Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Policy and Procedures Manual

2024

Last Updated: January 2024

Note:

Significant policy changes from 2023 are indicated with a vertical bar in the outside margin.

Amendments to the Policy and Procedures Manual that apply to graduates in 2024 but have been altered for future year are highlighted grey. Read the Policy and Procedures Manual for the following year for the details of these changes.

Amendments to the Policy and Procedures Manual that have been made in the current year and apply to this year's graduating cohort are highlighted yellow.

Contents

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 the first Board meeting of the year 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. In consultation the BSSS will conduct a process and then appoint members to committees or advisory panels as required.

Committee and advisory panel members may be appointed from the ACT education community for their expertise and with the expectation that they consider the whole system and all students when providing advice to the Board.

1.3.1.1 Assessment and Certification Committee (ACC)

The terms of reference are:

- subject to a reference from the Board, provide advice to the Board on assessment, vocational education and training, and certification policies and procedures
- to advise the Board on issues which may lead to a reference
- to advise the Board on the implementation of the Board's Strategic Plan
- to provide the Board with an Annual Report on the overall direction of assessment, vocational education and training, and certification in Years 11 and 12

Membership will comprise of two nominees from the Board (Chair and Deputy Chair), and one nominee from each of:

- ACT Government Education Sector
- ACT Catholic Education Sector
- ACT Independent Schools Sector

The committee will also include the:

- Executive Director OBSSS
- Executive Officer – Certification and Assessment

In addition, the Board may appoint one or more outside experts on educational assessment, or other co-opted members.

1.3.1.2 Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)

The terms of reference are:

- subject to a reference from the Board, provide advice to the Board on curriculum, including vocational education and training
- to advise the Board on issues which may lead to a reference
- to advise the Board on the implementation of the Board's Strategic Plan
- to provide the Board with an Annual Report on the overall direction of curriculum, including vocational education and training, in Years 11 and 12.

Membership will comprise of two nominees from the Board (Chair and Deputy Chair), and one nominee from each of:

- ACT Government Education Sector
- ACT Catholic Education Sector
- ACT Independent Schools Sector
- A local university
- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Business and Industry

The committee will also include the:

- Executive Director OBSSS
- Executive Officer – Curriculum and Quality Assurance

In addition, the Board may appoint one or more outside experts on curriculum, including vocational education and training, or other co-opted members.

1.3.1.3 Principals' Meetings

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

1.3.1.4 Board Appeal Committee

The Board will form an appeal committee following a request for a review of a school 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)

1.3.1.5 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.

1.3.1.6 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 and Assessment

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

1.3.2.3 Schools

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 schools, students and the community.

In some cases these are issued to schools, 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/.](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, or is declared by The Minister, 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 though 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 schools 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. The course area structure will be reviewed by ACC and CAC (Also see 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 intellectual disability eligibility criteria (refer to 3.2.8.3.3 M Course Eligibility.

3.2.5.4 H Courses

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

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 refer to A/T/M/V or A/M/V accredited courses, and E (External VET Credit) units, including ASbAs.

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.

Refer to 3.2.8.3.2 Language course eligibility.

3.2.6 Registration

Schools 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 E Units

E classification is given to all nationally recognised vocational qualification**s** (VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that are not integrated into BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V accredited courses.

E units have a course area corresponding to relevant BSSS courses. Refer to 8.5 Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement, noting that the maximum number of units that contribute to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is 8 standard units per course area.

If the total number of E units studied in a training package exceeds 2.0 units, the units will be deemed to form a course equivalent of the corresponding course type (refer to 3.2.8.2 Course Duration) with the training package title. Otherwise, the E units will be listed under Ungrouped.

E units completed as part of an ASbA are recognised as such by the unit title.

3.2.7.2   R Units

R units are registered units recognising an organised learning experience designed to develop capabilities (refer to the General Capabilities). Students develop capabilities through engagement in School-based, Work exploration, Cultural, Sport and 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. Schools 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 and Recreation – Bushwalking.

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

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

3.2.7.3   W Units

W units are Registered units that recognise time spent in required on the job placements as part of a VET program which has not led to the award of competencies.

All W units will be listed under the heading Vocational Workplace Training.

W units completed as part of an ASbA are recognised as such by the unit title.

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 school, 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 school'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.

3.2.8.3   Course Eligibility

Some accredited course classifications have eligibility requirements for student enrolment due to the goals, course content, and assessment of the classification.

3.2.8.3.1   H Course Eligibility

For Languages H courses, students must be enrolled in the same course level as in their home school.

Universities should note that schools are required to use the *BSSS Language Eligibility Form* to inform placement of students in the appropriate language level.

Student admission to the H course will be accompanied by an acknowledgment of enrolment from the home school.

Each H course will indicate the co-requisite requirements. In the circumstance that the home school does not offer the co-requisite, the H course provider will use their discretion.

3.2.8.3.2   Language course eligibility

The BSSS Language Eligibility Form is available on the BSSS website at:
https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/act_senior_secondary_system/curriculum

All students must complete the BSSS Language Eligibility Form as a requirement for studying a senior secondary language course.

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

3.2.8.3.3   M Course Eligibility

Enrolment in a M course can be offered when:
- the student has been diagnosed with a mild or moderate intellectual disability that is consistent with *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5)* or the *International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD 10)* by a qualified professional including:
  - approved standardised testing of intellectual functioning (standard score 70 ± 5)
  - adaptive functioning (standard score of 70 or below in one or more composite/domain areas for example Conceptual, Social and/or Practical, in both home and school settings)
- as a result of the intellectual disability, the student requires significant adjustments to curriculum and assessment to ensure they can access and participate in education on the same basis as a student without disability.

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
- Units in multiples of 0.1 will be awarded in E units. All training completed under the same

training package and Certificate level will be consolidated as one entry.

- Units in values of 0.2, 0.5 and 1.0 will be awarded in R units.
- Units in values of 0.2, 0.5 and 1.0 will be awarded in W units.

3.2.9.2 Unit Delivery

Schools 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[1]. 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.

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[1] 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.

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 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

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 school 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 school 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 consistency and interconnection 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
- Schools must be aware of policies concerning transfer of units and whole courses. (Refer to: 4.3.13.2.2 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 and other relevant communications
- Courses that form the basis of an Integrated course will be in the same course area as 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, or M) 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 if the panel recommendation is endorsed by a designated delegate of the relevant vice chancellor.

3.3.6.2 H classification

H courses are accredited by the BSSS. The contribution of the course to undergraduate degree or degrees must be approved by the university prior to accreditation by the BSSS. H courses are written under BSSS Frameworks and subject to BSSS course design specifications and accreditation processes.

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 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 Curriculum Renewal Cycle

Frameworks and courses will be reviewed using a ten-year cycle.

The BSSS Executive Director may also conduct a desktop review of Framework(s) or Course(s) including in response to either a Board decision, ACT Government initiatives, national agreements, Moderation Day feedback, significant developments and innovations in the field, or changes in VET Training Packages.

Requests to conduct a desktop review of ACT curriculum will be considered by the BSSS Executive Director. The BSSS Executive Director will consult with the Board and/or the BSSS Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Framework and course reviews commence with a desktop review. A desktop review is an evaluation of a framework or course resulting from research and analysing of data including:

•   qualitative or quantitative data gathered at system moderation

•   environmental scans of similar curriculum (nationally and internationally)

•   changes in VET Training Packages

•   consistency with ACT Government and national agreements

•   significant developments and innovations in the field.

Results of the desktop review will be compiled in a report. the report will either recommend a minor variation, redevelopment, or no action. The BSSS Executive Director may approve either a minor variation, redevelopment, or no action. Alternatively, the BSSS Executive Director may refer the report to the BSSS Curriculum Advisory Committee. The outcomes of the report and decision will be communicated to the Board.

The term 'redevelopment' refers to a re-conceptualisation of a Framework or course. The BSSS will lead the process of Framework or course redevelopment including:

•   establishment of the development team (i.e. expressions of interest to develop a course, appointment of course development team drawing across sectors where possible)

•   establishment of partnerships with stakeholders (i.e. universities, CIT, industry, or community organisations).

The BSSS will work in partnership with schools to develop:

•   Shape Paper for public consultation

•   Course for public consultation.

The BSSS will work in partnership with schools to analyse and report on responses to feedback from public consultation events. Responses to public consultation will be published on the BSSS Website.

The term 'minor variation' refers to minor changes to the Framework or course whilst maintaining the work's original conceptualisation. The BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual makes provision for minor variations (Variations to existing BSSS Accredited Courses 3.3.9.3). If no action is recommended the policy and procedures related to extension of course accreditation will apply (Extension of Accreditation 3.3.8.2).

3.3.8.1 Conditions of Accreditation

Frameworks and courses will be reviewed every ten year or as needed. Courses can only be taught within their period of accreditation. The period:

- commences from 1 January in a given year
- expires on 31 December in any given year.

The normal period of accreditation is ten years.

3.3.8.2 Extensions of Accreditation

Schools 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.

3.3.8.3 Transition Arrangements for BSSS Accredited Courses

Newly accredited BSSS courses are implemented from the commencement of the new school year. Courses subject to Minor Variation are implemented from the commencement of the new school year. These courses are approved at the discretion of the BSSS Executive Director and are not subject to re-accreditation. A transition arrangement is the process whereby delivery of a course ceases and the new iteration of the course commences. For certification purposes, units from the superseded course can be included with units in the new iteration of the course, providing that there be no significant duplication of content. Theses transition arrangements apply to courses integrating a VET Training Package. This meets ASQA requirements for RTOs nationally. Amendments to BSSS courses due to training package changes are introduced across all ACT senior secondary schools at the commencement of the next school year.

3.3.9 Course Development

A school 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 schools 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 School

A school is the proponent of a course of study.

A school 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 school 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 (e.g. 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(s). 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 Vision and Principles

Assessment will provide equitable access to quality, valid, reliable, relevant and learning-focused assessments that engage and motivate students, enabling them to show what they know and can do.

That assessment will:

- maintain and articulate standards that describe student achievement
- provide information about the level of students' skill, knowledge and conceptual understandings
- discriminate between the students
- recognise the social and cultural contexts of students
- support teaching and learning goals through clear alignment with curriculum, pedagogy and reporting
- involve a range and balance of types of assessment and modes of responding
- enhance professional and public confidence.

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

Schools are responsible for the education and assessment of students.

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 - School Responsibilities

4.3.1 Assessment Data Required by the Board

The Board requires that schools 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 4.5 Storage and Release of Assessment Data)

4.3.1.1 Home School Principal Responsibilities

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

The home school 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 school 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 school 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 4.3.6.6 Recognition (R) Grade)

4.3.2 Conflict of Interest

Staff[2] in schools hold positions of trust, and there is a community expectation that they will act with integrity. This requires that they:

- act with probity

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[2] Staff or staff member means any employee, contractor, subcontractor or agent of a school including a teacher, executive teacher, principal, deputy principal, secretarial or administrative staff, student records officers or counsellors.

- 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 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 schools is aimed at ensuring the integrity, fairness and credibility of the ACT senior secondary assessment and certification system.

The Board acknowledges that the school is the entity responsible for employment issues and the management of staff, including supervision of principal and school 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 schools in relation to any conflict of interest issues through this policy.

4.3.2.2 Procedures for Dealing with Conflict of Interest

The school 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 school 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 school. The form is to be held in the school's official records and a copy provided to the Office of the BSSS upon request.

In situations where the principal of a school has the potential conflict of interest, the school 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 school 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 school should ensure that a student in years 11 and 12 is not

assessed (marking or grading of work) by a Relative[3] or a Close Family Friend[4] unless any alternative arrangement would cause serious disadvantage to the student or other students studying the course. In such circumstances the school 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 school should ensure that any staff member who has a Relative or a Relative of a Close Family Friend as a student in the school is not solely responsible for data entry of assessment results for those students.

A school 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 schools 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 schools are referred to similar policies for their respective systems.

4.3.3 Assessment under Frameworks

Schools 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)

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[3] Relative means any of the following persons in relation to a student at a school:
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, de-facto relationship or other similar living arrangements of any persons described in those paragraphs.

[4] 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.

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/marking scheme.

The Assessment item coversheet in ACS includes:

- Course Title

- Unit Title, Value, Semester and Year

- Due date or time allowed, as appropriate to the task

- Weighting

- Clear statement of conditions under which the task will be undertaken, including any policy around the submission of drafts

- Reference to BSSS policies on penalties for late submission and academic integrity (where applicable)

In addition to the coversheet, an assessment item should contain:

- Clear instructions regarding the nature of the task

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

- 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 consistent with the principles of academic integrity

- Clear statement where competencies are attached to specific questions or aspects of the task (VET only).

