

BSSS News | Spring 2025



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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.



This edition's image shows a work by artist Anna Hewett of Orana Steiner School.

This image, Home, forms part of a body of work — Circle of Life

Thank you, Anna, for allowing us to use your beautiful art!

Acknowledgements

Cover image: Anna Hewett, Orana Steiner School. *Home*.

Images pp.3, 9, 12, 13 sourced from Canva for Education

All other images from BSSS Officers/Office of the BSSS.

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

We are very keen to have student-created images and content in the newsletter. Please consider it!

Certification Special



Certification refers to everything that needs to come together to make the award of the Senior Secondary Certificate possible; all the hard work, data entry, rules, checks and balances, and individual circumstances that are part of every Senior Secondary Certificate. Certification is why we all do what we do – students continue at school to get their certificate, and all staff work to help them get there. As a teacher or leader in the ACT Senior Secondary System, some of the decisions you make will have an effect on certification. We have put together some information to assist you when dealing with students, parents, and tricky situations.

How do I find an academic record?

Academic records are on the “reports” page in ACS, under “student”.

Does the student meet the rules for the package they want?

Note that there are rules that may also affect a student’s eligibility, such as the number of units completed at the home school, number of Status units, and similar. If in doubt, talk with your certification officer.

Standard Package

The ACT BSSS requirements for an ACT SSC **standard package** are:

- a minimum of four **different** A, T, M, H or E courses (regardless of course type) from at least **three** different course areas. These must include at least two A, T or M courses and one of these must be in the English course area.
- complete at least 17 standard units.
- complete the package in no more than five years

To be **awarded a TES (Tertiary Entrance Statement)**, the student must:

Complete the requirements of the standard package (above) and also:

- complete a minimum of 20 standard units during senior secondary studies

- form at least four majors and one minor, or three majors and three minors from A, T, M, H, or E courses
- complete at least three majors and one minor classified T or H
- sit all components of the ACT Scaling Test

Abridged Package

The Abridged Package has its own rules and cannot be used **unless a student’s cohort has already graduated.**

Talk with your certification officer before giving any advice about abridged package rules or eligibility.

If you are giving advice about changing or dropping courses:

- Will the student be able to retain their package?
- Is the subject needed as a prerequisite to employment or future study?
- Is the subject not a prerequisite, but will have a significant positive impact on the student’s goals? E.g., Mathematics is very important for careers that might not seem “mathematical” to a seventeen-year-old, such as the behavioural sciences, veterinary, nursing, teaching, and all trades.
- What is the opportunity cost of the change?

There is an article in the latest student newsletter that you can work through with students.

If you are giving advice about changing or dropping T subjects:

Don't focus on small differences in unit scores.
Remember that how subjects in different scaling groups will compare is not known before scaling.

If something about their unit scores doesn't look correct, discuss it with your certification officer.

Particular stumbling blocks to be aware of:

- **Students need to complete at least 3.5 semesters' worth of schooling** to receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement unless undertaking the abridged package. There is no minimum study period for the standard package.
- The abridged package is only for students whose cohort has already graduated.
- **Status is only applicable when a student has substantially met the goals of the unit**, but for reasons beyond their control, they would need estimates in assessment tasks totalling 50% or more of the total weighting for the unit. Status is not applicable to a student who has had little or no engagement with the unit, such as students who have been in in-patient facilities for the semester.
- **Only courses that have integrated courses can be combined.** If in doubt, ask your certification officer.
- **Schools cannot add E course credit.** Non-ASbA E course credit is by application to the OBSSS, while ASbA E course credit is added automatically by the OBSSS based on data received from Skills Canberra.
- **Course areas:** students need to show a breadth of study by studying at least 4 courses in at least 3 course areas.
- **If you are unsure, speak with your certification coordinator.** If you are the certification coordinator and you are unsure, speak with the Office.

Certification Checks

You should know that these exist, even if they aren't available to you in ACS – it might be that a quick trip to the certification officer or student admin is enough to clear up a question or query that might otherwise take you a lot of time and effort.

What are the certification checks that can be run on an individual student?

There are two main checks that anyone who has "edit" access can run for a student from ACS. To get to these checks, go to the student page and select "reports". They accomplish a similar purpose, but are designed to be used at different times.

