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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, and all others who have familiar or ongoing connections to this land.

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

Our cover image this time is a gang-gang cockatoo – one of a pair spotted near the BSSS Offices in Woden. The gang-gang cockatoo is the faunal emblem of the ACT, and in March 2022 was officially [listed as an endangered species](#).

Part of respect for Country is caring for Country and all those who live on it. One way you can get involved in helping the gang-gang cockatoo is by taking part in the ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's [feather collection project](#), which aims to understand the effective size of the ACT gang-gang population, so that conservation can be better planned and implemented.

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.



Leah Brideson, Strength in Community

Acknowledgements

Images pp. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13 sourced from Canva for Education

Leah Brideson's work sourced from ACT Government

All other images from BSSS Officers.

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



BSSS Ethical Research Guidelines

We proud to announce that the BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines are now available to teachers and students in the ACT.

The ACT BSSS Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines sets the standard for ethical research, particularly research involving people, undertaken for assessment in the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. These guidelines encompass tasks such as observational studies of human behaviour, creative inquiry, biographical research, and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from people. These were passed by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies in February 2023 for **full implementation in 2024**. They are a set of general principles accompanied by guidelines on their implementation.

The Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines are drawn from the Australian national standards, the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2018](#) and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#), which apply to universities and other research settings. A panel of teachers drawn from the three sectors, experts in cultural matters, and an expert in research ethics from ANU worked on the Principles and Guidelines to ensure their applicability to school settings.

The BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual has been updated to reflect this significant work.

The full text can be found in [Appendix 9 of the BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual](#).

This will empower teachers and schools to insist students conduct ethical research. Students who conduct unethical research may be penalised. Including Ethics under Academic Integrity enables schools to use existing structures to implement the regulation of their requirements.

Principles and guidelines are needed to ensure that students, schools, and research participants are not exposed to unnecessary risks and dangers. They mitigate the risk of student as researchers, creatives, and scientists causing themselves or others harm. These principles are also used in the tertiary sector and professional settings, so student familiarity with them will support their transition to study, life, and work beyond school. They will become accustomed to the procedural expectations around sound and ethical research.



James thought it might be time he talked to the students about *exactly* which famous experiment they were planning to replicate for their major task...



The guidelines provide suggestions and requirements that elaborate on the principles. There are model consent forms approved by the Government Solicitor on which teachers and schools can base their own consent forms for participants. Look in [Appendix 9 of the BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual](#). There is also an online self-paced workshop online on the BSSS website to assist school leaders and teachers in understanding the requirements. That workshop also will provide suggestions for implementation.

The Principles

For full elaborations, read the principles in their entirety in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

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.

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.

Do you have friends or ex-colleagues who haven't been teaching Year 12 this year, but still hold a WWVP card?

We are still looking for AST Supervisors, including special case supervisors.

Interested people should complete this form <https://forms.office.com/r/DpimGAmDKm>

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: _____

This form and others are available in the BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual; these can be easily customised to your context and research.

The Office of the BSSS is seeking invigilators for the AST on September 5 and 6, 2023.



The AST is the test sat by all ATAR-aspiring students at the end of Year 12. You will be paid for your work in this role. Rates of pay are in the application form below. Applicants need a WWVP card.





The Moderation Risk Matrix

*You might have seen the new Moderation Quality Assurance Report and heard your Principal discussing the Moderation Risk Matrix this semester. The risk matrix and report have been trialled using the data generated from Moderation Day 1, 2023. This trial is **not** being recorded as a “step” along the risk matrix, nor has anything other than an initial report been sent to schools*

The risk matrix will be in place from Moderation Day 2, 2023.

Moderation Day is one of the most important days on the ACT Senior Secondary calendar, and it’s one of the fundamental things that differentiates our system from other senior secondary systems. It’s the two days in the year when teachers are released from other duties so that they can get together to compare the quality of their work to that in other schools and offer feedback to other teachers about the grading of the work. Not only a day for feedback, it was also noted early on in the system’s genesis that there needed to be time set aside for teachers to see the work of others in the system, as without an external subject-based examination, this is the only time that teachers get a subject-based sense of how their students are performing relative to others in the ACT.