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, teachers are to publish the Unit Outline in ACS 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

- VET Competencies (For vocational programs)

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

- Achievement standards

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

- Moderation procedures (internal and external)
- Meshing procedures where required
- Method of unit score calculation.
- Penalties for late and non-submission of work
- Appeals processes
- Academic integrity
- 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.

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 half semesters/semesters the unit scores for the Scaling Group are to be back scaled 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.

4.3.6.2.1   Display of Unit Scores

At the end of each assessment period, student unit scores and scaling group information will be available in Profiles Online, accessible through the BSSS website. Students should be made aware of

the location of this data and when it will be available. No identifiable student scores may be displayed in public.

4.3.6.2.2   Storage of Unit Assessment Data

All assessment item and unit results for A, T, M and H units will be recorded in an ACS Markbook. There must be a markbook for each unit studied in an assessment period. A markbook can be used to store the assessment data of multiple units that have the same assessment item names and weights. All assessment item results in a T or H markbook must be directly comparable.

Grades and marks are required for each assessment item.

Where an assessment item has not been submitted or has had a penalty or other adjustment applied, this must be documented in the markbook. This will include the raw mark (if applicable), the relevant adjustment, and the reason for the adjustment.

Manual changes to unit scores, or the awarding of Void or Status grades must be consistent with all other relevant policies and procedures, evidenced, and documented in the markbook.

Markbooks should be completed no later than the end of the assessment period or a date negotiated with the Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment. At the end of each year markbooks must be complete prior to the date that unit scores are required to be published.

Under normal circumstances, schools are expected to enter the data and return marked and moderated assessment items, including feedback, to students in a timely way and generally within three weeks of the due date. This does not apply in the context of end of semester timelines.

4.3.6.3   Unit Grades (A-E) and 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 learning goals of the unit, and the requirements details in 4.3.8 Attendance/Participation and 4.3.9 Completion of Assessment Items have been met. At least 50% of assessment by weight must be completed and submitted for a unit to be awarded an A-E grade.

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 or W unit, the grade P is awarded if the student has satisfied the requirements for the unit, otherwise a V grade is awarded.

In an E unit, a student's achievement will be shown as a Pass for each unit awarded. The Board does not prescribe the distribution of Unit Grades. It does publish distribution statistics.

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   Status (S) Grade

Schools may award a grade of Status (S) when a student is unable to complete sufficient assessment in a unit because of illness or misadventure. (Refer to 4.4 Equitable Assessment and Special Provisions)

The award of an S grade must be seen as a last and sparingly used option and only awarded if a

student has satisfied the learning goals of the unit but has not been able to complete 50% of assessment by weight in a unit. An S grade cannot be given for any other reason.

In situations where a student is suffering from long term illness, schools should develop a long term strategy which provides access to courses of study that can be graded A-E and scored (when T units). Schools are encouraged to take a case management approach to long term illness and not ad hoc or semester by semester approaches. Situations of long term illness can be addressed through study over 2-5 years, including part-time or deferment of study. A Status grade is not appropriate where the student has not been able to engage with the content of the unit.

All instances for the award of an S grade will be documented by the school and recorded in ACS.

If an S grade is awarded, the unit may count towards the formation of a course and the units needed for the award of a Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement, within the requirements specified under section 4.3.6.7 Number of Status (S) and Recognition (R) Units Awarded.

4.3.6.6 Recognition (R) Grade (Units from Other Jurisdictions or Qualifications)

Equivalent study is recognised on the Record of Achievement as units with the grade Recognition (R) and of an appropriate unit weight, assessment period, and title with the suffix '- Non-ACT.

Refer to 8.9.2.1 Transferring from within the ACT system and 8.9.2.2 Transferring from outside the ACT system.

4.3.6.7 Number of Status (S) and Recognition (R) Units Awarded

For all accredited (T, A and M) courses, with the exception of 4.3.13.4 Courses from other Jurisdictions, the following guidelines apply

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, or E units being used to meet the minimum units required for the issue of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate must not have Status or Recognition grades.

4.3.6.8 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 – School Responsibilities)

4.3.6.9 Changing Levels in a Subject

When a student changes a level of study within a subject within a school, 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.

Schools 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.

To be awarded a unit a student must substantially complete and submit, or receive estimates for, at least 70% of the total assessment by weight.

Refer to section 4.3.6.3 Unit Grades (A-E) and Pass (P) and section 4.3.6.5 Status (S) Grade.

4.3.10   Late Submission of Assessment Tasks (Non-Test Tasks)

Students are encouraged to submit work on time as this is a key tenet of assessment condition standardisation, and supports timely completion of marking, moderation, attribution of outcomes, return of work and provision of feedback. Students are also encouraged to complete work, even if it is late, as soon as possible after the due date. The following policy is to ensure equity for all students:

students:

- All assessment tasks are expected to be submitted by the specified due time and date. Unless otherwise stipulated, the due time is 4.00pm for the physical submission of assessment and 11:59pm for the digital submission of assessment, on the due date.

- 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.

- For marks, the penalty for late submission is 5% of possible marks per calendar day late or part thereof, including weekends and public holidays, until a penalty of 35% or the notional zero is reached. If an item is more than 7 days late, it receives the notional zero score (Refer to 4.3.11 Notional Zeros).

- While grades are determined using the achievement standards, in the interest of fairness and the consideration of assessment that has been submitted on time, the grades of items submitted late will also be subject to penalty. The school will determine the grade (original grade) the item would have received had it been submitted on time. The school will determine the adjusted grade by attributing a grade based on the grade range within which the adjusted mark for that item falls following the application of the mark penalty. The student should be informed of both the original grade and the adjusted grade for the item.

  An item submitted more than seven days late and deemed a valid attempt will be subject to a minimum two grade penalty unless an E grade is reached.

- Submission on weekends or public holidays may not be acceptable if a physical submission is required. This should be clearly stipulated to students.

- When an extension is granted, the penalties for late submission will apply from the new due date.

- It may not be possible to grade or score work submitted late after marked work in a unit has been returned to other students. Work not submitted by the time marked work is returned to other students may be declared as 'Not submitted'. Students should be made aware in writing if this will be less than 7 days after the due date and any granted extensions.

The policy is to be referenced 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   Academic Integrity

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, improper or unethical research practices 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 lend themselves to uphold academic integrity.

In supporting students in undertaking tasks, teachers must ensure students follow the *BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines* as a key element of Academic Integrity (See appendix 9). Ethical research in BSSS Senior Secondary classes is research that is honest, genuine and protects the participant and the researcher from more than negligible risk of harm.

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 work generated by artificial intelligence as a student's own work
- submitting all or part of a paper from a source text without proper acknowledgement
- copying part of a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks
- submitting materials which paraphrase or summarise other work or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement of the original source of the work or ideas. This includes the use of paraphrasing software.
- submitting a digital image, sound, section of programming code, design, photograph, or animation, altered or unaltered, without proper acknowledgement of the source.

4.3.12.2   Student information

Schools 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. In addition, schools are also responsible for ensuring students are informed about ethical research and the procedures associated.

Schools must also inform students that any incident of plagiarism or unethical research 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 to provide advice to students.

4.3.12.3   Verification

Schools 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 and has been conducted ethically.

Where a school uses text matching software, provided that:

a) the software makes it a condition for submission of work that the student confirm that the work is their own, OR
b) the report generated by the software explicitly includes a statement from the student that the work is their own, then a report from the software is acceptable as a statement from the student.

For research involving human participants, schools will ensure that work submitted includes the appropriate teacher permission, risk assessment and consent forms required for human-based research tasks.

4.3.12.4 Breaches of Discipline in Relation to Assessment

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

School 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
- Schools should ensure that there is a common understanding across the school of the different categories of academic misconduct 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 school 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
- Schools 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 Schools

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 school assessment concerned
f. cancellation of the total school 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 schools. 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)

Counselling 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.

4.3.12.6   Compromised Assessment (effective 2024)

There are a range of circumstances when a school might consider that an assessment item has been compromised and is no longer a valid instrument for measuring student achievement for some or all students.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- When a student or students have access to an assessment item prior to release, or to solutions, or responses prior to completing the task (either accidentally or deliberately)
- There is a significant and unfair change of assessment conditions for a student or group of students

This may or may not be in addition to 4.3.12.4 Breaches of discipline in relation to assessment.

When a school becomes aware of the possibility that an assessment item has been compromised, the school should investigate and make a determination as to its seriousness, and then consider the application of an appropriate response.

Considerations include:

- The degree of potential advantage or disadvantage
- The effect of the compromised assessment on the results
- Whether the assessment has already been submitted or taken place
- Whether affected students can be identified
- Whether affected sections of the assessment can be identified

Possible responses include (but are not limited to):

- Amend the assessment requirements
- Amend the marking scheme
- Alter assessment results by a calculated level of advantage or disadvantage
- Estimate results for impacted students
- Replace with a new assessment item including the possibility of deferring assessment outside the assessment period

Replacement of an assessment item should only occur in serious cases and must be weighed against the impact on students who may have prepared and participated on a legitimate basis in the assessment task.

The OBSSS must be notified.

Any response implemented must be clearly communicated to students including the reason/s why.

4.3.13 Courses

4.3.13.1 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 accreditation possible.

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 and Assessment for permission to make an individual change.

4.3.13.1.1 Units from other Courses

Where a course allows, such as an integrated course or specific course rules, units from a course may be counted towards the course type of another course

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 4.3.13.5 Duplicate Courses and Content

4.3.13.1.2 Structured Workplace Learning in Courses

Refer to 10.2.4 Structured Workplace Learning.

4.3.13.2 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 school 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 schools

- 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 school 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 and 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 school.

(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 and Assessment by the date course scores are due. (refer to General Schedule)

4.3.13.2.1 Course scores with units from other cohorts or scaling groups

Where a course contains units with scores calculated from other cohorts or scaling groups, these unit scores are to inform the course score and rankings in their graduating cohort in the course's scaling group.

In preferential order, 'informing' the course score can be done by:

- altering the unit scores from other cohorts or scaling groups to mesh with the parameters of the graduating cohort and scaling group

- altering the course score to an appropriate score.

Both of these methods require a written explanation to the Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment as to what alteration has taken place.

4.3.13.2.2 Mathematics Course Scores

The Board requires the meshing of results in mathematics at the school, 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 back scaled onto previous units in the same Scaling Group, except with the express permission of the Executive Officer - Certification and 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 4.3.13.2 Course Score Calculations)

4.3.13.2.3 Meshing of English as an Additional Language (EAL) Course Scores

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

Results are to be meshed using appropriately documented procedures.

4.3.13.2.4 Display of Course Scores

At the end of the graduating year, student course scores and scaling group information will be available in Profiles Online, accessible through the BSSS website. Students should be made aware of the location of this data and when it will be available. No identifiable student scores may be displayed in public.

4.3.13.3 Collapsed Courses

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

4.3.13.4 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. In such cases, the course will be identified as an A course with no course score and titled with an appropriate subject name with the

suffix '- Non-ACT'.

Where a student has completed courses from another Australian state or territory that generate that jurisdiction'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. Schools should pass copies of relevant documents to the Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment. The Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment will calculate an appropriate ACT course score based on documentation and correspondence with the original state. These courses will be named using the jurisdiction's naming convention and have T accreditation.

4.3.13.5   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 school.

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 school, the home school course will be the one counted and reported on the certificates
- If all courses are being studied at the home school 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 school, the principal of the student's home school 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 schools of any cases of apparent duplication or overlap of courses which come to notice.

4.4   Equitable Assessment and Special Provisions

4.4.1   Principles

The Board supports the following principles of equitable assessment and special provisions:

- All students must have reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skill and learning outcomes when faced with adversity outside of their control, such as disability, illness or misadventure.
- Protocols for the selection of special provisions should be documented and consistently and equitably applied. They should consider student needs, unit requirements and school constraints.
- The long term learning outcomes of the student should be a central consideration.
- Special provisions must maintain assessment against the achievement standards, unit goals and unit content descriptions and not reduce validity and reliability of the assessment.
- Special provisions should not give one candidate an unfair advantage over another.
- A student's assessment results should reflect performance, not potential.
- Assessment practices should be consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the

Disability Standards for Education 2005.

- Students may choose to study towards their Senior Secondary Certificate over an extended timeframe as required.
- There should be alignment between students receiving special provisions in the AST and school-based assessment.

4.4.2 Eligibility

4.4.2.1 Disability

A student is eligible for special provisions if they are considered to be disadvantaged by a functional disability. This may be for some or all assessment tasks.