On track

This report will start to be very useful from the time students are enrolled in their last assessment period—usually Semester 2 of Year 12. It will check to see whether the student is on track to meet the requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement. It assumes satisfactory completion of units in the current assessment period and AST results for Tertiary package students and reports whether the student will meet requirements on that basis.

If you are in the final assessment period and want to see whether a student is on track, this report will tell you. It will identify any issues with the students pattern of courses.

Certificate check

This report is most useful after units from the last assessment have been graded and scored. It makes no assumptions about what students will achieve, and checks whether they qualify for a Senior Secondary Certificate or Tertiary Entrance Statement based on their completed units. It also reports critical errors that need to be fixed before the end of year process of Certification and scaling can begin. It reports:

Certificated and Tertiary Requirements Met flags:

These report whether the student will graduate and receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement. If the student is intending to graduate and this reports Not Certificated, this is something that needs urgent attention and communication with the student.

Likewise, if it is late November and reports Tertiary Requirements Not Met and the student is Intends T, this requires urgent attention.

Fatal errors: These are typically the result of a missing or invalid grade or score. Fatal errors must be dealt with as a priority to allow system-wide certification to proceed.

Warnings: These aren't errors, but things that need to be validated as not creating a problem for the student's package. Examples are things like more than 8 units from one Course Area. If a student is not being Certificated or receiving a TES, these may be reasons why.

What are some interesting EOY reports that my Certification Officer can access?

There are aggregated reports for:

- On track report
- Certification Check report

Other reports:

- Calculate Course Scores report: This shows the course scores and how they were calculated.

Other cool reports that people at your school can run include...

Caveat: these are cool for a given value of "cool". Nonetheless, they might be helpful to you as a means of gathering information about a student, cohort, or markbook. If you can't access one of these reports, get your Certification person to access it for you.

- Student Unit and Assessment Item Results
- Duplicate Unit Studied
- Frequency Distribution of Unit Grades
- Missing Grades and Scores
- Students with eight or more units in a course area
- Students with no units
- Ungrouped units
- Adjusted assessment item marks
- Students who should not have been graded
- Negative TID list

What are the current integrated courses?

These are sometimes colloquially referred to as "umbrella courses".

- English/Literature
- Commerce Integrated
- Design and Technology Integrated
- Further Mathematics
- History Integrated
- Information Technology Integrated
- Studies of Dance
- Studies of Drama
- Studies of Media
- Studies of Music
- Studies of Photography
- Studies of Religion
- Studies of Visual Arts
- EAL/English (has extra rules: check the document before making promises).


Courses most often mistaken as integrated, but aren't:

- Psychology/Sociology
- Science (including Physics, Chemistry, Biology)
- Languages
- Inclusion of units from History, Media or Drama in English (this is pre-Australian Curriculum policy, so it's been a while!)

If you don't know, please check the BSSS website or ask for help. Incorrect advice to students risks putting a student's academic package in jeopardy.

Eligible units means a unit is permitted to contribute to the minimum requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificate

The report shows completed and projected units so that students can see how they're going.

Student name and ID  **0123456 SWIFT, Taylor Alison**

Lake Burley Griffin College
ACADEMIC RECORD

Confidential

You need at least 3 here

Total Course Areas	6	Total Eligible Units	21.3	Total Eligible Completed Units	16.1	Intends T	Yes
Repeat	No	T/A/M/H/E Std Units	20.0	T/A/M/H/E Completed Std Units	15.0	Start date	29-Jan-2024
		Total Units	21.3	Total Completed Units	16.1	Finish date	21-Nov-2025

Check these for correct info, particularly Intends T yes or no.

All packages have combinations of T/A/M/H/E units that are compulsory.

Course Area → 011 -

Course name → 0397 ENGLISH

Course classification →

06431	T	2024,S1	ENG	Unit 1: Communication of Meaning	T - Major	COURSE SCORE = 75.36
06434	T	2024,S2	ENG	Unit 2: Representations Through Texts		1.0 70.8 C
06437	T	2025,S1	ENG	Unit 3: Comparative Texts		1.0 68.6 C
06440	T	2025,S2	ENG	Unit 4: Perspectives		1.0 85.3 B
						1.0 0.0
						4.0 Std Units

Once at least 2 units have been completed, an estimated course score is generated for T students in Year 12. This WILL change.