Given that the grades that go on the student’s record of achievement are the grades given by the teachers, it is important to the integrity of the certificate that these are as accurate as possible. The way that this is quality assured is

through Moderation Days, where it is a requirement that all teachers delivering the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate participate.

The Matrix

One of the functions of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies according to the BSSS Act 2016 is:

(d) to establish principles and procedures for the assessment of attainments of students and the moderation of the assessments

Feedback from Moderation Days, and to the first Shape of Moderation paper, indicated that teachers and leaders in the system wanted greater accountability for schools where serious or continued issues were noted in school presentations. The result of work on this is the Moderation Risk Matrix.

The *BSSS System Moderation Matrices* provides schools a snapshot of the level of risk to student learning and/or quality assessment at their school. A “presentation rating” is based on elements of the presentation, and the potential impact – either to the students in the course, to the school through providing grounds for appeals, or to the functions of the system through not providing enough evidence for quality assurance to occur. Presentations with no issues may be identified as Exemplary by the reviewers.

The level of risk will be determined using the *Presentation Risk Rating Matrix*. This matrix is based on two intersecting factors: the presentation rating at Moderation Day and its frequency. Schools with Moderation Day data indicating they have 10% or more of Exemplary presentations will receive a Board commendation.

Presentation Rating				
Exemplary	Satisfactory	Concerning	Concerning	Unsatisfactory
Identified by reviewer as an Exemplary presentation	No or 1 Level 1 issue	2+ Level 1 issues or a single recurring Level 1 issue*	Level 2 issue	2+ Level 2 issues or Level 2 and 2+ Level 1 issues

* Presentation rating can be reclassified from Satisfactory to Concerning by OBSSS when a recurring Level 1 issue is identified.

Course and School Risk Ratings

Minimum risk and exemplary ratings require no action. Low risk requires an action plan like the one that is currently filled in by schools post-Moderation Day. Medium and high require a more detailed plan to mitigate issues.

Once an issue makes it to extreme, the school is asked to show cause for the continuation of delivery of the course. This could be for a single course, or for the delivery of a number of units across a school. Finally, if a course makes it to non-compliant (a process over 2 years), then the Board will remove recognition for that course at that school. This will be done as per Policy and Procedures Manual 5.3.2.12.

		Single Course Risk Rating			
	Criteria for Risk Assessment	Exemplary	Satisfactory or Satisfactory with a single Level 1 issue	Concerning	Unsatisfactory
Frequency	First instance	Minimum Risk	Minimum Risk	Low	Medium
	Second instance			Medium	High
	Third instance			High	Extreme
	Fourth instance			Extreme	Non-compliant
	Fifth instance			Non-compliant	

		Whole School Risk Rating			
	Criteria for Risk Assessment	Commendation ≥10% Exemplary	≤10% of reviewed courses identified as Concerning or Unsatisfactory	>10% of reviewed courses identified as Concerning or Unsatisfactory	>10% of reviewed courses identified as Unsatisfactory
Frequency	First instance	Minimum Risk	Minimum Risk	Medium	High
	Second instance			High	Extreme
	Third instance			Extreme	Non-compliant
	Fourth instance			Non-compliant	
	Fifth instance				

What are the level 1/2 issues, and what is their impact?

Issues are split into Level 1 and Level 2; minor issues that only become a problem if they're consistently repeated, and issues that have more major implications for students, or that do not allow the quality assurance process to occur.

You'll see some of these are quality assurance issues. This is because one of the functions of Moderation Day is to assure government and the community that the quality of work being undertaken in ACT Senior Secondary Schools is that required by the courses and Achievement Standards. This quality assurance is one of the primary justifications for releasing senior secondary teachers from their other duties for the two Moderation Days. It is one of the formal ways that the government and community is given independent evidence that students are getting the information that they need to be successful (e.g., accurate due dates and rubric information) and that the marking and grading of student responses is fair and comparable across ACT schools. This is important in ensuring that all students across the ACT regardless of their school and subjects are given opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do (through quality assessment design and consistent application of standards).

