Frequently Asked Questions

A review of Mathematics as a requirement of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

Q. Has a decision already been made by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS)?

A. No. This is a discussion paper that is presented to the community for comment.

Q. Has the Mathematics Advisory Committee made a recommendation to the BSSS?

A. No. The Mathematics Advisory Committee needs to consider feedback from the current consultation before making their final recommendation/s to the BSSS. You are invited to read the discussion paper and provide feedback before Friday 21 August 2026.

Q. What was the purpose of including a proposed recommendation in the paper?

A. The proposed recommendation is only a draft. It is designed to stimulate discussion and help the Mathematics Advisory Committee gauge and consider community views before making a recommendation to the BSSS for consideration.

The Advisory Committee will take into consideration all feedback provided during the public consultation, including that from key stakeholders such as students, parents and carers, employers, teachers and school leaders, before making its recommendation. This will include feedback provided via the survey, during online and face-to-face forums and in written submissions.

Q. How can I have my say?

A. Go to the website. Attend one on the community consultations. Write a submission and email to BSSS Enquiries at: bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au or complete the survey.

Q. What happens to the feedback that is provided?

A. Feedback from the consultation will be considered by the Mathematics Advisory Committee prior to making a formal recommendation to the BSSS.

Q. What is a "course" in Mathematics?

A. A course is at least two units of study (a Minor course). One standard unit of study represents a minimum of 55 hours of structured learning activities, generally over one semester. Nearly all students complete 5 or 6 units each semester, depending on their school requirements.

Q. If compulsory, would students have to do Mathematics for both year 11 and year 12?

A. No. The proposed minimum requirement is to study a minor, so for one year. The minor could be studied in Year 11 or Year 12, or across both.

Q. If compulsory will Mathematics have to count towards ATAR?

A. No. The best 3.6 T majors **or** best 3 T majors and best T minor are used.

Q. What about students who find Mathematics challenging?

A. Bridging Numeracy is one of the mathematics courses that schools can offer to address the needs of students who have experienced difficulties in learning mathematics.

Q. Are there any Mathematics courses for students who have a disability?

A. Yes. Depending on the functional impact of the disability, students may study any mathematics course with reasonable adjustments. For students who need more adjustments, a modified course option is available in Essential Mathematics and Bridging Numeracy.

Q. Why is the BSSS reviewing the requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate?

A. Periodically reviewing the qualification is a key function of the Board. The last review occurred in 2014. This review is timely.

Q. Has Mathematics ever been a compulsory requirement?

A. Mathematics has never been compulsory or a requirement for receiving the certificate, but has been strongly recommended for many years. Some schools in the ACT may make mathematics compulsory as part of their enrolment and school policy.

Q. What are the Mathematics courses currently available for schools to teach?

Course	Key Focus	Pathways Supported
Specialist Mathematics *(taken in conjunction with Specialist Methods)*	Topics in functions, calculus, probability and statistics. Vectors, complex numbers and matrices are introduced	Students with a strong interest in mathematics, including those intending to study mathematics, statistics, all sciences and associated fields, economics or engineering at university.
Specialist Methods	Calculus and statistics, with an emphasis on structure and proof	Students whose future pathways involve mathematical and statistical applications in a range of disciplines at the tertiary level. In addition, this course is designed for students who wish to pursue the study of mathematics itself.
Mathematical Methods	Calculus and statistics, supported by algebra, functions and probability	Students whose future pathways may involve mathematics and statistics and their applications in a range of disciplines at the tertiary level. It is also advantageous for further studies in the health and social sciences.
Mathematical Applications	Consumer arithmetic, algebra and matrices, shape and measurement, data analysis and the statistical investigation process, linear equations and their graphs, applications of trigonometry, growth and decay in sequences, graphs and networks	The subject is designed for students who have a wide range of educational and employment aspirations and those who want to extend their mathematical skills.
Essential Mathematics	Mathematical problems in real contexts, e.g., probability and relative frequencies, Earth geometry and time zones, loans and interest, measurement, graphs and data collection, rates and ratios, and algebra	Students who want to develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding to solve problems in real contexts, in a range of workplace, personal, further learning and community settings. This also allows students to remediate mathematical knowledge and skills not gained in F-10.
Bridging Numeracy	Foundational numeracy aligned with ACSF Level 3. Disciplinary numeracy and authentic experiences, aiming to empower students to effectively engage with quantitative tasks across diverse subjects and real-world contexts, e.g., numeracy in the workplace, problem solving, data literacy, technical software skills, personal financial numeracy	This course is designed to support students who have not previously succeeded in Mathematics courses in F-10. It allows student attempting to gain functional numeracy at ACSF 3 level to experience success in a Mathematics and disciplinary numeracy course structured to support older learners. It engages with quantitative tasks across diverse subjects and real-world contexts. The course supports study readiness, workforce participation and general capability development.