Formal diagnosis by a medical practitioner, psychologist or relevant consultant is not necessarily required and can be imputed.

Schools must maintain the following:

- Current evidence of the functional effect of the disability. For example, a dyslexia diagnosis should also include information such as current reading and writing speed. 'Current' refers to documentation within 2 years prior to the start of the current year.
- Documentation of provisions implemented in assessment tasks.
- Agreement with the student or carer as appropriate.
- If imputed, schools should also detail why the student cannot obtain relevant documentation and diagnosis.

4.4.2.2 Illness

A student is eligible for special provisions if they are considered to be disadvantaged by an illness during or immediately prior to an assessment.

Students should provide appropriate medical evidence, such as a medical certificate, to the school.

4.4.2.3 Misadventure

A student is eligible for special provisions if they are considered to be disadvantaged by an unforeseen mishap, calamity or disaster.

Students should provide appropriate documentary evidence to the school as soon as practically possible.

4.4.2.4 Other

Special provisions for situations other than illness and misadventure, such as state/national sports representation or work placements, may be approved by the principal. Estimates are generally not suitable in these circumstances.

4.4.3 Types of Special Provisions

Equitable assessment and special consideration can take different forms depending on the student, situation, and assessment requirements. These could be condition or task modifications, deferring assessment or exemption (Estimate).

Assessment requirements and special provisions should be clearly communicated to the student.

4.4.3.1 Modifications to Assessment Conditions

Reasonable adjustments to the assessment conditions to mitigate disability, illness or misadventure

may include, but not limited to:

- Extensions or extra time
- Rest or movement breaks
- Change of location
- Use of appropriate aides such as a scribe, word processor or screen reader.

4.4.3.2 Task Modifications or Alternate Assessment

Assessment of the key knowledge, understandings and skills of the unit may be made accessible to students with the disadvantage of disability, illness or misadventure through reasonable task modifications or alternate assessment.

4.4.3.3 Deferring Assessment

Schools may defer assessment for completion outside the assessment period. Schools may use the Pending (Z) unit grade in ACS for this purpose while assessment is deferred. Processes must be in place to ensure deferred assessment is followed up and legitimate grades and scores are entered.

4.4.3.4 Assessment Estimate

Exemption to an assessment may be appropriate if it is not possible for a student to complete the task with condition or task modifications while maintaining the integrity of the task or due to time constraints. Estimates should be the last resort.

A result should be estimated by using other assessment results available in the current or past semesters. Extra weight may be given to assessment of a similar type.

Estimated assessment items should be identified in ACS through the relevant flag.

Refer to section 4.3.6.5 Status (S) Grade if 50% of assessment has not been completed due to Estimates.

4.4.4 Equitable Assessment and Special Provision Decision Process

Schools are responsible for determining how a disability, illness or misadventure disadvantages or has disadvantaged a student on an assessment task or tasks and the appropriateness of any type of special provision or special provision plan. These decisions should be made systematic through a centralised decision-making process to ensure equity and consistency.

Care should be taken that modifications do not overly change the relevant cognitive demand in demonstrating the achievement standards or, particularly in T courses, give an unfair advantage over other students.

Schools are required to have a process of review for special consideration decisions for students who wish it.

4.5 Storage and Release of Assessment Data

4.5.1 School-Based Information

The data used to compile unit grades or scores, and course scores should be retained or disposed of by schools 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 schools. Schools' 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.

4.5.1.1 School Responsibilities Relating to Changes in Data

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

4.5.1.2 Security and Privacy of Student Data

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

4.5.2 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.

4.5.3 Data Sharing

While the BSSS is committed to transparency and open access to data, consistent with the objectives of the ACT government's data sharing policy, this commitment is subject to the BSSS' obligation to respect and maintain confidential information that is personal and potentially commercially valuable.

The BSSS Data Sharing Policy is available in Appendix 10.

Final approval for the provision of data rests with the Executive Director, BSSS.

The BSSS publishes an annual publicly available certification data report.

5 Moderation

The Board requires that schools 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 Vision and Principles

Moderation will enrich the development of assessment through maintaining and enhancing the quality assurance and validation of assessment, as well as supporting excellence in pedagogy and a professional learning culture to encourage collaboration at school and system levels.

Moderation will:

- focus on evidence-based professional judgement of assessment
- enrich and refine teacher understanding of quality assessment and its development
- be transparent, informative, objective and lack bias
- enhance professional and public confidence.

5.2 In-School Moderation

In-school moderation procedures must be in place for all A, T and M units and courses to ensure consistency of individual assessment judgements and unit grade decisions in accordance with the relevant Framework.

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 schools 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 schools 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 (School 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. School 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 schools 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 schools 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, 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, V or M courses at years 11 and 12 are required to attend Moderation Days and participate in the moderation process.

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 school.

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 school 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 school 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 school 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 school 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   School Action Plans

Following each Moderation Day schools will receive reports based on reviewers' feedback. All participating schools will then forward to the Office of the BSSS, a School 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 associated with assessment practice, course content and grade standards. These processes will include:

- written advice and website advice to schools on moderation requirements before each Moderation Day,
- a report to schools after each Moderation Day based on collated OBSSS and reviewer feedback,
- a response from the school in accordance with the BSSS System Moderation Risk Mitigation Plan,
- escalating consequences to address ongoing issues including, but not limited to:
  - discussions with principals and heads of relevant educational sectors or school boards,
  - non-recognition of a specific course(s) if taught and assessed by a school until such

time that the school can provide sufficient evidence that the course will be administered, taught and assessed as required, and

o non-recognition of all courses if taught and assessed by a school until such time that the school can provide sufficient evidence that all courses will be administered, taught and assessed as required.

5.4 Statistical Moderation of Scores

To ensure comparability of course scores across subjects and across schools, 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 school 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 and Assessment. The exceptions to this are

- Mathematics courses which are to be in the one Scaling Group
- EAL 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 and Assessment may approve a school 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 school cannot provide appropriate meshing procedures to combine this group with a larger group. (refer to 5.4.2 Small Group Procedures)
- Courses that form the basis of an Integrated course must be in the same scaling group within each school that adopts the Integrated course. The EAL/English course is exempt from this requirement but must be meshed with either English or EAL. Where these are in different scaling groups, course scores must be calculated as per 4.3.14.2.1 Course scores with units from other cohorts or scaling groups
- Where courses are combined into a Scaling Group, a copy of the meshing procedures must be provided to the Executive Officer - Certification and 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 school 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 schools are unable to provide meshing procedures for the students at their school to combine into another group, then the group will be scaled by the Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment using known information, such as AST results and the students' scores in other subjects.

5.4.2.1 School Responsibility

It is a school's responsibility to notify the Office of the BSSS of possible small groups by a date determined by the Executive Officer - Certification and 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 school 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 and 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 and 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 schools for the particular area in question.

Example

Small Group Adviser's School		Small Group School 1		Small Group School 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 school. It is not the adviser's role to change the rank order of students within a school. However, if the adviser disagrees with the school 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 and 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 school.

Schools 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   Purpose

The purpose of the ACT Scaling Test (AST) is to establish a common scale in order to aggregate student course scores across all T courses and schools to form a single rank of students for university entrance.

- The AST enables students to be compared equitably, regardless of the school they attend or the course groups to which they belong.
- The AST tests higher order cognitive skills which are developed through senior secondary studies and measured through school-based assessment.
- The AST assesses skills necessary for success at university.
- The AST is open to any student in their final year of schooling undertaking an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

6.2   Background

The AST Scaling Test underpins a contemporary and relevant senior secondary system that enables student voice through diversity of curriculum and course packaging. The school-based curriculum and continuous assessment system positions teachers as professionals to plan and assess students according to their needs and interests.

The AST Scaling Test is an assessment of generic reasoning, reading and writing skills rather than a test of subject-based knowledge as in an examination. The AST aims to test the cognitive skills and understandings that underpin success in senior secondary and post-secondary education. The test allows the placement of scores given to students in individual schools onto a single system-wide scale. Scaling allows the scores given at different schools to be comparable.

6.2.1   Description of the AST

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

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that students are well prepared for each component of the test.

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

A graduating 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)

The schedule of the AST will be finalised and made available to schools on the BSSS website. The scheduled dates will usually be the first Tuesday and following Wednesday in September.

Starting in 2021, 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 (two hours). It is employed to facilitate the comparison of T Course groups across the ACT, both within and between schools.

For 2020, 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 schools. The AST measures skills necessary for success at university. The AST enables students to be compared equitably, regardless of the school they attend or the course group to which they belong.

The items in the Multiple-Choice Test and Short Response Test are partitioned into two sub-tests, the Quantitative and Verbal or the Q and V sub-tests. Results in the Writing Task are reported as single scores. The total AST score used in the scaling process is made up of a combination of these five 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 schools 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 school. The trial should introduce students to the procedures for the conduct of the test as well as the nature of the test itself. Schools 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 school.

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 (Refer to 6.5 AST Illness/Misadventure).

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 school 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 school will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

6.5 AST 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, the candidate must notify the school 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 school but is genuinely ill prior to the commencement of a paper, the Supervisor-in-Charge or the school AST Coordinator should counsel the student to not attempt the paper.

If the candidate is too ill to attempt the paper, the candidate should:

- seek medical attention and obtain a medical certificate within 24 hours, and
- apply for approval to attend the Second Sitting for the paper concerned. This application should be supported by the medical certificate and a school 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.

If, after counselling, the candidate elects to sit the paper, the candidate will not be eligible for the Second Sitting of the paper concerned and will not receive special consideration in the calculation of AST scores.

6.5.2 Misadventure Before a Test Paper (First Sitting)

Misadventure is defined as an unforeseen mishap, calamity or disaster. If an event of misadventure 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.

6.5.3　Illness During a Test Paper

6.5.3.1　Temporary absence during the AST (any sitting)

Short absences from the test room may be permitted provided the candidate is accompanied at all times by a supervisor. There will be no extension of time granted without prior approval.

6.5.3.2　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 that they are ill and 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
- 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

6.5.3.3　Illness during the AST (First Sitting)

If a candidate becomes ill during the First Sitting, the candidate must apply by the due date for approval to sit the remaining paper(s) in the Second Sitting.

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.

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

6.5.4　Exceptional Circumstances (First Sitting)

Approval for the second sitting will not be granted for holidays or avoidable travel.

Approval for the second sitting may be granted for state or national representation, or where the student has a significant and unrepeatable commitment related to future work or future study. In these instances, students must provide satisfactory evidence in their application that the commitment is necessary and could not be conducted at any other time.

Note that exceptional circumstances are not a valid reason for exemption from the AST.

6.5.5　Approval to Participate in the Second Sitting

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 T 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.

A candidate who has already sighted all or part of the Multiple Choice or Short Response papers will not be permitted to sit the paper a second time. 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.

The Office of the Board will notify the candidate and their school in writing of the decision on the request for participating in the second sitting.

6.5.6   Review of Decision on Second Sitting

The student has 7 days from the date of the notification to seek a review of the decision by the Board Chair. The student and the school will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

6.5.7   Exemption from the AST

A student who is not able to sit either sitting of the AST as a result of illness or misadventure may be exempted from sitting the AST. Requests for exemption to sit the AST must be made as soon as the school or student is aware of the illness or condition and its impact on the AST.

Exemption from the requirement to sit the AST is only given in extraordinary circumstances.

In cases of illness or misadventure before the Second Sitting, requests for exemption must be received by the Friday of the test week.

The application for exemption may be completed by the student (or if this is not possible by a parent/guardian), or by the school principal and accompanied by appropriate documentation supporting the request. In either case, the school principal must indicate in writing whether they support the request.

The Office of the Board will notify the candidate and his/her school in writing of the decision on the request for exemption from the AST.

6.5.8   Review of Decision on Exemption

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 school will be notified in writing of the outcome of this review.

6.6   Special Provisions

6.6.1   Principles Underpinning the Award of Special Provisions

The Board supports the following principles regarding special provisions in the AST:

• The purpose of a special provision is to minimise the impact of a student's disability, illness or misadventure upon her/his assessment performance.

• 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.
- All students are expected to undertake all components of the AST.
- There should be alignment between students receiving special provisions in the AST and school-based assessment.

6.6.2 Eligibility for Special Provisions

A student is eligible for special provisions if they are considered to be disadvantaged by a functional disability.

Students who may impact test conditions for other students are also eligible.

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 Applications for Special Provisions.

