

Review of Mathematics as a requirement of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate



ACT System Overview

- The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) utilises school-based curriculum and assessment.
- System moderation is conducted each semester to ensure comparability of grades across schools.
- To attain an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC), students must complete a minimum of 17 units from at least three different course areas.
- Students are required to undertake a course in English as a requirement of the SSC.

The consultation paper introduces the idea of Mathematics as an additional requirement of the SSC.

Should students complete a course under the Mathematics Framework as a requirement for the award of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate?

Rationale for a course in Mathematics as a requirement of the ACT SSC

- Provides essential mathematical skills for everyday life, including financial decision-making, risk assessment and interpreting data.
- Supports 21st century capabilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, logical reasoning and data literacy.
- Keeps pathways open for higher education, vocational education and emerging careers.
- Reduces inequality by ensuring all students access powerful knowledge, not just those who choose mathematics.
- Addresses gender inequality and disadvantage.

Jurisdiction Comparison

The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia that does not have a minimum requirement for numeracy or mathematics for its senior secondary qualification.

BSSS Mathematics Courses

Courses under the BSSS Mathematics Framework are

- *Specialist Mathematics*
- *Specialist Methods*
- *Mathematical Methods*
- *Mathematical Applications*
- *Essential Mathematics*
- *Bridging Numeracy*

These courses are written to cater to the full range of student abilities and future pathways. Students can engage with mathematics at a level appropriate to their aptitude and future goals, ensuring flexibility is maintained.

Alignment with National Goals

- Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019)
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- The Future of Education: An ACT education strategy for the next ten years (2018)

Data and Evidence

- Approximately 90–95% of ACT students enrol in a mathematics course each year.
- PISA data from 2022 shows that 43% of ACT students performed below the National Proficient Standard in mathematical literacy and reasoning.
- Between 27% and 35% of Australian students lack proficiency in key areas such as problem-solving, digital literacy and financial literacy.
- Mathematics study is strongly linked to higher employment rates and increased lifetime earnings.

How to contribute

- Complete the consultation survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/qPHRPBF85Z> or
- Attend a public forum. See www.bsss.act.edu.au

Feedback will inform the final recommendation to the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.