. The exact nature of the functional difficulties the student suffers in test situations at the college should be stated
- In particular, medical certificates need to be **current** at the time of the AST. For instance, if a student has suffered recurrent bouts of an illness, then the documentation requesting special AST provisions must detail the student's state of health at the time of the AST. Medical documentation cannot predict on past or future performance — it should state clearly the functional difficulties associated with the medical condition. If a medical condition appears to be ongoing, then updated medical evidence will be needed to provide special assessment provisions.

Students who suffer an accident, family crisis or a sudden illness may apply for special consideration, such as approval to take the second AST sitting or, in extraordinary cases, exemption from the test.

(Refer to 6.6.9 [Exemption from the AST](#)). The Executive Director, BSSS will decide the appropriate course of action once notification and documentation is received from a college.

### 6.6.5 Types of Special Provisions

The range of special provisions may include one or more of the following:

- additional time (up to twenty-five minutes to incorporate extra reading and writing time) for multiple choice and/or writing task and/or short response test
- supervised rest and/or movement breaks
- modification to the visual presentation of papers, for instance enlarged print or the test printed on coloured paper
- a reader and/or a scribe
- signing of instructions

- use of a computer in the writing task and/or short response test (use of spell checkers, thesaurus or word count capacity are NOT permitted)
- separate accommodation for the test
- use of special ergonomic furniture.

The nature of the special provision is determined by the Executive Director, BSSS after consideration of each student's situation and the accompanying documentation.

### **6.6.6 Review of Decision on Special Provisions**

The Executive Director of the BSSS will notify the candidate and his/her college in writing of the special provisions granted or the decision to decline Special Provision/s. Different provisions from those applied for may be granted. The student has 14 days from the date of the notification to seek a review of the decision, by the Board Chair. The student and the college will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

### **6.6.7 Use of AST Scores of Students who have Received Special Provisions**

The AST scores of students who have been granted AST special provisions will be used in the scaling process in the same way as the AST scores of other students.

### **6.6.8 Students from Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

Students flagged as from a Linguistically Diverse Background are required to sit the AST and must make a serious attempt at all components of the test. (Refer to 6.4 [Serious Attempt](#))

They will have their AST scores included in the OCS scaling process unless they are deemed to be aberrant. (Refer to 8.6.3.2 [Aberrant AST Scores](#))

Colleges flagging students as from a Linguistically Diverse Background will indicate that students have met each of the criteria.

Students flagged as from a Linguistically Diverse Background will have their AST papers treated as follows:

- the Multiple Choice Paper will have the number of questions reduced by the equivalent of a 30 minute reduction in test time
- the Short Response Test will have the number of questions reduced by the equivalent of a 15 minute reduction in test time
- for the Writing Task there will be no time consideration but identified students will have their scripts marked separately from those of the other students.

#### **6.6.8.1 Criteria for identification of Linguistically Diverse Students for the purpose of AST**

A student will be determined to be from a Linguistically Diverse (LD) Background for the purpose of the AST if:

- the home college principal judges, on the basis of documented evidence, that the AST will not provide an accurate assessment of the student's scholastic aptitude because of English language difficulty, and
- the student has received fewer than four years of education conducted in standard English prior to commencing year 11 studies, and

- the student has been resident for fewer than 6 years, just prior to starting their senior secondary studies, in a nation where standard English is the language, then LD status will be granted.

To assist colleges in identifying students, any student who can achieve a B grade average or higher in English or Literature does not fit the intention of this policy.

Special cases can be approved by the Executive Director, BSSS.

### **6.6.8.2 Review of LD Status**

A review of the decision on any student's LD status must be lodged with the BSSS Board Chair within 14 calendar days of notification.

### **6.6.9 Exemption from the AST**

The Executive Director, BSSS may determine, on the basis of evidence provided, that a student who is not able to sit the AST through illness or misadventure may be exempted from sitting the AST. Exemption from the requirement to sit the AST is only given in extraordinary circumstances, such as where the student is functionally incapable of sitting the test due to a documented medical condition.

Requests for exemption to sit the AST must be made as soon as the college or student is aware of the illness or condition during Year 12 and before the AST.

The Executive Director, BSSS may determine, on the basis of evidence provided, that a student's AST results will not be used in the scaling process. Exemption from the requirement to use a student's AST results in the scaling process is only given in extraordinary circumstances. Requests for exemption from the use of AST results must be received within ten working days after the sitting of the AST.

The application for exemption must be completed by the student, (or where this is not possible by a parent/guardian), or by the college principal and accompanied by appropriate documentation supporting the request. The college principal must indicate whether they are supporting the request.

### **6.6.10 Review of Decision on Exemption**

The Executive Director of the BSSS will notify the candidate and his/her college in writing of the decision on the request for exemption from the AST. The student has 14 days from the date of the notification to seek a review of the decision, by the Board Chair. The student and the college will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

### **6.6.11 Cultural Bias in the AST exam**

The AST Officer at the Office of the Board explicitly reviews questions for potential cultural bias, in order to minimise their effect.

## **6.7 Responsibilities of Colleges**

The college is responsible for:

- arranging for candidates to apply for AST using the AST Application Form
- nominating an AST Coordinator for the college. An assistant AST Coordinator is also recommended as back up when needed
- forwarding to the Board the applications for special case provisions, applications to sit

AST overseas, applications to take the second sitting

- informing students determined to be from a Linguistically Diverse Background of the conditions under which they sit the AST
- setting up of the examination centre on the day before the first session of the AST
- settling the students into the test centre and formally placing them under the authority of the Supervisor-in-Charge
- providing any necessary support to the Supervisor-in-Charge
- checking the student roll at each sitting of the AST when students are seated in the test centre. The Supervisor-in-Charge will accompany the college AST Coordinator during the checking of the roll
- completing the register of Absent Candidates and forwarding it to the Office of the BSSS.

## **6.8 AST Supervisors**

The Board will be responsible for hiring external invigilators for the AST conducted in each college. These invigilators will be provided with a book of Instructions for the Conduct of the AST, and be required to attend a seminar detailing administration of the test. They are charged with responsibility for the conduct of the test, security of the test material and the return of all test material to the Office of the BSSS.

## **6.9 Security**

Refer to the booklet: Instructions for the Conduct of the ACT Scaling Test, for further details.

### **6.9.1 Teachers and AST**

Teachers are not to have access to the AST papers. The Supervisors-in-Charge will be informed of this policy.

### **6.9.2 Examination Centre**

No candidate will be permitted to leave the testing centre until the test is complete and all papers have been collected, except for those circumstances laid down in the booklet: Instructions for the Conduct of the ACT Scaling Test. A student who leaves the test centre temporarily will not be allowed to return unless s/he has been accompanied by a supervisor during the whole period of the absence.

Candidates must provide their own pens, pencils and erasers. Candidates must not bring any papers, books (apart from a dictionary), calculators, mobile phones or other electronic devices into the testing centre. Candidates shall sit in their designated desks unless directed otherwise.

No smoking will be permitted inside the testing centre. No alcoholic substance or other drinks, drugs or food will be permitted inside the testing centre, except in extenuating circumstances as determined in advance by the Office of the BSSS, or in unforeseen circumstances by the Supervisor-in-Charge.

### **6.9.3 Expected Codes of Student Behaviour**

Each candidate is required to present for the AST. No candidate shall allow or coerce another person to present for the AST in place of the candidate or provide false information.

Candidates, once in the testing centre, shall observe and obey any instructions given by the Supervisor-in-Charge or assistants. If a candidate does not obey instructions, the candidate will be reported to the Discipline Committee of the Board for a breach of conduct.

Candidates shall be admitted to the testing centre not less than ten minutes prior to test instructions being given. No candidates shall be admitted to the testing centre later than thirty minutes after commencement of the test.

During the test, if a candidate is found to have or to be using any unauthorised material or to be cheating, that candidate shall be reported to the Supervisor-in-Charge and to the principal (or nominee) for breaching the rules of the test. The Supervisor-in-Charge shall note the breach in an incident report and shall report said candidate to the Board.

Any candidate who annoys or interferes with any other candidate or invigilator may be requested to leave the testing centre and will be denied access to the test. The Supervisor-in-Charge shall note the breach in an incident report and shall report said candidate to the Board.

Any breach by any candidate of these rules or any rules and instructions laid down in: *Instructions for the Conduct of the ACT Scaling Test* shall be reported to the Board and the matter dealt with by the Discipline Committee.

## **6.9.4 Emergency Procedures**

In the event of the AST group being asked to leave the examination room by a college principal or delegate, students should leave behind all pieces of paper both written and printed and not return to the room.

Another sitting of the session will be arranged with the Office of the BSSS. This additional session will be conducted with a parallel test to the one provided. The session should not be confused with the second sitting of AST.

## **6.9.5 Release of Scores**

The Board will not disclose individual AST scores until after the closure of college access to the BSSS database, to prevent any undue emphasis being placed on AST scores during the calculation of course scores. AST scores are not printed on individual certificates, however, each student will receive his/her scaled Quantitative Multiple Choice score, scaled Verbal Multiple Choice score, scaled Short Response Test score and scaled Writing Test score separately from the certificates.

## **6.10 Breaches of Discipline in Relation to AST**

### **6.10.1 General Principles**

The AST and its administration are the responsibility of the Board. Expected Codes of Student Behaviour are stated in section 6.9.3 and detailed in the booklet: *Instructions for the Conduct of the ACT Scaling Test*. 'Conditions for Candidates' are provided with the AST Application Form and in the '*AST Student Information Bulletin*'.

The Board views seriously any breach of discipline in relation to the AST. Any cheating, dishonesty or improper behaviour shall constitute a breach of discipline.

### **6.10.2 Breach of Discipline**

The Executive Director, BSSS will investigate (to include consultation with the student) any alleged breach of discipline in relation to the AST, as reported in writing by a supervisor, and will provide a report to the Chair of the Board (or Delegate, not a member of the Discipline Committee).



The Board Chair shall determine on the balance of probabilities whether there has been a substantive breach of discipline in relation to the AST. The Board Chair shall determine the seriousness of the breach and any action that may be taken.

#### **6.10.2.1 Penalties**

The penalties, depending on the nature of the breach, will be:

- a reprimand
- cancellation of AST result for the candidate, ATAR calculated and reduced by an amount to be determined
- cancellation of AST result for the candidate and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the calculation of the ATAR.

#### **6.10.2.2 Notification**

The student and the student's college shall be advised in writing of the outcome and the procedures for the appeal.

### **6.10.3 Right of Appeal to the Discipline Committee**

In all cases where a candidate has had a penalty applied by the Board Chair, the candidate or her/his representative shall have a right of appeal to the Discipline Committee, provided that, within fourteen days after the day on which the Board Chair's written decision was given to the candidate, the candidate gives written notice to the Board Chair of her/his intention to appeal, stating the grounds of the appeal.

#### **6.10.3.1 Grounds for Appeal**

The candidate may appeal against the penalty applied on the basis of:

- the severity of the penalty
- the procedures followed in determining the penalty and/or
- denial of the breach of discipline.

Students involved in an appeal should understand that there are four possible outcomes: no change, withdrawal of the penalty, a reduction in the penalty, or an increased penalty.

#### **6.10.3.2 Information for the Appeal**

A student seeking to appeal to the Discipline Committee must provide the following information, in writing:

- the student's name and college attended
- the particular component of the AST involved
- the penalty being appealed and the remedy being sought
- a statement setting out the details for each ground for appeal and/or
- a statement supporting the appeal.

### **6.10.4 Board Appeal Hearing**

#### **6.10.4.1 Discipline Committee**

The Discipline Committee shall be a subcommittee of the Board (refer to 1.3.1.5 [Discipline](#))

[Committee](#)).

#### **6.10.4.2 Procedures**

The Discipline Committee Chair is in charge of the proceedings. The Discipline Committee, after taking advice and after giving the candidate (or the candidate's representative) an opportunity of being heard, and after receiving a report from the Board Chair concerning the matter, will confirm, quash or vary the determination of the Board Chair.

The Discipline Committee Chair should consider implementing procedures that, while safeguarding confidential information, ensure that all parties have maximum access to all the evidence being considered by the Discipline Committee.

All appeals shall be dealt with in confidence and if any wider issues emerge from an appeal the name of the appellant shall not be disclosed.

#### **6.10.4.3 Friends Accompanying Students**

Students may be accompanied by a friend. Students making an appeal will be allowed either to present their own case or have their case presented by a friend. The friend could be another student, a parent or some other person.

There is no necessity for legal representation at appeals.