The following guidelines are relevant for special provision applications:

- Applications open from Term 1 Year 11 and must be submitted by the due date except in exceptional circumstances.
- The application form must be completed by the student and the school. The form must be signed by the school AST co-ordinator and principal.
- Special provision arrangements will not be considered without current documentation from a relevant professional. 'Current' refers to documentation within 2 years prior to the start of Year 12.
- The exact nature of the functional difficulties the student suffers in test situations at the school should be stated. Teachers are well situated to recognise the kinds of functional difficulties their students suffer long term and their comments are encouraged.
- The current provisions the school is implementing in school-based assessment should be detailed (if applicable) as it is important that a student has had experience using any special assessment conditions that are requested. For example, students who are granted the use of a scribe or reader should have had opportunities to practice under these special assessment conditions in school-based assessment or trial ASTs.

6.6.4 Types of Special Provisions

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

- additional time
- supervised rest and/or movement breaks
- modifications 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.

6.6.5   Special Provisions Decision Process

The nature of the special assessment conditions for the AST will be determined by the Office of the Board according to the evidence provided of the assessment needs of the individual candidate.

The Office of the Board may seek advice or evidence from any source considered relevant. Where appropriate, opinion external to the system may be sought. This may involve consulting health experts, specialists in learning disorders, psychiatrists, interstate authorities or other appropriate bodies.

The Office of the Board will notify the candidate and his/her school in writing of the special provisions granted or the decision to decline Special Provision/s. Different provisions from those applied for may be granted.

6.6.6   Review of Decision on Special Provisions

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 school 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

Schools should flag students as LD that have met each of the criteria in 6.8.8.1.

Students flagged as LD 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)

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

- That students with a linguistically diverse background sit the common multiple choice and short response tests and be assessed in all tests using the common marking criteria.
- That an additional 20 minutes for Short Response Test, 25 minutes for Multiple Choice and 25 minutes for the Writing Task be granted to students with a linguistically diverse background to complete the ACT Scaling Test.

6.6.8.1   Criteria for identification of LD Students for the Purpose of the AST

A student will be determined as LD for the purpose of the AST if:

- the home school 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.

To assist schools 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.

6.6.8.2   Review of Linguistically Diverse (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   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 Schools

The school is responsible for:

- arranging for candidates to apply for AST using the AST Application Form
- nominating an AST Coordinator for the school. 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 school 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 school. 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 school 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 school 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 Quantitative score, scaled Short Response Verbal 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 are communicated to students.

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 OBSSS will investigate any alleged breach of discipline in relation to the AST, as reported in writing by a supervisor.

The Executive Director shall determine on the balance of probabilities whether there has been a substantive breach of discipline in relation to the AST. The Executive Director 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 and an ATAR reduction of up to 5 percentiles,
- cancellation of AST result for the candidate and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the Tertiary Entrance Statement and ATAR, or
- cancellation of all the candidate's results for years 11 and 12 and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the Senior Secondary Certificate.

6.10.2.2   Notification

The student and the student's school shall be advised in writing of the outcome and the procedures for the appeal. Schools are required to confirm with the Executive Director that the student has received the notification within three days of the notification being sent to the school.

6.10.3   Right of Appeal to the Discipline Committee

In all cases where a candidate has had a penalty applied by the Executive Director, the candidate shall have a right of appeal to the Discipline Committee.

An appeal, including the grounds and evidence for the appeal, must be lodged within seven days of school or candidate confirming the student has been advised in writing of Executive Director's decision.

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 school 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 Executive Director concerning the matter, will confirm, quash or vary the determination of the Executive Director.

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   Support Person

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

There is no necessity for legal representation at appeals.

The student, with support person, 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 Executive Director, the Discipline Committee may direct the Executive Director to take one of the following actions:

- a reprimand,
- cancellation of AST result for the candidate and an ATAR reduction of up to 5 percentiles,
- cancellation of AST result for the candidate and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the Tertiary Entrance Statement and ATAR, or
- cancellation of all the candidate's results for years 11 and 12 and the candidate is deemed ineligible for the Senior Secondary Certificate.

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 School of the Decision

The Discipline Committee will advise the Chair of the Board, who will advise the candidate and the school 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.

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.

7.2 School Responsibilities for Distribution of Review and Appeals Procedures

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the appeals procedures, in written form, are readily available to students.

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

7.3 School-based Assessment

Students are able to seek a review or appeal on school-based assessment including assessment item marks, grades or penalties, the unit grade, the unit score including any meshing procedures, or course score.

7.3.1 Review and Appeals Structure

The ACT system operates a hierarchy of reviews and appeals:

- Student seeks review from the classroom or relevant teacher
- Student seeks review from the relevant head of department
- Student appeals the reviews' decision to the school principal
- Student, who has been through the school appeal process, may appeal to the Board

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

7.3.2 Teacher Review

A student can request a review of their results including assessment item marks, grades or penalties, the unit grade, the unit score including any meshing procedures, or course score to the classroom or relevant teacher.

7.3.2.1 Method

The student may ask for a review verbally or in writing.

7.3.2.2 Lodgement Period

In general, students should seek a teacher review within five school days of the results being published.

For the final assessment period of year 12, students should seek a teacher review within one school day of the results being published.

7.3.2.3 Outcomes

The teacher may increase, decrease, or maintain the original result, and review additional student results if deemed appropriate. They may consult with other teachers.

Following the teacher's decision, the option to contact the head of department, and any relevant deadlines, must be communicated to the student.

There may be system deadlines that apply to the final assessment period of year 12. The teacher must ensure that the decision-making timeline facilitates these being met.

7.3.3 Head of Department Review

A student who is not satisfied with the teacher review can request a review of their results including assessment item marks, grades or penalties, the unit grade, the unit score including any meshing procedures, or course score to the relevant head of department.

If the teacher and head of department are the same person, another head of department should be asked to review the result.

7.3.3.1 Method

The student may ask for a review verbally or in writing.

7.3.3.2 Lodgement Period

In general, students should seek a head of department review within five school days of the teacher's review decision being communicated to the student.

For the final assessment period of year 12, students should seek a head of department review within one school day of the teacher's review decision being communicated to the student.

7.3.3.3 Outcomes

The head of department may increase, decrease, or maintain the original result, and review additional student results if deemed appropriate. They may consult with other teachers or schools.

Following the head of department's decision, the student's option to seek a School Appeal, and any relevant deadlines, must be communicated in writing to the student.

There are system deadlines that apply to the final assessment period of year 12. The head of department must ensure that their decision-making timeline facilitates these being met.

7.3.4 School Appeal

A student who is not satisfied with the teacher or head of department review can appeal their assessment results including assessment item marks, grades or penalties, the unit grade, the unit score including any meshing procedures, or course score to the principal.

7.3.4.1 Method

To lodge a school appeal the student must write to the principal or to a person designated by the principal.

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.

7.3.4.2   Lodgement Period

In general, the appeal should be submitted to the principal within five school days of the head of department's decision being communicated to the student.

For the final assessment period of year 12, students should submit a school appeal within two school days of the head of department's review decision being communicated to the student. The deadlines for both the lodgement and finalisation of School Appeals will be published by the Office of the BSSS in the ACT BSSS General Schedule and must also be communicated to students by their school.

7.3.4.3   School Appeal Committee

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

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

7.3.4.4   Support Person

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

7.3.4.5   Procedures

The teacher or head of department has the right to make a prepared written response to the appeal and submit this to the committee.

Both the student and the teacher or head of department have the right to make an uninterrupted statement to the committee and have the opportunity to correct or contradict submitted evidence. Each party may be subject to questioning from the Committee, but not to cross examination from each other. The teacher or head of department, and/or the student, and/or the support person, may seek clarifications through the School Appeal Committee Chair.

The committee should consider implementing procedures that, while safeguarding confidential information, ensure both the student, and teacher or head of department have reasonable and sufficient access to all the evidence being considered.

The School Appeal Committee may seek advice or evidence from any source it considers relevant. It is expected that both the student and teacher or head of department will have an opportunity to comment on the advice or evidence presented.

7.3.4.6   Outcomes

The School Appeal Committee may increase, decrease, or maintain the original result. The decision should be communicated in writing to the student as soon as practicable.

The committee may also decide that as a consequence of the appeal the results of other students

should be changed. When the outcome of an appeal causes changes to the results of other students, the principal is responsible for informing these students. Any further appeals related directly and only to these changes, should be allowed. These appeals must be lodged with the principal within five school days of notification.

For the final assessment period of year 12, these students should submit the appeal within one school days of the changed results being communicated to the student.

7.3.4.7 Registration with the Board

All school appeal decisions must be registered with the Office of the Board.

7.3.5 Board Appeal

Appeals to the Board are generally limited to disputes arising from the fair and proper application of published assessment procedures and appeal procedures. The intention is not to remark work.

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.

7.3.5.1 Method

An application for a Board appeal must be made in writing to the Executive Director, Office of the BSSS and signed by the student. The appeal must provide the following information:

- student's name and school attended

- the particular mark/s, score, grade, penalty being appealed, including the task, unit, course concerned

- a statement as to the outcome of the school appeal on the matter

- a statement setting out the details for each ground for appeal including 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

- the remedy being sought, and

- any other information the student wishes to bring to the Board Appeal Committee's attention.

The completed application for a Board Appeal must be forwarded by the Executive Director, Office of the BSSS to the principal of the school concerned.

7.3.5.2 Lodgement Period

In general, the appeal should be submitted to the Executive Director within five school days of the School Appeal Committee's decision being communicated to the student.

For the final assessment period of year 12, the deadline for Board appeals will be published by the Office of the BSSS in the ACT BSSS General Schedule and must also be communicated to students by their school.

7.3.5.3 Initial Assessment

The Executive Director of the Office of the BSSS, in consultation with the Board Appeal Committee Chair, will assess all applications for a Board Appeal and determine if such an appeal is in accordance with the Board's requirements. If the appeal is deemed valid both the student and the school will be advised the date, time and venue of the appeal hearing. If the appeal is not in accordance with the Board's requirements, the Executive Director, Office of the BSSS will inform the student of this and the reasons for its rejection in writing, usually within five working days of the receipt of the appeal.

7.3.5.4 Board Appeal Committee

The appeal will be conducted by a committee composed of three members. The Chair is a Board member and is appointed annually. The other two members will be appointed to the Committee by the Board Chair and 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.

7.3.5.5 Support Person

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

7.3.5.6 Procedures

The school must prepare a statement responding to the major points in the application and specifically to the grounds given for the appeal. The school may also include other issues or material it considers relevant to the matter under appeal. The completed school statement should be provided to the student before the date of the Board Appeal hearing and both parties' statements must be forwarded to the Committee members in advance of the hearing.

The Committee Chair is in charge of proceedings.

Each party should have opportunity 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 student, with a support person, and the school 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 student and the school representative should be interviewed separately by the Committee and brought together for discussion if required.

The school representatives, and the student or their support person, 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 student, school 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.

7.3.5.7 Recording of Appeal Hearing and Confidentiality

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 student may seek permission from the Committee Chair to electronically record the hearing but not the Committee's deliberations. If that permission is given, the student'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 student does not have an automatic right to review notes of the Committee's deliberations.

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

7.3.5.8 Outcomes

The upholding of an appeal may result in the alteration of the student's assessment task mark, grade, unit score or course score.

The Board Appeal Committee may increase, decrease, or maintain the original result.

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 of the Office of the BSSS will advise the student and the school of the Committee's decision and the reasons for it in writing.

A Scaling Group will not necessarily be rescaled because of an alteration to one student's score.

A change in the scores of other students will not be made unless determined by the Committee Chair.

7.4 Other Reviews and Appeals

Reviews concerning the second sitting of the AST, exemption, or non-serious attempts in the AST, or appeals related to penalties imposed for breaches of discipline in the AST are covered in 6. ACT Scaling Test (AST).

Reviews of the refusal by the Board to issue a Certificate are covered in 8.11 Review of a Board Refusal to issue a Certificate.

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 schools 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 schools, 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 school 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 school 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 school, seeking employment, changing schools 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 schools 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 school/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 School 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 school 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 six or more Certificates (Senior Secondary Certificates, Tertiary Entrance Statements or Vocational Certificates) need to be edited and reprinted due to a school error, after certification is completed, the school involved will be required to reimburse the Office of the BSSS for the cost (ACT Government scheduled fee) of these reprints. The first five reprints will not incur a cost but Certificates above that number will incur the scheduled fee.

8.4　Recognition of Courses and Units

The Board shall not issue a certificate, or recognise courses or units on a certificate, under subsection (1) of the Act unless it is satisfied that the course or unit has been taught and assessed in accordance with the guidelines that relate to its accreditation or registration as described in the relevant Framework and course document and BSSS Policies and Procedures.

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

In all situations, only VET completed during years 11 and 12 may contribute to the Senior Secondary Certificate.