Counts completed units AND units still in progress-- anything not graded still needs to be completed!

Glossary of Academic Record Terms

Total Course Areas	How many course areas as defined in the document "Course Areas for Certification" that a student has. Students must have at least 3, including English. (Note: students need a minimum of four courses which can be drawn from three course areas).
Repeat	Is this a repeating student, yes or no.
Total Eligible Units	How many units appear that could potentially count towards the minimum requirements of the SSC, assuming other parameters are met (like being graded in the unit, or not exceeding the maximum number of units in a single course area).
T/A/M/H/E Units	How many units appear with these accreditation types. A student must have 12 to receive a SSC and 18 to receive a TES.
Total Units	The total units with R and W units also included.
Total [x] Completed Units	How many of that unit category have been graded. Students need to meet specific unit completion requirements to be certificated.
Intends T	Does this student intend T, yes or no. This flag is surprisingly important, even in Year 11, because it is used to help set up small group processes. In Year 12, it is used to create AST rolls and print the papers. If these flags are wrong, you will get too many or too few AST papers. Please help us to not send you too many or too few AST papers.
Start date	The date the student started studying senior secondary courses. For an early access student, this may be out of line with the rest of the cohort's start date. A student has 5 years from this start date to complete their senior secondary certificate.
Finish date	This is the date set that shows when the student's current unit enrolments finish. If it doesn't look correct, talk to your schools' Certification officer.
Course	A group of units that come together to form a course of study – it refers to a completed minor, major, major-minor, or double major.

Certification Important Dates and Explanations

Notification deadlines

November 25: last day for initial ACS entry and handback of student work

Your school might have a different day that they have planned for this to occur, but this is the last day that this can occur to guarantee that appeals can happen in a reasonable timeframe before deadlines pass. If your college chooses to do something different, you are still responsible for meeting the appeals timelines. By policy students must be given certain amounts of time throughout the appeals process between the “levels” of appeal, and this **cannot be compressed**.

November 27: last day for students to be notified of unit and course scores

Again, your school might have something different here, but this is the last day for this to reasonably happen so that appeals deadlines will be met. We will push out anything unpublished early on the 28th, so that deadlines can be met.

Appeals deadlines:

26 Nov – final deadline for teachers to respond to student appeals

28 Nov – final deadline for head of faculty to respond to student appeals

2 Dec – final deadline for students to lodge college appeals

4 Dec – **HARD DEADLINE** final deadline for colleges to finalise college appeals

5 Dec – **HARD DEADLINE** final deadline for students to lodge Board appeals

10 Dec – final deadline for the Board to finalise appeals

December 3: Perfect Data and VET Day

What is Perfect Data Day?

Perfect Data Day is the day when everything needs to be perfect! This means no fatal errors and no anticipated changes. If you put in a placeholder and it's still there at the end of Perfect Data Day, your placeholder will be used in the scaling. So please don't do that. Equally, no surprises on Perfect Data Day is the ideal. Sometimes things happen, and we'll deal with that when it does, but if you are putting something off, get it done before Perfect Data Day. Make sure that any students who will not be Certificated or qualify for a TES are communicated with.

If there are fatal errors, the team will contact your certification officer, because a fatal error means that certification can't proceed for anyone in the system.

What about VET?

Please do not enter any VET data after December 5. It will not be included in the AVETMISS submission to NCVET at the end of the year and will create many problems as a result.

Scaling days

The ACT uses Other Course Score Scaling to make the course scores in different scaling groups directly comparable to each other. Each scaling group is scaled independently of others, even within the same school, and there are no assumptions about what will happen. Scaling is only applied to T and H courses, and it is only used to create a rank for the ATAR.

4 Dec – Preliminary Scale. The database closes at 9am and stays closed until midday 5 December. If we have questions about something that could hold up scaling for everyone, we may call your college certification officer. If your college certification officer has questions, they may call you.

8 Dec – Main Scale. The database will now stay closed until 12 December, because we cannot have anything change that we don't know about. If we have questions about something that could hold up scaling for everyone, we may call your college certification officer. If your college certification officer has questions, they may call you.

11 Dec – Final Scale. Final edits can be made on this day, but only by coming into our office. Generally, we do not expect to need to call anyone, but we do ask that people are available to give us information when we need it.

