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The BSSS acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, the traditional Custodians of the land on which our department is located and where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respects to Ngunnawal Ancestors and Elders, past and present.



Leah Brideson, Strength in Community

This artwork was commissioned by the ACT Government, and the [Department of Community Services notes the following about its interpretation](#):

The pathways represent journeys of growth of understanding and the strong relationship building of our families and community. The four outer circles represent the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Ngambri and our neighbouring countries and the knowledge they hold, share and bring to our community. The central meeting place symbolises our community working together to build strength in culture, family, identity and community. The outer design represents the local ACT landscape, the connection we have with our land, the importance of caring for country and an acknowledgement of our ancestors who continue to guide us. The painting is rich in the colours of the ACT landscape and the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

Thank You

Thanks to all the people who have helped at a system level this term including:

- AST Coordinators and Supervisors
- Moderation SGLs and AGLs
- Moderation coordinators and supplementary moderators
- Course and Framework writing and accrediting teams
- Annotation writing teams
- Curriculum, VET, and Certification Coordinators





By late September, well over eight thousand AST papers arrived in Melbourne, where a team of markers from ACER have been marking them. The results flow back to the Office of the BSSS, where they will be used to scale student scores – which allows scores given at different colleges to be directly comparable. For our first-ever feature, we discuss the AST.

The AST is a standardised test of students’ verbal (word-based) and quantitative (mathematical) reasoning; in the words of its creator, it is “cross curricular” and “non-algorithmic”, “[aiming] to minimise the impact of prior knowledge [...] by giving candidates unfamiliar items to think about ([McCurry, 2017](#)). It is set by the team at ACER – that’s the Australian Council for Educational Research – with substantial input from the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

As the ACT system is continuous and school-based without subject-based examinations, a range of quality assurance activities are undertaken to ensure comparability across schools. The primary mechanisms are moderation days and the AST. These offer external validation of teaching and learning in the ACT, and make our Senior Secondary Certificate a significant, respected document.

The AST consists of three papers:

- Short Response
- Multiple Choice
- Writing Task

These papers ask students to respond to a range of stimulus material, using their interpretive and mathematical skills. Both Short Response and Multiple Choice require students to answer sets of questions; these are called “units.” The writing task offers students a range of stimulus material on a theme, and students write a reasoned argumentative piece responding to the major issue in the stimulus material.

How does a question make it onto the AST?

Question material is developed by ACER and the BSSS provides in-depth feedback. Importantly, before the questions are used on the test, two things happen:

1. they are assessed for suitability by BSSS staff, and
2. they are tested in the field, by ACER, with groups of students in other states and territories. This is done to affirm the expected answers, the expected spread of achievement, and to find any unexpected problems with the question.

What happens in the marking centre?

The multiple-choice questions are machine-marked. The short answer and writing task are marked by professional markers employed by ACER. Before these markers begin, they undergo systematic calibration of their marking through working over a series of examples and benchmarks. Their work is checked during the process by the Lead Markers.

Short Answer papers and Writing Task papers are marked by multiple examiners; if there is a significant difference between them, then the paper is flagged to be reviewed by an expert team, and final decisions are made.

How does this turn into an ATAR?

The AST is not a direct contributor to an individual student's ATAR; it is used to scale course scores within and between schools.

Initially the five AST component scores (multiple choice verbal, multiple choice quantitative, short response verbal, short response quantitative, and writing task) are compared to preliminary scaled course scores using regression. Once the best fit between the AST results and course scores is found, this decides what weighting will be given to each paper to determine the total AST score and maximise its alignment with school-based assessment. This process is repeated a number of times.

Once the weighting of the sections is decided, student marks are scaled using the numbers provided by the AST. If you want to see the actual scaling process and how course scores scale in the Other Course Score (OCS) scaling methodology, please come to one of the BSSS Surveying Scaling Workshops. You could also look at [the Hyndman report](#) which details it.

Once scaling is complete, students receive an Aggregate consisting of their best three majors and 0.6 of their best minor or next best major. The aggregate is used to rank the students across the ACT. The result of this ranking is that students are assigned an ATAR; a measure of their ranking against others.