The student, with friend, will meet with the committee to discuss the matter under review.

#### **6.10.4.4 Discipline Committee Decision**

The Discipline Committee will reach a decision.

#### **6.10.4.5 Penalties**

In varying the determination of the Board Chair, the Discipline Committee may direct the Board Chair to take one of the following actions:

- a reprimand
- cancellation of AST results for the candidate, ATAR calculated and reduced by an amount to be determined
- cancellation of AST results for the candidate and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the calculation of the ATAR.

#### **6.10.4.6 Recording of Appeals**

A careful record of discussion needs to be kept. The appeal is to be recorded. When evidence is taken the recording is to be the official transcript.

#### **6.10.4.7 Reporting of Discipline Committee Decision to the Board**

The Discipline Committee will report its decision and reasons to the Board 'for noting'. The Board cannot overturn the Committee's decision.

#### **6.10.4.8 Advising the Student and College of the Decision**

The Discipline Committee will advise the Chair of the Board, who will advise the candidate and the college of the decision and the reasons for it, in writing.

## **7 Review and Appeals Procedures**

### **7.1 General Principles**

The Board is committed to a review and appeals process that is based on natural justice and public interest.

Appeals operate:

at the school/college level in relation to:

- school-based assessment (unit/course scores and grades, and breaches of discipline in relation to assessment)

at the Board level in relation to:

- the fairness and application of a college's published assessment and appeals procedures (refer to 7.2 [School-based Assessment](#) and to 7.4 [College Appeal](#))
- penalties imposed for breaches of discipline in school-based assessment and in the AST (refer to 6.10 [Breaches of Discipline in Relation to the AST](#))
- the refusal by the Board to issue a Certificate (refer to 8.11 [Review of a Board Refusal to issue a Certificate](#)).

The Board is not responsible for the delivery of a course. Questions about the delivery of a course should be made to the relevant authority.

### **7.2 School-based Assessment**

#### **7.2.1 Objectives of the Review and Appeals Process**

The objectives of the review and appeals process are to:

- achieve valid course scores, unit scores, grades and marks
- promote assessment procedures that are transparent, reliable and accurate
- provide appeal procedures that are accessible and responsive to all students.

The purpose of an appeal is to ensure that assessments are valid and the procedures applied are those that are published and are correct.

#### **7.2.2 Right of Appeal**

The ACT system operates a hierarchy of reviews and appeals:

- Student seeks review from teacher regarding assessment task mark/grade, unit score, unit grade, course score
- Student seeks review from head of department, if required following review by teacher
- Student appeals to her/his college principal for a review of college assessment relating to assessment task grade/mark, unit grade, unit score, course score, penalty imposed for breach of discipline in relation to assessment (Refer to 7.4 [College Appeal](#))
- Student, who has been through the college appeal process, may appeal to the Board against the college procedures by which the appeal decision was reached. (Refer to 7.5 [Appeals to the Board](#))

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a Board Appeal will only be accepted if an appeal has first been heard by the college.

### **7.2.3 Definitions**

In this section the following definitions apply:

Marks, grades	- given as the result of an assessment task. Marks may be standardised
Unit scores	- scores aggregated from marks awarded on individual assessment tasks
Course scores	- scores aggregated from unit scores by a defined process
Unit grades	- grades based on the unit portfolio of work and verified against BSSS grade descriptors.

## **7.3 College Responsibilities**

### **7.3.1 Student Information**

#### **7.3.1.1 Assessment Task Information**

At the time of issue of an assessment task, students are entitled to receive the assessment criteria for the task. Students are entitled to know how each assessment mark, grade and score is derived. Each assessment task to be completed out of class must include information regarding late submission of work and plagiarism penalties. The task must either indicate the penalties to be applied or state where the information on the penalties can be readily accessed. (Refer to 4.3.10 [Late Submission of Assessment Tasks](#) and to 4.3.12 [Plagiarism and Dishonesty](#))

#### **7.3.1.2 Provision of Unit and Course Information**

The principal is responsible for ensuring that Unit Outlines (refer to 4.3.6.1 [Unit Outline](#)) are distributed to students and that appeals procedures, in written form, are readily available to students.

#### **7.3.1.3 Deadlines for Lodging Appeals**

The principal is responsible for ensuring that deadlines for lodging appeals are made known to all students.

### **7.3.2 Review of Marks, Grades, Scores**

A student should try to resolve an issue relating to marks, grades, scores with the teacher of the unit and if necessary with the head of the department before lodging a formal college appeal.

Prior to setting up a college appeal, the principal or delegate should set up an independent review by a teacher of the same course at a different college.

If the head of department is the classroom teacher then the student should have access to a mediator within the college.

A clear distinction should be made between teacher-student review of assessment and the formal college appeal.

## **7.4 College Appeal**

The appeal process begins officially with the lodging of a written appeal by the student to the principal or to a person designated by the principal, and is finalised by written advice from the College Appeal Committee to the student.

The written appeal should include:

- the student's name and ID
- the specific mark/s, score, grade, penalty being appealed, including the task, unit, course concerned
- the specific remedy being sought for each matter being appealed
- a statement setting out and supporting the matters of appeal.

The student should be able to present further evidence to the College Appeal Committee.

#### **7.4.1 Lodgement Period**

Except in Semester 2 of year 12, appeals against assessment should be lodged within five working days of the assessment outcome being available to the student i.e.

- task mark/grade being provided to the student
- student being advised in writing of the penalty for breach of discipline
- unit grades/scores being published by the school.

In Semester 2 of year 12:

- appeals against an assessment task, unit grade/score, breach of discipline should be lodged within two working days of the results being published
- appeals against a course score should be lodged within one working day of the results being published.

Colleges must inform students of these final dates by the end of term 1 of year 12.

#### **7.4.2 College Appeal Committee**

The principal is responsible for establishing a College Appeal Committee. This Committee should consist of the principal (or nominee), a member of the teaching staff and an experienced member of the teaching profession nominated by the Board from outside the college. One of the members of the committee must be a teacher experienced in the supervision of student assessment.

No member of the College Appeal Committee should have had any direct dealings with the matter of the appeal at an earlier stage.

#### **7.4.3 Friends Accompanying Students**

Students may be accompanied by a friend. Students making an appeal will be allowed either to present their own case or have their case presented by a friend. The friend may be another student, a parent or some other person.

#### **7.4.4 Right to Make a Statement**

An important aspect of natural justice is the opportunity for both the student, and the teacher or head of department, to correct or contradict evidence submitted to the College Appeal Committee. Each has the right to make an uninterrupted statement to the College Appeal Committee, be subject to questioning from the Committee, but not subject to cross examination from each other. The teacher or head of department and the student, or her/his friend, may seek clarification of issues from each other through the College Appeal Committee Chair. However, the appellant should be given the opportunity to make the final statement.

Colleges should consider implementing procedures that, while safeguarding confidential information, ensure both the student, and teacher or head of department have maximum access to all the evidence being considered by the College Appeal Committee.

#### **7.4.5 Sources of Information**

The College Appeal Committee may seek advice or evidence from any source it considers relevant. The college will seek an independent evaluation from teachers external to the college. This will be arranged through the Executive Director of the BSSS. It is expected that both the student, and teacher or head of department, will have an opportunity to comment on the advice or evidence collected from the relevant source(s).

#### **7.4.6 Communication of College Appeal Committee Decision**

The College Appeal Committee will make a decision and communicate the outcome and reasons for it in writing to the student with a copy to the principal.

#### **7.4.7 Time Period to Finalise Appeal**

Except in Semester 2 of year 12, appeals will be finalised within fourteen working days of the lodgement of an appeal.

Appeals at the college in Semester 2 of year 12 should be completed by the day prior to the final date for appeals to the Board published annually in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events*.

#### **7.4.8 College Records**

Colleges should keep a record of each appeal, including the grounds for the appeal, the decision and the reasons for the decision. Colleges must notify the Board, in writing, of the outcome of the appeal.

Colleges may be required to provide the Board Appeal Committee with these records if there is a subsequent appeal from the student to the Board.

#### **7.4.9 Outcomes of the Appeal**

Students and others involved in an appeal should understand that there are three possible outcomes for an appeal against marks, grades or scores:

- a higher mark, grade or score
- no change
- a lower mark, grade or score.

Students and others involved in an appeal should understand that there are four possible outcomes for an appeal against a penalty imposed for a breach of discipline in relation to assessment:

- withdrawal of the penalty
- a reduction in the penalty
- no change
- an increased penalty.

#### **7.4.10 Effects on Other Students**

The upholding of an appeal may result in the alteration of the appellant's unit or course score. A change in the scores of other students arising from the appeal will be made only if determined by the College Appeal Committee Chair.

It should be understood that when the outcome of an appeal causes changes to the results of other students, the principal is responsible for informing these students, and further appeals related only to these changes should be allowed. These appeals must be lodged with twenty-four hours of notification.

#### **7.4.11 Registration with the Board**

All college appeals' procedures must be registered with the Board.

#### **7.4.12 Summary of Principal's Responsibilities**

The principal of the college is responsible for the development of procedures consistent with these guidelines, in particular

- distribution of written Unit Outlines
- ensuring that the Board's appeals' procedures, including deadlines, are made known to students
- establishing, as necessary, a College Appeal Committee, including appointing Chair
- filing the records of the appeal, the decisions made and the reasons for the decisions
- notification to other students where their scores/grades may be affected
- ensuring that written communication regarding the outcome of a college appeal is dispatched promptly by the college to the student and to the Office of the Board.

### **7.5 Appeals to the Board**

This section details procedures in the event of an appeal to the Board following the processes of review and appeal at the college level. (Refer to 7.2.2 [Right of Appeal](#))

#### **7.5.1 Grounds for Appeal**

The matters for appeal to the Board are generally limited to disputes arising from the fair and proper application of published assessment procedures and appeal procedures.

Students may appeal to the Board on the grounds that:

- the published procedures used to calculate a unit grade or score or course score have not been followed, or have been applied unfairly or incorrectly
- an inappropriate penalty has been imposed for a breach of discipline in relation to assessment, including the severity of the penalty or denial of the breach of discipline, and/or
- the published appeal procedures, which are available for public inspection, have not been followed or have been applied unfairly or incorrectly.

Students and others involved in an appeal should understand that there are three possible outcomes for an appeal against marks, grades or scores:

- a higher mark, grade or score
- no change
- a lower mark, grade or score.

Students and others involved in an appeal should understand that there are four possible outcomes to an appeal against a penalty imposed for a breach of discipline in relation to assessment:

- no change
- withdrawal of the penalty
- a reduction in the penalty
- an increased penalty.

### **7.5.2 Period for Appeal**

Where, under the conditions set out in section 7.4.1, a student appeals to the Board, such an appeal must be received by the Executive Director, BSSS within five working days of the date of the written decision of the College Appeal Committee. In Semester 2 of year 12, the final date for appeals to the Board is the date published annually in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events*. In the event that no date is published in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events* the final date for appeals in Semester 2 of year 12 will be the first Friday in December. The Board will hold its review as soon as practicable after the receipt of the student's appeal.

Waivers of these time limits may be granted by the BSSS Chair at his/her discretion after taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, but in no case should a waiver be granted more than six months after the date of the written decision of the College Appeal Committee or the published date in the applicable *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events* or in the event of no published date, six months after the first Friday in December.

### **7.5.3 Information for Appeal**

An application for a Board appeal must be made in writing to the Executive Director, BSSS and signed by the student (appellant). A student seeking to appeal to the Board must provide the following information:

- appellant's name and college attended
- the particular mark/s, score, grade, penalty being appealed, including the task, unit, course concerned
- a statement as to the outcome of the college appeal on the matter
- a statement setting out the details for each ground for appeal and/or
- the procedures used to calculate the mark, grade, score, penalty that the student alleges have not been followed or have been applied unfairly or incorrectly, and/or
- the remedy being sought, and
- any other information the appellant wishes to bring to the Board Appeal Committee's (the Committee) attention.

The completed application for a Board Appeal must be forwarded by the Executive Director, BSSS to the principal of the college concerned. The college must then prepare a statement responding to the major points in the application and specifically to the grounds given for the appeal. The



college may also include other issues or material it considers relevant to the matter under appeal. The completed college statement should be provided to the appellant before the date of the Board Appeal hearing (the hearing), and both parties' statements must be forwarded to the Committee members in advance of the hearing.