12 Dec – ACS is reopened, but it's really important that you don't do any VET work in there! We tell schools the final scaling results (without aggregates at this stage) and we also tell you who your top students are.

15 Dec -- You will get your aggregates and ATARs on this day, but they are embargoed until 1pm.

16 Dec – Certificates will be available for your designated representative to pick up at the office from 9am. ATARs will be released through Profiles Online at 9am.

18 Dec – ATARs will be released through UAC.



Retention of Student Assessment Evidence

The Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (OBSSS) recently hosted two on-line information sessions focused on the retention of student assessment evidence. These sessions attracted over 90 senior secondary educators from across the ACT and internationally.

Led by BSSS Officers, the sessions covered topics such as the policy requirements, the rationale behind retention practices, and best practice for managing both digital and physical evidence. Importantly, the sessions offered a valuable opportunity for principals and teachers to ask questions and clarify expectations ensuring that schools are well-equipped to implement the policy in 2026.

The support material is available on the BSSS website.

Learner Profile Consultation: Phase One

Phase one of the Learner Profile consultation has concluded, with over 45 stakeholders participating in discussions about an ACT Senior Secondary Studies Learner Profile.

BSSS officers engaged with a diverse range of groups, including public service agencies, industry representatives, local businesses, professional associations, employment services, ACT teacher unions, students and vice-chancellors from local universities.

Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of recognising a broad range of student capabilities beyond traditional academic metrics. Skills such as critical and creative thinking, ethical reasoning, interpersonal and communication skills, collaboration, resilience and digital literacy were highlighted as essential attributes for future success.

We extend our sincere thanks to all stakeholders who contributed to the first phase of consultation on the proposal to develop an ACT Learner Profile.

Early Access to ACT Senior Secondary Studies: Guidelines and Application Requirements

The BSSS Early Access processes have been revised in 2025. The Board has endorsed updates to policy and procedure requirements and a guidelines document to support schools in identifying and selecting gifted and talented students from Years 7–10 for their suitability for Early Access to ACT Senior Secondary Studies. This guidance document is available on our [website](#). Early Access provides students with the opportunity to commence some T or H courses, see the [BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual](#) for details. Early Access is designed for students who have demonstrated mastery of relevant 7–10 curricula and are cognitively, socially, and emotionally ready for the demands of Year 11 learning. Schools must convene a panel to assess the evidence base, including cognitive assessments, achievement data, learning behaviours, and performance indicators.

To apply, schools must email BSSSCertification@ed.act.edu.au to request the online application form and submit copies of the supporting documentation. Approved students are enrolled in the ACS and assessed against Year 11 achievement standards. It is recommended that schools monitor the student progress through the development of a Learning Support Plan and regular meetings.

Teachers are encouraged to share this information with relevant staff, parents/carers, enrolment teams and begin collecting evidence for students interested in applying for a 2026 start. For more information see:

https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/act_senior_secondary_system/introduction_to_the_bsss_system - Select the 'Early Access to Senior Secondary Studies' at the bottom of the list for links to the Guidelines document.

https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/faq - Select the 'Can I start my senior secondary studies if I am in high school years 7-10?' at the bottom of the list for links.



The BSSS Recognition of Excellence Awards will be held on Monday 15 December, from 11:00am to midday, at the Kambri Precinct, ANU. This annual event celebrates outstanding student achievement across a range of categories.

As in previous years, schools are not required to submit nominations for any award other than assisting with the Aunty Agnes Shea Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Community Service Award. Instead, award recipients will be identified through end-of-year certification data, with schools notified of eligible students. In cases where a tie occurs, schools may be contacted to assist in determining the final recipient.

This year's ceremony will feature seven award categories:

- ACT Senior Secondary Certificate Excellence Award (non-TES)
- ACT Senior Secondary Certificate Excellence Award (TES)
- Vocational Studies Award – School-based
- Vocational Studies Award – External
- BSSS System Leadership Award
- Aunty Agnes Shea Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Community Service Award

New: Highest Achievement Award – awarded to the student with the highest scaled course score in each framework (e.g. Mathematics)

The BSSS looks forward to recognising the exceptional efforts and achievements of ACT senior secondary students at this special event.