Where an item cannot be assessed in a portfolio because it's missing, that's an item that can't be quality assured. When something can't be quality assured, there's a risk that the item, assessment, opportunity, or part of curriculum is

not being provided.

Moderation administrative checks have been significantly streamlined, to remove both the administrative burden of changing things, and to remove the issue that was (quite rightly) pointed out in survey responses from teachers that changing information and/or supplying missing information was a misrepresentation of what had actually happened in the class or course.

What does this mean? What do I have to do?

All you need to do is to continue to implement quality strategies to teach your students, design, implement and make judgements on student

Teachers should continue to implement quality strategies to teach your students, design, implement and make judgements on student evidence and participate in moderation processes.

evidence and participate in moderation processes. The information provided in the reports should allow you to work with your colleagues to review your assessment and judgements and, where relevant, consider what might be improved to provide opportunities for next time. It is important to consider and apply any learnings to those assessments that do not go through the moderation processes too. In other words, all you need to do is teach and assess as normal, and moderate as normal.

If you get a minor issue in a portfolio, then that's something to consider for next time.

If you get a major issue or multiple minor issues, your school leaders will work with you to help address the issues and implement appropriate changes. You'll write up the same sort of documentation that you usually do when this happens now (the moderation action plan).



Certification Report

Your school has received a copy of the 2022 certification report. This report presents information about the certification (awarding of a senior secondary certificate) of students last year. Some highlights are below.

How many people got a senior secondary certificate?

In 2022, 4527 students met the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. This included 4347 students enrolled in ACT schools, 69 enrolled in CIT Pathways College and 111 enrolled in international schools.

Category	2022
Senior Secondary Certificates	4,527
ACT Public	2,790
ACT Catholic	680
ACT Independent	946
International	111
CIT	69
Standard Package	4,468
Abridged Package	59
ACT Certificated	4,347
ACT Male and Non-Binary	2,163
ACT Female	2,184

How many course areas did students have on their certificate?

Course areas are groupings of similar courses. In 2022 there were 237 courses recorded on Senior Secondary Certificates from 56 course areas. To receive a Senior Secondary Certificate, students are required to complete four courses from three different course areas, including the English course area.

A “course” here is a major, minor, major-minor, or double major. 4227 (94.6% of standard package) students achieved at least one Major or above in a course, 850 (19% of standard package) of students completed at least one Major Minor or above, and 537 (12% of standard package) completed at least one Double Major.

Number of course areas with at least one course	Number of ACT Senior Secondary Certificate students	Percentage of ACT Senior Secondary Certificate Students
3	47	1.1%
4	793	17.7%
5	2,009	45%
6	1,375	30.8%
7	210	4.7%
8	27	0.6%
9	7	0.2%

What sorts of courses did people study?

Courses on Senior Secondary Certificate in 2022.

Course Area(s)	Number of ACT Senior Secondary Certificate Students who completed a course from this course area	Percentage of ACT Senior Secondary Certificate Students who completed a course from this course area
Art/ Photography	761	16.8%
Commerce	1,017	22.5%
Design/ Technology	1,072	23.7%
Drama	270	6%
English/ESL	4,527	100%
Geography/ Global/Pol	388	8.6%
History	670	14.8%
IT	485	10.7%
Languages	534	11.8%
Mathematics	4,238	93.6%
Media	229	5.1%
Music	207	4.6%
Religious Studies	1,232	27.2%
Science	2,500	55.2%
Sociology	445	9.8%
SportsSc/ HumanMovt/ OutEd	1,400	30.9%