## **7.5.4 The Board Appeal**

### **7.5.4.1 The Board Appeal Committee**

The appeal will be conducted by a committee composed of three members appointed by the Board. The Chair is a Board member and is appointed annually. The other two members appointed to the Committee will include a teacher experienced in the supervision of student assessment and a teacher experienced in assessment of the subject under appeal. No member of the Committee should have had any prior direct dealings with the matter of appeal.

### **7.5.4.2 Assessment of Appeal Applications**

The Executive Director of the BSSS, in consultation with the Committee Chair, will assess all applications for a Board Appeal and determine if such an appeal is in accordance with the Board's requirements outlined in 7.4.1 (Lodgement Period), 7.4.2 (College Appeal Committee) and 7.4.3 (Friends Accompanying Students). If the appeal is deemed valid both the appellant and the college will be advised the time, date and venue of the appeal. If the appeal is not in accordance with the Board's requirements, the Executive Director, BSSS will inform the student of this and reasons for its rejection, in writing, usually within five working days, of the receipt of the appeal.

### **7.5.4.3 Friends Accompanying Students**

The appellant may be accompanied by one friend. The friend could be another student, a parent or some other person. The appellant will be allowed either to present their own case or have their case presented by the friend. However, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the appellant should be present for all of the hearing.

### **7.5.4.4 Procedures**

The Committee Chair is in charge of proceedings.

An important aspect of natural justice is the opportunity for each party to correct or contradict evidence submitted to the Committee. Consequently, the Committee Chair should implement procedures, which, while safeguarding confidential information, ensure that all parties have maximum access to all the evidence being considered by the Committee.

The appellant, with friend, and the college principal or delegate who may be accompanied by one adviser, will meet with the Committee to discuss the matter under review.

The Committee Chair will decide whether the parties, should be heard together, or whether the appellant and the college representative should be interviewed separately by the Committee and brought together for discussion if necessary.

The college representatives and the appellant, or her/his friend, may seek clarification of issues from the other party through the Committee Chair.

The parties do not have a right to be present during the deliberations of the Committee or at the time of its decision.

The Board Appeal process is not designed to be adversarial. Legal representation would not normally be appropriate at the hearing, although the appellant, college and/or the Committee Chair have the right to retain it if they consider it appropriate. Regardless of the outcome each party is responsible for its own legal costs.

#### **7.5.4.5 Confidentiality**

All material relating to the appeal, including evidence presented during the appeal, is to be kept confidential in order to maintain the privacy of individuals concerned.

The Chair should make a statement at the start of the appeal that any material, oral or written, presented prior to or during the appeal is confidential. Also, that all deliberations of the Committee are confidential.

#### **7.5.4.6 Recording of Appeals**

Notes of the parties' oral statements and discussion at the hearing, and of the deliberations by the Committee, should be kept by a staff member in the Office of the BSSS, who will be present throughout the hearing and the Committee's deliberations. In addition, the statements and the discussion at the hearing, but not the Committee's deliberations, should be recorded electronically by a staff member from the Office of the BSSS.

The appellant may seek permission from the Committee Chair to electronically record the hearing but not the Committee's deliberations. If that permission is given, the appellant's record will not have official status as a record of proceedings. The Board electronic record will be the official transcript.

The Board will keep its electronic record of proceedings in its custody at all times for a period of five years after the proceedings are finalised, but will, upon the parties' application, make the electronic record available for review. The appellant does not have an automatic right to review notes of the Committee's deliberations.

#### **7.5.4.7 Board Appeal Committee Decision and Advice to Appellant**

The Committee will reach a decision and report its decision and the reasons for it, to the Board 'for noting'. The Board cannot overturn the Committee's decision.

The Executive Director, BSSS will advise the appellant and the college of the Committee's decision and the reasons for it, in writing.

#### **7.5.4.8 Effect of Changed Scores**

The upholding of an appeal may result in the alteration of the appellant's assessment task mark, grade, unit score or course score. A change in the scores of other students will not be made unless determined by the Committee Chair. The Scaling Group will not necessarily be rescaled because of an alteration to one student's score.

#### **7.5.4.9 Storage of Records**

All material relating to the appeal is stored at the Office of the BSSS in a secure setting for five years.

## **8 Certification**

### **8.1 General Principles**

#### **8.1.1 Profile Report**

The official name of the testamur is the Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate.

The official name of the profile report listing the record of results is the Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Record of Achievement. The Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Record of Achievement includes grades for individual units. Only units and courses on the Board's register (refer to 3.1 [Responsibilities](#)) appear on the Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Record of Achievement.

Throughout the BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual "Senior Secondary Certificate" refers to both the testamur and the record of results.

An Australian Capital Territory Statement of Achievement is issued by secondary colleges on behalf of the ACT BSSS to students

- Completing their Year 11 and 12 studies
- Seeking employment
- Moving interstate

This is not a Senior Secondary Certificate of education within the Australian qualifications Framework.

#### **8.1.2 Records/Accuracy**

The production of the Senior Secondary Certificate is a joint effort involving colleges, the Office of the BSSS and computing staff. Principals are responsible for the accuracy of data passed to the Board for printing on the certificates. To ensure the continued valuing of the Senior Secondary Certificate, the users (employers, tertiary bodies, parents, etc) must be confident that the certificate is correct.

It is therefore a college responsibility to have procedures that guarantee the accuracy of the data to be recorded on students' certificates.

All questions from students and/or parents to the Office of the BSSS regarding the accuracy of scores will be referred to the college attended by the student.

#### **8.1.3 Compulsory Courses**

All students must complete a course from the English Course Area as a requirement for the award of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

#### **8.1.4 Strongly Recommended Courses**

It is strongly recommended that all students complete a course from the Mathematics Course Area as part of their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate package.

#### **8.1.5 Certification Review**

The requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate are reviewed on a five year cycle.

## **8.2 Statement of Achievement**

The Statement of Achievement may be issued to students at any time during year 11 and year 12.

The Statement of Achievement reports the units studied by the student, grouped in courses, and where appropriate the unit grades.

Personal skills and qualities covered by references are not included on the Statement of Achievement.

The Statement of Achievement is made available on request to students who are leaving college, seeking employment, changing colleges or moving interstate, as an up-to-date record of their current studies.

## **8.3 Senior Secondary Certificate**

### **8.3.1 Generic Achievement standards**

Generic Achievement standards describing levels of achievement are used on the Senior Secondary Certificate and may be used by colleges in reporting. They are as follows:

- A** awarded to students who have demonstrated a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the full range of concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a very high level of cognitive and practical skill in a wide range of assessment situations.
- B** awarded to students who have demonstrated a high level of knowledge and understanding of the concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a high level of cognitive and practical skill in a range of assessment situations.
- C** awarded to students who have demonstrated a sound level of knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a sound level of cognitive and practical skill in most assessment situations.
- D** awarded to students who have demonstrated a limited knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a limited level of cognitive and practical skill in assessment situations.
- E** awarded to students who have demonstrated a very limited knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a very limited level of cognitive and practical skill in assessment situations.

### **8.3.2 Issue of Senior Secondary Certificate**

Any educational institution whose courses have been accredited by the Board may have the results of those courses recorded on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. The certificate will be issued by the college/educational institution that the student was attending at the conclusion of her/his year 12 studies. If a student is attending more than one institution, that with the greater number of courses shall issue the certificate and shall have its courses listed first. The signatures of all the relevant principals will appear on the certificate.

#### **8.3.2.1 College Distribution of Senior Secondary Certificates, Tertiary Entrance Statements and Vocational Certificates**

Senior Secondary Certificates, Tertiary Entrance Statements and vocational certificates should be handed directly to the student.

Each student must sign a distribution register on the receipt of a certificate and the date of

receipt must be recorded against the signature.

If a student cannot personally receive a certificate, the certificate can only be given to another person upon receipt of an authorisation signed by the student and the authorised person, which must be kept with the register.

If mailing is a documented option, the college is to use Registered Mail for this process.

### **8.3.2.2 Return of Uncollected Certificates**

Uncollected certificates must be returned to the Office of the BSSS, by the end of February of the following year after certification.

These Certificates are available for collection by students from the Office of the BSSS upon provision of photographic identification.

### **8.3.3 Reprinting of Certificates**

Transcripts of Senior Secondary Certificates, Tertiary Entrance Statements and Vocational Certificates, are available from the Office of the BSSS upon production of photographic identification or alternative verified documentation. An application form, detailing required documentation and costs, is available from the BSSS website: <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/>

When a significant number (ten or more) Senior Secondary Certificates and Tertiary Entrance Statements need to be edited and reprinted due to a college error, after certification is completed, the college involved will be required to reimburse the Office of the BSSS for the standard cost of these reprints.

## **8.4 Conditions for the Award of Senior Secondary Certificates**

The Board shall not issue a certificate under subsection (1) of the Act in respect of a course or unit unless it is satisfied that:

- the course has been taught in accordance with the guidelines that relate to its accreditation or registration and any conditions that the accreditation or registration is subject to any guidelines and requirements of the Board relating to the teaching of the course and the assessment of students have been observed.

Teaching courses as accredited or registered means that:

- all teachers have a copy of the whole course document prior to teaching it
- the course has been taught in the course patterns described in the course document
- the course goals have guided the direction of the delivery of the course and describe outcomes achievable by students
- all units have been taught to the goals, content, teaching and learning strategies, across curriculum perspectives, assessment and resources as described in the Unit Outlines in the accredited course document
- the level of difficulty of the assessment tasks is consistent with that indicated in the accredited course document and appropriate for students in years 11 and 12
- students are assessed according to the Unit Outline and standards in the accredited course document
- requirements for assessment, moderation and course score calculations are met
- for vocational courses, teaching and physical resource requirements have been met.

Requirements relating to the awarding of a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance

Statements can be waived in exceptional circumstances with the permission of the Executive Director, BSSS.

## **8.5 Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement**

Within a standard package the maximum number of units that contribute towards the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement is 8 standard units per course area.

Within a Course Area, the course type is limited to the equivalent of a double major.

For an abridged package, the maximum number of units that contribute towards the requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is 4 standard units per Course Area.

### **8.5.1 Contribution of Vocational Learning to Senior Secondary Certificate**

The maximum contribution that E units can make to the requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is the equivalent of 8 standard units in each industry area.

A maximum of one C or E course can be used as a required minor for a Senior Secondary Certificate in abridged packages.

Implementation of awarding E units that recognise vocational learning is the responsibility of individual colleges in consultation with the Office of the BSSS. Colleges are required to endorse an **External Vocational Studies Application Form** and forward to the Office of BSSS with appropriate and sufficient evidence to support the application for the awarding of E units.

Refer to 10.2.3 [External Vocational Learning Courses \(E courses\)](#).

E Units are also awarded by the school for students undertaking an Australian School Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) for:

- Structured training and on-the-job training provided by an external RTO
- On-the job training for an ASBA undertaking the structured training at school, where the school is the RTO.

Refer to 3.2.7.2 [E courses](#)

Refer to 3.2.9.1 [Unit Values](#) for E units.

Colleges should develop a process of informing all students of the ability to have vocational learning recognised. For example; the college handbook.

### **8.5.2 Contribution of Structured Workplace Learning to Senior Secondary Certificate**

Refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#).

## **8.6 Tertiary Entrance Statement**

To obtain an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement a student needs to meet the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

### **8.6.1 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)**

The Tertiary Entrance Statement is produced for students who qualify for the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). It reports information useful for tertiary admission.

The method of calculation of the ATAR will be:

- calculate Aggregate Score for each student
- calculate notional Aggregate Score for students completing at least one T course
- calculate candidate ranking for each student including notionals
- translate candidate ranking to an ATAR ranking using NSW Technical Committee on Scaling table.

## **8.6.2 Order of Merit List**

The BSSS does not publish an order of merit list. The most meritorious student in each college in various categories is recognised at the Recognition of Excellence Ceremony. (Refer to 11.1 [Recognition of Excellence Ceremony](#))

## **8.6.3 Definitions and Calculations**

### **8.6.3.1 Other Course Score (OCS) Scaling**

The OCS method of scaling scores is used for the purpose of the ATAR calculation. OCS scaling involves scaling course scores against a measure of general achievement (Scaling Score) made up from a student's AST and scores in their best four T courses, including the best three T majors. The AST and course scores of all students who have met the requirements for a T Package will be used in calculating the scaling parameters for each course group.

Scaled course scores are constrained between an upper and a lower limit. The upper limit is 229 and the lower limit is around 76.

Note: ATAR calculations include procedures for the determination and weighting of aberrant AST scores.