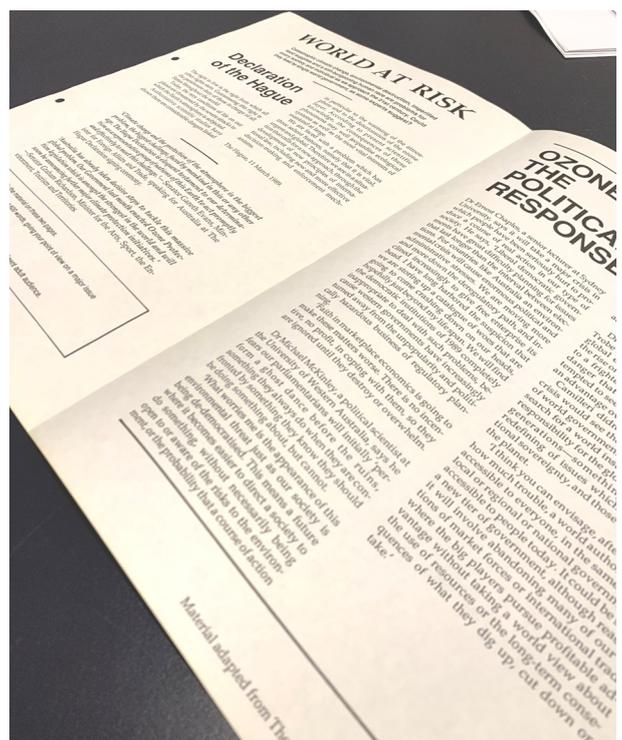
After scaling, schools are provided with information about how each course scaled compared to their raw scores. Where there is evidence of significant difference, this may indicate a need for reflection on the application of historical parameters in ACS markbooks, or

how assessment tasks differentiate between students of different abilities.

How can I help my students prepare?

All schools do at least one trial AST in preparation. You can help students by supporting the trial/s and doing what you are already doing: teaching them problem-solving skills, how to interpret data from your subject, how to build and defend an argument, and broadening their horizons and general knowledge.

The best approach to prepare students for the test, and more broadly, academic achievement, is to develop quality assessment that develops higher-order thinking. Work with the Achievement Standards from your course and Framework, and the Quality Assessment Guidelines.



With topics like “World at Risk”, “Ozone, the political response” and “Declaration of the Hague”, which year is this past writing task paper from?

(Answer on page 17)

The Student Voice

The second BSSS Student Forum of 2022 took place recently. The feedback and advice from the students were extensive and insightful.

Students discussed hypothetical scenarios – the digitisation of the AST, the local marking of the AST, and the introduction of a Learner Profile. These scenarios were selected as these are three areas that form part of the national picture of senior secondary education – digital exams and learner profiles are being explored by other jurisdictions.

Students overwhelmingly endorsed a hypothetical proposal to digitise the ACT Scaling Test. They identified a range of benefits including:

- addressing the needs of students with disabilities
- less paper, making the operation sustainable and environmentally friendly
- ability to edit and make corrections
- mirrors school-based assessment which is mostly conducted on digital platforms.

Students were also asked for their opinions on a hypothetical proposal to engage ACT senior secondary teachers to mark the test. They identified benefits including:

- valuable professional development opportunity
- opportunity for teachers to have a greater understanding of the purpose of the AST
- potential to enhance the quality of assessment.

Students were concerned about bias from local

markers and were keen to discuss measures that would ensure anonymity.

Students also endorsed a hypothetical proposal to introduce a Learner Profile. Learner Profiles are currently in discussion at high levels in education across Australia. Students identified the benefits including:

- offers to potential employers and further education institutions a comprehensive and balanced profile of the student
- skills equally valued to academic performance.

Students did raise concerns about equity for all students in the senior secondary system and the validity of subjective judgements.

Gathering information through these forums enables the Office of the BSSS to understand the issues that impact students which, in turn, informs policy and innovation.

The composition of the BSSS Student forum consists of nominees from across senior secondary schools. The BSSS Student Forum provides an opportunity for young people to have a voice in their senior secondary education.

Students work directly with the Office of the Board and take a cross sectoral leadership role within the ACT, contributing their ideas and experiences in support of the future direction of education in the senior years of schooling. Annually, the BSSS calls for expressions of interest to join the BSSS Student Forum. This usually occurs in Term 1.

What are some of the other things students think could be reported on when they graduate?

The broad range of skills demonstrated over senior secondary years

Scaled academic results over the ATAR

Well-roundedness such as participation in leadership, service to community, and other co-curricular activities

Attitude towards work

Academic results in conjunction with soft skills and community service

Experiences through community engagement and events

Teamwork and personal development

Sport teams outside schools

Community involvement both within and beyond school

Soft skills/career skills over academic results

Extra curricular involvement including leadership

The Annotations Project

Annotated examples of tasks and student work have been a ‘wish list’ item for many of us over the years. The wait is almost over for the first subjects to have annotations, but the project continues; if you teach in the Health, Outdoor and Physical Education or Arts areas, we want to hear from you!

Annotated assessment tasks and annotated student responses make thinking and judgements explicit and visible for teachers. It is envisaged that these tasks will be used at System Moderation to support teacher judgements and offer a “benchmark” for reliability.