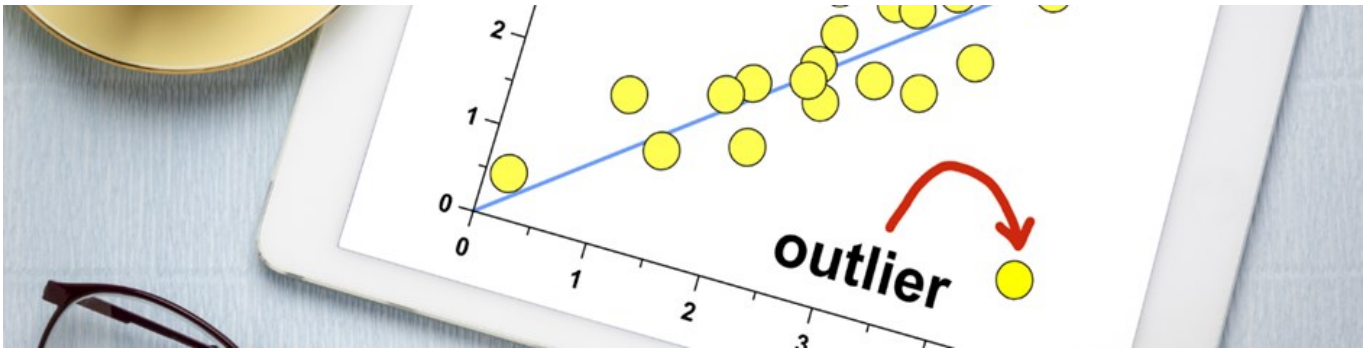
Course completion in English is 100% as it is a requirement for certification. Science saw the biggest increase, but this can be largely attributed to the reclassification of Psychology which has moved course areas from the old Behavioural Science course area.

Design and Technology, and Biology have continued their upward trend. In previous years this had been attributed to the introduction of Human Biology, and a reorganisation of course areas which consolidated the design courses. The continuing trend in both these areas, however, suggests a significant change in student course selection patterns over the last decade.

We see Languages and Art/Photography at their lowest levels since the modern organisation of course areas in 2006. Languages can be somewhat explained by the reduction in international full fee-paying students in the last three years but Art/Photography would require further analysis to determine possible reasons.

Loving the data and want to read more? Talk with your Certification Coordinator about the report, which contains more information about which courses contributed to students' aggregates, which competencies and AS-bAs were completed, and more.





An Outlying Z-Score: what does it mean?

Last issue we looked at scaling, and we discussed the importance of the z-score in scaling. This time we are going to look at unusual z-scores and what this might be indicating. Outlying z-scores are those in the ± 3 range or above. 99.7% of scores will fall inside a ± 3 range.

So what might be causing it?

- There might be a student who is significantly better than others in the group
- There might be a student who is misplaced in the course or needs counselling about their study habits (e.g. excessive lateness)
- There might be a problem with the assessments; e.g. creating an unneeded gap, being too hard or too easy
- There might be a need to enforce a non-serious attempt penalty
- There might be another reason due to group size

1. The student who is significantly better than others in a group

This student is someone who only comes along maybe once or twice in a career. They might not even be your student, but a student you're aware of in someone else's class. Generally, a student who gets an outlying high z-score is a memorable student. For example, there's a 0.002% chance (1 in 50,000) that someone will naturally get a z score greater than 3.5.

It can be difficult to write assessment that accurately determines the placement of this student in z score terms. There is little reason to push out a student past 3.5 z score unless this is a very high performing student in a low performing group. Remember if the other course scores and AST don't support the high placement in comparison to the other students in the group, scores will 'flatten' (move toward the mean).

2. The student is misplaced in the course or needs counselling about study habits/provisions available

This is usually a student who consistently gets a low outlying z-score, but may not demonstrate the same level of difference in other instruments (e.g., they have excellent results on AST trials).

This can happen for several reasons:

- The student does not understand the course content
- The student does not have strong executive functioning skills, undertaking choices leading to late penalties or plagiarism penalties
- The student does not have appropriate special provisions

This is a student who likely needs some assistance from the pastoral care or student services team at your school, or through community organisations such as homework clubs. Where there's a student consistently getting low outly-

ing z-scores, please check in with them to determine if one of these factors is at play. Intervention could make a huge difference for this student, whether it's mental wellbeing, home life, or just that they have picked the wrong subject/level and need counselling to help them understand that.