(Refer to 9.2.6 [Scaling of H Courses](#))

### **8.6.3.2 Aberrant AST Scores**

The Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will identify cases where a student's AST score is significantly different from that which would be expected on the basis of her/his Scaling Score. The Executive Director, BSSS will use this information in deciding whether the student's AST score will be used in scaling.

### **8.6.3.3 Aggregate Scores and Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)**

The Aggregate Score is reported on the Tertiary Entrance Statement. The Aggregate Score will be calculated for all students who have studied an appropriate package and sat the AST. The Aggregate Score will be calculated and reported on the Tertiary Entrance Statement as an integer. A percentile rank, named the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, will also be calculated, based on the Aggregate Score. The ATAR will be reported on the Tertiary Entrance Statement as a decimal value to the nearest 0.05.

### **8.6.3.4 Ranking of Candidates**

The Year 12 Candidature is the group of year 12 students who completed at least one T minor course. The Rank by Year 12 Candidature indicates the percentage of the Year 12 Candidature placed higher than the student on the Aggregate Score. This is translated to a Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) using the NSW Technical Committee on Scaling table.

The ATAR is a ranking of a student relative to the full age cohort i.e. relative to the set of students who would be in the group if all students stayed on and completed year 12. It is reported with a range from 99.95 for the highest ranked students down to 30.00.

## **8.7 Types of Packages**

### **8.7.1 Standard Year 12 Package**

#### **8.7.1.1 Senior Secondary Certificate**

##### **8.7.1.1.1 Purpose**

The Senior Secondary Certificate is awarded following a program of full-time study completed over years 11 and 12, or equivalent.

It certifies that students have demonstrated achievement that prepares them for the workforce or further study.

##### **8.7.1.1.2 Goals**

All programs of study for the Senior Secondary Certificate are designed to develop student capabilities as defined in Section 1.1.3.

##### **8.7.1.1.3 Course Pattern**

A standard package for a Senior Secondary Certificate will be awarded on completion of an educational program approved by the college as having a coherent pattern of study and which includes the equivalent of at least 17 standard units in a period not exceeding five years. Refer to 8.5 [Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#).

This package must contain a minimum of four A, T, M, H, C or E courses from at least three different course areas including English. This must include at least two A, T or M courses.

At least 12 standard units are classified as A, T, M, H, C or E.

A maximum of 5 standard units from R courses can contribute to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate. This applies from the 2017 graduating cohort.

A maximum of 8 standard units from all external (the sum of E + H) courses can contribute to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate.

Refer to 10.2.4 for the maximum contribution of [Structured Workplace Learning](#) units to the Senior Secondary Certificate.

(Refer to 8.9.1 [Deferral of Studies](#))

#### **8.7.1.2 Tertiary Entrance Statement**

To meet the requirements of a T package and be awarded a Tertiary Entrance Statement, during year 11 and 12 studies a student must complete units that accrue a minimum of:

- 20 standard units which must include at least 18 standard A, C, E, T, M, H units of which at least the equivalent of 12.5 standard units must be T or H. Refer to 8.5 [Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#).

The accredited units must be arranged into courses to form at least the following patterns:

- five majors or
- four majors and one minor or
- three majors and three minors

Of these major and minor courses at least three major courses and one minor course must have



been classified T or H.

These studies:

- must be completed within no fewer than three and a half semesters and no more than five years
- with the approval of the college principal, deferment may be allowed once for an unbroken period of up to one year
- a student intending to take longer than two years needs to have first had her/his study plan approved by the college principal

The student must also sit for the ACT Scaling Test (AST).

### **8.7.1.3 Aggregate Score – Standard Package**

The Aggregate Score is the sum of the best three major scaled scores plus 0.6 of the next best scaled course score. In the Aggregate Score calculation the maximum course weight is 2.0 for all courses within the same Course Area.

## **8.7.2 Repeat Students**

A student may repeat year 11 or year 12. A student who repeats year 11 will fall into the same category as one commencing year 11. A student who repeats year 12 will study an Abridged Package (8.7.3).

### **8.7.2.1 Senior Secondary Certificate**

#### **Repeat students — year 11**

A student repeating year 11 will be certificated when year 12 is completed.

The Board will report only units and courses studied since recommencing year 11. The certificate awarded to the student who repeats year 11 and who subsequently qualifies for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank should record only those units and courses studied since beginning year 11 again. Only those units studied since beginning year 11 again will count towards an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

## **8.7.3 Abridged Packages**

A student who is commencing or recommencing studies after their original cohort has graduated is eligible to study an abridged package. Such students are classified as O.

**Note:** Commencement means the first time ever a student enrolls in college studies.

Students who are classified as studying an abridged package and are also recommencing studies will have only units from the recommenced study recorded on their certificates

Students studying an abridged package in secondary colleges fall into two categories:

- Students who study an abridged package over one year. (These students will be identified as O)
- Students who study an abridged package over two years. These students will be identified as O2 in their final year of study and as O1 prior to their final year.

### **8.7.3.1 Senior Secondary Certificate**

A Senior Secondary Certificate will be awarded to a student who has studied an abridged package and completed a study program approved by the principal which contains at least 6 standard units

forming at least three (3) A, T, M, C or E minors from different course areas including English. A maximum of one C or E course can be used as one of these minors. (Refer to [8.5 Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#).)

#### **8.7.3.1.1 Status and Recognition**

- In an abridged package no units with a grade of Status (S) for illness/misadventure can be counted towards the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate.
- In an abridged package no units with a grade of Recognition for studies completed overseas or interstate can be counted towards the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate.

#### **8.7.3.1.2 Structured Workplace Learning**

In an abridged package, no Structured Workplace Learning units can be counted towards the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate.

#### **8.7.3.2 Tertiary Entrance Statement**

Students studying an abridged package qualify to receive an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement if they complete a study program approved by the principal which includes:

- at least 8 standard T units, (refer to [8.5 Contribution of Units to a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#))
- T units that combine to form at least four T minor courses or one major and two minor courses from at least three different course areas.

#### **8.7.3.3 Aggregate Score – Abridged Package**

Students will have the course scores for any completed course scaled with the graduating cohort of the year of completion of that course.

These scores are stored and are available for use in the calculation of the student's Aggregate Score.

The Aggregate Score for an abridged package is the sum of the best three scaled minor course scores multiplied by 1.2. For the purposes of this calculation, a major course score counts as two minor course scores of equal value.

## **8.8 Vocational Certificates**

Refer to [10 Vocational Programs](#).

## **8.9 Special Categories**

### **8.9.1 Deferral of Studies**

With the approval of the principal deferral may be allowed once for an unbroken period of up to one year for students studying the standard package. However, no deferral is allowed for students who study an abridged package.

### **8.9.2 Transferring Students**

Qualifications issued by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies should reflect the studies completed by the student in accordance with the philosophy of the ACT senior secondary system. Significantly, at least half of the outcomes leading to the award of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should be the result of studies in courses accredited or registered by the Board of

## Senior Secondary Studies.

When a student transfers from outside the ACT senior secondary system prior to commencing year 12 (i.e. the final year of senior secondary education) or when a student chooses to transfer during year 12, their year 11-12 studies completed elsewhere are recognised and reported on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. However, the student must complete a minimum of:

- 8.5 standard units (50% of 17 minimum required) in the ACT senior secondary system and meet all the other requirements to be awarded an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. (Refer to 8.7.1.1.3 [Course Pattern](#))
- 10 standard units (50% of 20 minimum required) in the ACT senior secondary system and meet all other requirements to be awarded an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement. (Refer to 8.7.1.2 [Tertiary Entrance Statement](#))

Transferring students will only be eligible for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) if they have been assessed within their 'home' college with a grade and score in at least 2 standard units in each of a minimum of three T major courses and at least 1 standard unit in one T minor course. (Refer to 4.3.6.9 [Number of Status \(S\) and Recognition \(R\) Units Awarded](#))

When a student transfers from outside the ACT senior secondary system during year 12 and the circumstances are beyond the control of the student (e.g. Defence, Diplomatic postings) or the student cannot reasonably continue in their current education system (e.g. Australian Institute of Sport), the Principal in consultation with the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will decide on an appropriate study package to enable the student to complete the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of such a decision can appeal to the Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Any college receiving a student from another college or school in/or outside the ACT who is seeking exemption or recognition needs to obtain the appropriate verification and data.

Refer to 4.3.6.5 [X Grade \(Exemption\)](#) and to 4.3.6.7 [Recognition \(R\) Grade](#)

### **8.9.2.1 Transferring from Within the ACT system**

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, students transferring from other colleges in the ACT system will maintain the unit data, from their original (home) college. If a student continues with the study of a course from their previous college, the course score is based on achievement in units after arrival. However, if a student has completed a course at their previous college, and they do not continue studying that course at the new college, then the unit data can be used to generate a course and/or a course score for that subject.

A student may transfer from an international qualification in a college to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate in the same college or another college. They may be granted recognition for work completed under the provisions which apply to students transferring from Jurisdictions within Australia, other than the ACT system or outside Australia as detailed in 8.9.2.2 and 8.9.2.3

### **8.9.2.2 Transferring from other systems within Australia, other than the ACT system**

Students transferring from jurisdictions within Australia, other than the ACT system, may be granted recognition for work completed during their senior secondary studies, and have these units included in their major and minor courses.

Where a student has completed courses in other systems that generate an equivalent to a course score, then the student is entitled to have a course score calculated that will appear on their Tertiary Entrance Statement. Colleges should pass copies of relevant documents to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment. The Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will calculate an appropriate ACT course score based on documentation and correspondence with the original system.

### **8.9.2.3 Transferring from Outside Australia**

Students transferring from outside Australia may be granted recognition for work completed during their senior secondary studies, and have these units included in their majors and minors. However, the course score is based on achievement in units after arrival. If the student does not complete units in the course in the ACT, but has sufficient status units to form a course, then s/he is awarded an A course in the subject.

### **8.9.3 Students with Major Disabilities**

Principals may approve variations to the assessment procedures of courses for students identified as learning disabled. Variations will be based on degree of difficulty and what prevents a student from conveying her/his acquired knowledge as effectively as a student without a disability.

### **8.9.4 Incomplete T Package**

In exceptional circumstances, students who have met all of the course requirements for a T package but have not sat for the AST may qualify by sitting the AST in any year. In such cases the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank will be calculated using the Scaling Group parameters which applied in the year the course work was completed. The Tertiary Entrance Statement will be issued in the year the AST requirement is completed.

### **8.9.5 Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Overseas Students**

Colleges should ensure that, to the best of their ability:

- students claiming Australian Aboriginality
- students claiming Torres Strait Islander descent
- overseas students

are flagged in the database.

### **8.9.6 Students from Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

Refer to 6.6.8 [Students from Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds](#).

### **8.9.7 Early Access Students**

The purpose of Early Access is to enable year 10 students to enrol early in Year 11/12 studies. (Refer to Appendix 5 [Guidelines for Early Access](#))

An Early Access student is one who has commenced their senior secondary studies as a year 10 student. It is the responsibility of the college to inform these students of the implications of beginning their senior secondary studies earlier than their cohort. The Executive Director, BSSS, must be informed in writing by the college principal of all Early Access students prior to the student commencing their senior secondary studies.

Early Access year 10 students will be added to the BSSS database with their year level set to 10.

These students enrolled in senior secondary studies while in year 10 will have these studies counted toward and reported on their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. The beginning of year 11/12 studies will count as the start of the five year span that students have to complete their Senior Secondary Certificate. Students will be issued with their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate along with their cohort at the end of year 12.

The scores achieved in the Early Access units are not to be used in the calculation of a course score, but can be used to inform the college decision on the course score.



## **8.10 Procedures for certificating the French Baccalauréat Program**

French Baccalauréat courses will be registered with the BSSS, with each structured so that it can be offered in units consistent with Board policy. The courses will be considered as equivalent to T courses where the course is delivered in standard units with a minimum value of 0.5. Courses delivered in units with a value less than 0.5 will be classified as R courses/units.

The college will report scores out of 20 for each of the French Baccalauréat units. These scores will provide an indicator of progress and performance but they will not be used in the calculation of an ACT scaled course score.

T units satisfactorily completed by the student will be recorded with a grade “Successful” on their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. R units satisfactorily completed will be recorded with a Pass (P) grade.

Course names will have a prefix of FB. For example:

FB: Mathématiques S

FB: Histoire Géographie FB: Français

FB courses will be in their own single Scaling Group.