Review of End of Year Data publication

The Review of ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) Policy and Procedures for Publication of End of Year 12 Data has not yet been completed. In September, the Board agreed to establish an Advisory Committee to provide external, independent, and expert advice on the publication of Year 12 data. This includes evaluating the principles and practice of the release of comparative Year 12 data, including the impact of such data on students, teachers, schools, and the broader community. The Advisory Committee will provide final recommendations to the Board on the completion of the review process in 2026.

Strategic Plan Update

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) has endorsed its Strategic Plan 2026–2030, following a comprehensive public consultation held between February and April 2025.

The development of the Strategic Plan was guided by feedback from over 140 participants, including students, teachers, and other key stakeholders. A consistent theme throughout the consultation was the importance of equipping young adults with adaptability and future readiness.

The Strategic Plan outlines the Board’s mission:

Through valuing and aspiring to excellence, and a commitment to collaboration and equity, regulate schools with integrity so that senior secondary students have the opportunity to build knowledge, skills, and understanding that empower them for broad and deep participation in life.

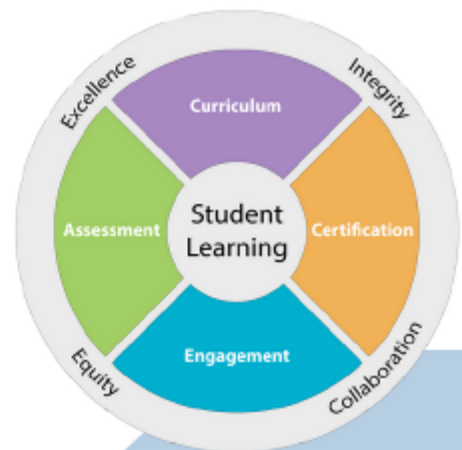
At the centre of the Strategic Plan is student learning, supported by four key priorities: curriculum, certification, engagement, and assessment. These priorities are underpinned by the core values of excellence, integrity, equity, and collaboration.

The Strategic Plan 2026–2030 provides a strong foundation for the continued development of senior secondary education in the ACT, ensuring students are supported to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We extend our sincere thanks to all stakeholders who contributed to the consultation process for the BSSS Strategic Plan 2026–2030.



ACT BOARD OF SENIOR SECONDARY STUDIES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030



OUR MISSION

Through valuing and aspiring to excellence and a commitment to collaboration and equity, regulate schools with integrity so that senior secondary students have the opportunity to build knowledge, skills, and understanding that empower them for broad and deep participation in life.

OUR VALUES

Integrity Excellence Equity Collaboration

OUR PRIORITIES

CURRICULUM

- Implement fair and ethical processes in the development of curriculum.
- Develop and refine curriculum that is contemporary, authentic, and flexible.
- Build teacher capacity and confidence through curriculum design and development to enrich the student learning entitlement.
- Create evidence-based and accessible support for schools and teachers.

ASSESSMENT

OUR GOALS - Through continuous improvement and pursuit of the highest levels of quality:

- Lead assessment processes that are standards-based, constructive, and improvement focussed.
- Guide schools in the development and application of assessment that is relevant, rigorous, and effective.
- Support schools and their teachers to make expert, fair, and consistent judgements.
- Administer robust statistical and data management processes, supported by accessible and reliable technology.

CERTIFICATION

- Oversee quality assurance systems and processes to produce reliable, robust, and comparable evidence-based senior secondary student outcomes.
- Value and recognise all pathways equally in the interests of and aspirations of all learners.
- Connect with teachers and school leaders, and other stakeholders to inform policy development and implementation.
- Work with the community to provide clarity and deepen understanding of senior secondary certification.

ENGAGEMENT

- Network with education communities to enhance trust, mutual respect, and shared purpose.
- Provide clear, current, relevant, timely, and targeted information to refresh and increase understanding.
- Foster stakeholder knowledge and capability in support of a collaborative and inclusive culture of opportunity and high expectation.
- Grow, encourage, and maintain positive partnerships founded on shared educational values for the benefit of senior secondary students.



AI in education has been, and will continue to be, a hot topic. National conversation is starting to shift away from specific tools and the bane of everyone's existence – academic integrity – to what the constants are in education and learning, what is desirable, and what does assessment represent. The Office has been working with people from the National Taskforce, ACACA, and further invitation-only groups to keep abreast of the trends.