Annotations are nearly complete for select Science, English, EAL/D, and Mathematics; after a request from the Board of Senior Secondary Studies for this program to go ahead, teachers and BSSS Officers have worked together to collate suites of assessment, programs of learning, and student work. These have then been annotated them to provide a shared understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in the ACT. These annotations will then be validated by a separate group of highly experienced specialist teachers in these courses and prepared for publication.

For the subjects completed so far, what will be provided?

- Copies of assessment tasks, with an explanation of where the task fits in to the Quality Assessment Guidelines
- Copies of student work at two different achievement levels (usually A and C) with annotation explaining what the students has or has not demonstrated
- Copies of the program of learning, so that teachers can see and understand the decisions underpinning the unit of work.

Thank you to the staff for your work on this project so far, particularly within the challenges of the last year and a half.

Get involved!

We are now looking for people in the Arts, Health, Physical Education, and Outdoor Education areas who are interested in working with the OBSSS to develop annotated versions of the excellent work that teachers and students are doing in schools across the ACT. If you would like to know more, contact the office on bsssenquiries@act.gov.au or fill in the form [here](#).

Rationale

Waiting to Blossom addresses the Cold War through an anti-war and anti-totalitarian message written with a Japanese context. Similar to *Grave of the Fireflies*, it depicts the promulgation of propaganda fabricating nationalism, Japan's purity and the glorification of death. These acts were established on the principles of Kokutai and Bushido. Reflecting the propaganda and totalitarian approaches of governments in the Cold War, Kokutai is a manifestation of Japanese nationalist pride, whereby Japan is propagandised as racially and morally superior. This story exposes the moral failings of Bushido which weaponised these beliefs by depicting death as a form of purification and devotion, in turn, indoctrinating militarism. It warns the reader against the gauses that violent nationalism might take in leading people to the horrors of war.

Waiting to Blossom uses a confessional, first-person narrative form to engage the reader in the personal conflict of the protagonist. In using first person perspective and sensory language, the reader is invited into the perspective of the story, for example, "I blankly stared at it and then at the shadows of black that the light from the mirror had cast". In immersing the reader in the context and experience of totalitarianism, war and violence using first-person and sensory language, they are more profoundly moved to consider the danger that lie in a government's manipulation of its people toward war.

Waiting to Blossom uses historical events as a warning to the reader about how governments were attempting to control people in the Cold War, and to encourage war and conflict. During the war, Japan glorified the nation to justify and encourage millions of soldiers to go to war, which the story illustrates through nationalist symbols. *Asahi* means "the rising sun", a symbol of the Japanese nation. The symbol is initially associated with a kind man and warmth i.e. "warm, like his [Niko's] mother's hugs". However, its integrity is diminished through it "burn[ing]" and "crouching below the horizon in indifference", highlighting how the truth of war is concealed by diverting attention to pleasantness. This is exemplified by the juxtaposition of chrysanthemums, a nationalist and imperial symbol of longevity, masking the

Commented (MC1): Opens with a clear and direct thesis statement that identifies the purpose of the creative piece. Clear orientation to the unit ("Perspective").

Commented (MC2): Clear and direct link to the class text, and synthesis of knowledge of text, context and creative intent. Insightful analysis, complex concepts and a considered perspective communicated with precisely chosen complex vocabulary and effective grammar.

Commented (MC3): Utilises principles of academic integrity. Based analysis in an well evidenced understanding of context.

Commented (MC4): The student indicates a clarity of purpose and accurately analyses their own work. When read together with their creative piece, their intention was achieved.

Commented (MC5): A precise identification of genre, function and effect to support a clear topic sentence that engages with the creative piece and an analysis of its purpose, stylistic devices and intended impact on the reader.

Commented (MC6): Skilful foreshadowing in command of language does not detract from overall effect and argument.

Commented (MC7): Discussion of evidence and context explicates the reasoning behind the choice of genre and language to appeal to audience.

Commented (MC8): Sustained argument begun in the introduction is further developed.

Commented (MC9): Well-chosen references to the creative which illustrate the manner in which they manipulate stylistic features for a specific purpose to sustain the argument about authorial purpose and impact on the reader.

¹ Samuel Anderson and Kenji Sato. Japan in the Twentieth Century. Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 45.
² Samuel Anderson and Kenji Sato. Japan in the Twentieth Century. Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 58.
³ Heather Chen, "The Grave of the Fireflies: The Haunting Relevance of Studio Ghibli's Darkest Film", BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53909091>

HEALTH, OUTDOOR EDUCATION, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ARTS ANNOTATIONS PROJECT

The BSSS is seeking inspiring teachers working under the Arts or Health, Outdoor Education and Physical Education Senior Secondary Frameworks to help create annotated work samples for ACT schools.

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Framework, Course, and Policy Updates

New Course: Agriculture A/T/M

The Board of Senior Secondary Studies is delighted to announce that the new Agriculture course is available for adoption for 2023.