A student studying the French Baccalauréat program will be awarded an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate provided they meet the Board’s requirements for that certificate. An ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, which incorporates French Baccalauréat courses, will include the following statement:

Courses with a prefix of ‘FB’ are French Baccalauréat courses. These courses have been delivered in the above college and are recognised under an agreement between the French, Australian and ACT governments.

A student who has completed the French Baccalauréat program can be awarded a Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) and an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) provided they have met the requirements for a TES, including the requirements that studies are completed over a minimum of three and a half semesters in years 11/12 and the student has sat the AST in their year 12.

The calculation of an ATAR for such students will be based on a maximum of two (2) French Baccalauréat courses, comprising 1.6 transformed French Baccalauréat course scores and at least two (2) ACT major courses, comprising 2.0 scaled course scores.

The Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment will transform the scores received in the French Baccalauréat exam into an ACT scaled course score based on the student’s exam score and information on the relative achievement of the student against the French year 12 cohort undertaking that course. This information is obtained from the French Baccalauréat organisation.

For such students the Tertiary Entrance Statement will include the following statement:

Courses with a prefix of ‘FB’ are French Baccalauréat courses. These courses have been delivered in the above college and are recognised under an agreement between the French, Australian and ACT governments. The scores have been transformed from the student’s score/s received in the French Baccalauréat Examination.

## **8.11 Review of a Board refusal to issue a certificate**

Where the Board refuses to issue a certificate, a person dissatisfied by the refusal may apply, in writing, to the Board for a review of the refusal. ‘Certificate’ applies to a certificate of any kind

ordinarily issued by the Board to a person who has completed the studies to which the certificate relates, including a certificate of attainment.

The applicant must:

- state the grounds on which the review is sought
- provide the application to the Board within one month after the day the Board states is the day when the certificate would have been issued.

Within one month of receiving the application, the Chair of the Board must set up a committee to advise the Board on the application. The committee will be established only on a needs basis and will operate in a manner similar to that of the Discipline Committee of the Board. The committee's procedures should be guided by the appeals processes outlined in Section 7.3 Appeals Procedures.

## 9 University Programs

### 9.1 Extension Units

Universities, such as the Australian National University and the University of Canberra also provide opportunities for talented year 11 and 12 students to enrol in nominated university units to extend their college program. Currently extension units are offered as either T units or R units.

#### 9.1.1 Recognition towards Senior Secondary Certificate

If the extension unit is classified by the Board as a T unit, up to two standard Extension Units can be used in a related home college T course. Completed Extension Units are reported with the related home college T course and contribute towards the course type. The grade(s) achieved by the student in the unit(s) will be recorded on the Senior Secondary Certificate using the university descriptors.

The course score for T courses will be based on the home college units.

If the Extension Unit is classified by the Board as an R unit, the grade achieved by the student in the University Extension Unit will be recorded on the Senior Secondary Certificate using the university descriptors. The units cannot be reported with a BSSS accredited course and cannot be used in the calculation of an ATAR.

#### 9.1.2 Eligibility

Students who are to be considered for Extension Units are, in the first instance, nominated by their school or college principal as having the potential and motivation to undertake university study.

Note: Extension Units cannot be used to meet the minimum requirements for major and minor courses or the minimum number of accredited units that are required for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement.

### 9.2 H courses

H courses are targeted or first year university programs delivered in partnership with higher education providers and are intended to support high achieving students.

Students enrolled in H courses would normally be studying the same course in their home college. The university will determine co-requisite requirements. These must be clearly stated in the course.

#### 9.2.1 Registration of H courses

H courses (refer to 3.2.7.1 [H Courses](#)) are accredited by an Australian higher education provider and presented to the Board for registration.

The contribution of the course to undergraduate degree or degrees must be approved by the higher education provider prior to presentation to the BSSS for H classification and clearly indicated in the course.

The Board will decide on the award of H classification to a course after the following issues have been verified:

- higher education provider accreditation of the course and approval of its contribution to



undergraduate degree(s) with that provider

- the contribution of the course to an undergraduate degree or degrees is clearly outlined in the course
- co-requisite home college courses are clearly indicated
- the course includes the following statement: “Where an H course can include students who are concurrently studying the same course in their home college and those who are not, the H course provider must inform students of this in writing and that the assessment will be the same for all students”
- the course provides curriculum differentiation from year 11 and 12 BSSS accredited courses to provide university equivalent knowledge and understanding in a subject area
- duplication of course content with other BSSS T courses has been recognised so that existing policy on duplication can be implemented
- time requirements meet with Board policy
- student admission to the H course will be accompanied by an acknowledgment of enrolment from the home college.

Whilst H courses are not accredited by the BSSS and therefore not subject to Framework requirements, the nature and number of assessment tasks are to be consistent with the assessment requirements in the relevant Framework.

BSSS approval for H classification is to be finalised before students begin studying courses. Courses should be submitted to the Office of the BSSS in adequate time for review.

H courses are not available for adoption.

### **9.2.2 Moderation of H courses**

Teachers of H courses will be required to present portfolios of student work for verification that units are taught and assessed as documented. The Quality Assurance Officer should report any concerns to the Board.

### **9.2.3 Unit Grades in H courses**

Unit grades for H units will be awarded by the university, using the descriptors from that university. These will be recorded on the student’s Senior Secondary Certificate.

### **9.2.4 Contribution of H Courses and Units to Requirements for Senior Secondary Certificates**

A maximum of 6 standard units from H courses can contribute to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement. (Refer to 8.5 [Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement](#))

### **9.2.5 Reporting of H Courses**

H courses are reported separately on the Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement. If a student has not completed enough H units to form a course, the units may be reported under the relevant home college course and contribute to the course type but not the course score.

## 9.2.6 Scaling of H Courses

Institutions delivering H courses are required to provide to the BSSS, for each course, a course score for each year 12 student who has completed the course and is enrolled in a home college using BSSS certification. These course scores must be provided by the date in early December specified annually in the *BSSS General Schedule of Meetings and Events*. At the beginning of each year institutions must also nominate, to the Executive Officer - Certification & Assessment, an assessment coordinator who is responsible for the provision of these course scores to the BSSS.

All H courses are scaled using the scaling scores ( $V_i$ ) of the students studying the course.

Scaled course scores from H courses are available for inclusion in the calculation of the Aggregate Score. Home college and H courses are reported separately, each with its own course type.

Students can count up to 2 H courses to a maximum weight of 1.6 (2 H minors would be 1.2; 1 H major and 1 H minor would be 1.6) out of the required 3.6 in the calculation of the ATAR.

If a student completes a T minor in their home college and a minor H course then only the best minor would be used in the calculation of an Aggregate Score.

If the student completes a T major in their home college and a minor H course in the same course area, then both are able to be used in the calculation of an Aggregate score.

If the student completes a T major minor in their home college and a H course minor then these two scores could be weighted as if they form a double major, and are equivalent to a double major course type.

If a student completes a double major at their home college and an H course minor then these course scores could be weighted as if they form a double major.

Colleges, and universities, should ensure that students are informed of the processes for the scaling of H courses, and the contribution of H courses to the requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificates, including the calculation of a student's ATAR.

## 10 Vocational Programs

The Board recognises the value of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs and their contribution to quality education and enhanced transitions to work and further education. The Board has a range of policies and procedures to ensure that VET study undertaken during years 11 and 12 can contribute towards the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and be recognised on certificates issued by the Board. Students may study VET programs through their college as the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or with an external RTO.

The Board defines vocational programs as structured and sequenced training that has been nationally endorsed through Training Packages. All Board classified vocational programs lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or statement of attainment and are registered on the national database on vocational education and training, TGA (<http://training.gov.au>)

### 10.1 National VET System

#### 10.1.1 Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* are a set of national standards, developed to provide nationally consistent, flexible, high-quality training and assessment services for clients of Australia's VET system.

#### 10.1.2 National Training Packages

A Training Package is a set of nationally endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Each Training Package:

- provides a consistent and reliable set of components for training, recognising and assessing peoples skills. It may also contain optional support materials
- enables nationally recognised qualifications to be awarded through direct assessment of workplace competencies
- encourages the development and delivery of flexible training, which suits individual and industry requirements
- encourages learning and assessment in a work-related environment which leads to verifiable workplace outcomes.

Training Packages are developed by Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) or enterprises to meet the training needs needs of an industry or a group of industries . Extensive research and consultation with industry stakeholders is undertaken in the development and validation of training packages. Training packages are then endorsed and approved for implementation.

#### 10.1.3 Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

An RTO is a training organisation registered by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or, in some instances, a state regulator in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 to deliver vocational education and training (VET). An RTO can deliver nationally recognised training and issue Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) VET qualifications in line with its scope of registration.

#### **10.1.4 Training Logo**

The Nationally Recognised Training logo is used to certify national vocational education and training and will appear on a VET certificate or statement of attainment issued by the Office of the Board.

#### **10.1.5 VET Delivered to Secondary Students**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivered to secondary students consists of programs or courses undertaken by students that contribute to the senior secondary certificate. These programs also provide credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework. The training students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by a Registered Training Organisation or a school in partnership with a Registered Training Organisation.

### **10.2 BSSS Vocational Programs**

#### **10.2.1 Development**

To meet the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, all vocational programs must be written to the relevant Training Package. The Board requires developers of vocational programs to engage with industry and the Canberra Institute of Technology to ensure industry support and transition pathways to further training and education.

Colleges can choose to deliver BSSS vocational programs which are developed as courses (A, T, M) as registered on TGA. Course developers work closely with the Office of the BSSS Curriculum Officers in the development of courses and may contact the Office of the BSSS for course development training, support, advice and materials.

Alternatively, a C course may be developed and accredited which assesses and reports competency based standards instead of grades. (A copy of the template for C Courses is available from the Office of the BSSS.)

The Office of the BSSS will alert colleges to any changes within the VET sector, including changes to Training Packages, which must be implemented within the five-year accreditation period. When amendments to current courses are required, BSSS accredited programs will be updated to incorporate the changes in consultation with the proponent. The revised course document will be uploaded to the BSSS website.

#### **10.2.2 Accreditation**

The Board's processes for the accreditation of vocational programs are outlined to course developers during training sessions.

The Board will decide on the award of a vocational program classification (V) to an A, T, C or M course after the following matters have been verified:

- duplication of course content with other A, T, C, M courses has been recognised so existing policy on duplication can be implemented
- time requirements meet Board policy
- the course leads to a nationally recognised vocational qualification registered on the national database, Training.gov.au.

### 10.2.3 External Vocational Learning Courses (E courses)

E courses have industry areas as course titles. These courses will be in course areas along with other relevant BSSS courses. The maximum contribution of any one course area to the minimum requirements of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate is 8 standard units.

Students will be awarded standard units in multiples of 0.5 undertaken as a structured educational program.

Students who undertake an E course with an external RTO must complete an External Vocational Studies Application Form (available on the BSSS website). This form needs to be endorsed by the school by the beginning of November in the student's final year of study, and sent to the Office of BSSS with appropriate and sufficient evidence to support the application for the awarding of E units.

E Units are also awarded by the school for students undertaking an Australian School Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) for:

- Structured training and on-the-job training provided by an external RTO
- On-the-job training for an ASBA undertaking the structured training at school, where the school is the RTO.

ASBAs undertaking a Certificate II qualification will be entitled to a maximum of 2 units a semester in the relevant industry area (1 unit for structured training and 1 unit for on-the-job training).

ASBAs undertaking a Certificate III qualification will be entitled to a maximum of 3 units a semester in the relevant industry area (1 unit for structured training and 2 units for on-the-job training).

**Note:** Students cannot get credit towards an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate for an E Course which duplicates content in a home college course they are studying or have studied.

Refer to 3.2.7.2 [E Courses](#).

Refer to 8.5.1 [Contribution of Vocational Learning to the Senior Secondary Certificate](#).

### 10.2.4 Structured Workplace Learning

Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) is the workplace component of a nationally recognised industry specific VET program. It provides supervised learning activities contributing to an assessment of competence, and achievement of outcomes and requirements of a particular Training Package.

The following conditions relate to the development and implementation of SWL in Board courses.

