

BSSS News | Summer 2025



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The BSSS acknowledges and pays respect to the 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.



Cover image

Molly Gifford, Hawker College

“Caged” as a response to the theme ‘Our Time’.

Thank you, Molly, for allowing the use of your work.

Acknowledgements

Cover image: Molly Gifford

Images pp. sourced from Canva for Education

All other images from BSSS Officers.

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!



Strategic Plan Consultation

An invitation from the Board Chair

You are invited to contribute to the development of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

This is a key time to be involved in setting directions in senior secondary education. Globalisation and rapid technological advancements have transformed the landscape of employment opportunities and societal expectations. The days where students merely learn content and sit exams to “get a certificate” is no longer valid. A student’s learning journey can no longer simply be a race to a finishing line.

To be equipped to meet the challenges of a changing world, every student will need to build lifelong learning skills. Education must equip students with the ability to learn and adapt throughout their lives, regardless of their first choices beyond school.

Over the period of the BSSS Strategic Plan 2017-2023, the Board has shaped a senior secondary system that provides challenge and opportunity for all students and ensures fairness and transparency in what it does. There is much to celebrate. Key achievements include the redevelopment of 225 courses integrating the general capabilities, embedding a culture of high learning expectations by raising the standard of achievement described in the Achievement Standards for all course classifications, the refurbishment of system Moderation Day resulting in increased accountability and comparability of grades, and modelling a commitment to continuous improvement with the review of policy and procedures of assessment, moderation, ACT Scaling Test and vocational education in senior secondary schools.

The future of the ACT senior secondary system will be built on the successes of the first 45 years. It is envisaged that graduates of the senior secondary certificate will continue to make a significant contribution to society in a myriad of ways. The Board will continue to be an enabler for schools to address the needs and interests of their students in their context and to trust and support teacher judgements in the evaluation of student needs and interests. The Board will also continue to hold schools to high standards in teaching and learning, through its focus on continuous improvement in curriculum, assessment, certification, and engagement.

The Board’s purpose is to help shape senior secondary education so that all students have an opportunity to strive for excellence. The interim BSSS Strategic Plan 2024-2025 provides the initial groundwork in support of the “Why?”. When reflecting on the interim plan please ask the question, what do you value and expect from a senior secondary qualification? Qualifications by their nature derive their value from the public trust. Hence, how will the ACT maintain and further enhance confidence in the credential?

A striking feature of the ACT system is the level of engagement, co-operation, and goodwill between the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, school sectors, principals, teachers, and the wider community. A jurisdiction where all principals can meet regularly to discuss educational issues is a significant and powerful characteristic. This forum has enabled the BSSS, in collaboration with government and non-government sectors, to set goals, establish standards, maintain instructional and curriculum focus, and ensure consistency and quality of educational delivery. Regular student forums also provide valuable input to the BSSS.

There is great confidence and optimism that this jurisdiction will continue to lead nationally with an approach to education that is student centred and prepares students for their lives beyond school.

The Board looks forward to working with you on the development of the BSSS Strategic Plan 2025-2027.

Cathy Hudson
Chair
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

How can I get involved in the development of the new Strategic Plan?

We invite all stakeholders in the system to contribute. You can use the QR code to the right to get to the consultation form, or follow the links on our website.

We are also hosting some in-person feedback sessions for key stakeholders such as the student forum and the coordinating teachers from the schools in our system. See below for details of when this consultation will happen.

When offering feedback, we respectfully invite people to consider the role and remit of the BSSS. Our key responsibilities are for Certification, Assessment and Quality Assurance. You can find more information in the consultation information documents.