Broadly speaking, educators in the national context are reflecting on:

- Questions asking what the fundamental elements and practices of assessment are, and what needs to change as technology changes.
- The most critical learning is often challenging and difficult, and the deepest learning is tied to purpose. How do we make this work in an AI-enabled context?
- Reminders that assessment is a proxy for learning, not a coupon to get a “good” ATAR and “good” career.
- Reminders that education is not only about productivity gains. Yes, it's useful to have a society where people can do maths for productivity, but that maths is also something valuable to the individual outside of its basic utility.
- A need to remember, appreciate, and value the human in education. When someone uses an AI tool, what is the opportunity cost?
- Hidden curriculum values such as citizenship, community building, self-regulation and pro-social behaviours.
- We need to remember VET when discussing AI. VET is not AI-proof.
- Learning is an embodied process. No one can learn *for* someone else, like no-one else can eat for you, or breathe for you. Reminding ourselves and our students of that may be an island of calm in the sea of AI that seems to be encroaching ever-closer.

Industry are reflecting:

- High uptake of micro-credentials, particularly those incorporating AI skills and skills targeted at specific careers. In some cases a suite of corporate micro-credentials is being perceived as being as valuable as more traditional credentials!
- A need for personal skills; e.g., perseverance/ grit; the ability to connect with others; reliability; the ability to initiate and discuss ideas; realistic expectations about the workplace.

Provocations for reflection with your colleagues:

- How do we teach students how to learn in our subject and context?
- How can we incorporate essential skills like self-regulation and perseverance when the work is challenging?
- Where is the line between what a student needs to do for themselves, and what it's ok to offload to AI? Why do I think that?
- When are we giving students the opportunity to solve complex problems?
- What is the role of student agency in our teaching and assessment?
- What does “authentic” teaching and learning look like in our school?

Pre-emptive AI Feedback

There has been a new player enter the field; the third-party tool that the student can upload their draft and the rubric into and get an “estimated” result for the task.

These kinds of tools may compound unhelpful beliefs about assessment as a 'product' that is exchanged for marks, rather than a reflection of a student's learning. We do not recommend or sanction their use.

We should also note that AI feedback that a student has garnered from a third-party tool does not constitute grounds for an appeal in the ACT Senior Secondary System. Appeals can be made about assessment item marks, grades or penalties, the unit grade, the unit score including any meshing procedures, or course score – however, “but the AI said I did better” is not in itself a reason to question the marking of a task!

Some talking points, if needed:

- It's a third-party tool made by a company that has nothing to do with our system.
- The “black box” nature of AI responses, particularly those from large language models with no further finessing. The inability of any party involved to quality assure the measures used to interpret both the rubric and the student work means that we can't know whether the AI is accurate, or whether its result is replicable.
- Where an assessment has a floating marking scheme (e.g., an English essay marked out of 100) where the marks are assigned using an in-school moderation process, there is no way the AI system could expect to replicate or reflect this.
- An AI tool is not a teacher. It does not have context for the work other than what the user uploads, which may be inaccurate or incomplete.
- If you get a student who is insistent, you may also like to remind them that they need to assure compliance with copyright, which includes your assessment tasks and rubrics!

Indeed, feedback from a third-party person such as a tutor or relative also does not in itself constitute grounds for appeal in the ACT senior secondary system; the student should be able to explain why they believe the work was not marked accurately based on the work, not on the opinions of someone else.



Can you clarify that?

We have given over most of the usual “Can You Clarify” column this issue to the idea of regulation, and to answer some of the questions we get asked about regulation on the regular.

The BSSS, as the statutory authority, sets the requirements that guide Senior Secondary teaching and assessment across the ACT. This means that, as the regulator, part of the duties of the Board and the Office is enforcing the rules on behalf of the ACT government.

Regulation isn't about questioning anyone's professionalism — it's about creating a consistent and fair framework that supports all students, regardless of where they're learning. One of the functions of the BSSS Act 1997 is to recognise that while we trust in the expertise and commitment of educators, a shared structure with shared expectations, quality assurance measures, and processes that are enforced by an independent authority ensures that every student receives their learning entitlement.

The aspects of regulation that we've focussed on recently have been tied to system quality assurance. Our system is decentralised, so what individual teachers do in schools is of vital importance. Every assessment is as important as an HSC, VCE, or QCAA exam.

Some specific questions we have had are listed below.

Why do unit codes need to be correct?