- For accreditation by the Board, Structured Workplace Learning units must identify the specific industry units of competence that will be assessed
- SWL assessment evidence must be provided for verification and validation that assessments meet industry standards
- To gain credit for SWL, a student must be enrolled in a directly related VET program and have reached the level of achievement indicated in the relevant BSSS accredited course SWL unit
- A student must be awarded an A-E or Pass/Participated (C Course) grade in the associated BSSS accredited VET unit for the Structured Workplace Learning unit to be awarded, otherwise the SWL will be recorded as Work Experience

- Students will be awarded a grade Pass or Participated in the Structured Workplace Learning unit. (Refer to 4.3.6.3 [Unit Grades](#))
- Structured Workplace Learning units are awarded in multiples of 0.5 standard units up to a maximum of 4 Structured Workplace Learning units, equivalent to 2 standard units, per course. The SWL component cannot be greater than 50% of the course
- The maximum contribution of Structured Workplace Learning units to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is 4 standard units
- As an integral part of a vocational program, the Structured Workplace Learning units will be reported with the associated course on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate
- Within T courses, Structured Workplace Learning units do not contribute to course type or course score. Only the T units are used for the 80% rule in the calculation of a course score and in the determination of course types e.g. minor, major
- Within A and M courses, Structured Workplace Learning units contribute to the course type
- Structured Workplace Learning units are not available for abridged packages as these already have reduced requirements
- Structured Workplace Learning units are categorised as W units for administrative purposes.

The Board's *Guidelines for Structured Workplace Learning* are provided in Appendix 4.

## 10.2.5 Delivery of Vocational Programs

To provide accredited and/or registered vocational programs, colleges must be registered as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or provide training in partnership with an external RTO.

Where colleges have scope but do not have the necessary infrastructure to deliver a Training Package, they may form a partnership as a Third Party Agreement with another RTO for the delivery of part or all of the qualification.

### 10.2.5.1 Scope of Registration

College RTOs apply for scope to deliver vocational qualifications through ASQA. College RTOs must also apply to ASQA for an extension of scope to deliver new qualifications or additional competencies. ASQA will grant scope on the basis of an RTO's ability to meet the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, trainer/assessor requirements and the physical resource requirements set out in the industry specific Training Package.

## 10.2.6 Assessment in Vocational Programs

Vocational programs must be assessed in accordance with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* and the guidelines outlined in the relevant Training Package.

Students undertaking A, T and M accredited vocational programs will be assessed against the criteria and standards referenced in the frameworks to produce grades and scores. They will also be assessed against competency standards as described in the relevant Training Package. Refer to 4.3.6.3 [Unit Grades](#)

Students undertaking C accredited vocational programs will be assessed against competency standards as described in the relevant Training Package.

Where vocational programs are delivered through a partnership arrangement, there must be a teacher from the college at which the students are enrolled involved in the assessment of student

achievement in determining BSSS unit grades and scores.

All high school VET data must be entered into the ACT Certification System (ACS) by the VET Coordinator at the Registered Training Organisation identified in the Third party Service Agreement, or by the VET Coordinator at the Registered Training Organisation identified in the Third party Service Agreement working together with the VET Coordinator from the high school.

In order to satisfy quality assurance principles, the principal of the college at which the students are enrolled is responsible for the assessment and certification awarded.

Students who do not reach competency within the time frame allocated should have an opportunity for further assessment.

## **10.2.7 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

Clause 1.8 in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* identifies the requirement for all RTOs to have strategies and procedures in place to conduct RPL relating to competency assessment according to the requirements of the relevant industry Training Package.

Under RPL students may receive exemptions for Year 11 and 12 studies if the student making the claim can clearly demonstrate that all of the learning outcomes of a unit of competency have been achieved. (Refer to 4.3.6.5 [Exemption \(X\) Grade](#)) The minimum exemption for which RPL will be allowed will be a unit of competence as per the relevant Training Package. Exempted time may need to be made up to meet the time requirements by the end of the unit/course. (Refer to 3.2.8.3 [Course Duration](#))

### **10.2.7.1 Implementation of RPL**

Before year 11 and 12: Competencies a student has obtained under RPL arrangements for experience prior to enrolling at a college may be given credit transfer (Refer to 10.2.8 [Credit Transfer](#)).

During year 11 and 12: Where a student arranges an alternative way of achieving competence, either through the college as a Registered Training Organisation or another RTO, credit toward the Senior Secondary Certificate may be granted for competencies where they form a unit of study. (The student must have the approval of the principal). Where RPL is obtained in addition to a student's agreed program of study at the college, no credit toward a Senior Secondary Certificate will be granted. In all cases, the college must be informed of the application for RPL prior to the commencement of the unit that includes the competencies to be studied.

Note: the above policies on recognition need to be read in conjunction with other vocational education policies. (Refer to 10.1.3 [Registered Training Organisation](#), 3.3.6 [Board Determination of Classification](#), 10.2.6 [Assessment in Vocational Programs](#), and to 10.2.10 [Certification of Vocational Programs](#))

## **10.2.8 Credit Transfer**

Clause 3.5 in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* specifies that VET qualifications and VET statements of attainment issued by any RTO must be recognised by another RTO.

This will be done through Credit Transfer arrangements and will contribute to the relevant Qualification. Students must produce a Statement of Attainment from a Registered Training Organisation which specifically indicates competencies achieved against national codes. Credit Transfer relates only to national training qualifications, it does not contribute points towards the Senior Secondary Certificate.

## **10.2.9 Moderation of Vocational Programs**

Teachers of A, T and M accredited vocational programs are required to submit portfolios of student work as part of the BSSS peer review moderation process. (Refer to 5.3 [System Moderation of Grades](#)) Assessment evidence is to be provided for Structured Workplace Learning units for verification and validation that assessments meet industry standards. (Refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#))

Teachers of C courses are required to present portfolios of student work for verification and validation that the units and assessment instruments meet industry standards and are delivered as documented. The Quality Assurance Officer will report any concerns to the Board.

## **10.2.10 Certification of Vocational Programs**

### **10.2.10.1 Contribution of Vocational Programs to requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate**

Board accredited vocational programs undertaken during years 11 and 12 can contribute to the requirements for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement. (Refer to 8.7 [Types of Packages](#) for details of these requirements and the contribution of C or E vocational courses, and 10.2.4 Structured Workplace Learning)

Where a student obtains vocational qualifications from an external RTO during years 11 and 12, recognition towards a Senior Secondary Certificate will be determined by the Office of the BSSS upon request from a college, providing the student is enrolled in the college during the program.

### **10.2.10.2 Reporting of Vocational Programs on the Senior Secondary Certificate**

Vocational education outcomes are reported on the Senior Secondary Certificate in the following ways.

#### **10.2.10.2.1 A, T, M Courses**

A, T and M accredited vocational programs are reported with the units studied and A-E grades achieved by the student.

#### **10.2.10.2.2 C Courses**

- For C courses, a student will be awarded standard units in multiples of 0.5 based on agreed hours of training and assessment undertaken as a structured education program
- C courses are reported in accord with Board policy on unit values (refer to 3.2.9.1 [Unit Values](#)) and course duration (refer to 3.2.8.3 [Course Duration](#)) for accredited courses
- C units are reported with the grades Participated or Pass. Refer to 4.3.6.3 [Unit Grades](#)
- Where units do not form a course they will be reported on the Senior Secondary Certificate under Ungrouped.

(Refer to 8.5.1 [Contribution of Vocational Learning to Senior Secondary Certificate](#))

#### **10.2.10.2.3 Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)**

Refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#).

#### **10.2.10.2.4 E Courses**

- An E course is recorded under a course name according to the relevant *Industry Area* (refer to 3.2.7.2 [E Courses](#)) and are reported with the grade Pass
- Where units do not form a course they will be reported on the Senior Secondary Certificate under ungrouped units.

(Refer to 8.5.1 [Contribution of Vocational Learning to Senior Secondary Certificate](#))



## 10.2.11 Vocational Certification

Vocational qualifications are certificates that bear the Nationally Recognised Training logo and are achieved by students meeting the requirements as described in the relevant vocational course and industry specific Training Package. Vocational qualifications certificated by the Board include Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III and Statements of Attainment.

Vocational qualifications report the relevant competencies demonstrated by the student. For vocational qualifications, the following principles apply:

- RTOs must comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015
- students demonstrating all required competencies in the VET qualification packaging rules will receive a vocational Certificate
- students demonstrating some of the required competencies in the VET qualification packaging rules will receive a Statement of Attainment for the specified qualification
- competence must be demonstrated over time and in the full range of industry context. To be deemed competent in a unit, students must demonstrate all the performance criteria within the documented range statements and assessment contexts
- Vocational Qualifications (Certificates or Statements of Attainment) must include:
  - the Nationally Recognised Training Logo
  - the logo and provider number of the Registered Training Organisation (the college)
  - the college principal's signature
- the Board produces the certificates and statements after provision of accurate, reliable data from colleges.

# 11 Recognition of Achievements

## 11.1 Recognition of Excellence Ceremony

At the end of each year the Board recognises excellence in the following categories:

- Academic Achievement
- Community Service
- Performing/Visual Arts
- Vocational Studies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Performance.

One student in each of the categories above is to be nominated by each college. The criteria outlined below are to be used by principals in determining nominations.

### 11.1.1 Academic Achievement

The highest Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) in the college Year 12 cohort, or, in the case of a college with no ATAR eligible students:

the highest Grade Point Average (GPA) from the college Year 12 cohort calculated from the best ten units (T, H, A, M, E, C). In the event of a tie the largest number of the highest grades (for an equivalent number of courses) then the grades in the best four courses or course scores (if they exist) are used.

### 11.1.2 Community Services

- Outstanding contribution and service during years 11 and 12 to the life of the college through active participation in clubs/societies, voluntary work, fundraising and/or activities of a similar nature and/or
- Outstanding contribution and service during years 11 and 12 to the broader community through active participation in clubs/societies, voluntary work, fundraising and/or activities of a similar nature.

### 11.1.3 Performing/Visual Arts

- Sustained high level of individual contribution to or achievement in one or both nomination areas within the college during years 11 and 12 and/or
- High level of success during years 11 and 12 in one or both nomination areas activities/competition(s) external to the college on the basis of work completed in association with the college.

### 11.1.4 Vocational Studies

- Sustained high level of participation and achievement during years 11 and 12 in vocational programs conducted under the auspices of the college and/or
- Outstanding achievement during years 11 and 12 on the part of a female or male student in a non-traditional area of vocational study conducted under the auspices of the college.

### **11.1.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**

- Sustained high level of achievement across all courses studied by the student during years 11 and 12 and/or
- Significant contribution during years 11 and 12 to life in the college or broader community. Students may have been mentors to other students, represented their college at national or international level, or excelled in academic studies, sports or the arts.



## Appendix 1: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

<b>College:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
I have a potential Conflict of Interest in that the following named person/s is/are a Relative or Relative of a Close Family Friend *:	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Year level:</b>
My relationship to them is:	
I teach year 11 and/or 12 in the following courses:	
The college has the following procedures in place to manage this potential Conflict of Interest:	

Staff Member's Signature: ..... Date:

Principal's Name (print): .....

Principal's Signature: ..... Date:

\*Relative means any of the following persons in relation to a student at a college:

- a father, mother, guardian, grandfather, grandmother, step-father or step-mother; or
- a son, daughter, grandson, grand-daughter, step-son or step-daughter; or
- a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister; or
- an uncle or aunt; or
- a nephew or niece; or
- a cousin; or
- any other kind of relationships similar to those described in paragraphs (a) to (f) above arising by marriage, defacto relationship or other similar living arrangements of any persons described in those paragraphs.

Close Family Friend means a person who has been a close friend of the student or student's father, mother or guardian for more than five years.