In Agriculture, students develop scientific and technical skills in data gathering and analysis, knowledge and understanding about the complex biological, physical, and chemical systems that underpin agriculture. This course prepares students for further work and study in a growing sector. It also develops general scientific capacity for further work in study in other areas of science and social science.

A copy of the new course is available [on the BSSS website](#).



AGRICULTURE A/T/M

New BSSS courses available for adoption for 2023

Agriculture is a dynamic, future-focussed science that will be vital to the future of the world. This new version of the course includes a T option. Check it out on the BSSS website for more information.



REMINDER
Draft courses for Public Consultation until October 17

- Accounting A/T/M
- Automotive Technology A/M/V
- Business A/T/M
- Business Services A/M/V
- Economics A/T/M

Validity

Reliability, Bias, Academic Integrity, Curriculum Coverage, Student Engagement, Thinking Levels

LEARN MORE www.bsss.act.edu.au

Courses for Consultation

Three teams of course writers drawn from Government and non-Government sectors have been working hard to update courses under the Commerce and Technologies Frameworks. Five courses are up on the BSSS Website for viewing and online feedback; if you teach in these areas or have any interest in the work your students do in these areas, please take a look!

- Accounting
- Automotive Technology
- Business
- Business Services
- Economics

Go [here](#) for more information. The feedback is read and carefully considered by course writers and BSSS staff.

Appeals

For 2023, the Board has amended the appeals process for students. The appeals process will be updated in the 2023 *BSSS Policy and Procedure Manual* to make it clearer for teachers and students what needs to be communicated and when. The end of the year in Senior Secondary schooling is a busy time with significant system deadlines, which is why the timelines are shorter than at other times; particularly so that scaling for all schools isn't held up by a single student undergoing an appeal. Any delay with processes at the end of the year can jeopardise the ability to deliver AST and ATARs in a timely way.

As a classroom teacher, what will I need to do?

- When a student comes to you with a query about a mark or grade, explain the reasoning behind that mark or grade to them. You need to make the outcome from their query clear, i.e., the student must understand whether or not there will be a change to their result, and if so, what that change will be.
- Make sure this has happened within 5 working days of the student contacting you unless it's the end of Year 12. At the end of Year 12, it needs to be within 1 working day of the student contacting you.
- If the student has further queries, they will need to speak to your head of faculty. It is a good idea to document what was said and done so that if the student queries further, you have a record.
- If you are the head of faculty, ask a colleague who is at or above your level to do the next part of the assessment review.
- It is strongly recommended that you inform students of their right to query or appeal their result; this approach creates trust and confidence.

Querying an Assessment Result: Teachers

Students may query an assessment result or penalty; however, there are processes that students will need to follow. Students can query the result of an assessment, or the application of policy such as with penalties for late submission or plagiarism. Each step needs to be initiated by the student, and with the exception of the end of Year 12, should take place within five days of the conclusion of the previous step. The end of Year 12 timeline is one day. In brief, the steps are:

1. The student will contact the class teacher with a query. The teacher will review the work and respond, explaining why the work was marked as it was, making sure the response/decision resulting from the query is clear to the student. **The response may be verbal or in writing.**



2. If the student is not satisfied with the teacher's response, they can take the query to the head of faculty. The faculty head reviews the work, makes a determination, and provides the student with a **response in writing**. If the teacher is also the head of faculty, a different head of faculty will review the work.



3. If the student is not satisfied with the result of the faculty review, they may **appeal in writing to the principal** explaining why they think the appeal is justified.



4. The principal (or delegate) will organise a College Appeal Committee to hear everyone's side of the story and make a determination. This will be **communicated to the teacher and the student in writing**, and registered with the BSSS.



5. If the student is not satisfied with the result of the College Appeal they can **appeal to the BSSS by writing to the Executive Director** on the grounds of fair application of procedure and appeal processes.



Refer to the *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual* for details
www.bsss.act.edu.au

As a faculty/school leader, what will I need to do?

- If a student comes to you with a query about a mark or a grade, check that they have already spoken to their class teacher.
- Review the item or penalty that the student is querying. You may do this personally or ask a teacher who is not involved in the process to moderate the work. This moderator might come from within your school or your professional network; however, you are the person who will be responsible for the feedback.
- Give feedback in writing to the student within 5 days of receiving the item from the student. At the end of Year 12, this needs to be within 1 working day of the student contacting you.
- If the student is still dissatisfied, they may write to the principal (or delegate) and begin a formal college appeal.
- Ensure that all members of your faculty/team understand the processes for a query and appeal, and that these processes are publicised to students.

As a principal, what will I need to do?

