



What's the

AST?

ACT Scaling Test



B S S S

**BOARD OF
SENIOR
SECONDARY
STUDIES**

Australian
Capital Territory

what's the

AST?

The ACT Scaling Test (AST) is a test attempted by all ACT Year 12 students wishing to gain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The test is designed to measure a range of general skills considered to be relevant to success in a variety of courses and to studies at university.

When is the AST held?

The AST is run at your college in Term 3, usually the first Tuesday and following Wednesday in early September each year. In the case of documented illness or misadventure, students who are unable to sit at this time may apply to sit a second sitting later in the year. Special sittings can also be arranged interstate or overseas for students not in Canberra when the test is held, but applications must be received well in advance.

Who sits the AST?

If you are a Year 12 student who intends to apply for entry to university you must sit the AST. If you are unsure what you will do after Year 12, you should also sit the AST. This will allow you to gain an ATAR providing other conditions are met. Students with specific medical conditions are not exempt from the test, but special arrangements are made to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged. If your college identifies you as a student from a Linguistically Diverse Background, you will be able to access extra time for each AST Sub-test.

How are the results of the AST used?

The AST scores of those students who complete a T package provide the basis for scaling course scores awarded to students by the colleges they attend. A student's scaled course scores are used in the calculation of that student's ATAR. More details of this process can be found in **What's the ATAR?**, which is another publication in this series.

How do I find out my AST result?

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies does not publish your AST score on any of the certificates it produces. At the end of Year 12, however, your college will provide you with your scores on the various components of the AST.

What makes up the AST?

The AST is made up of 3 papers – a 120 minute Short Response Test, a 135 minute Multiple Choice test containing 80 questions and a 150 minute Writing Task. You must make a serious attempt at all three papers, or you may not be eligible for an AST score.

(1) The AST Short Response Test

This is a test of thinking and reasoning, and you will be asked for interpretation, explanation and justification of a point of view. The stimulus material may be a prose passage, a quotation, a graph, a table containing words or numbers, a poem, a picture, a map or any combination of these. The major elements in the test will cover the following: comprehending and interpreting, dealing with Information, thinking critically, drawing conclusions, solving problems, evaluating and responding.

There will be several questions and the material will be drawn from a wide variety of subject areas, but is not aimed at subject specialists and should be accessible to all senior secondary students. Responses will vary in length from one word to a paragraph.

(2) The AST Multiple Choice Test

The multiple choice questions are grouped into units, each based on a piece of stimulus material. The stimulus material may be a prose passage, a graph, a table containing words or numbers, a poem, a picture or a map or any combination of these. Any specific information required to answer the questions is contained in the stimulus material or in the questions which follow.

The material is drawn from the humanities, social sciences, sciences and mathematics, but is not aimed at subject specialists and should be accessible to all senior secondary students.

(3) The AST Writing Task

You will be offered a selection of stimuli on a particular issue. The time available allows for planning, drafting, editing and producing a final written version of an essay of approximately 600 words. A clear argument on a major issue raised by the stimulus material must be presented.

What should I do to prepare for the AST?

The skills required for success in the AST are believed to develop slowly as a result of a variety of experiences, of which formal schooling is one important element. Your best preparation is to read widely and to think critically.

Your college will arrange at least one trial of the AST Multiple Choice Test, Short Response Test and Writing Task to give you a realistic idea of the nature of the test and the time available in which to complete the set tasks.

The booklet **AST Student Information Bulletin**, available from your college in Year 12, contains sample multiple choice questions and advice on how to choose the correct answer in each case. You should work through this booklet prior to attempting the AST. Information on the Short Response Test and some sample questions will also be available. A copy of a previous Writing Task is included.

More Information

There are staff members in your college who can explain and give advice on this brochure or any other in this series.

Other pamphlets in this series that are available from your school are:

Publication

What additional programs are available?

What certificates could you obtain?

What's the ATAR?

Your rights to appeal

What's Moderation?

What's Plagiarism? How you can avoid it

What's Plagiarism? How you can avoid it
Advice for Teachers

Equitable Assessment and Special
consideration in Assessment in Years 11
and 12

Explanation

A guide to additional programs available for senior secondary students in the ACT.

Explains all the different certificates you could be awarded at the end of Year 12, and what's on them.

Explains the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank and details how it is calculated.

Explains the processes available for having results for Year 11 and/or 12 assessment tasks, units or courses reviewed.

Explains the consensus based peer reviewed process used to moderate student work across the ACT

A guide to what constitutes plagiarism and how you can avoid it. Citation and referencing examples are included.

A guide to what constitutes plagiarism. Procedures and strategies for dealing with plagiarism and where to find resources and further information.

A guide to reasonable accommodation in assessment for students with special circumstances. (Student and Teacher versions)

Further information may be obtained at: <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au>

Enquires may also be directed to the:
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GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Phone: (02) 6205 7181
email: bsss.enquiries@act.gov.au

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