## Appendix 2: Common Curriculum Elements and Glossary of Verbs

Common Curriculum Elements		
Organisers	Elements	Examples
create, compose and apply	apply	ideas and procedures in unfamiliar situations, content and processes in non-routine settings
	compose	oral, written and multimodal texts, music, visual images, responses to complex topics, new outcomes
	represent	images, symbols or signs
	create	creative thinking to identify areas for change, growth and innovation, recognise opportunities, experiment to achieve innovative solutions, construct objects, imagine alternatives
	manipulate	images, text, data, points of view
analyse, synthesise and evaluate	justify	arguments, points of view, phenomena, choices
	hypothesise	statement/theory that can be tested by data
	extrapolate	trends, cause/effect, impact of a decision
	predict	data, trends, inferences
	evaluate	text, images, points of view, solutions, phenomenon, graphics
	test	validity of assumptions, ideas, procedures, strategies
	argue	trends, cause/effect, strengths and weaknesses
	reflect	on strengths and weaknesses
	synthesise	data and knowledge, points of view from several sources
	analyse	text, images, graphs, data, points of view
	examine	data, visual images, arguments, points of view
investigate	issues, problems	
organise, sequence and explain	sequence	text, data, relationships, arguments, patterns
	visualise	trends, futures, patterns, cause and effect
	compare/contrast	data, visual images, arguments, points of view
	discuss	issues, data, relationships, choices/options
	interpret	symbols, text, images, graphs
	explain	explicit/implicit assumptions, bias, themes/arguments, cause/effect, strengths/weaknesses
	translate	data, visual images, arguments, points of view
	assess	probabilities, choices/options
identify, summarise and plan	select	main points, words, ideas in text
	reproduce	information, data, words, images, graphics
	respond	data, visual images, arguments, points of view
	relate	events, processes, situations
	demonstrate	probabilities, choices/options
	describe	data, visual images, arguments, points of view
	plan	strategies, ideas in text, arguments
	classify	information, data, words, images
	identify	spatial relationships, patterns, interrelationships
summarise	main points, words, ideas in text, review, draft and edit	

<b>Glossary of Verbs</b>	
<b>Verbs</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Analyse	Consider in detail for the purpose of finding meaning or relationships, and identifying patterns, similarities and differences
Apply	Use, utilise or employ in a particular situation
Argue	Give reasons for or against something
Assess	Make a Judgement about the value of
Classify	Arrange into named categories in order to sort, group or identify
Compare	Estimate, measure or note how things are similar or dissimilar
Compose	The activity that occurs when students produce written, spoken, or visual texts
Contrast	Compare in such a way as to emphasise differences
Create	Bring into existence, to originate
Demonstrate	Give a practical exhibition an explanation
Describe	Give an account of characteristics or features
Discuss	Talk or write about a topic, taking into account different issues or ideas
Evaluate	Examine and judge the merit or significance of something
Examine	Determine the nature or condition of
Explain	Provide additional information that demonstrates understanding of reasoning and /or application
Extrapolate	Infer from what is known
Hypothesise	Put forward a supposition or conjecture to account for certain facts and used as a basis for further investigation by which it may be proved or disproved
Identify	Recognise and name
Interpret	Draw meaning from
Investigate	Plan, inquire into and draw conclusions about
Justify	Show how argument or conclusion is right or reasonable
Manipulate	Adapt or change
Plan	Strategies, develop a series of steps, processes
Predict	Suggest what might happen in the future or as a consequence of something
Reflect	The thought process by which students develop an understanding and appreciation of their own learning. This process draws on both cognitive and affective experience
Relate	Tell or report about happenings, events or circumstances
Represent	Use words, images, symbols or signs to convey meaning
Reproduce	Copy or make close imitation
Respond	React to a person or text
Select	Choose in preference to another or others
Sequence	Arrange in order
Summarise	Give a brief statement of the main points
Synthesise	Combine elements (information/ideas/components) into a coherent whole
Test	Examine qualities or abilities
Translate	Express in another language or form, or in simpler terms
Visualise	The ability to decode, interpret, create, question, challenge and evaluate texts that communicate with visual images as well as, or rather than, words

## **Appendix 3: Australasian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authority (ACACA) Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity**

### **Context and Scope of these Guidelines**

ACACA agencies are responsible, directly or indirectly, for enormous amounts of assessment hundreds of examinations, thousands of questions, tens of thousands of assessment items set in schools in the high stakes area of senior secondary assessment.

Senior secondary assessment has a significant impact on the lives of the students involved. Accordingly, they each deserve a fair go the same opportunity to show what they know and can do regardless of factors such as gender. Fairness, equity and quality are closely related, not least in the sense that reasonable quality is a prerequisite for the deliberate achievement of equity. Low-quality assessment will almost certainly lead to inequitable outcomes.

There is, of course, always room for improvement in the quality of assessment. Each year sees an increase in the sophistication of educational assessment.

The adoption and implementation of these guidelines represent a step forward in improving the quality, and hence the fairness, of assessment. They do not represent a definitive, final or complete position. They should be read as representing a commitment by ACACA agencies to moving forward by setting down some principles and adopting nationwide an agreed position. The guidelines are intended to be a starting point and so should be read as being deliberately both provisional and incomplete. Experience with, and evaluation of, the effect of their adoption will lead to their further development and enhancement.

ACACA agencies are responsible for assessment, not for how schools operate. The need to be fair to all students means that ACACA assessment practices should not seek to adjust for missed opportunities to learn by saying that students have demonstrated achievement that they have not in fact demonstrated. In this sense the equity issues connected with ideas of Opportunity to Learn are not, therefore, part of these guidelines.

These guidelines are concerned with the practice of assessment. Syllabuses specify the knowledge and skills that should be assessed. The task of assessment is to assess in terms of these specifications, not to redefine the syllabus. However, the guidelines include the need for systematic and regular evaluation and review of assessment: its methods, its materials and its results. The systematic evaluation and review of assessment in a subject provides information about the syllabus: information that should be fed back into the syllabus review and development process.

Fundamental to equity in assessment is the recognition that the construction of the knowledge and skills to be assessed should involve a critical evaluation of the extent to which the choice of a particular set of knowledge and skills is likely to privilege certain groups of students and exclude others by virtue of gender, socioeconomic, cultural or linguistic background. A concern with equity also leads to adopting a proactive stance on the appropriate representation in the curriculum of different kinds of cultural knowledge and experience as valued knowledge and skills.

ACACA agencies have a job to do, practical tasks to complete within tight timelines and stringent resource constraints. In this role, their concerns are pragmatic: more about the achievable than the ideal, the practical more than the theoretical, and the present more than the remote future. The adoption by ACACA of this set of national guidelines is intended to promote change through review of existing practices and a proactive stance on equity.

### **Guidelines for Assessment Quality and Equity**

These guidelines are about the quality of assessment methods, materials and results and hence implicitly and explicitly about equity. The principal touchstone of quality in assessment is the extent to which it gives students a fair go.

To certify achievement in a subject requires assessment of students' command of the knowledge and skills defined and required by the syllabus. This assessment occurs through a set of assessment instruments. Assessment instruments include such devices as supervised examinations, assignments, projects, practicals, orals, aurals, observational schedules and portfolios. Assessment occurs under various conditions supervision, notice, access to resources, times, dates, handing-in procedures and acceptance of late submissions. Each assessment instrument comprises one or more assessment items. An assessment item requires a response from students in one or more of a variety of modes such as multiple choice, short answer, paragraph, extended written response, oral, graphical, diagrammatic and so on. As well as the knowledge and skills that are the direct focus, assessment items draw on assumed knowledge and often make use of background material contextualising the task presented. Cues and the layout of assessment items provide guides to students about the requirements of the task set by the item. Assessment items are devised by item writers and selected and combined into assessment instruments by test designers.

For quality, and hence equity, each assessment item should:

- actually assess what the item writer intends it to assess
- assess what on face value it purports to assess
- only require for its successful completion the decoding of a subtext after critical examination of the necessity and appropriateness of this requirement
- use specialist language or jargon as an aid to clarity and accuracy and not as an irrelevant obstacle to successful demonstration of the required knowledge or skill
- only involve the reproduction of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic or other cultural stereotypes after careful consideration of the necessity of such reproduction in order to avoid being itself a barrier to students' demonstrating their command of the characteristic the item is supposed to assess
- be clearly presented through appropriate choice of layout, cues, visual design, format and choice of words
- state its requirements explicitly and directly
- use as background material and require as assumed knowledge only that to which students may reasonably be presumed to have had ready access
- be marked by explicit, clear, unambiguous, criteria declared in advance that:
  - allow the student to identify appropriate ways to demonstrate command of the required knowledge and skills
  - allow the marker to recognise, where appropriate, different ways in which a student may demonstrate command of the required knowledge and skills.

Each assessment instrument should:

- give students clear and definite instructions
- be used under clear, definite and specified conditions that are substantially the same for all
- be used under conditions that do not present an inappropriate barrier to the equal participation of all.

Each set of assessment instruments used to assess a student's achievement in a subject should:

- involve the use of a range and balance of background contexts in which assessment items are presented



- involve a range and balance of types of assessment instruments and modes of response, including a balance and range of visual and linguistic material
- involve a range and balance of conditions.

Each agency should endeavour to improve assessment practices for which it bears responsibility:

- by regular review of the methods, materials and results of assessment
- by including an examination of equity in quality control and quality assurance procedures such as research and data analysis
- by training item writers, test designers and markers directly employed by the agency
- by communicating its quality requirements to suppliers of assessment items and instruments
- by promoting the adoption of these guidelines by teachers responsible for school-based assessment contributing to results certified by the agency.

An illustrative list of strategies for developing improved practices in assessment emphasising quality, equity and gender equity. Agencies can:

- distribute summaries of relevant research findings to item writers and test designers
- conduct reviews of the representation of gender in assessment instruments
- evaluate the occurrence in assessment instruments of reproductions of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic or other cultural stereotypes
- evaluate the consistency of the syllabus and the total set of assessment instruments by identifying the relative importance given by each to particular knowledge and skills
- review the extent to which the set of assessment instruments in a subject are, to the full extent permitted by the syllabus, inclusive of the experience and achievements of women as well as of men
- provide item writers and test designers with examples showing the full extent to which the construction of knowledge and skills to be assessed allows assessment incorporating references to human contexts
- conduct 'equity' scanning of assessment instruments before use
- promote research into the validity and fairness of assessment items for which the agency is responsible
- scrutinise assessment instruments to eliminate material that may prove an unnecessary and irrelevant distracter for some students
- employ specialist editors to examine the language of assessment instruments in terms of possible barriers to equal opportunity for all students
- involve students in critical examination of the quality of assessment instruments they have experienced
- involve teachers in critical examination of the quality of assessment instruments their students experience
- involve parents and the wider community in reviews of assessment practices
- review marker recruitment, selection and training procedures
- evaluate the weighting of assessment items and instruments in terms of analyses of gender differences in student performances.

## **Appendix 4: Guidelines for Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)**

Structured Workplace Learning units are a valued part of vocational courses and an integral part of the learning process required for the achievement of competencies from industry Training Packages that lead to a vocational qualification in the Australian Qualification Framework. Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) should be integrated with learning taking place at the college.

Refer to 10.2.4 [Structured Workplace Learning](#) for policy on the development and implementation of SWL.

Paid or voluntary work in a specific industry area will be considered as a SWL program where the student can demonstrate achievement of identified units of competence from a vocational course they are studying, which directly relates to their area of employment.

### **The student must be:**

- currently enrolled in a VET program directly related to the area of work and have reached the level of achievement indicated in the relevant BSSS accredited course SWL unit
- able to obtain agreement in writing from their employer to provide the support and mentoring required to participate in the program
- undertaking on-the-job training directly related to units of competence in the training package or nationally accredited VET qualification that the student is studying
- able to be trained and assessed on the job by the teacher/workplace assessor in consultation with the workplace supervisor/employer.

Students can maximise available opportunities for SWL placements by undertaking SWL at any time during the year when a placement and teacher supervisor is available, providing BSSS course requirements are met.

### **Students must be able to:**

- demonstrate over time specifically identified competencies in accordance with the rules for assessment within the industry Training Package. This may include maintaining an evidence portfolio, reflective journal and other resources
- demonstrate over time a range of employability skills as specified in the unit of competency/qualification. These may include: skills in initiative, willingness to learn and problem-solving capabilities; self-management, planning and organisational skills; and communication, technology and teamwork skills
- provide evidence for assessment of competency.

### **The college is responsible for:**

- providing supervisors, employers and students with information detailing the requirements of the program and the types of activities that may contribute to learning and assessment of skills and competencies
- monitoring the program and the progress of students in consultation with the designated workplace supervisor/employer
- assessing of the student in consultation with the workplace supervisor.

This may include collecting authenticated third party reports of on the job training and assessment, from the workplace supervisor

- maintaining student records including a summary record of units of competence demonstrated in the workplace. These records must be authenticated by the workplace trainer/assessor in consultation with the workplace supervisor/employer
- making available student evidence portfolios for moderation and validation purposes until the end of the year that the student graduates.

**The employer is responsible for:**

- providing on the job training and an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the workplace skills and knowledge required by the specific industry competencies identified in the training package
- providing a designated workplace supervisor. This individual must be an adult employee/employer acting in a designated supervisory capacity, with responsibility for mentoring and supervising the progress of the student while in the workplace. The workplace supervisor is responsible for working with the teacher/workplace assessor to determine whether a student has demonstrated competence on the job in specific units of competence.

**Note:** A work placement that does not meet the definition for SWL is regarded as a Work Experience placement and as such may be eligible for recognition on the Senior Secondary Certificate as a Registered unit.