VET that is integrated with BSSS accredited courses (A/T/M/V or A/M/V) is considered part of that course and does not contribute any additional units unless a required Structured Workplace Learning

is completed. For the minimum requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificate, A/T/M/V courses or units are the same as A/T/M courses or units.

The maximum contribution that E and W units can make to the requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is the equivalent of 8 standard units.

A maximum of one E classification course equivalent can be used as a required minor for a Senior Secondary Certificate in abridged packages.

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 school 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 to equate course scores across all schools and courses, and place on a common scale. OCS scaling involves scaling course scores against a measure of general achievement (Scaling Score) drawn 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 that contribute to a student's aggregate will sit between 76 and 229. Other scaled course scores below this range will be reported as 75.

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 and 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

8.9.1.1.1 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.

8.9.1.1.2 Goals

All programs of study for the Senior Secondary Certificate are designed to develop student capabilities as defined in Section 1.1.3.

8.9.1.1.3 Course Pattern

A standard package for a Senior Secondary Certificate will be awarded on completion of an educational program approved by the school 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, or H courses, or E course equivalent, 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, or E.

A maximum of 8 standard units from all external (the sum of E + W + H) units can contribute to the minimum requirements for a 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. 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 school 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 school 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

The Repeat classification is used when a student's prior senior secondary units are not to be combined with the student's subsequent units. Students who are continuing their Senior Secondary studies in a third, fourth or fifth year are not classified as Repeat students.

8.7.2.1 Repeat students – Year 11

A student who repeats Year 11 will fall into the same category as one commencing Year 11 and will be certificated when their Senior Secondary Certificate 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 will record only those units and courses studied since beginning Year 11 again. Only those units studied since beginning Year 11 again may count towards an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

8.7.2.2 Repeat students – Year 12

A student who repeats Year 12 will study an Abridged Package (8.7.3).

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 enrols in senior secondary 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 senior secondary schools 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, or E minors from different course areas including English. A maximum of one E course equivalent can be used as one of these minors. (Refer to 8.5 Contribution of Units to Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement.)

8.9.3.1.1　　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.

8.9.3.1.2　　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 deferment 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. 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 at the school from which they are graduating. The student must complete a minimum of:

- 8.5 standard units (50% of 17 minimum requirement) in the ACT senior secondary system at their graduating school 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 requirement) in the ACT senior secondary system at their graduating school and meet all other requirements to be awarded an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement. (Refer to 8.7.1.2 [Tertiary Entrance Statement](#))

8.9.2.1 Transferring from within the ACT system

Students transferring from other schools in the ACT system will maintain the unit data from their original (home) school.

If a student continues with the study of a course from their previous school, the course score is based on achievement in units at their new school and will require at least 2 standard units in each T major course and at least 1 standard unit in any T minor course at their new school.

If a student has completed a course at their previous school, and they do not continue studying that course at the new school, then the unit data can be used to generate a course and/or a course score for that subject at their previous school.

A student may transfer from an international qualification in a school to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate in the same school or another school. They may be granted recognition for work completed under the provisions which apply to students transferring from outside the ACT system as detailed in 8.9.2.2.

8.9.2.2 Transferring from outside the ACT system

When a student transfers from outside the ACT senior secondary system their year 11-12 studies completed elsewhere are recognised and reported on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

Transferring students will only be eligible for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) if they have been assessed within their graduating school 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. (Also see 4.3.6.7 Number of Status (S) and Recognition (R) Units Awarded)

If the student does not complete units in the course in the ACT, but has sufficient recognition units to

form a course, then s/he is awarded an A course in the subject.

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 and 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 school receiving a student from another school in/or outside the ACT who is seeking exemption or recognition needs to obtain the appropriate verification and data.

Refer to 4.3.6.6 Recognition (R) Grade

8.9.2.3   Transferring from other systems within Australia with a completed course

In addition to the above, 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. Schools should pass copies of relevant documents to the Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment. The Executive Officer - Certification and Assessment will calculate an appropriate ACT course score based on documentation and correspondence with the original system.

8.9.3   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.

8.9.4   Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Overseas Students

Schools should ensure that the following students are flagged in the database:

- students claiming Australian Aboriginality
- students claiming Torres Strait Islander descent
- overseas students

8.9.5   Early Access Students

The purpose of Early Access is to allow the commencement of senior secondary studies for exceptional high school students who have demonstrated mastery of any relevant 7-10 curricula to a high standard and are well prepared for success in senior secondary studies. Early Access is intended for T or H courses. Beginning Languages, Mathematical Applications, and Mathematical Methods courses are not available for Early Access.

An Early Access student is one who has commenced their senior secondary studies in one or more subjects as a high school student. Their Year level in ACS will be the official Year level but will be treated as a Year 11 student for assessment purposes (see 4.3.13.2.1 Course scores with units from other cohorts or scaling groups).

Schools are required to seek approval for Early Access students by submission of an application to

the Office of the Board. Refer to Appendix 5 Early Access Applications. In the case of Specialist education providers wishing to engage students in Early Access, the home school of the student should support and submit the application.

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 school 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: Mathematiques S

FB: Histoire Geographie FB: Francais

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 school 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 and 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 school 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 H Courses

Universities provide opportunities for year 11 and 12 students to enrol in H courses to extend their learning.

9.1.1 Eligibility

Refer to Section 3.2.8.3.1 for information on eligibility for H courses.

9.1.2 Accreditation of H Courses

H courses (refer to 3.2.5.4 H Courses) are accredited by the BSSS.

The contribution of the course to undergraduate degree or degrees must be approved by the university prior to accreditation by the BSSS.

The Board will decide on the award of H classification to a course after the following have been verified:

- university accreditation of the course and approval of its contribution to undergraduate degree(s) with that university is clearly outlined in the course
- the H course will align with BSSS course design specifications
- co-requisite home school courses are clearly indicated
- time requirements meet with Board policy
- H courses are subject to Framework requirements including BSSS assessment and Achievement Standards

BSSS accreditation of an H course must be finalised before the course is advertised and students begin studying courses.

H courses are not available for adoption.

9.1.3 Moderation of H Courses

As with all T courses, universities will be required to present portfolios of student work for the purposes of quality assurance. H course teachers are required to attend Moderation Day. The Quality Assurance Officer will report any concerns to the Board.

9.1.4 Unit Grades in H Courses

A to E unit grades for H course units will be awarded by the university, based on the Achievement Standards in BSSS Frameworks. These will be recorded on the student's Senior Secondary Certificate.

9.1.5 Contribution of H Courses and Units to Requirements for Senior Secondary Certificates

A maximum of 4 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

9.1.6 Reporting of H Courses

H courses are reported separately on the Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement. H units cannot be combined with T units to form T courses.

9.1.7 Scaling of H Courses

Universities delivering H courses are required to provide the BSSS with unit grades, and all assessment item, unit and course scores, for each student. At the beginning of each year universities must nominate, an assessment coordinator who is responsible for the provision of this data to the BSSS.

All H courses are scaled using the scaling scores (Vi) of the students studying the course.

Scaled course scores from H courses are available for inclusion in the calculation of the Aggregate Score. Home school and H courses are reported separately, each with its own course type.

Students can count one H course in the calculation of the ATAR.

If the student completes a T major in their home school 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 school and a H course minor then these two scores can 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 school and an H course minor then these course scores will be weighted as if they form a double major.

Schools, 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.

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 people's 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 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.

Registration with ASQA is the responsibility of the RTO.

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 in the ACT generally consists of programs undertaken by students in A/T/M/V and A/M/V courses delivered by school-based RTOs, Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA), or other qualifications delivered by external RTOs that may contribute to the senior secondary certificate. These programs or courses can 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 and Recognition

Vocational Programs and Recognition include BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a Training Package, external provisions such as Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs), and other approved qualifications and competencies offered by external RTOs.

Note: BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a VET Training Package are designed to articulate the breadth of students' learning entitlement in the context of senior secondary education.

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.

BSSS courses integrating a VET Training Package are written under Design Specifications for ACT Senior Secondary Courses. All BSSS courses integrating a VET Training package must ensure the following that A, M and T courses integrating VET competencies make provision for students to undertake competency training including Certificate II qualifications unless the Training Package or industry advises otherwise.

Schools 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.

All C courses will be phased out prior to 2024.

The Office of the BSSS will alert schools to any changes within the VET sector, including changes to Training Packages. When amendments to current courses are required, BSSS accredited programs will be updated to incorporate the changes. 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, or M course after the following matters have been verified:

- duplication of course content with other A, T, 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 Programs (External VET Credit Units)

10.2.3.1 Definition

External vocational programs refer to VET qualifications undertaken independently of BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a Training Package.

10.2.3.2 Recognition of External VET Credit Units on an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

Recognition of achieved competency outcomes on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate of External VET Credit Units approved by the Board must be supported by the following actions:

- Provision of RTO evidence and endorsement of student achievement
- For ASbAs, schools award units in consultation with the OBSSS as per 10.3.4
- For External VET Credit Units other than ASbAs, submission by the school of completed competencies and nominal hours no later than the advertised dates.

10.2.3.3 Calculation of VET Credit Units

BSSS VET Credit Unit values are awarded for the completion of a competency using the following methodology:

- 100 Nominal hours as per the Victorian Purchasing Guide of completed competency = 1.0 BSSS VET Credit Unit

External VET Credit Unit values are rounded to the nearest 0.1 increment.

Refer to 3.3.5.3 Duplication of Content.

10.2.4 Delivery of Vocational Programs

To provide accredited and/or registered vocational programs, schools must be registered as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or provide training in partnership with an external RTO.

As an example, where schools have the necessary infrastructure but do not have scope 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.

Schools may deliver BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a VET Training Package, providing the school is an RTO with scope, qualified staff, and resourcing to support the Training Package.

External vocational programs refer to VET qualifications undertaken independently of BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a Training Package. This category includes tertiary institutions, privately owned and operated businesses and school-based RTOs delivering a VET program independently of Board courses.

10.2.4.1   VET Qualification issued by the Board and VET Data

Where the Board has an agreement with a school-based RTO with appropriate scope, the Board will print VET certificates and Statements of Attainments for VET studies undertaken at school-based RTOs through A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a VET Training Package and non-integrated vocational programs agreed through application. These VET qualifications will be issued to students in conjunction with the Senior Secondary Certificate.

The Board will hold and where appropriate provide the relevant VET data for national reporting.

10.2.4.2   Year 10 VET Arrangements

All high school VET competency achievement 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 school at which the students are enrolled is responsible for the assessment and certification awarded.

10.2.4.3   Scope of Registration

School-based RTOs apply for scope to deliver vocational qualifications through ASQA. School 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.

10.2.5   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. Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) is recorded on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate as an W unit.

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

Where vocational programs are delivered through a partnership arrangement, there must be a teacher from the school at which the students are enrolled involved in the assessment of student achievement in determining BSSS unit grades and scores.

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 if the student making the claim can clearly demonstrate

that all of the learning outcomes of a unit of competency have been achieved. The minimum exemption for which RPL will be allowed will be a unit of competence as per the relevant Training Package.

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 school 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 school 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 school, no credit toward a Senior Secondary Certificate will be granted. In all cases, the school 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 courses that include vocational competencies 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).

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
- Excellence in Subject
- Vocational Studies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Performance.

One student in each of the categories above is to be nominated by each school. The criteria outlined below are to be used by principals in determining nominations.

11.1.1 Academic Achievement

The highest Aggregate Score in the school Year 12 cohort, or, in the case of a school with no ATAR eligible students:

- The highest weighted Grade Point Average (GPA) from the school graduating cohort calculated from the best ten units (T, H, A, M).
- In the event of a tie, the largest number of weighted A grades, B grades, etc. by unit.

11.1.2 Community Services

- Outstanding contribution and service during years 11 and 12 to the life of the school 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 Excellence Award (for a student who has achieved excellence in a nominated subject area)

- Sustained high level of individual contribution to, or achievement in, a subject area within the school during Years 11 and 12; and/or
- High level of success during Years 11 and 12 in a subject area including activities/ competition(s) external to the school based on work completed in association with the school.
- The subject area chosen would be at the discretion of the school. In deciding the recipient of this award, schools are encouraged to consider students who show exceptional learning dispositions within a subject area. The subject areas could be A, T or M.

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 school 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 school.

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 school or broader community. Students may have been mentors to other students, represented their school at national or international level, or excelled in academic studies, sports or the arts.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

School:	
Name:	

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 *:

Name:	Year level:

My relationship to them is:

I teach year 11 and/or 12 in the following courses:

The school 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 school:

- 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, de-facto 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
	select	main points, words, ideas in text
identify, summarise and plan	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

Glossary of Verbs	
Verbs	**Definition**
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	Strategize, 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, 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 school.