3. Problems with the assessments

Sometimes an outlying z-score indicates there's a problem with the assessment. This happens even to the most experienced assessors. Problems might be:

- The assessment did not differentiate enough between the majority of students
- The assessment was unbalanced: e.g. a heavily weighted section at the end of a difficult exam that only one or two students managed to finish
- The assessment was too difficult for the majority of students, skewing the results
- 'Squashing down' other high performing students too much to account for a very high performing student. This can be especially problematic in a rubric-style marking guide of multiple criteria.
- There was interference from non-relevant factors; e.g. extremely wordy questions in a Mathematics examination that are as much a test of reading as they are of Maths



Sometimes an outlying z-score indicates there's a problem with the assessment. This happens even to the most experienced assessors.

When there's an unexpected distribution of scores, this is always a cue to have a look at the assessment to check for issues like these. They may not be there, but checking is part of the usual reflection and quality assurance process expected by the AITSL standards and the requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificate.

4. A non-serious attempt

Last newsletter we discussed non-serious attempts and gave some advice about how to determine serious and non-serious attempts. An extremely low z-score may reflect a need to enforce the rules about non-serious attempts; for example, a student who only attempts 2 questions in a 60-question exam should not be graded.

By grading a student, you are certifying that they can do the things the course says they can do.

You're giving them a qualification. Giving that qualification without the supporting evidence or giving it to someone who hasn't fulfilled the requirements, devalues that qualification.

5. Other reasons

Other reasons can be to do with group size – e.g. a very large group will (pretty much) always have a z-score around 3. Think of the English or Mathematics groups in big schools, where there might be 300 students in one group! A very small group is also likely to throw other statistical anomalies, which is why your certification coordinator will combine very small groups into larger markbooks and scaling groups.

In the end, there will be the odd outlying z-score in your markbooks. These have a range of implications and causes, and sometimes they are entirely natural and expected. Your certification officer and school leaders might talk with you about it. You might also look at your z-scores as part of data-driven reflection on your students' achievements and your assessment task design. Where you need to be more cautious is when very low or very high z-scores are habitually occurring in your data over several semesters – this points to a probable systemic issue in the assessment setting and marking that you need to address to be fair to all students.

On the Horizon

Compromised Assessment

We are currently working on policy for compromised assessment tasks. Assessment tasks are compromised when students get a copy of the task or marking instructions in a way that would give them an advantage over other students and/or distort the results for the task. This might come about in different ways. Some we have encountered or had reported to us:

- Human error (e.g. a teacher gives out the actual exam question as a “practice question”; a marking key or document is accidentally left or posted where students have taken advantage of it)
- Older friends and siblings sharing re-used tasks, and responses to re-used tasks
- Tutors paying students for copies of exams or assignments, and then “teaching the test” to students in schools that are known to use the same tests year-in, year-out
- Teachers copying tasks in their entirety from third-party websites that provide both task and solution, leading to students googling the questions and finding all answers
- An assessment includes content that has an unanticipated negative effect on students (e.g., an assignment is about road deaths and a bad road accident happens to students in the class)

In an upcoming Board Meeting, the Board will consider addition to Policy and Procedure to offer more explicit advice in the instance of a compromised assessment task. Your principal and curriculum co-ordinators will be informed of the result of this and will be able to give you advice if you find yourself in this situation.

Artificial Intelligence

A lot is happening in the Artificial Intelligence space this year, and AI will continue to be salient as we move through into the second half of 2023.

The Office of the BSSS have published two AI-specific papers for teachers, with a third on the way. This third paper focusses on AI plagiarism detection.

Two topics from this paper to pay particular attention to:

1. **Data agreements and privacy**
2. **Don’t rely on “AI detectors” as your sole source of information indicating plagiarism**

Agreements vary by sector, but generally, services which use student data or require students to self-disclose personal data require parental consent. If a data agreement doesn’t exist, exercise extreme caution in the use of any AI tool, and speak to your line manager about explicit and recorded permission for the use of any specific tool.

Please note that we do not recommend using ChatGPT to write personalised identifiable school reports because the consequences of a data breach could be catastrophic both for students and for you.