- You need to publicise to students whether they speak to you or a delegate about College Appeals.
- The student needs to write to you or your delegate, with complete information about what is being appealed, why the appeal is justified, and what steps they have already undertaken. Check that they have sought feedback at teacher and school leader level before coming to you.
- You/delegate need to contact the Office of the BSSS. With our support, you will organise a panel that consists of two people from your school who have not been involved in any way in the query, and one external person selected by the BSSS who is an expert in the subject area.
- The panel will hear from both the student and the school and make a deliberation about the appeal.
- The panel will report this deliberation to you, the BSSS, and the student.
- If the student is still dissatisfied, they may appeal to the Board. We will contact you if this occurs.

STEPS FOR AN APPEAL

1. Student queries to class teacher
2. Student queries to faculty leader
3. Student writes to principal requesting a formal appeal of the item
4. Student writes to the BSSS requesting a formal appeal

Innovations in VET

The ACT BSSS recognises and celebrates the value of Vocational Education and Training courses and their contribution to quality education and enhanced transitions to work and further education.

As part of the ongoing quality assurance of VET in the ACT, there will be some changes to courses integrating a VET Training Package coming up in 2023. After 2023 these changes include:

- Certificate II will become the minimum VET qualification integrated into A, T and M courses
- Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) will be recorded as R units
- Competency-only VET programs will be recognised on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

These changes have been informed by cross-sectoral committees, including the Curriculum and Assessment Committees, before being endorsed by the Board. Experienced VET providers from Government and non-Government schools, CIT, Skills Canberra, Industry, and external RTOs have been involved all along the way.

Certificate II will become the minimum VET qualification integrated into A, T and M courses.

What does this mean?

A Certificate II will be the qualification mapped for most BSSS courses integrating VET competencies. Where industry or the training package stipulates a Certificate I, the BSSS course will reflect competency sets from the Certificate II where possible. For example, in the

Metal Products course, the Manufacturing and Engineering Training Package suggests a Certificate I in Engineering or that a Certificate II in Engineering Pathways is available for senior secondary students. In this instance the BSSS *Metal Products* course will incorporate the maximum feasible number of Certificate II in Engineering competencies also found in the Certificate I or the Certificate II Engineering Pathways qualifications. For the BSSS *Furniture Making Pathways* course, industry recommends schools consider the MSF20516 Certificate II in Furniture Making Pathways.

A transition period across 2023-2025 will be implemented allowing schools time to phase out Certificate I qualifications.

Why is this change being made?

An analysis of the aims and purpose of Certificate I and Certificate II as described in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) showed that further consideration of the relationship of Certificate I packages to the Senior Secondary Certificate was needed. Certificate I packages are defined using words such as 'foundational' and 'basic' and are designed to be a 'taster' in that industry area.

The change removes a cap on learning so a student who may wish to pursue a career in a desired industry can prepare through access to a greater depth of learning as opposed to being restricted by an entry level qualification which is generally considered a taster and more appropriate for the high school years.

That Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) when stipulated in a Training Package is recorded as R Units

What does this mean?

From 2023 onwards if a student studies a SWL unit as part of their in-school training package, this will be recorded as an R (registered) unit.

Why is this change being made?

Currently, SWL units are included in BSSS courses for recognition on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. SWL units are competency only. These units cannot be reviewed at system moderation as they do not specify content. The absence of content means that student work is not quality assured in the same way. These are important considerations in the context of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

The recommendation to undertake SWL units as R units recognises the students' learning outside school and maintains coherence and consistency of processes and practices across senior secondary curriculum.

Recognition of Competency only VET Programs on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

The Board has approved the *BSSS External VET Credit Unit classification*. This classification refers to competency only VET programs undertaken by students that are not integrated into BSSS accredited courses (including Australian School-

based Apprenticeships). VET programs may either be full qualifications or approved groups of competencies.

What does this mean?

Students undertaking competency-only VET with an external organisation or a school-based RTO can have them recognised on their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. If they have 2 units or more, they'll be grouped together. If they have less than 2 units, they will be listed in 'ungrouped units'.

How will hours be worked out?

Hours will be calculated using the [Victorian Purchasing Guide](#), with 100 hours the designated equivalent to a 1.0 unit. The Victorian Purchasing Guide is used by VET providers to assign nominal hours to courses. This will also encompass SWL undertaken by students who are studying VET with an external provider.

Why 100 hours, not 55? Because in BSSS accredited courses, the 55 hours represents time spent in class. In practice, a student may spend 100 hours completing course requirements.

In the Victorian Purchasing Guide, the nominal hours awarded to a competency are designed to also encompass the work students do outside the classroom, which means many competencies are recognised with 60+ hours per competency. For example, at the time of publishing, a Certificate II in Construction equates to between 467-492 hours according to the Victorian Purchasing Guide – therefore from 4.7 to 4.9 units in the BSSS system



Hints and Tips

How can I prep for Moderation now?