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 school 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:   Early Access Applications

Guidelines for Determining Early Access Students

The Early Access option is intended for exceptionally advanced students who have mastered the standard Year 10 curriculum in one or more subjects before formally completing Year 10 and have no more opportunity to extend themselves in those subjects.

Early Access is designed for the T and H course classifications.

There are no pre-determined achievement thresholds for Early Access that makes a student automatically eligible. Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Some examples of characteristics that may be used to identify Early Access students are given below. It is not an exhaustive list but is intended to give an idea of what evidence would make a student's application strong.

The following would constitute strong evidence:

- Student won awards and recognition outside of school (e.g. student won a prize in an AMT Maths Challenge; they were allowed to participate in an event not normally open to students in their school year)
- Student won selective awards and recognition in school for their work, and
- Student was accelerated in school and completed Year 10 level work prior to Year 10

The following are weak evidence and individually would be insufficient to justify Early Access:

- Student is in the top 1% of their class (Some students will be in the top 1%, 0.1%, etc. by definition no matter the level of achievement of the student and the cohort)
- Student has always achieved an A grade (This is evidence of being a good student, not for a need for Early Access), and
- Student participated in extra-curricular activities related to the subject (Participation by itself is evidence only of interest in a subject. There needs to be additional evidence of a high level of performance.)

While academic attainment and capacity, and the completion of any relevant Year 10 curricula 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 considered pertaining to their success at senior secondary studies:

- the student's age
- the student's extracurricular and out-of-school activities
- the interpersonal relationships of the student
- emotional readiness for the Early Access proposed
- organisation and work habits
- 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:

- Students
- Teachers
- Career Advisors
- Parents/carers
- Other professionals associated with student learning or development as necessary.

Early Access must not:

- Be used for the sole purpose of lightening a student's future senior secondary course load, and
- Be offered to students without making it clear that enrolment is contingent on approval by the OBSSS.

Implications of Early Access for Students

It is the responsibility of the school to inform students and parents/carers of the implications of beginning their senior secondary studies earlier than their cohort.

These implications include:

- Participation in senior secondary studies will start the five-year period that students have to complete the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- Early Access students are assessed as Year 11 students in Early Access units.
- These studies will be recorded on and count towards the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- Units may be repeated in future years but can only contribute once.
- The scores achieved in Early Access units will not to be used directly in the calculation of course scores as these unit scores were not ranked within the student's graduating cohort. Achievement in Early Access units will be used to inform their course rankings in their graduating cohort (see 4.3.13.2.1 Course scores with units from other cohorts or scaling groups).

Applications to the Office of the Board

Applications to the Office of the Board should include evidence:

- that the student is highly accomplished in the subject/s being considered for Early Access,
- that the student has successfully completed any relevant 7 – 10 curricula to a high standard,
- that extension programs other than Early Access have been exhausted or are not appropriate
- that the school has considered the guidelines listed above in determining the use of Early Access and the readiness of the student to begin senior secondary studies,
- that the implications listed above have been discussed with the student and parents/carers, and
- that the student and parent/carers agree to the use of Early Access.

Early Access enrolments entered into ACS without prior approval from the Office of the Board will be deleted.

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 schools have a responsibility to ensure that all students are well prepared for each component of the test. Procedures should be in place within each school 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 school 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 school 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 schools not involved in the trialling 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 over-stated. 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 e.g. listening for specific information and completing true/false or short answer questions
- reading activities e.g. putting sentences in correct order to retell a narrative
- speaking activities in a range of situations e.g. participation in pair work or group discussion or ability to provide specific information when answering classroom questions
- writing tasks e.g. correcting sentences which contain particular grammatical errors, relevant to the genre being studied.

Appendix 8: Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

This policy was developed in conjunction with ACT Education Directorate *Complaints Policy* and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) policies and procedures for handling specific appeals and complaints.

Feedback

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

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 schools

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) should be provided within 20 working days.

When receiving oral feedback, the recipient should indicate what will be done with the feedback.

Complaints

The BSSS is committed to responding to complaints in a timely and positive manner. This enables staff, students, parents, and community members to contribute to the BSSS' continuous improvement strategy.

The BSSS complaints handling processes are designed to provide efficient, fair, accessible, and transparent mechanisms for resolving complaints in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

A complaint can be verbal 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 B), or
- a verbal complaint.

which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving the

complaint.

An informal complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction which is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving it.

Complaints will be handled responsively, openly and in a timely manner, with the aim of resolving complaints at the frontline level of service delivery.

The OBSSS procedures for handling general complaints are at Attachment A

In addition to general complaint handling procedures, the BSSS has policies and procedures for handling specific appeals and complaints. A list is at Attachment C.

A list of external agencies which handle complaints is at Attachment D.

BSSS Procedures for handling general complaints

Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the level at which it is made.

Upon receiving a complaint, consider if it is a matter for the BSSS or the responsibility of another area/organisation. If it is not a BSSS matter, refer the complainant on to the responsible area.

If the complaint is about a BSSS matter covered by a specific policy or procedure (see Attachment B), refer the complainant to the relevant policy/procedure and/or contact person, as appropriate.

A verbal complaint that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving it is to be documented on the *BSSS Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form* (Attachment B) by the officer receiving the complaint.

The BSSS Complaints Officer is the Executive Director, BSSS. All formal complaints are to be referred to the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer is responsible for maintaining a complaints database.

Written complaints should be acknowledged within five working days and the proposed timeframe required to resolve the complaint should be indicated to the complainant as early as possible in the process. Further, complainants should be kept informed of progress towards resolving the complaint.

The response to the issues raised by the complainant should be in a non-judgemental and courteous manner. Complainants should be reassured that their complaint will not lead to discrimination.

Complainants with special needs will be offered reasonable assistance to make their complaint.

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 except in exceptional circumstances.

Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form

If you have a suggestion, concern, or complaint, please let us know. Please complete this form and send it to: bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au

Which service or school is involved?

……….

We encourage you to raise issues with the relevant officer providing the service or the principal of the school 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 school principal?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Please provide details of the matter: (if insufficient space, please provide details on separate sheet)

……..
……..
……..
……..
……..
……..
……..
……..

What would you like to happen?

………..

………..

………..

………..

………..

………..

………..

………..

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 *Information Privacy Act 2014* and may be subject to release under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*. We will keep this form as part of our records.

BSSS Policies and Procedures for Handling Specific Appeals and Complaints

Complaint	*BSSS Policy/Procedure*	*Source*
School-based assessment	BSSS policy (Refer in first instance to the school policy and procedures)	Policy and Procedures Manual Appeals Section 7 Assessment Section 4
Special Provisions for the AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6.6
Review of LD status for AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6.8.2
Non-serious attempt at AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.4
Scaled scores/ATAR	No appeal against scaled scores/ATAR	
Issuing certificate	Legislation BSSS policy	BSSS Act 1997, Sections 26A, 27 Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 8.11
Register Specialist Education Provider	Legislation	BSSS Act 1997, Schedule 1
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 5.3.2.9
Conduct at Moderation Day	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5.3.2.10

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 are encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss their concern with the Executive Director, Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Agency	Further information is available from:
ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal: for reviews of certain of decisions made under legislation including the: *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997* *Freedom of Information Act 2016*	Phone: 02 6207 1740 www.acat.act.gov.au
ACT Human Rights Commission: 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	Phone: 02 6205 2222 www.hrc.act.gov.au
ACT Ombudsman: complaints about the Board's administrative actions and decisions	Phone: 02 5119 5518 www.ombudsman.act.gov.au
Australian Human Rights Commission: complaints of unlawful discrimination	Phone: 1300 369 711 www.humanrights.gov.au
Information Commissioner: complaints about an unlawful breach of a person's personal information	Phone: 1300 363 992 www.oaic.gov.au

Appendix 9:   BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines

Adapted from the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines

BACKGROUND

Senior secondary students conduct research and investigations to answer questions, clarify their understanding of their world and to develop skills as researchers. This includes analytical and creative investigations in all courses.

There are many benefits for student learning in providing opportunities for students to undertake independent research, creative inquiry, and investigation tasks. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate such tasks into their programs of learning and to allow students access to Independent Study Units.

Research involving humans that is done well has benefits for students. Yet, such research has the potential to cause harm to participants. It carries risks. As investigations at the senior secondary level rarely uncover new knowledge of service to society, non-negligible risks cannot be justified. As such, only investigations involving negligible risks[5] to participants and researcher are acceptable. Research that engages with people on topics that can carry risks of harm that are more than negligible are not permitted in courses of study authorised by the BSSS.

The BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines were developed in particular to support students and teachers who undertake human research. That is, inquiry tasks and self-directed projects which involve other people as the subjects of their research. These principles and guidelines will assist teachers and students to develop ethical questions and methodologies and mitigate risks to the wellbeing and safety of students and participants.

Students have an obligation as researchers to ensure that they take active steps to prevent harm. These obligations are consistent with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018, which all researchers engaged in human research follow in Australia. Familiarity with these requirements will prepare students for further study. Failure to meet these obligations will be considered breaches of academic integrity under ACT BSSS Policies and Procedures.

Those obligations are incorporated into the principles and guidelines below.

PRINCIPLES

The principles (P1–P8) that are the hallmarks of responsible human research conduct are:

P1   Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- Present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting, and reporting research.

P2   Rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

- Conduct research using attention to detail and a well-researched and well-justified methodology, avoiding, or acknowledging biases.

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[5] "The expression 'negligible risk research' describes research in which there is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort; and any foreseeable risk is no more than inconvenience." *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (updated 2018),* p. 13.

P3   **Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data, and findings**

- Communicate research methodology, data, and findings openly, responsibly, and accurately to the reader.

P4   **Fairness in the treatment of others**

- Treat fellow student researchers, sources of information, and others involved in the research fairly and with respect.

- Appropriately reference and cite the work of others.

P5   **Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals, and the environment**

- Treat all human participants with care and respect and consider the needs of participants.

- Follow school policies in the use of animals in research and ensure that respect underpins all research with animals.

- Minimise adverse effects of the research on the environment.

P6   **Recognition of the right of First Nations Australians to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them**

- Recognise, value, and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property, and connection to country of First Nations Australians, and on Ngunnawal Country that of Ngunnawal people, as well as the diversity of all First Nations people residing here.

- Students are encouraged to engage with First Nations Australians who are experts in their field and community leaders to inform themselves about and understand topics.

- Any research that involves engagement with First Nations Australians as participants requires consultation with First Nations Australian community leaders and members, informed consent by participants, and final outcomes shared with participants, with the opportunity for participants to review and reflect.

- Recognise and interrogate own cultural assumptions, and the biases of source material and data, to frame questions and to ensure a consideration of issues using First Nations Australians epistemologies and perspectives.

P7   **Accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research**

- Comply with relevant legislation, policies, and guidelines.

P8   **Promotion of responsible research practices**

- Promote a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research.

GUIDE TO TEACHER AND RESEARCHER RESPONSIBILITY IN IMPLEMENTING THE PRINCIPLES

Summary of Guidelines for Students

- **Be guided by your teachers and disciplinary methodology.**

- **Be honest and sincere in setting and answering questions.**

- **Be transparent with participants.**

- **Be respectful of the privacy of participants.**

-   **Be respectful of the culture, traditions and beliefs of participants and cultures studied.**

-   **Be aware of the capacity of research to hurt, offend and humiliate participants.**

(See infographic for students)

Guide to Implementing P1, P2 and P3

Students should work with their teacher to ensure they develop questions that engage honestly and fairly in what they want to know.

Students should plan human research to ensure that there is no predetermined outcome and ensure it is underpinned by varied source material with a range of well-founded perspectives and theories.

Students should choose a methodology for selecting interview participants or survey respondents that minimises the bias of findings towards certain groups or outcomes.

Students should keep accurate notes to ensure they can report research honestly.

Data from research should be represented in ways that clearly and accurately communicate the perspectives of others and factual findings to the audience for the research. Ensure graphs give an accurate and honest representation and do not mislead the reader. Ensure the quotation chosen fairly represents   the view of the source and does not misrepresent them.

Students should draw conclusions that encompasses all of their data and findings and not obscure data that challenges their biases, hypothesis, or assumptions. Conclusions should be made in response to all data and should change if contrary data emerges.

Guide to Implementing P4, P5

Research material collected by students can include data or information, such as unpublished knowledge, ideas, words, sound recordings, images, and videos of participants. Any unpublished material relating to or provided by other people, such as classmates, friends, or family, can only be used with the informed consent of the participant, and evidence of consent must be provided, and data drawn from participants should be cited. If the participant is under the age of 18, parental consent must also be provided. Informed consent involves the participant understanding the purpose and goal of the work in which they appear.