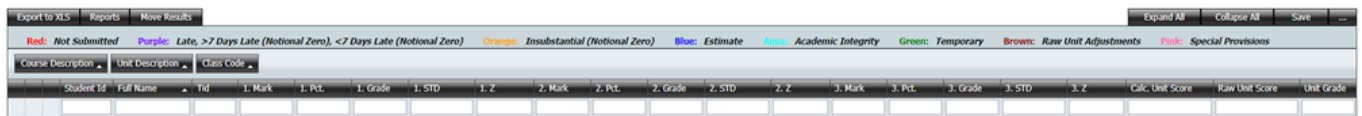
As the year continues, it is likely that your school or sector will iron out any data agreement hiccups. Until then, it is advisable to be cautious in putting anything that may be considered student information or student production into generative AI, including detectors, without a privacy or data agreement in place.

How to hide and unhide columns in ACS

More detailed ACS help articles can be found here: <https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/acs/index>

Did you know that you can move, hide and unhide columns in ACS? It can be a bit of a surprise if you click and drag a column by accident, but it is easy to get the data back.

Go into any markbook you have access to and scroll down to where you can see the column headers. It will look like this:



So much information... so much so that it doesn't even fit nicely on our newsletter page. Having all this info is useful, but sometimes you just need a break from so much information so that you can enter things without worrying about using the wrong column, or you want to arrange the columns how you like them.

Step One

Go to the "meatball" menu on the far right (also called the "three dots" or the "ellipsis" menu). This will give you a list of currently hidden information. In the example, I have only got unit code in there

Step Two

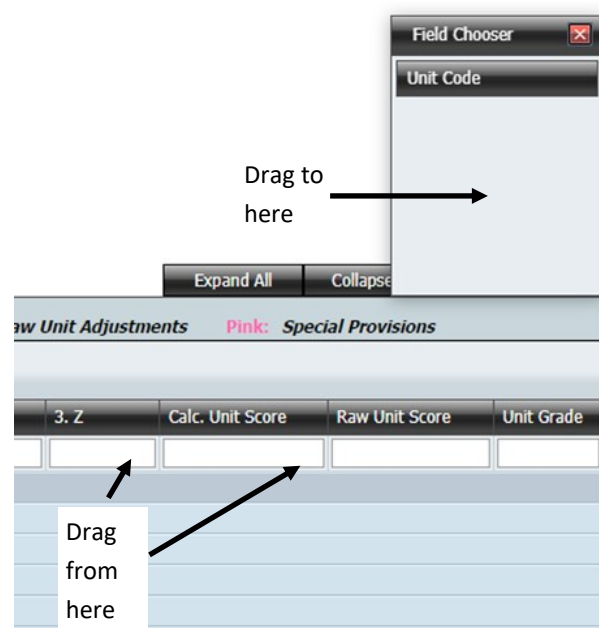
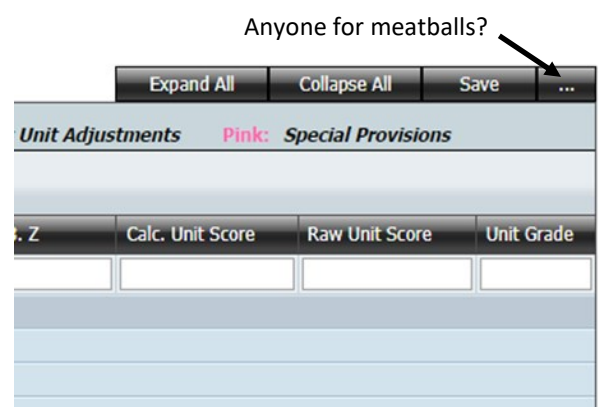
Hover over the name of a column until your cursor looks like a hand. Now grab one of the column headings by clicking, holding and dragging, and pull it up into the Field Chooser.