At the end of the semester, ACT Senior Secondary Schools will prepare presentations for review at Moderation Day 1, 2023. You will be making these portfolios from the work undertaken by the Year 11 cohort in Semester 2, 2022.

Ways to prepare

Make sure that the assessments being given to students have the correct data on them

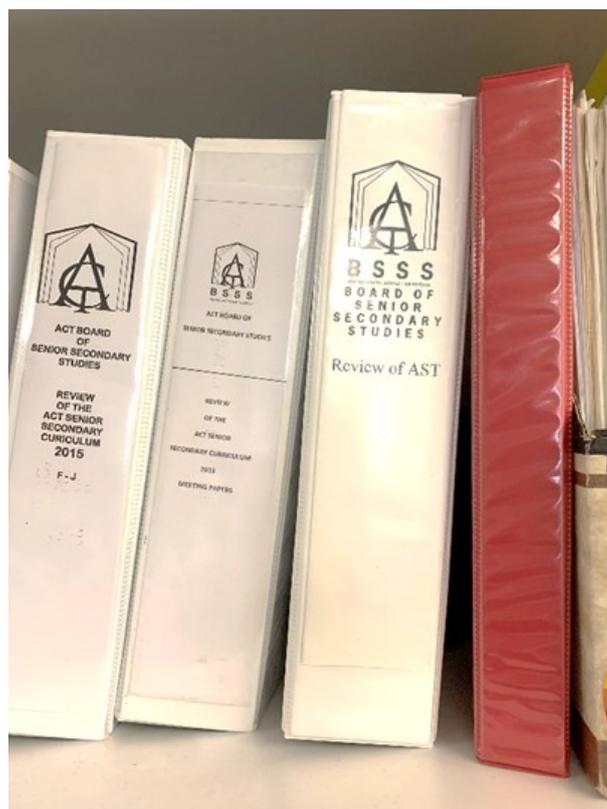
- Dates and weighting okay? Do they match the unit outline?
- Is the year or semester right?
- Are you using the right Achievement Standards for your course?
- Is there a marking scheme or rubric?

Make sure what's reported to the student is correct

- Items have been moderated at your school
- Raw marks and item grades are not adjusted after they have been returned to the student – all moderation and feedback is completed prior to the return of the item
- The number on the item matches what you put into ACS.

Collect what you can, when you can. Many teachers put together their document folders as they go. For example:

- If using Google Drive, downloading a document into Word will let you print the comments on it
- If using Google Forms, printing the “answer” page to PDF will let you PDF the response with all corrections and information in it.



Remember, presentations are intended to be a collation exercise of work already completed.

What's the purpose of some of these documents?

In the ACT Senior Secondary System, peer (or *social*) moderation is a primary method of quality assurance. Quality assurance is about making sure that the system remains fair and comparable, and that students receive their *learning entitlement*.

The phrase ‘learning entitlement’ refers to the learning that a student should receive from studying the ACT senior secondary certificate. This entitlement is an implicit promise of quality made to the student by the school and the system through framework, course, unit, and policy documents. The learning entitlement that all students in Australia can expect from their schools, teachers, and systems is outlined in the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration \(2019\)](#).

The documents requested in a Moderation portfolio help the people moderating affirm that the work from a school is of high quality, and that students are receiving their learning entitlement.

Evidence that the students got the correct information about the unit

- Dates, year and semester are correct. Title, accreditation (e.g., T, A or M) and value are correct.
- It is clear what students have to do: goals, content descriptions, weightings of tasks, Achievement Standards, reference to *BSSS Policy and Procedure* are all there
- VET competencies are clearly stated.

Evidence that the students received quality, comparable feedback

- Grades and scores match between the individual student profile generated from ACS (Profiles Online), and the students' work. Using ACS to hand back grades and scores in a timely way means that mismatches can be picked up during the semester
- Feedback on student work is legible
- Marking schemes supplied as rubrics or test answers for each task
- Where a long-answer question is heavily weighted in a test, a specific scheme for this question is used to ensure comparability between students (e.g., a rubric or marking guide).

Evidence of the work itself

- For most subjects, digital files do not need to be downloaded or opened in a specific program to "work." If not possible (e.g., in IT), talk with the OBSSS
- Not locked to a specific virtual learning environment or otherwise inaccessible
- Student clearly identified in videos have been captured where required.

Evidence that the unit is being taught as accredited

- Names on student work match up
- No A grade? Comment on PRP or on ACS when creating the portfolio
- Evidence exists for tests (e.g., not locked to a particular virtual learning environment).

Mparntwe Education Declaration Goals

Goal 1

The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Goal 2

All young Australians become:

- confident and creative individuals
- successful lifelong learners
- active and informed members of the community.