If the participant declines to consent to exhibiting or publishing work that is consistent with the proposal, then that work should not be presented to others, but it still might be assessed and viewed by the teacher and internal moderating teacher. It should not be presented for review on Moderation Day. Participants have the right to withdraw consent without any reason.

However, if the nature of the final product deviates substantially from the project proposal to which the participant consented, then the researcher/student has been unethical as they failed to live up to their promises. Consequently, the work can be rejected, in part or in whole, for assessment using the rules under Academic Integrity in the *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual*. This pertains to both analytical and creative work.

Another aspect of ethical research is that students have an ethical responsibility to engage with the cultural material and knowledge of other cultures with the intention to understand, represent fairly without stereotype, and give voice to experiences with the people of the culture. Engaging as a sympathetic observer of the cultures of traditionally disempowered groups is in many ways an ethical duty. The abstract study, analysis or appreciation of cultural products or knowledge is not appropriation and learning about marginalised or disempowered cultures is an ethical duty in itself.

Students must consider the capacity of their work to cause offence if they employ the cultural heritage of groups other than their own in research that culminates in critical or creative art works. Using the cultural material of others incorrectly, inaccurately, insensitively or without cultural authority or

empathy can cause profound offence. Such research can harm members of that culture, including a loss of opportunity to gain or profit from their own heritage, or offence and humiliation. The aphorism "Nothing about me without me" is useful to illuminate this principle. Having conversations with people with cultural authority is the starting point.

There are a range of considerations for investigations that involve direct interactions with living people, such as biographical works, oral history, surveys, and experimental studies. There are areas of study that secondary students should not attempt to research with human participants, as due to their inexperience or lack of knowledge they may harm their participants or themselves. For example, some topics may trigger past trauma in the research participant. Due attention should be paid to the ethics of study or experimentation in the disciplines by teachers and schools. The following should guide research:

a) Students must get approval from their teacher for any self-developed topic or research question that requires engagement with human participants. That approval should be in writing such as an email or signed form (See the model BSSS form).

b) Teachers will ensure that formative work conducted in class is also of negligible risk to students, risks are considered and mitigated, and that ethical research is modelled to students.

c) Only negligible risk questioning (that is, where there is negligible risk to the participants) involving impersonal matters are appropriate topics for experimentation or quantitative /qualitative analysis in assessments for the Senior Secondary Certificate. More consequential matters may be investigated through an experimental/research design (i.e., not carried out), a literature review, or an assessment of published studies.

d) Students must consider the risks to themselves, their school, and their participants in planning a research study or experiment. A risk assessment should be conducted to justify the decision that the study is of negligible risk and safe (See attached Model Risk Assessment Matrix in Appendix 1).

e) A best practice approach is for teachers to provide a list of ethical experiments/studies that involve negligible risk for replication by students. Students will still follow the recommended steps for research, such as permission notes, risk assessments etc.

f) A researcher's top priority must always be the safety, feelings and dignity of people involved in the study. Researchers must be respectful of each participant's personhood and ensure that they do not inflict, or repeat, trauma, psychological or physical injury on the participant. Be aware that asking personal questions could be traumatising and injurious.

g) When conducting oral history or biographical research, students should ask their teacher for help, or conduct research into writing good questions. Biographical methodology is a rich area of academic study. Students should access that advice from research. Generally, students should respect the right of their participant to tell their own story by planning questions and prompts carefully to minimise the effect of questions on the information received. For example, students should not ask leading questions, or not try to shape responses with their questions.

Students may ask follow-up questions to access more detail, but also respect that the participants may not want to discuss some issues in greater detail. Researchers should be aware of the impact their own preconceptions, beliefs or experiences may have on interactions with their participant in questions, analysing and forming arguments and conclusions, and consider that as a feature of their argument.

h) In qualitative data collection, questions are an important tool. Students should consider whether they wish to use a structured interview (where the questions are closed and read out exactly as worded) or semi-structured in which conversation is more natural and free flowing. Students should work with their teacher to plan questions that are appropriate to the purpose of their study.

Reviewing published studies can be useful to guide question development. In both structured and semi-structured interviews, students should advise the participant that they may choose not to answer any question.

Semi-structured interviews may require students to ask follow-up questions. It is recommended that the researcher consider possible follow up questions prior to the interview that could be included in the proposal that was submitted to the teacher. However, it is not uncommon that more spontaneous follow up questions in the interview are necessary to access further detail. If this occurs, students should try to ask questions in a way that limits the effect on the information likely to be provided in response. Also, students should be aware that the participant may not want to provide any more detail than they have already given.

i) In quantitative and qualitative studies, determining how to select participants is a critical part of the methodology and must be explicitly explained in the proposal and in the submitted report. Students should select participants fairly and in a manner that does not distort results or predetermine conclusions. Students should actively seek guidance into how to fairly select participants. Students should consider the method of participant selection in their argumentation and conclusions.

j) People involved in a study must be fully informed of the goals and intentions of the study in writing.

k) Human participants must give written consent for their involvement. People under 18 must have parental consent for participation (Schools may use the model form provided by the BSSS). Teacher guided formative work in class does not require permission notes of people under 18 as this is regarded as teaching, not as undertaking research.

l) Researchers can use the information gathered in research only for the stated purpose to which participants consented. It should not be used for other purposes.

m) Data gathered in a study should be considered personal information and must be stored securely and every reasonable effort made to maintain privacy. It is recommended that all data should be kept in school data drives. Data should be destroyed after unit scores are awarded and the appeals period has passed. A plan for managing data should be a part of the risk assessment. Techniques for protecting participant privacy include containing personal data about participants in password protected files and file folders. Another technique is to always use a code or substitute name in gathering, analysing, and reporting data about a person. Preparatory sketches of live human models would best be done on paper detachable from the Process Journal so that in the event that permission to exhibit is refused, pages can be removed and the process journal still utilised for interviews etc.

n) If a quantitative method is used, in which participants are deidentified and represented only by data points, participants do not need to be provided with the final product, though that would be courteous.

o) If identified or identifiable in the research product, such as analytical or creative, students must show the participant how they have been represented in the final work. The participant has the right to decline to be involved and remove their data at any

point. Alternatively, at that point they may require the responses to be edited to be more accurate and the student should do so, even if that requires rethinking their argument or conclusions.

An identifiable participant might also decline to give permission for exhibition or circulation of the work, then it should not be exhibited or circulated/published. However, the work may still be marked by the teacher and internal moderator. It should not be submitted to systemic Moderation Day.

If the participant declines permission for exhibition/circulation because the final work is not consistent with the promises of the student to the participant, then the student has been unethical. The teacher will consider both sides of the argument and the teacher may impose academic integrity penalties, such as marking only the ethical components of the work, or a notional zero. Students who knowingly refuse to comply and do not inform the teacher of the withdrawal of consent risk the imposition of serious academic penalties. Existing appeals processes apply. Informed consent forms must be provided at the submission of the work for assessment.

p) A copy of the final product should be gifted to the participant if they are identifiable, e.g., a biography.

There are strict guidelines in schools and school systems around use of animals in research. Students must adhere to those guidelines.

When conducting research and experiments students should consider sustainability. This includes whether equipment is reusable or recyclable and how to clean equipment without harmful chemicals entering our waterways. How to dispose of chemicals and other substances safely and without harm to the environment must also be considered.

Guide to Implementing P6

Students predominantly are studying on Ngunnawal country, so they need to understand this local context, culture, and connection to country first when engaging with First Nations Australian content, but also consider the diversity of First Nations Australians living in our local community.

Students have a duty to seek out First Nations Australians' perspectives on topics that engage with First Nations people and represent those views in their research and creative work with respect and referencing. For example, in researching Emily Kngwarreye, students should make every effort to quote the artist, other First Nations Australian artists and First Nations Australian critics among the perspectives on her art that they consider. In another example, if conducting a literature review on the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission in Legal Studies, students should quote the views of First Nations Australian criminologists and legal scholars, as well as other perspectives, and also consider First Nations Australian protocols around naming the deceased in the research product.

First Nations Australian knowledge belongs to them and should be treated respectfully, and with due attention to protocols around its use and dissemination. Some knowledge for First Nations Australians is permitted only for certain people to use and circulate. Knowledge in the public domain may be available for use. If students access such knowledge during research, they have an ethical duty to actively seek an understanding of protocols around its use and follow them.

Teachers and students should recognise that developing and using intercultural skills may well require learning about and how to use those skills. Students should not be expected to have such skills already. Students should be guided to recognise and interrogate their own cultural assumptions when framing questions, establishing a research methodology and forming arguments.

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (p.84) lists certain types of research that always require full Human Research Ethics Committee approval, including all research on

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, and so these types of research should not be undertaken by students, with a single exception. These guidelines do not prevent First Nations students from conducting research into their own family, community, and culture. Research with Australian First Nations family members or community members already known to the student is not precluded, but students should carefully consider the feelings and vulnerabilities of their family members and whether research might harm them. Students should make it clear that participation is voluntary and that they are free to say no. First Nations students developing their own investigation focused on First Nations Australian communities or individuals, should work with their teacher on how to approach First Nations Australian community leaders for interview or consultation respectfully.

For students who are not First Nations, they should not undertake research on or related to First Nations Australian topics involving their own engagement or interaction with human participants, but rather study such topics using published texts and data.

A distinction should be drawn between teacher-guided engagement with First Nations Australian community members, Elders, and experts in particular fields who present to the class, and students engaged in self-directed projects engaging with First Nations Australians. In the first case, teachers should engage thoughtfully and respectfully using appropriate cultural protocols appropriate to the individual, context and specific needs of the people involved including their students. Teachers must find out what is required. As with any outside provider, teachers should recognise that community leaders, elders and disciplinary experts should be offered payment for their time.

Guide to Implementing P7

Students must actively seek an understanding of their obligations in complying with legislative requirements such as copyright and privacy.

Guide to Implementing P8

Students should be open about their ethical approach to research. Students should provide advice and guidance to others on ethical research approaches when it is sought.

Students should speak out against unethical approaches when they observe them, or suspect they are occurring.

GUIDE TO THE INSTITUTION'S RESPONSIBILITY (R) IN IMPLEMENTING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

This is incorporated into the *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Policy and Procedures Manual* under numbers 4.3.12 *Academic Integrity* to 4.2.12.5 *Penalties: Advice to Colleges.*

Schools must ensure that the procedures, such as a risk assessment, are undertaken with due attention and care by the students, reviewed seriously and thoughtfully by the teacher, and records retained by the school.

R1   Establish and maintain good governance and management practices for responsible research conduct.

R2   Identify and comply with relevant laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies related to the conduct of research.

R3   Develop and maintain the currency and ready availability of a suite of policies and procedures which ensure that institutional practices are consistent with the principles and responsibilities of the Code.

R4   Provide ongoing training and education that promotes and supports responsible research conduct for all researchers and those in other relevant roles.

R5   Ensure teachers have an understanding of the *Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines* and their obligations, and skills to assess risk through attending BSSS training.

R9   Facilitate the prevention and detection of potential breaches of the *Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines.*

R10   Provide mechanisms to receive concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the *Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines*. Investigate and resolve potential breaches of the *Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines* fairly and in a timely manner using as stated in the *BSSS Policy and Procedure Manual* processes.

Attachment A – RISK ASSESSEMENT AND MODEL FORMS

Alternate digital formats might be developed, rather than paper forms, provided the approval process is transparent, responsive, and timely and that records might be retained and produced if necessary.

Risk Assessment	Consequences of Exposure to Risk					
		Negligible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Likelihood of Expose to Risk	Rare	*e.g. Literature review*				
	Unlikely	*e.g. Interview with expert*				
	Possible					
	Likely					
	Almost Certain					

Data Management Plan	*e.g. None required for literature review.* *e.g. Survey results kept in password protected folders on school drive.*
Record of Consultation with teacher/school	Teacher Signature: _____ Teacher name and Date:
Residual Risk Level	Explanation of Choice
Negligible	*e.g. Interview with expert risks will be mitigated by:* *- Questions being discussed with teacher and questions sent to interviewee ahead of time.* *- All efforts being punctual and professional.* *- Consideration being given to possibility of distressing information being provided to participants.*
Low Medium High	Research involving risk beyond the negligible is not permitted. Actions and controls must remain in the negligible risk band. Negligible Risk is defined as: *Research in which there is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort, and any foreseeable risk is no more than inconvenience.*

Extreme	

Research Proposal Approval Form

Students must gain the approval of the teacher for their research project proposal. This approval must be submitted with the task for assessment. Any amendments must also be agreed to by the teacher.