[If you are reading this online, click here to get to the information about the Strategic Plan.](#)



BSSS STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION

Date	Stakeholders	Mode
February	Heads of sectors: ACT Education Directorate, Association of Independent Schools of the ACT and Catholic Education Office of Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn	In person
13 February	Quality Assurance Coordinators' Meeting	In person
18 February	Assessment and Certification Committee	In person
19 February	Curriculum Advisory Committee	In person
20 February	Curriculum Coordinators' Meeting	In person
25 February	Certification Coordinators' Meeting	In person
12 March	Board Principals' Meeting	In person
13 March	VET Coordinators' Meeting	In person
27 March	Board Meeting	In person
31 March	BSSS Student Forum	In person
March/April	Senior Secondary Students	Online survey
March/April	Industry	Online survey
March/April	Senior Secondary Teachers	Online survey
March/April	Parents and carers, and the broader community	Online survey
March/April	Vice chancellors of local universities	In person
March/April	Canberra Institute of Technology	In person



2024 Recognition of Excellence Ceremony





Celebrating Young Leaders: Aunty Agnes Shea Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Community Service Award Winners

The Aunty Agnes Shea Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Community Service Award, introduced in 2024, honours exceptional young leaders. The inaugural recipients, Tahalianna Soward-Mahanga, Yvette Lapworth, and Jaharn Mundy-Drazevich, have demonstrated outstanding leadership, cultural pride, and community service.

Tahalianna Soward-Mahanga

Erindale College

Tahalianna is a remarkable young leader, artist, and advocate who excels academically and creatively. She represents Aboriginal voices through roles with the Gungan-Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, Mindyigari Centre for Excellence, and as an ACT Student Representative on the 2023 National School Reform Agreement Ministerial Reference Group. She has made significant contributions to the arts, including as lead solo vocalist at the 2023 NRL Multicultural Round and the 2024 Canberra Enlighten Festival. Her dedication to community, culture, and the arts makes her an inspiring role model for young Aboriginal people in Canberra.

Yvette Lapworth

Melba Copland Secondary School

Yvette is an inspiring role model, combining her passion for dance with her dedication to education and cultural leadership. She completed an ASBA Certificate III in Allied Health while excelling in performances with the QUEST Dance Program at events like Floriade and the Step into the Limelight Gala Showcase.

A recipient of the Students Aspirations Scholarship, Yvette will join the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association Dance College in 2025 to deepen her cultural knowledge and pursue her dream of becoming a professional dancer, choreographer, and teacher.

Jaharn Mundy-Drazevich

Saint Mary MacKillop College

Jaharn has made a significant impact on his school and broader community. He successfully balanced his senior studies with the completion of an Australian School-Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) in Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance with Indigenous Allied Health Australia. A recipient of the Leadership Award from Catholic Education Canberra Goulburn, he also represented his peers in the Duty of Call Bill for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Proud of his heritage, Jaharn inspires others through his leadership, cultural pride, and dedication.

Congratulations Tahalianna, Yvette, and Jaharn!



Policy and Procedures Roundup

BSSS Policy and Procedure is a living document; we recommend always referring to the website version, because it will be the most up-to-date.

Major policy changes made during 2024:

- The date of the AST was changed for 2025, to August 26 and 27 (one week earlier, and prior to notification of early offers). Please ensure that this is communicated early and often to members of your school community.
- The date of Moderation Day 2 was changed to August 14 to accommodate changes to AST dates.
- Progression on the Moderation Risk Matrix was graduated for schools with ongoing minor issues, in response to teacher feedback.
- Bridging Literacy and Numeracy (as part of being accredited) have an entry requirement that a student has not met the demands of ACSF Level 3. This may be determined by testing (e.g., PAT testing) or through teacher recommendation. Notation must be kept on the student's file.
- R Units can only be awarded for learning not credited elsewhere on the Senior Secondary Certificate (e.g., if a student repeats a unit, they cannot be given an R unit).
- The award categories for the Recognition of Excellence Ceremony were changed. More information about this can be found in the final newsletter of 2024 (available on the BSSS website).
- School websites and promotional publications must use course and unit names as accredited.
- Information about feedback on student work was moved within the PPM to make it more prominent. This is now under 4.2.5.2 and covers timelines under normal circumstances, and the requirement for students to be able to retain or retrieve a copy or the original of their marked work and the associated feedback. This is separate to the retention of student work.
- Composition of the Assessment and Certification Committee was extended.

Other important changes that have happened in recent years

- AST special provisions forms are now completed using Smartforms online.
- The criteria for M units were clarified in 2023 and contain specific detail about eligibility.
- The criteria for Status was clarified in 2023 and
- The criteria for early access to senior secondary courses was clarified in 2023.
- All unit outlines and assessment item cover sheets must be completed on ACS in real time – i.e., as the semester progresses.
- ACS now automatically selects which student/s will go to Moderation. Further detail about this can be found on the website.