**Validation**

Validation is a quality review process. It involves checking that the assessment tool produced is valid, reliable, sufficient, current and provides authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the Training Package have been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes.

**Moderation**

Moderation is the process of bringing assessment judgements and standards into alignment. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same Unit(s) of Competency. It is an active process in the sense that adjustments to assessor judgements are made to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.

**Assessment Tool**

An assessment tool includes the following components: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the candidate, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.

## **Appendix 5: Guidelines for Early Access**

The purpose of early access is to enable students to start year 11/12 courses earlier than their cohort. Early Access must be utilised to either broaden the depth of a student's program or to begin university or Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) studies earlier. It should not be used to repeat units of study in Year 11 or 12.

Students will be issued with their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate along with their cohort at the end of Year 12. Early Access Year 10 students will be added to the BSSS data base, with their year level set to 10.

### **1 Guidelines for Determining Early Access Students**

In determining the appropriateness of Early Access as a strategy for the education of students, the progression of each student must be considered and the college should consider what developmentally appropriate educational provisions and strategies are necessary. If a class or group of students is being considered, each student should be considered individually.

While academic attainment and capacity are the principal criteria for Early Access, they are not the only ones. When considering the student's suitability for early enrolment in year 11/12 courses, the following additional factors should be borne in mind:

- the student's age
- the student's extracurricular and out-of-school activities
- the interpersonal relationships of the student
- school performance
- early achievement of the required outcomes stated for their particular curriculum stage
- emotional readiness for the Early Access proposed
- likely future patterns of study
- the student's intellectual, physical and emotional needs
- interest in the curriculum area.

The following stakeholders may be engaged in this process:

- Parents/carers
- Teachers
- Students
- Psychologist
- Other professionals associated with student learning or development as necessary.

### **2 Early Access in one subject, or in one or more subjects**

It is expected that students will be enrolled in one subject of special interest and expertise. For some students it may be appropriate for enrolment in more than one subject.

### **3 Options for Early Access Students**

Early Access students, as with all Year 12 students, will have open to them a range of alternative pathways to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Early Access Year 11/12 students may:

- undertake additional units for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate
- undertake a university level subject, eg a University Extension Units.

- undertake external or part-time study at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)
- undertake a combination of the above options.

#### **4 Repeating of Courses or Units by Early Access Students**

The issue of these students repeating courses or units, for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate is a complex one. In exceptional circumstances approved by the Executive Director, BSSS an Early Access student may be permitted to repeat a course or unit in which they have been accelerated, though this would not be the expectation. The Board's rules specify that, while a student may repeat a subject, only the most recent result may be counted for ATAR purposes.

#### **5 What results will be recognised by the Board?**

To have results recognised on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate all courses must be accredited by the Board and delivered according to Board policies for assessment and moderation. To have results recognised, a student should ensure that s/he attends a class operating under Board policies. Only results signed off by the principal of a recognised educational institution under the Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997 will be recognised.

## Appendix 6: ACT Scaling Test – Best Practice Guidelines

### 1 General Principles

- the AST is a very significant test used in the scaling of school-based assessments and colleges have a responsibility to ensure that all students are well prepared for each component of the test. Procedures should be in place within each college to deal with students who do not attend required practice sessions or who do not take practice sessions seriously
- where possible, students should do at least one full trial incorporating seating arrangements, same times of day, reading times etc.
- practice materials belong to the college and should be kept in a designated area ensuring they are available in the future. The Office of the BSSS may not be able to replace materials that have been lost or discarded
- it is preferable that the AST coordinator have an understudy
- while doing practice tasks has some value, the best AST preparation students can receive is embedding the type of items and the thinking that accompanies such items into college assessment items over the two years.

### 2 Year 12 AST Preparation

Suggestions for a standard program of AST preparation during year 12 include:

- 2 (or 3\*) Multiple Choice papers, at least one of which should be 135 minutes long.

The 2010, 2011 or 2015 papers are most valuable for the full practice together with other materials which can be sourced from the Office of the BSSS's AST Officer.

(\*Those colleges not involved in the trialing of the Queensland Core Skills Test (QCST) paper in February should consider doing one extra Multiple Choice practice).

- 2 Short Response Test papers, at least one of which ought to be 105 minutes. All past SRT papers have been released
- at least one full Writing Task of 150 minutes, together with other Writing Task "brainstorming" sessions. All past Writing Task papers have been released together with the full list of topic headings from both sittings going back to 1986
- AST Coordinators are given information folders in March each year. These contain past test material to be used for practice and discussion.
- students are to be issued with the AST Student Information Bulletin which contains worthwhile practice items
- QCST past papers are available for a fee from Queensland Studies Authority, and Multiple-Choice answers and SRT marker model answers are available free from the on-line "Retrospectives". <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/2322.html>
- it is planned that a full set of papers (one each of Multiple-Choice, Short Response and Writing Task) will be put on the BSSS website during 2011 subject to contractual arrangements.

### 3 Year 11 AST Practice

For year 11, there are sets of Multiple-Choice questions and answers keys available from the Office of the BSSS AST Officer. One Multiple-Choice practice of about 1 hour should be sufficient. Some schools may choose to do one Writing Task practice in year 11.

#### **4 Short Response Task Preparation**

The importance of incorporating AST-style tasks into assessment and class work over years 11-12 cannot be under-estimated. This has been shown from research in the Queensland system to be most effective. The main place where this is evident is the Short Response Test.

## **Appendix 7: Assessment Provisions for English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Students - Guidelines**

### **1 Background:**

*These guidelines are for ACT Years 11 and 12 school-based assessment and do NOT in any way refer to the AST.*

As a general principle, assessment tasks should enable students from diverse language backgrounds to demonstrate the extent and depth of their learning.

There are no current BSSS requirements to provide special assessment provisions for EAL/D students. This is fundamentally the position taken in all other jurisdictions in year 11 and 12 for school-based assessment.

### **2 ACT Senior Assessment for EAL/D Learners**

Assessment tools should assess what they claim to assess. School assessment policy processes should ensure that school assessment tasks assess to what extent learners meet the assessment criteria in a subject, rather than assess their level of reading, listening and comprehension in English.

Some ways to ensure validity of assessment for EAL/D learners include:

- explicitly teaching essential background cultural knowledge assumed in each task
- aligning teaching and assessment by pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts used in assessment tasks incorporating any abstract or formal language needed
- working collegially in discussions with staff in other faculties who assess EAL/D students.

In some language dense tests, an allocation of an extra 5 minutes of reading time is considered adequate. If extra test time is given it should be for a maximum of 10 minutes writing time for tests of 1 to 1½ hours.

For tasks completed outside of school an extra day is acceptable but this must be negotiated in advance with the teacher(s) and noted in the school's assessment guidelines.

A case exists for dictionaries in a foreign language for some tasks in certain subjects and this should be noted when the task is given out.

Formative assessment is beneficial and for EAL/D students could include:

- listening activities eg. listening for specific information and completing true/false or short answer questions
- reading activities eg. putting sentences in correct order to retell a narrative
- speaking activities in a range of situations eg. participation in pair work or group discussion or ability to provide specific information when answering classroom questions
- writing tasks eg. correcting sentences which contain particular grammatical errors, relevant to the genre being studied.



## **Appendix 8: Feedback and Complaints Management Policy**

This policy incorporates the ACT Education Complaints and Concerns Management Policy and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) policies and procedures for handling specific reviews, appeals and complaints.

### **Feedback:**

Feedback is provided to the BSSS through a variety of channels. These include:

- BSSS Enquiries, accessed through the BSSS website
- written correspondence
- emails or phone calls to officers in the BSSS Secretariat, known as the Office of the BSSS
- meetings with client groups
- focus groups
- reference groups
- BSSS committees
- BSSS meetings
- BSSS forums
- questionnaires completed by colleges.

Feedback is actioned in ways and timeframes suited to its nature and purpose. These include:

- revision of policy and procedures
- development of new policy and procedures
- a response clarifying policy and procedures
- a response indicating action taken.

A response to written feedback (letter or email) will normally be provided within 20 working days.

When receiving oral feedback, where appropriate the recipient will indicate what will be done with the feedback.

### **Complaints:**

A complaint to the BSSS can be oral or in writing, and may be formal or informal. A formal complaint is a complaint which is:

- submitted by letter or email or
- lodged via the BSSS Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form (Attachment A) or
- an oral complaint
- which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving the complaint.

An informal complaint is an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction which is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving it.

Complainants with special needs will be offered reasonable assistance to make their complaint. Written complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt.

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints within 28 working days.

All formal complaints will be referred to the Executive Director, BSSS, who is the BSSS Complaints Officer.

The person or area about whom the complaint is made will have the right to be advised of the complaint and the identity of the complainant.

No action will be taken on anonymous complaints unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In addition to general complaint handling procedures, the BSSS has policies and procedures for handling specific reviews, appeals and complaints. A list is at Attachment B.

A list of external agencies which handle complaints is at Attachment C.

## Attachment A: Feedback and Complaint Lodgment Form

If you have a suggestion, concern or complaint, please let us know. Please complete this form and send it to:

Executive Director

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

GPO Box 158

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or email to: [bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au](mailto:bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au)

Which service or college is involved?

.....

We encourage you to raise issues with the relevant officer providing the service or the principal of the college concerned in the first instance.

What would you like to tell us?

Suggestion     Concern     Complaint

Have you discussed the issue with the relevant officer or college principal?

Yes     No

Please provide details of the matter: (if insufficient space, please provide details on separate sheet)

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What would you like to happen?

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.....  
.....

Would you like a response to your feedback?

Yes       No

Please provide your contact details:

Name: .....

Address: .....

Email: .....

Contact number/s: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

We will keep your personal information confidential as far as is possible. However there may be some circumstances when your personal information will need to be provided to others as part of the process of addressing your suggestion, concern or complaint. Personal information may also be released under the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 and may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act 2016. We will keep this form as part of our records. The BSSS privacy policy is available on our website: (<http://www.bsss.act.edu.au>)

## Attachment B: BSSS Policies and Procedures for Handling Specific Reviews, Appeals and Complaints

Complaint	BSSS Policy/Procedure	Source
School-based assessment	Appeals Policy Assessment - Discipline Plagiarism Policy (Refer in first instance to the school)	Policy and Procedures Manual Appeals Section 7 Section 4.3
Refusal to grant Special Provisions for the AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6
Refusal to grant exemption from the AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6
Refusal to approve CLD status for AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6
Non-serious attempt at AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.4
Scaled scores/ATAR	No appeal against scaled scores/ATAR	
Refusal to issue certificate	Procedures outlined in legislation and BSSS policy	<i>BSSS Act 1997</i> , Sections 26A, 27 Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 8.11
Refusal to register Specialist Education Provider	Procedures outlined in legislation	<i>BSSS Act 1997</i> , Schedule 1
Refusal to accredit/register course	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 3
Requirement for courses to be presented for moderation	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5
Moderation Day review decision	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5.3
Conduct at Moderation Day	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5.3

## Attachment C: External Agencies

In some instances, further assistance may be available from an external agency. The complainant may refer their complaint to one of the following external agencies at any time. Complainants should be encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss their concern with the Executive Director, ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Agency	Further information is available from:
<p><b>ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal:</b> for reviews of certain of decisions made under legislation including the: Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act (1997) Freedom of Information Act (2016).</p>	<p>Phone: 02 6207 1740 <a href="http://www.acat.act.gov.au">www.acat.act.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>ACT Human Rights Commission:</b> complaints of unlawful discrimination, contravention of the health privacy principles or about services for children and young people and services to persons with disabilities and their carers.</p>	<p>Phone: 02 6205 2222 <a href="http://www.hrc.act.gov.au">www.hrc.act.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>ACT Ombudsman:</b> complaints about the Board's administrative actions and decisions.</p>	<p>Phone: 1300 362 072 <a href="http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au">www.ombudsman.act.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>Australian Human Rights Commission:</b> complaints of unlawful discrimination.</p>	<p>Phone: 1300 656 419 <a href="http://www.humanrights.gov.au">www.humanrights.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>Privacy Commissioner:</b> complaints about an unlawful breach of a person's personal information.</p>	<p>Phone: 1300 363 992 <a href="http://www.privacy.gov.au">www.privacy.gov.au</a></p>

## **Attachment 9: BSSS Legislative Act**

The BSSS Legislative Act can be found on the BSSS website at  
[http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/The Board/board\\_of\\_senior\\_secondary\\_studies\\_act](http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/The_Board/board_of_senior_secondary_studies_act)