



**Friday 20 August 2021**

## **ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies**

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### **A message from the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies for students and parents/carers**

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#### **Working together for all senior secondary students**

The COVID -19 (Novel Coronavirus) pandemic has disrupted all aspects of our lives. It has caused great uncertainty and presents many challenges.

Our priority is the safety, wellbeing, and future of all students. The Board of Secondary Studies (BSSS) is focused on equity and fairness so that no student need be disadvantaged.

Students will be able to achieve an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate this year, which will be able to facilitate access to university, other further education opportunities and employment.

The BSSS is working in collaboration with schools to support student engagement with their learning and assessment. A reduction of face-to-face teaching and learning time at school need not limit the teaching and learning available to ACT senior secondary students.

Schools are employing the flexibilities available in providing learning and assessment for students. Effective and innovative online learning opportunities and interactions can deliver positive learning and assessment experiences for students.

Schools have received advice on learning and assessment to maintain the intent and integrity of the knowledge, skills and understandings described in the curriculum. Our continuous school-based assessment model provides flexibility for each school to accommodate the learning and assessment needs of their students. In the current circumstances, there is broad scope for principals to adjust the number of assessments, and the type of assessment, including no requirement for examinations during lockdown.

Students who complete the appropriate T courses and undertake the ACT Scaling Test (AST), will qualify for a Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) and an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR).

The BSSS has developed a range of contingencies for the ACT Scaling Test (AST). At this stage, the intention is to conduct the ACT Scaling Test as per normal on the revised dates of Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 October 2021. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide further information as required.

The Universities Admission Centre (UAC) has confidence in ACT assessment outcomes and the data used for the calculation of the ATAR.

I would like to draw your attention to two relevant publications. First, the information released by Education Council following the recent April 7 meeting can be found at <http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/EC-Communiqués-and-Media-Releases.aspx>. Second, the Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admissions Centres (ACTAC) media release is included below. These documents provide further clarity and assurance across states and territories that all are working together for the benefit of all students.

I encourage all year 11 and 12 students to remain committed to their learning and the completion of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Your schools and the Board will support you to do so.

Martin Watson  
Executive Director  
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

## **ACTAC STATEMENT: NATIONAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT YEAR 12 STUDENTS THROUGH COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS**

The Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admissions Centres (ACTAC), comprising admissions centres from across Australia, is committed to ensuring that prospective students will still have a pathway to tertiary study in 2021.

ACTAC's members are working with their own state's education authorities and tertiary institutions to ensure that admissions processes can adapt to any changes in Year 12 assessment in 2020. Students should be reassured that all tertiary institutions are looking forward to welcoming this year's graduating secondary students into courses commencing in 2021.

ACTAC has worked for many years to ensure that the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) provides a consistent starting point for tertiary entry across all states and territories, no matter where a student completes their senior secondary study. ACTAC will continue this important role coordinating admissions processes and ATAR equivalence nationally.

The ATAR is a rank, not a score – so any changes to assessment processes in individual states will not affect the validity of the ATAR as a tool for tertiary admissions. ACTAC's coordination already ensures that the ATAR provides a reliable comparison of a student's performance compared to their age group, regardless of the different examination and assessment processes within each state's curriculum. Any changes to such processes will be accommodated within this existing framework to provide certainty and consistency for both students and tertiary institutions.

These are extraordinary times. Year 12 students and others aspiring to further study should remain committed to their goals and confident that all state and national education bodies are working on an equitable way forward that maintains the integrity of tertiary admissions.

Media queries: please contact the tertiary admissions centre in your jurisdiction.

**NSW/ACT**



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