Sponsoring a BSSS Workshop

Ongoing professional learning is an important part of our work as teachers and leaders, and the BSSS is committed to providing PL to schools. In 2025, there will be three ways in which you can organise and access BSSS professional learning:

1. Scheduled professional learning held at the Office of the BSSS
2. Online asynchronous professional learning accessible through the BSSS website
3. Getting your school to 'sponsor' a professional learning opportunity at a time that suits participants

There is no cost attached to booking a professional learning session, but a minimum of 12 participants will be required. This could be made up of staff only from your school, or schools may also invite staff from other schools.

Complete the application form below to sponsor a BSSS Workshop for your staff at your school.

[Application form](#)

List of available workshops

BSSS Workshops	TQI Hours	Flyer
Assessing Group Work and Collaboration Skills in Senior Secondary Classes	3	Link
Introduction to the Arts Framework for the ACT Senior Secondary System	3	Link
Introduction to the BSSS Quality Assessment Guidelines	3	Link
Introduction to the Commerce Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the ACT Senior Secondary Ethical Research Principles and Guidelines Workshop	3	Link
Introduction to the ACT BSSS Senior Secondary English Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the ACT BSSS Senior Secondary Health, Outdoor and Physical Education Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the Senior Secondary Humanities and Social Sciences Framework in the ACT	3	Link
Introduction to Senior Secondary Industry and Services Framework for the ACT BSSS	3	Link
Introduction to the Languages Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the Mathematics Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the Technologies Framework	3	Link
Introduction to the Science Framework in the ACT Senior Secondary System	3	Link
Programs of Learning in the ACT Senior Secondary System	3	Link
Scaling in the ACT Senior Secondary Assessment	3	Link
Writing Great Rubrics	3	Link



Cross Curriculum PL Opportunity

The ANU National Security College has set up a fabulous range of free professional learning opportunities here in Canberra, and online. We do not usually put forward opportunities from external organisations, but the quality and accessibility of these events is something to celebrate!

The ANU National Security College is a joint project of the Commonwealth Government and the Australian National University, aimed at awareness and capability uplift for Australians in areas pertaining to national security. This series of professional learning opportunities intends to help teachers address issues of importance to young Australians with up-to-date, accurate information. While aimed primarily at the Humanities, STEM, Commerce and Social Sciences, the sessions cover content from the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. This is a rare opportunity to see excellent speakers in person, for free, and get TQI hours for it. You can sign up for one session or all the sessions.

The sessions include sessions about climate change; energy transitions; online extremism; AI and the hijacking of trust; how cabinet and policy development work; and critical minerals.

You can register your interest and see more details, including how to get TQI hours for attendance, here: [Evidence for educators: professional development program for teachers | National Security College](#)

Contacting the Office

Did you know there are designated email inboxes to contact the team? Using email means your query will get through and will usually be answered more quickly because multiple people have access to each of these inboxes.

These are the general email addresses for the office; however, simple problems (e.g., a forgotten ACS password) can be fixed by the relevant coordinator at the school level.

Bsssenquiries@act.gov.au: general enquiries or enquiries that you are unsure where to send. This is our main email.

Bsssast@act.gov.au: AST enquiries from coordinators and school staff.

Bssscurriculum@act.gov.au: curriculum enquiries from coordinators and school staff.

BsssVET@act.gov.au: VET enquiries from coordinators and school staff.

Bsssmoderation@act.gov.au: moderation enquiries from moderation coordinators and executive staff.

Bsssinternational@act.gov.au: general enquiries inbox for BSSS International schools.

Bssscertification@ed.act.gov.au (*note that this is a slightly different format*): ACS technical enquiries, certification enquiries, appeals, and similar questions from school staff.

Curriculum and Certification Updates

Retention of Student Assessment Evidence

A new policy on the Retention of Student Assessment Evidence will take effect in 2026. Here's what you need to know:

Key Retention Guidelines

- **Retention Period:** Schools must keep all student work used to determine results for internal assessments until the end of Term 1 of the year following the student's exit from the school.
- **Purpose:** This evidence supports school judgments in determining results reported to the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) and may be needed for quality assurance, appeals, or verification processes.
- **Post-Retention:** After the required retention period, schools may decide whether to keep the assessment tasks, dispose of them or return them to students. Any decision must also comply with relevant school, sector, or government document retention policies.