Step Three

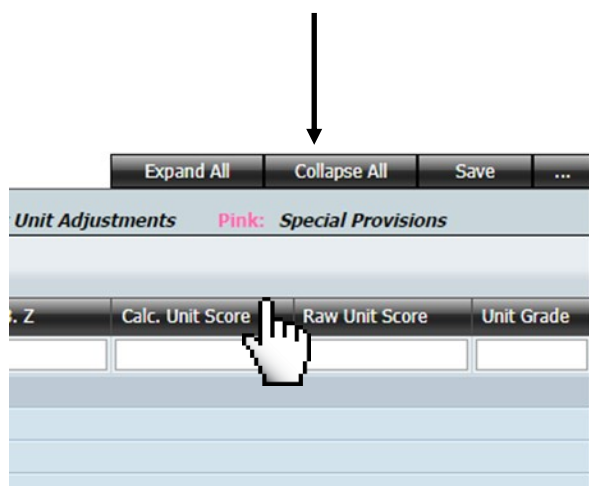
Now drag a the heading back to where it came from. You might see that the headings have ended up out of order, but don't worry – you can re-order them in the way you like.

Step Four

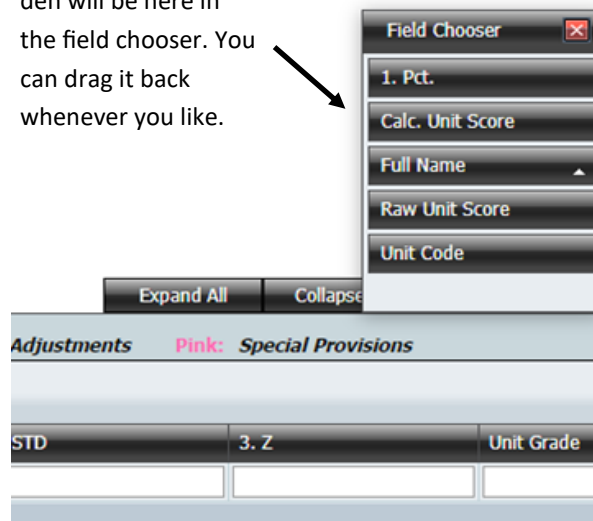
Hover over the name of a column until your cursor looks like a hand. Then you can click and drag (hold down the mouse button) and move the columns into any order you like. Look for a little arrow above the menu to show you where it's going!



When you hover over the menu, your cursor will look like a hand (enlarged in this image)



Anything you've hidden will be here in the field chooser. You can drag it back whenever you like.



Student Forum

In March and May, the Office of the BSSS hosted the first student forums for 2023, bringing together students from different schools and sectors to discuss issues that matter to them. The event provided an interactive platform for students to voice their concerns and collaborate on potential solutions.

One of the key discussions centred around the calculation of student results. Students expressed their concerns about transparency and fairness in the grading process. Students highlighted the importance of timely and accurate communication between educational institutions and their pupils. They called for more efficient channels of information, ensuring that students are well-informed about academic policies, opportunities, and support services.

Below is some of what the students said, in their own words. One thing that shows up multiple times is mental health and wellbeing; this may be of interest to schools planning learning opportunities for their students.

What are you hoping to gain out of being part of the Forum?

- Ideas on how other schools deal with things so that we can feed back to our own schools.

- Giving more of a voice to students – we are people with opinions about education.
- More opportunities for excursions especially in humanities subjects, this will motivate people to do work in class.
- What are other ways to get into uni without an ATAR? Why is there so much emphasis on the AST and the ATAR?
- Teachers tend to focus more on the outcome and results rather than process and the students' understanding.
- Why do teachers make the test harder to get the perfect bell curve? What happens to students who don't perform so well in class?

Do you have any questions/concerns?

- Learning could be more fun in Year 11 and 12
- Students should be more aware [of] their options to get through the school year in a flexible way
- Teachers are still confused about scaling and they are not able to actually explain this to students

- Explain scaling more thoroughly – many students choose subjects they do not like/ do not have an aptitude for due to misconceptions regarding scaling
- There needs to be clearer communication or a centralised way of approaching moderation and scaling
- The stigma between accredited and tertiary

What do you think teachers should know about generative AI?

- It's not always correct
- Variety in learning, not just cramming notes, make adaptations for all learners
- We should be taught how to utilise it properly
- It can have a positive or negative impact on student
- Not to make every assessment written in decreasing stress levels
- ChatGPT can often limit our creative approach
- AI cannot be banned. It is the push schools and the BSSS need to modernise the outdated assessment tasks

What are your thoughts on the student newsletter?