I _____ propose the following research project:

(name)

Date: School: Class:

Question

Method, including participant selection

Data Management

Whether research participants will be identifiable in final product

Use of final product

I _____, teacher, approve the above project.

(Print full name)

_____ Signature

Date: _____

Agreed Amendments

I _____, teacher, approve the above project amendments.

(Print full name)

_____ Signature

Date: _____

Informed Consent Form for a person under 18 for a Creative Inquiry Project

A Creative Inquiry Project is a research project that culminates in a creative work of Art. In this case, the inquiry involves human participants who will be identifiable in the final creative product.

Title of Project: _____

Contact Details of School: _____

This project has been approved by _____ Signature: _____

Description of Creative Inquiry Project:

(write description here including the following)

Inquiry topic? Proposed aesthetic? Hypothesis? Artistic influences? Research Methodology?

Proposed form of artwork?

Description of data management and privacy procedures:

(write description here)

Password protected files? Date of data deletion?

I hereby consent to my child _____ 's (image/performance) being used in the creative inquiry project described above.

I reserve the right to withdraw my permission for any participation at any time. I understand that I will be shown the work prior to exhibition and can approve or withdraw permission through the signed permission form below. I understand that work I do not approve for publication/exhibition will still be used for assessment by the school.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

I have examined the artwork (Title: Date:) resulting from the Creative Inquiry Project described above and that is intended for exhibition. Tick the appropriate choice below.

☐ I **AGREE** it is consistent with the research proposal provided, and **CONSENT** to its exhibition.

☐ I **DO NOT AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided and **DO NOT CONSENT** to its public exhibition.

☐ It is consistent with the research proposal, but **DO NOT CONSENT** to its exhibition for other reasons.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Informed Consent Release for an Adult for a Creative Inquiry Project

A Creative Inquiry Project is a research project that culminates in a creative work of Art. In this case, the inquiry involves human participants who will be recognisable in the final creative product.

Title of Project: _____

Contact Details of School: _____

This project has been approved by _____ Signature: _____

Description of Creative Inquiry Project:

(write description here, including the following)

Inquiry topic? Proposed aesthetic? Hypothesis? Artistic influences? Research Methodology

Proposed form of artwork?

Description of data management and privacy procedures:

(write description here)

Deidentified participants? Password protected files? Date of data deletion?

I hereby consent to my (image/performance/location) being used in the creative inquiry project described above.

I reserve the right to withdraw my permission for public exhibition or access but will allow the use of the work for assessment purposes. I understand that I will be shown the work prior to exhibition and have the opportunity to withdraw permission through the signed permission form below.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

I have examined the artwork (Title: Date:) resulting from the Creative Inquiry project that is intended for exhibition. Tick the appropriate choice below.

[ ]   I **AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided, and consent to its public exhibition.

[ ]   I **DO NOT AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided and **DO NOT CONSENT** to its public exhibition

[ ]   It is consistent with the agreement but **DO NOT CONSENT** to its exhibition for other reasons.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Research Participation Informed Consent Form for a person under 18

This is a research project involving human participants.

Title of Research Project: _____

Contact Details of School: _____

This project has been approved by _____ Signature: _____

Description of research project and participant role:

(write description here)

Hypothesis? Participant role? Replication or original design methodology?

Qualitative or Quantitative?

Description of data management and privacy procedures:

(write description here)

Deidentified participants? Password protected files? Date of data deletion?

I hereby consent for my child _____ to be involved in the research project as a participant according to the circumstances outlined above. I recognise that I can withdraw my student's contribution at any time.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

I have examined the research (Title: Date:) resulting from project.

Tick the appropriate choice below.

☐   I **AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided, and **CONSENT** to the use of my contribution.

☐   I **DO NOT AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided and **DO NOT CONSENT** to the use of my contribution.

☐   It is consistent with the agreement but **DO NOT CONSENT** to its use for other reasons.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Research Participation Informed Consent Form for an Adult

This is a research project involving human participants.

Title of Research Project: _____

Contact Details of School: _____

This project has been approved by _____ Signature: _____

Description of research project goals and participant role:

(write description here)

Hypothesis? Participant role? Replication or original design methodology?

Qualitative or Quantitative?

Description of data management and privacy procedures:

(write description here)

Deidentified participants? Password protected files? Date of data deletion?

I _____ hereby consent for to be involved in the research project as a participant according to the circumstances outline above. I recognise that I can withdraw my contribution at any time.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

I have examined the research (Title: Date:) resulting from project.

Tick the appropriate choice below.

[ ] I **AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided, and **CONSENT** to the use of my contribution.

[ ] I **DO NOT AGREE** it is consistent with the description provided and **DO NOT CONSENT** to the use of my contribution.

[ ] It is consistent with the agreement but **DO NOT CONSENT** to its use for other reasons.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Appendix 10: Data Sharing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the BSSS Data Sharing Policy (**this Policy**) is to outline the principles and processes adopted by the BSSS in deciding whether to grant discretionary access to, and release of, data, that it collects and holds by:

- using a consistent approach in releasing data;
- complying with the legislative requirements; and
- using a framework to systematically assess the risks associated with the release of data.

While the BSSS is committed to transparency and open access to data, consistent with the objectives of the ACT government's data sharing policy, this commitment is subject to the BSSS's obligation to respect and maintain confidential, commercially valuable, and personal information.

The Principles

Under the Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997, one of the purposes of the BSSS is:

> *...to make available, as decided by the board, statistical information about*
> *(i)   senior secondary education in the ACT*

The BSSS will ensure that its data and information is generated, stored, transferred, and otherwise used in accordance with the following overarching principles.

Any use and/or disclosure of data by BSSS must be authorised by relevant applicable laws, including but not limited to the *Information Privacy Act 2014* (ACT).

Any use of the BSSS data must be ethical and appropriate.

The BSSS will:

- protect the security and privacy of individuals;
- be clear, inclusive, and open;
- publish open data and source code;
- broaden individuals' and collectives' control over their data, understanding that individuals have a right to seek access to their own personal and health information;
- be efficient and accountable for the collection, storage, evaluation and reporting of the data; and
- minimise the risk of misuse of data and information.

The data BSSS holds and what that data is used for is outlined in the BSSS Privacy Policy. The BSSS publicly releases annual certification data on its website, being deidentified aggregate data on the previous year's graduating cohort. The BSSS releases this annual certification data to provide the ACT community with information on the senior secondary education system, as well as to provide opportunities for community members to use the annual certification data to create knowledge to help improve ACT educational outcomes.

The Policy

1. The BSSS will abide by all the principles outlined in this Policy. All data release decisions must follow these principles.

2. The BSSS will safeguard student records from unauthorised access and will only use and disclose personal information in strict compliance with ACT and Commonwealth legislative requirements.

3. In compliance with Commonwealth and ACT privacy legislation, the BSSS publishes a privacy policy (the 'BSSS Privacy Policy') that explains how it collects, uses, shares, and stores personal information, and how such personal information can be accessed and corrected. The policy is available on the BSSS webpage.

4. The BSSS may publicly release system-level data where this release meets the requirements outlined in the principles (e.g., the annual certification data). The BSSS will only do so in ways that protect individuals' privacy.

5. **Student access to records:** students can request access to their records held by the BSSS. Students can also request amendments to those records where they believe a record is incorrect, out of date, incomplete or misleading. A student's parent or guardian can obtain access to their child's records with the student's permission.

6. **Access by schools who provided the data:** schools which provide or have provided data to the BSSS can request access to that data and request amendments where they believe a record is incorrect, out of date, incomplete or misleading. These requests must come from the principal of the concerned school.

7. **Access by higher education providers:** the BSSS provides the final results of senior secondary students on their completion of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate to the Universities Admissions Centre, who will then share, this data, upon request, with other university admission centres. On request, the BSSS may also make arrangements with individual universities and other higher education institutions to provide these results to those institutions directly.

8. **Access by external agencies:** the BSSS may be required to disclose information to agencies such as Centrelink, the Australian Federal Police, or the Fair Work Ombudsman through legislation, subpoenas, or notices for non-party production. Any other data release to an external agency will only occur under a data sharing agreement with appropriate protections.

9. **Access and use by BSSS staff:** BSSS data is used by staff for purposes such as administering the ACT Scaling Test, calculating the Tertiary Entrance Score for students, providing appropriate education opportunities and support for individual students and meeting duty of care responsibilities towards students. BSSS data is also used to effectively manage the ACT senior secondary education system. The BSSS also analyses BSSS data to find opportunities to improve educational outcomes and streamline processes.

10. **Research:** anyone seeking to undertake research projects on the ACT Senior Secondary data held by the BSSS must submit a request to the BSSS in accordance with this policy. The request will be reviewed and a data sharing agreement may be entered into. If a request is refused, reasons for that denial will be provided in writing to the applicant.

Considerations

The BSSS acknowledges there will be requests for BSSS data for the purpose of research and analysis, and to support opportunities that enable improved educational outcomes for students. In general, under the ACT Data Governance and Management Framework, BSSS data must only be shared:

- for an appropriate purpose that delivers a public benefit;
- with a user who has the appropriate authority, skills, experiences, and qualifications to deliver that benefit;
- in an environment that minimises the risk of unauthorised use or disclosure;
- with appropriate and proportionate protections applied; and
- with the understanding that any output is appropriately safeguarded before further sharing or release.

Any proposed use of the BSSS data must further at least one, and not work against any, of the following:

- improve student educational outcomes;
- enhance educational outcomes related to social and economic capacity;
- enhance education practices and pedagogies;
- assist school programs to improve student engagement and achievement; and
- create knowledge.

Reducing risks

When considering BSSS data requests, the BSSS may, in approving the request, mitigate the risk of releasing information which could be re-identified through:

- aggregating data;
- limiting the disclosure of dates;
- Grouping data by category;
- aggregating or removing extremely rare events, such as the highest or lowest ATAR in a school;
- not releasing data that could identify an individual unless such release is properly authorised by the individual or has been specifically approved for release by the BSSS under its procedures; and
- applying the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner De-Identification Decision-Making Framework.

Data breaches

If a data breach of Personal Information occurs, the BSSS will where required report the breach to the ACT Information Privacy Commissioner and, wherever practicable, notify individuals affected. Where the breach is likely to result in serious harm to individuals, the BSSS will take all reasonable steps to notify those individuals. If a data breach occurs that does not contain Personal Information, then the BSSS will initiate an internal review guided by the principles of this Policy and the BSSS Privacy Policy. The BSSS will abide by all Territory obligations that apply in the event of a data breach.

If a data breach is determined to have been caused by the actions of an external entity or individual, the BSSS may suspend that entities or individual's access to the data and initiate the process outlined in the Data Sharing Agreement between the BSSS and that entity or individual.

Applicant responsibilities

If an applicant is approved access to BSSS data by the BSSS, they must sign and abide by a data sharing agreement and are not permitted to grant access to BSSS data to any third party without the express written permission of the BSSS and such third-party entering a data sharing agreement with the BSSS. Such applicant must be ISO 27001:2022 compliant, which covers data security and privacy, or must provide a satisfactory response as to why they do not need to be ISO 27001:2022 compliant.

How to contact us

You can contact us by:

Email: bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au

Telephone: Data Sharing Contact Officer
                 (02) 6205 7181

Facsimile: (02) 6205 7167

Post: ACT BSSS
                 Data Sharing Contact Officer
                 Level 1, Building B
                 Callam Offices
                 Easty Street
                 Woden ACT 2606

Assisted Contact:
- National Relay Service: 13 36 77
- TTY Users phone: (02) 6207 0494
- Translating and Interpreting Service: 13 14 50

Relevant documents – links

[ACT Data Governance and Management Framework](#)

[ACT Education Directorate Access to Student Records Policy](#)

[ACT Government Data Sharing Policy](#)

[ACT Health Data Release Policy](#)

[ACT Senior Secondary System Certification Data](#)

[BSSS Privacy Policy](#)

[Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997](#)

[Independent Hospital Pricing Authority Data Access and Release Policy](#)

[Information Privacy Act 2014](#)

[ISO/IEC 27001:2022 – Information security, cybersecurity, and privacy protections](#)

[Northern Territory Board of Studies Data Release Policy](#)

[OECD Good Practice Principles for Data Ethics in the Public Sector](#)

[Office of the Australian Information Commissioner: notifiable data breaches](#)

[Office of the Australian Information Commissioner: The De-Identification Decision-Making Framework](#)

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

[Research in ACT public schools](#)

[The Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997](#)