Practical Tips for Teachers

To meet these requirements, consider implementing some of these strategies this year:

- **Go Digital:** Design assessment tasks that can be easily stored electronically. This not only reduces physical storage needs but also streamlines access for quality assurance purposes.
- **Label and Organise:** Implement a consistent naming and filing system to track and retrieve assessment evidence quickly when needed.
- **Collaborate with IT Teams:** Work with your school's IT department to ensure data security and compliance with retention policies.

Why This Matters

Retaining assessment evidence ensures transparency, fairness, and accountability, strengthens internal moderation and simplifies appeals and moderation processes. It also supports continuous improvement by helping teachers refine assessment methods and enhances academic integrity by addressing potential issues like academic misconduct in the era of Generative AI.

Latest ACS Updates

ACS is regularly updated to introduce requested features and fix any emergent bugs. The latest ACS release includes changes that are mostly relevant to post-moderation functions.

- There is a new report to let schools know which unit outlines have not been published that should have been. It includes whether or not the unit outline has been started or not. It's under reports > college.
- Moderation coordinators and principals can now print PRPs for selected presentations from the postmoderation details page. They can filter the presentations on a specific criteria, select, and print just the ones they want.
- A bug relating to student list report has been fixed
- Moderation Presentation Review groups page performance has been improved

If you do encounter a bug or problem, we encourage you to take a screenshot and let us know what you were doing at the time — this will help us replicate it with the developers, so that the bug can be fixed.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST 2025 AST SUPERVISORS

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



We looking for AST Supervisors, including special provision supervisors.

Applicants will be required to work 12 hours across 1.5 days. Training will be provided.

More information and application form can be found via the following link.

[form https:// forms.office.com/r/DpimGAmDKm](https://forms.office.com/r/DpimGAmDKm)



Are you a complete newbie to our system? We've put together a summary of some of the key things you need to do to ensure a) your students are treated fairly and b) you keep within the policies and guidelines for the successful award of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. This shouldn't replace attending the intro PL, or the work you do with your mentors at school, but it will hopefully be a quick guide to things you should be considering as you start your journey in the ACT Senior Secondary System.

Getting set up

Your [courses and frameworks](#) are on the BSSS Website.

[Policy and Procedure](#) is on the BSSS Website.

If there have been any changes to your courses between one year and another, these arrangements are on the [transitions page](#). There will always be a transition arrangement.

Course planning checklist

- Read the Framework to get a sense of the overall philosophical drive of the learning area.
- Read the Course for specifics about the philosophy and intent of the course.
- Check which unit students have been enrolled into (usually student services or in faculty can help you with this) and make sure none of them have studied that unit before.
- Check the level, mix and classification of the class (year 11, 12, A/T/M/V) because each level has different achievement standards, and may involve different content.
- Check with your head of faculty where the courses you teach sit on the Moderation Risk Matrix and what actions they need you to prioritise.
- Plan Program of Learning
 - ⇒ You must cover all the course content in the course document.
 - ⇒ Generally, you get to pick the lens through which you do this. Check that what you want to do isn't scoped for another unit/ hasn't been taught in another unit so that you don't duplicate content.

⇒ Your school may have existing Programs of Learning (PoLs) for that subject, and/or you might be teaching with another person. Check in with the faculty.

⇒ Even if all you do at this point is rough it out and have a "working document", you will need to know where and when the assignments are at a minimum.

⇒ If your course has changed since the previous year or is due to change, all the details will be on the Transitions page

Resources

[Introduction to BSSS PL](#)
[Programs of Learning PL](#)
[Courses webpage](#)

Unit Outline Checklist

- Unit Outline due MAXIMUM 2 weeks after you start the course.
- See your school's certification officer to get your [ACS password](#) and make sure you're attached to the right markbooks. Do not leave this password where students can get it because they can use this password to change their results!
- Access ACS using the official link, rather than bespoke school "launchpad" or "backpack" links. Most issues with upload to unit outlines come from people using bespoke urls for ACS.
- Make sure assessments are set in the markbook for the unit. Check this with your faculty head/ school calendar/etc; don't just make it up. They can also show you how to set the assessments in the markbook.