- It is important that this newsletter is provided to all students, and it should be an expectation that teachers are providing this information to students
- Nobody our age uses Twitter and Facebook
- To add stories of real people and include their educational struggles
- People who would benefit the most from it aren't reading it

We are looking at ways to celebrate student and teacher work in the coming months; particularly, interesting projects and work that students and teachers are doing in this system, to showcase what is happening in schools.

It was wonderful to meet the students in this year's forum, and we're looking forward to further meetings later this year. By maintaining an open dialogue with students and involving them in decision-making processes, we hope to create a more inclusive, efficient, and supportive educational environment for all.



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; so if you have a question, please send it in via your curriculum co-ordinator or through the bsssenquiries@act.gov.au email. This newsletter's clarifications all came from teacher queries!

What are the communication lines between the Office and schools?

The Office of the Board communicates with key people in your school so that they can pass that information on to classroom teachers and the school community. This is done so that school leaders can plan the flow of information to staff in their school and ensure that all staff are on the same page at the same time.

Communications given to Principals include:

- Expression of Interest forms for course development and other opportunities
- News about changes to courses, reviews (e.g. the review of moderation), and changes to Policy and Procedure
- Requests for feedback on Shape Papers, Courses, and other documents
- School-specific feedback about course moderation
- Requests for award nominations at the end of the year
- Teacher and Student newsletters
- Special interest papers, such as the AI paper
- News about new professional learning

Other coordinators in your school will be given information to pass on as well. Certification, Moderation, Curriculum and VET Co-ordinators

all attend meetings throughout the year, where information about courses, changes to policy, and information relevant to their area of responsibility is passed on. Where an EOI, policy change, or newsletter would be relevant to their area of responsibility, these communications are also sent to them to forward on to interested staff in their school.

The Office of the Board communicates with key people in your school so that they can pass that information on to classroom teachers and the school community



This is done so that school leaders can plan the flow of information to staff in their school and ensure that all staff are on the same page at the same time.

For the Newsletters, we are currently going through the processes to have a user-managed signup; however, this is taking time as we must abide by the software packaging rules required by Government. Watch this space!

How many External VET units can go onto the Senior Secondary Certificate from 2024?

The term 'external VET' refers to competency only VET programs that are not integrated into BSSS accredited courses and includes Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs).

External vocational education and training is recognised on the ACT SSC as either an *External VET Credit (E) Unit* or a *W Unit*.

Can you clarify that? (Cont.)

Both *E* and *W* Units [may contribute towards the minimum requirement of the ACT SSC.](#)

An *E* Unit may be awarded to approved externally delivered training which leads to a nationally recognised vocational qualification (VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment) that is delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and attributed based on the competencies achieved. E Unit credit may not be awarded if there is duplication of content between the BSSS accredited courses being studied by the student and their external VET program.

A *W* Unit may be awarded to students for engagement in the workplace or on-the-job participation in the external VET program. Students are required to provide verified evidence of engagement (e.g., training diaries, logbooks, online portals etc.)

Please refer to the BSSS Website for more information.

It's never too early to think about AST...

AST 2023 will be held on 5 and 6 September.

Save the date on your calendar now!



Events Term 2 2023

Professional Learning Opportunities

There are a range of in-person PL opportunities coming up in August. Check the BSSS Calendar on our website and click the hyperlinks to enrol.

Online PL opportunities can be found on our website, including our new TQI-accredited Introduction to Generative AI. Find them under "Information for Teachers"

Meetings

- Board Meeting 8/6
- AST coordinators/supervisor's seminar 28/6
- Curriculum Co-ordinators' Meeting 27/7
- Student Forum 3 31/7
- Moderation Coordinators Meeting 3/8
- Certification Coordinators Meeting 10/8
- Moderation Day 2 17/8

Important deadlines

- Moderation Presentations due 29/6
- Final date for all Year 12 "intends T" data in ACS to be correct for AST rolls 30/6
- AST rolls available for collection by college AST Coordinators