Alice Springs (Mparntwe)
Education Declaration
DECEMBER 2019



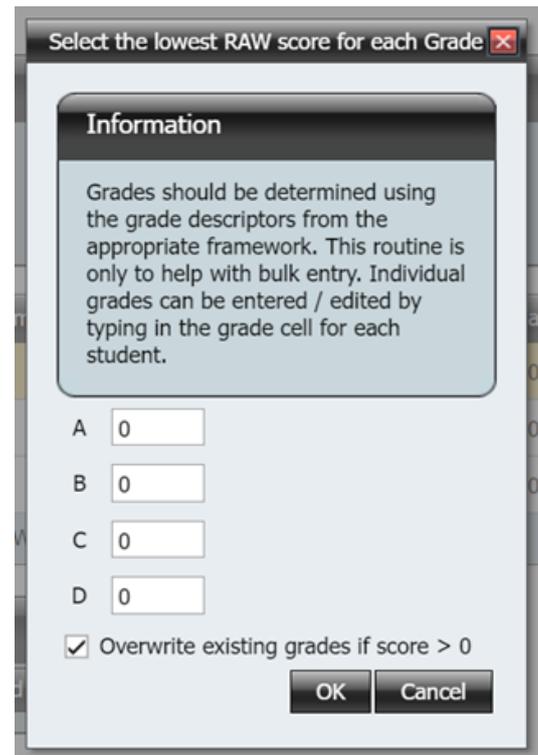
**Education
Council**

How to enter grades in ACS

In the ACT, students are now supplied with both grades and scores on their assessable work. Did you know that you can bulk-enter grades in ACS?

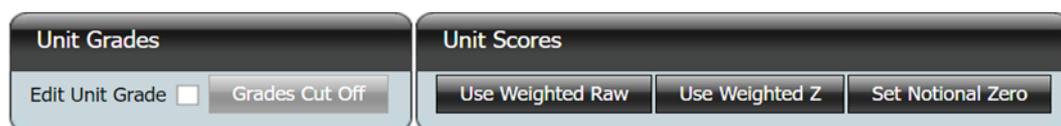
To bulk-enter grades:

1. Once assessment is marked, moderated, and the scores entered, the numerical scores can be used to designate the grade cut offs for that item. This may differ depending on the item and course.
2. Tick the box next to the item that says "Grades Cut Off"
3. Enter the marks you want to cut the grades at into the boxes
4. Hit "okay"
5. When it prompts "are you sure", hit "okay" and any student with scores will be given a grade automatically!
6. Check the grades are right, then hit "save" to save the grades.



At the end of the unit, you can do this with unit grades, too. The screenshot below shows the edit unit grade button underneath the assessment items.

Data Entry		Assessment Item	Maximum Mark	Weighting	Bottom Ma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grades Cut Off	AI 1 Responding Exam	100	40	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grades Cut Off	AI 2 Investigative Task	100	30	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grades Cut Off	AI 3 Creative Response	100	30	
Total Weight:				100	



Why grades?

- Grades directly reflect the Achievement Standards, which is one of the measures all courses need to report on as part of their accreditation
- Grades are used by students at all levels, including T students seeking entry to interstate and overseas universities
- Grades are an absolute standard in the ACT Senior Secondary System and do not change based on scaling.

Why numerical scores?

- Numerical scores allow for accuracy of reporting of late or plagiarism penalties
- Numerical scores allow for automation of weighting influence on the final score
- Numerical scores for each task can provide finer-grained information on student's attainment to support unit grade differentiation
- Numerical scores allow scaling processes to occur.

Can you clarify that?

Sometimes people ask for clarification across a range of issues. We'd love to be able to clarify things that people in the system ask for; if you have a question, please send it in via your curriculum co-ordinator or through the bsssenquiries@act.gov.au email.

Clarification #1:

Meshing does not change students' grades

In 2022, there have been a few statements on Moderation documentation from teachers stating that meshing has had an impact on grades. Some of our BSSS officers know from experience that sometimes there is some pressure to change a grade based on meshed scores, so we have written up some information to help you in that conversation.

If you read the article about bulk-entering grades, you might have noticed the following statements:

- Numerical scores allow meshing and scaling processes to occur
- Grades are an absolute standard in the ACT Senior Secondary System and do not change based on scaling.

What does this mean? And why is it important?

Grades and scores are two different measures. If you've ever looked at a student's Academic Record, you might have seen differences in the grade awarded to the same score in different subjects. This is acceptable in our system, because that numerical score will change when the results are scaled, but the grade will not.

Grades are awarded based on how well the student has met the relevant Achievement Standards in their course. They offer an unmoving snapshot of how a student performed at a particular point in time.

While the general community may expect that a score will in some way reflect a grade, it is not necessary to do so and there may be good reasons why grade and score relationships are different between subjects and cohorts. Your peers verify grade decisions at Moderation Day.