- Check that the unit is the one you expect to be teaching. If it's not, do not proceed until it has been changed by faculty head or certification officer.
- Use the Unit Outline generator to make your unit outlines
 - ⇒ If course is shared (e.g., English T) then only one outline will be made.
 - ⇒ If you have multiple levels in one class, use the "clone" function to copy data
 - ⇒ Data will automatically populate from markbook (assessment types, due dates).
 - ⇒ If you need a date range, use the date range feature.
 - ⇒ Your school may have pre-populated assessment conditions that are automatically drawn in.
 - ⇒ You can attach a PDF for things like a semester calendar or expanded information.
- Publish to students in ACS. They can access through Student Profiles Online.
- We do not require you to download and reupload to a learning management system, but if your school requires it, there is a 'download' button.

Resources

[ACS help files](#)

Going to Moderation Day Information

Moderation Day One is on 04/03/2025. It is a requirement for all teachers of Senior Secondary Courses to attend and participate.

Make sure that you have put in which subject you will be attending, plus any dietary requirements, on ACS. This is done on the first screen you see when you log in. This is how we know who to expect at each site, and whether any special food is needed. There is a cut off for this, and if you miss it, you won't have food allocated to you.

You will not need to submit or bring any student work with you. The submission was done last year. You will probably be at a different venue to your usual place of work. [These venues are published on our website](#), and detailed maps sent to your moderation coordinator to send on to you just prior to the day.

Bring your laptop, ACS logon, and a power cable.

You will be part of a group that includes experienced teachers. These teachers, and the information on the day, will help you know what you need to do.

Moderation Day is your opportunity to see the quality of students' work in other schools, to network with teachers, and to get a sense of how people are interpreting and assessing the work of students in your subject. It's how you get a sense of your calibration with the rest of the system.

Some weeks after Moderation Day, you will get feedback on the last semester's portfolio. Take notice of this, and of where you are on the Risk Matrix. You may need to take specific actions.

Resources

[Moderation Venue information](#)

[Moderation Day Resources](#)

[ACS Help files](#)

Setting an assessment task checklist

Talk with anyone who shares the unit or the markbook with you and plan so that the assessment is comparable.

- Any classes undertaking the same unit should have the same assessment. If you're in a situation where classes do different texts (e.g., English), work with questions that align with the unit goals which are applicable to the different texts. A simplified example to illustrate: "critically analyse the representation of [specific theme or concept] in [the set text]".
- Any T assessment that will be recorded in the same column of the same markbook (e.g., if the Science subjects are all in the same markbook) must be **directly comparable** to the others in that column. If it is not, then students will be unfairly dis/advantaged.
- Refer to the course and Achievement Standards to set the task.
- Make a rubric or marking guide referring to the achievement standards that is tailored to the task. Make sure the others in your scaling group and markbook have seen it prior to handing out, and that you've incorporated any feedback.
- Different levels (A, T and M) and different year groups (11 and 12) have different Achievement Standards. This should be reflected in the task (e.g., expectations, rubric).

- Use the coversheet function on ACS to create the coversheet. Attach the task and marking criteria there. This helps get the same info to everyone, and it helps future you to not need to do it at the end of semester.
- If you are doing multiple levels of the same class, you can clone coversheets on ACS.
- Make sure that you have attached the assessment conditions, school policies, links to things like appeals processes, and any instructions about the use of AI (or the prohibited use of AI). If it's not written, it doesn't exist.
- Check any uploaded documents haven't got minor contradictions – e.g., unit name is the same, year is right, any dates are the same, any word counts are the same. It's generally easier to leave metadata fields for the coversheet where they'll auto-populate, rather than putting them onto bespoke PDFs.
- Publish the task to students. They can access it through Student Profiles Online.
- If you want to use a Learning Management System dropbox, you can download and reupload; just be aware that any links created by ACS won't work in an external LMS. They will work in SPO.
- Remember that special provisions are not permitted to lower the cognitive difficulty or essential expectations of the task in A and T courses.
- If you get students to title their filename with their student ID first, then you can streamline bulk uploading for moderation at the end of the semester.