Unit codes indicate to students what subject they will be studying. We have tried to automate this process as much as possible, through the coversheet and unit outline generators. If the unit code is wrong in ACS, then the students are on the record as having studied the wrong unit – which can lead to frustrating problems in the future with duplicated content rules.

There is no need to put unit codes onto rubrics and marking schemes if you intend to re-use or modify them in future, as this can cause problems around appeals and proving to students that they were marked for the correct unit on the correct rubric. Questions and queries re. incorrect information come to the Office all the time, as what is given to the student in writing carries weight in the appeal process, it must be correct. Equally, it is fair to give students correct information!

Why does it matter if the date changes for when an assignment is due?

Assessment dates have some operational concerns that need to be considered – for example, there needs to be sufficient time for the student to complete the assessment, the teacher to mark it, and the appeals deadlines that finish out the year. This one, though, is usually about the quality of student experience – if a unit outline says one date, but the task is due earlier, or a different task is given, that’s a pretty reasonable thing for a student to complain about or worry about.

Why does it matter if the mark on student work is different on ACS to what is written on the student work?

It matters because ACS is the point of truth and as such the official record of what a student has completed and what marks the student received. If evidence exists that a student was told something different, particularly in writing, then that must be noted as part of the quality assurance process.

Why do I need to put things on ACS?

There needs to be some consistency between schools and sectors so that the same types of data are monitored and quality assured. Every school and sector use a different learning management system, because the way ACT education works is that the sectors are responsible for the day-to-day management of schools, whereas the Board is responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of the curriculum, assessment and certification of the entire Senior Secondary System.

ACS allows for auditing of what is happening in a school or markbook, and the use of ACS means that the Board can guarantee to government and the community what information a student is able to access, how it is presented, and how it is quality assured. The documents by the regulator must be on put on ACS.

Why should I care about administration?

If you see your core responsibilities as a teacher as teaching and assessing students, treating students fairly and helping them to get their certificate, administration has a role to play in your day-to-day. Caring about administration means valuing the structures that support teaching, learning, and decision

-making and safeguarding the integrity of what we deliver. In education, the value of a certificate is only as strong as the quality of the teaching and assessment behind it. It requires deliberate, consistent administrative oversight.

When we care about administration, we’re committing to processes that ensure assessment tasks are valid, fair, and aligned with learning outcomes. We’re making sure that what students are taught is what they’re assessed on—and that what they’re assessed on truly reflects the skills and knowledge we claim to certify.

Good administration is what turns good intentions into trusted outcomes.

Can you clarify — Unit Outlines

Why Do I Need to Generate and Publish Assessment Coversheets in ACS?

The requirement to generate and publish assessment coversheets in ACS (Section 4.2.5.1 BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual) was introduced for two key reasons:

- To provide real-time evidence of consistent assessment practices across all ACT schools.
- To support the development of the new BSSS Student App, which centralises access to assessment information for students.

This policy ensures that all students receive a clear and consistent standard of information about their assessments, including task conditions, due dates, weightings, and marking criteria. Publishing coversheets in ACS by the distribution date supports student preparation and engagement with the task, as well as ensuring that every student gets the same kind of information, no matter where they study or what LMS is used.

What about Exams?

For exams and other in-class tasks, the ACS coversheet acts as an exam notice, outlining key details such as timing, duration, weighting, and task conditions. After the task is completed, a copy of the exam— a clean version with marking criteria — is attached to the coversheet and published in ACS within a reasonable timeframe. This is so that students have access to the full context of their performance in the assessment.

What about Exams ? (Cont.)

Ongoing access to this information is essential for students to reflect on feedback, understand how they were assessed, and apply that insight to future learning and assessment tasks.

ACS is a secure, closed system accessible only to enrolled students and staff, and a warning pop-up should show to make sure exams aren't accidentally published. Once an exam is 'in the wild', it cannot be guaranteed secure, whether from ACS or regular handback.

Supporting Student Evidence and Equity

The importance of this consistency was strongly reinforced by feedback from the BSSS Student Forum over the past couple of years. Students have highlighted inconsistencies in how assessment information was communicated between, and even within, schools. Consistent publication of coversheets and marking guides in ACS empowers students to reflect on their learning. This helps to support student agency, equity, and confidence in the ACT Senior Secondary System.



Board Chair Cathy Hudson (on the right) with members of the BSSS Student Forum 2025.