What is in-school moderation and what is meshing?

Teachers delivering the same unit (or different units if they are in the same markbook), moderate their grading and marking to ensure consistency between teachers. Processes vary between contexts but usually involve having work marked by another teacher or discussions on student work and grade or mark decisions. Initial marks or grades may change in this process if there were inconsistent expectations between teachers.

Meshing is statistically adjusting T unit scores using the markbook parameters to create a scaling group of at least 30 students with directly comparable scores. Processes vary between contexts but usually involve multiple sources of data such as trial AST results, meshing tasks, or common tasks. There is no requirement for a meshed scaling group to have the same grade-score relationship for all courses.

But if the scores go up, then the grades should go up, right?

No. Grades and scores are two different measures. Grades should always reflect the Achievement Standards as applied to the unit. We know that meshing sometimes uncovers issues in grading but this would remain as a grading issue and not the result of meshing. If the idea of raising or lowering a student's grade due to meshing becomes contentious, give the OBSSS a call and one of our officers will further explain the difference between grades and scores.

Clarification #2:

There is no “set” or “BSSS” proforma for programs of learning

Depending on the setting or needs, there are many ways to write a Program of Learning (POL). Programs of Learning are the lens for delivering the curriculum – a POL crystallises thought and practice, and provides an artefact for future reference and adaptation. Similarly, Programs of Learning offer accountability and quality assurance, ensuring consistency of learning expectations, as well as allowing for collaboration.

The responsibility of the classroom teacher is to establish the approach for delivering content, skills, and learning experiences to impart the course and unit goals to your students (e.g., case studies, genres, practical activities, movements, eras, etc.). Accountability measures required by the OBSSS, TQI (AITSL standard 2, particularly 2.1 and 2.2), ask you to plan your teaching and learning as a scaffolded and sequenced set of connected learning opportunities.

Whatever format you plan in, your program of learning should cover:

- Clear links to unit goals
- Link to curriculum content so there is a clear connection between the curriculum as accredited and what you will be teaching
- Elaborations that deal with how you’ll cover content descriptions
- Assessment details (formative and summative)
- Teaching and learning activities
- Reflection on the composition of the class and any specific needs students may have.

There is an example of a POL on the BSSS

Website, but many schools construct plans of their own that use a different form to make clear what learning activities and assessment will be used to target, teach, and assess the course content.

In the response to the first *Shape of Moderation* paper, many commenters noted that their POLs were iterative documents that evolved over a semester, with their initial plans changing and those changes noted for future reference. There were a lot of comments about Programs of Learning in these responses, and these comments are being used to inform the second version of the Shape of Moderation.

Do you have Professional Learning ideas?

You might have noticed that the BSSS social media has woken up for the spring! We’d love to know what your ideas are as we plan Professional Learning for 2023.

Similarly, if you’re doing amazing things in the classroom and you’d like to share them with others, there will be several opportunities in 2023 to do that as part of a plenary or group session. Examples include great programs of learning, assessment, and ways of working with others in your school to implement courses and units.

If you have feedback about the kinds of PL you’d like to see, fill in the form [here](#).

If you are interested in contributing to PL in 2023, please fill in the form [here](#).

We will collate the most popular ideas and bring them to you in the new year.

Events Term 4 2022

Dates and events are accurate at the time of publishing. Check the website and social media for updates

AST Second Sitting

- **October 18-19**

Recognition of Excellence Ceremony

- **December 12**

Professional Learning Opportunities

- Leading Senior Assessment in your School **October 21**
- Planning for the new Commerce Framework **November 3**

Regular Meetings

- Assessment and Certification Committee **October 25**
- Curriculum Advisory Committee **October 26**
- VET Co-ordinators' meeting **November 1**
- Curriculum Co-ordinators' meeting **November 2**
- Certification Co-ordinators' meeting **November 3**
- AST Coordinators' meeting **November 10**
- Board Principals' meeting **November 15**
- Board of Senior Secondary Studies meeting **November 24**

Important deadlines

- Closing date for Recognition of Excellence Nominations **November 11**
- Final day for return of student assessment **November 23**
- Final day for students to be notified of course and unit scores **November 25**
- Final day for lodgement of college-based appeals by final-year college students **November 29**
- Final day for the completion of college-based appeals by final year college students **November 30**
- Perfect data day **November 30**
- Final day for lodgement of Board appeals by final year college students **December 2**
- Moderation presentations due **December 15**

Acknowledgements

Images pp. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 sourced from Canva for Education

Image p. 11 sourced from Microsoft Office Stock Images

Leah Brideson's work sourced from ACT Government

All other images from BSSS Officers.

The AST writing task on p. 4 is from 1989

If you are interested in seeing your images or content in this newsletter, contact bsssenquiries@act.gov.au