Marking and returning an assessment task

- Talk with anyone who shares the unit or the markbook with you and plan so that the assessment marking is comparable.
- Grades are an absolute standard. There is no "A+" or "C-" – the piece either meets the grade standard or it doesn't. Grades are not based on unit scores or on the student's rank in the class.
- Grades are awarded on "best fit" – i.e., the band that the student fits best into. They may fit some descriptors in other bands, but an outlier should not decide the band placement.
- There is no official BSSS "marks to grades" conversion; anyone who tells you otherwise is wrong.
- Any assessment that will be recorded in the same column of the same markbook (e.g., if the Science subjects are all in the same markbook) must be **directly comparable** to the others in that column. This means:
 - ⇒ Peer moderation is imperative so that the rank and distance between students in the same column is quality assured.
 - ⇒ The same rubrics should be used where the task is for the same unit. Do not add anything bespoke to a common rubric, because this will reduce comparability.
- Use [the Annotations](#) to help establish the expectations of an A-E Standard.
- Don't give back "preliminary" or "unmoderated" marks.
- Write a mark and a grade on the task where it can clearly be seen by the student, and if the piece is going to moderation, by the moderators.
- Enter results into ACS. Also enter:
 - ⇒ Late penalties
 - ⇒ Non-submissions
 - ⇒ Other penalties
 - ⇒ Special provisions

Resources:

[Quality Assessment Guidelines](#)

Assessment task conditions advice

- Do not go rogue on due dates or conditions. **Do what you agreed to** with the other people in the marking group.
- Any additional instructions need to be in writing and added to the task for everyone. If you are in a subject with common assessment, make sure any bespoke instructions are communicated to the whole group, not just your class.
- Special provisions must be centrally managed at your school. Anything that changes the standard conditions is a special provision. Apply the special provisions you need to, based on what the school has told you they should be. If you think a special provision is unreasonable, talk with your head of faculty.
- **Extensions are special provisions** and as such need documentation and organisation. You as an individual teacher should not be giving extensions.

- If you want to use the “insubstantial” descriptor, run it past your head of department/faculty and make sure the student knows that’s the decision. They may wish to query or resubmit (with a late penalty as appropriate).
- Save entering estimates for the end of the semester. These are most accurate when the other information in the markbook has been populated.
- If the student plagiarised, follow the policy. You should not come up with a penalty before speaking with the student. Keep notes. Don’t take it personally.
- Once all is good on ACS, make sure the results are published within ~3 weeks of the task being handed in.
- The portfolio is created when you first click on it to open it. If you click on the portfolio early to have a stickybeak, that’s fine – just delete that version and start a new one once all your scores and grades processing is done.
- Upload student work for each student that ACS has picked. If ACS doesn’t pick a student, [check the help files for possible reasons](#).
- Check everything – do numbers match? Can you see the mark/grade easily on each piece of work? If you’re logged out can you see what’s at the link?
- Upload to your moderation coordinator.
- If the mod co sends it back, please don’t be nasty to them. They are trying to help.

Data at the end of the semester

Your head of faculty may need you to input everything for the final assessment task so that they can do processing on the scores.

Finalise estimates at the end of semester. ACS will give you an estimate based on the student’s z-scores for their other items. If there is a good reason not to use this estimate, you can use a different estimate, just document, document, document and talk with your faculty leader so they know what’s happening.

When time comes to allocate grades, look at the student’s performance over the suite of assessment. Do not use the numbers to allocate the grades, even if they seem to have “gone up” or “gone down”.

There is a bulk grade entry function. Get a colleague to show you.

T Markbooks: the numbers attached to each student’s overall performance are not finalised until **after scaling at the end of Year 12**. The processing done on them at the end of each semester is to help students compare between courses. Do not panic if the numbers seem to have gone “down” – the z-scores stay the same, and they are what will be used in scaling.

Moderation Portfolios

- Your coversheets, unit outlines etc. will automatically populate in.
- [Use the various help files if unsure](#)

Keep an eye out for...

- Shape papers in your area. These are the papers that explain how a course or framework will be constructed, and we really need your feedback on them!
- Draft courses in your area. Ditto with the feedback.
- [Newsletters](#) and other communications. We communicate with key people in schools, who send it on to you!

Can you clarify that?

How is the AST multiple choice marked?

Most machine-marked multiple choice uses a technology called OMR, and the AST is no exception. Optical Mark Recognition technology scans marksheets quickly and accurately using light; basically, “does the box reflect more or less light compared to the boxes around it”.

This data is then digitised. It’s different to the sort of “quick marking” apps that you might have on your phone, because it’s shining a light onto or through the paper, and as such has a higher sensitivity for spotting things like imperfectly erased marks. However, if students are a bit sloppy with their erasing, have a chat with them about taking more care to give their work the best advantage.

OMR marksheets require a high degree of precision in their printing and construction, but because of their accuracy, are used worldwide for things like tests, lottery entries, census documents, and even in some cases, voting. The more you know!

What happens when a response is flagged as non-serious in the AST?

Non-serious responses in the AST are identified by several means:

- Number of marks attempted
- Length of response
- Content of response (e.g., facetious, off-topic, or profane)

We get a few responses every year that are identified as non-serious. The key message is always that students should do their best.

Anonymised examples from the last five years include:

- Student answered every short response question with “I don’t know”, “I don’t care” or profanity.

- Student wrote a completely unrelated essay for the writing task that appeared to have been memorised for an in-class essay in an unrelated subject.
- Student handed in a blank writing task booklet.

Have there been staffing changes in the office?

Yes, there has been some movement of staff. We would like to congratulate Dale Argall on his new role as the Director of Moderation and Studies at Marist College, and Mitchell Tummers on becoming the permanent deputy principal at UC SSC Lake Ginninderra.

We have farewelled Deb Tierney as she moves back to the United Kingdom, and Chantal La as she has returned to her substantive role at Hawker College. We have welcomed Kathleen Tate to the office admin team.

When can scaling groups change?

A scaling group is the group of students whose T scores will be scaled together. Once a cohort is put into a scaling group and assessed in that scaling group, they need to stay in that scaling group. This means that the only time a scaling group can change is when a new cohort enters. This means scaling groups can only change when:

- Students enter in year 11
- A new course is adopted at a school

Some courses need to stay in their scaling groups for other reasons. Maths courses have mandatory scaling group rules. Other courses that should be kept in the same scaling groups are courses you intend to combine — such as Drama and Specialised Drama. Talk with your certification officer for more details

Wait, weren’t you moving?

We are still moving. We anticipate sometime during S1, 2025. We will keep you updated. We promise.

AST 2025

AUGUST 26 AND 27

26
TUES AM

SHORT RESPONSE

Short response questions. Tests verbal and quantitative reasoning. You will need a pen and dictionary.

26
TUES PM

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Multiple choice questions. Tests verbal and quantitative reasoning. You will need a 2B pencil and an eraser.

27
WED

WRITING TASK

Write a 600 word argument in response to a provided stimulus. You will need a pen and a dictionary.

29
FRI

DEADLINE

This is the deadline for applications for Second Sitting to be commenced. Do not organise travel on AST dates; second sitting is only available for illness or misadventure.

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Certification Reporting

Your certification officer has received your school's certification data for the year. In this report is some information that you may find interesting, especially when combined with other data sources.

What might you look for?

Average Scaled Course Scores

The system average for scaled course scores is 150. The maximum scaled score is in the high 220s. We have given you the average scaled course scores for English, Mathematics, and the Physical Sciences.

Box and Whisker for Unit and Score Distribution

Remember that we do not expect a 1:1 relationship between unit grades and scores. However, this set of graphs can show where there are disparities between grading in your school and that of the system, and between the grading of students in your school who got similar scaled scores in different subjects. You aren't aiming to be right on the system, but if you notice a pattern, it might be something you triangulate with your data from moderation days to reflect on your grading.

Historical Parameters

The Historical Parameters are used to set the parameters on ACS. These are set to give students a realistic comparison between classes, and a realistic idea of what their scaled score might be. This slide shows you where the mean and standard deviation set as historical parameters were accurate and where the students performed differently to expectations.

Scaling Groups that had problems

If there were issues listed on this page (not all schools had this!), please investigate them. These are issues that could disrupt scaling for everyone, so we want to minimise them.