



Proposed Senior Secondary Qualifications

Overview

The Anglican School at Googong is a caring Christian educational community of excellence where authentic learning is at the heart of the school – where students are taught how to learn and where personal effort and achievement, as far as each individual can produce, is valued and celebrated. It is our clear intention to provide this education for all students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

As The Anglican School Googong continues to plan for the commencement of the Senior School in 2018 we have been investigating the possible Senior Secondary Qualifications which our school would provide for our students. Over the past twelve months the school has undertaken a detailed study and analysis of the possible options available in order to assess their capacity to meet the aspirational and educational needs of our students.

This work has been led by the Principal and has involved extensive consultation with members of staff, the School Board and its Education, Mission and Ministry Committee. This investigation has also involved research and consultation with educational leaders and researchers across Australia and internationally as well as both current and future parents within the school community.

The School considered three possible options for Year 12 exit qualifications which were believed to be the most likely to meet the needs and aspirations of our students. These were the NSW Higher School Certificate, the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and the International Baccalaureate Diploma and Career-related programs. An overview of the three forms of Year 12 exit qualification was provided to all key stakeholders so they could have a clear understanding of each.

Throughout the consultation and research phase it was clear that both the academic and pastoral needs of the students needed to be the key values driving the eventual outcome. It was also apparent that the educational philosophy that is currently provided in the school is one which the whole school community wishes to continue through to Year 12. That is, a philosophy which allows the schools aspirations to be met in full where the students and staff:

- Know and discover – to find and explore the wonder in the world around them
- Understand and dream – to dare to make a difference for themselves, their community and their planet
- Grow in faith – to use God’s gifts to be the best they can be.

Over the coming years we will see the school continue to thrive with our ever expanding student population. We look forward to seeing our students graduate from Year 12 in 2023 and beyond so that this generation are able to take their place as global citizens. We are educating what will become the first generation for the 22nd century so we need to look well beyond 21st century learning.

Senior Secondary Qualification

It is proposed that The Anglican School Googong seek approval from the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACT BSSS) to deliver the ACT Senior Secondary system at the school. This will allow the issuing of the following qualifications as appropriate to eligible students:

- ACT Senior Secondary Certificate
- ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement
- ACT Statement of Achievement
- VET Certificates and Statements of Attainment

We believe that by adopting the ACT BSSS system we will be well placed to meet the broad academic and pastoral needs and aspirations of our students and their families. It will allow us to:

- Continue building our student-centred learning environment
- Provide a rich and diverse curriculum to meet each of our student's needs
- Provide flexible pathways to cater for the diverse range of students we will have in the school

The key reasons for this proposal are:

- The flexibility available through the ACT BSSS courses will provide us with a great deal of autonomy in delivering courses which more closely provides for student needs
- Courses can more easily be constructed to engage and challenge students to be broad thinkers
- Students wishing to gain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) can do so and then use this to seek enrolment in universities throughout Australia
- Students can access the ANU Extension Program – these courses can contribute to a student's ATAR and be credited towards tertiary study at the ANU
- There is a clearly defined and supportive vocational pathway for students whose personal goal is to pursue VET Certificates and Statements of Attainment
- Through the semester- based course structure, in contrast to emphasis on a major end of course external exam, the well-being of students is well catered for
- The students and staff at the school, as well as parents, can establish and maintain close educational links with the broader ACT educational community

In Conclusion

By August this year the school will make a final decision on the shape of the Senior School (Year 7 to Year 12). This decision will include the type of academic and pastoral structure from Year 7 to Year 10 as well as the Year 12 qualifications to be offered.

Further information about the ACT Senior Secondary System has been appended for your information and consideration. We trust it will be helpful in demonstrating why we are proposing to adopt that system at The Anglican School Googong with regard to our Year 12 exit qualification.

We would welcome any feedback and invite current and future parents to respond to this document by Friday 22 July if you wish. You can respond by email or by arranging a time to meet with the Principal.

E: principal@tasg.nsw.edu.au

P: 6154 9400 (please call for an appointment)

ACT Senior Secondary System Overview

The ACT Senior Secondary system provides school-based curriculum and assessment within the policy and procedures of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS).

School-based curriculum means that Year 11 and Year 12 teachers are involved in all curriculum development and that schools determine what courses they offer to students. There is a commitment to offering high quality educational programs from a wide range of academic and vocational areas.

Assessment under the ACT BSSS system is continuous school based assessment. This means there are no external subject-based examinations. Courses are taught and assessed unit by unit. A unit of study is organised around a particular theme or skillset and has a value based on the time the unit took to deliver. One standard unit of study towards a Senior Secondary Certificate represents a minimum of 55 hours of timetabled classes generally over one semester. Moderation is conducted every semester to ensure comparability of grades from different schools and the ACT Scaling Test (AST), a higher order thinking examination, is used to compare Tertiary scores from different schools for calculation of the ATAR.

Qualifications

Formal documents which would be issued to eligible students by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACT BSSS) include:

ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

This is awarded to all senior secondary students who have successfully met the ACT BSSS requirements. This certificate consists of:

- the certificate, detailing your years of attendance and the school you are graduating from, and
- the Record of Achievement, that details your studies throughout Year 11 and Year 12

Tertiary Entrance Statement

The ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) is awarded to all students who meet the ACT BSSS' requirements. It reports information used in the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which is required for admission into universities in Australia.

Statement of Achievement

The Statement of Achievement is available for students who have not achieved the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. It lists the units and courses you studied during years 11 and 12 up to the time you leave. Receiving a Statement of Achievement does not disqualify you from obtaining an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate in the future.

VET Certificates and Statements of Attainment

The School will offer nationally recognised vocational (VET) courses. These courses are delivered to industry standard and, provided students meet the requirements, they will be issued with a qualification that will be recognised by vocational training providers (TAFEs, CIT, etc.) and employers around Australia.

Underlying Philosophy

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) states that a Senior Secondary Curriculum should:

- encourage students to complete secondary education in the fields of study of their choice;
- be inclusive and encourage respect for the diversity of the global community;
- be capable of flexible delivery;
- be broadly based, challenging and responsive to the diverse needs and learning styles of students;
- enable students to prepare for their futures in further education and training, employment, and as active citizens by:
 - developing knowledge and skills;
 - providing opportunities to explore attitudes and values;
 - fostering physical, spiritual and creative development;
 - providing opportunities to participate and shape local and global communities; and
 - providing opportunities to learn both independently and collaboratively and manage their own learning;
- provide students with explicit statements about the basis for assessment of students' achievements, which ensure that assessment is fair, valid and reliable;
- enable students' achievements to be reported accurately and comprehensively;
- motivate students to continue learning throughout their lives;
- be presented in clear, coherent, comprehensive documents; and
- be subject to regular review.

The curriculum frameworks also articulate the following beliefs and principles:

- **Prior knowledge:** Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings and skills.
- **Connectivity:** When learning is organised around major concepts, principles and significant real world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.
- **Metacognition:** Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.
- **Self-concept:** Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affect learning.
- **High expectations:** Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations.
- **Individual differences:** Learners learn in different ways and at different rates.
- **Socio-cultural effects:** Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn.
- **Collaborative learning:** Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one.
- **Explicit expectations and feedback:** Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress.

Academic Structure

The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate is awarded to all students who complete an approved program of study in years 11 and 12. It is thus a two-year course. Students must complete a coherent pattern of study including at least 17 standard units. One standard unit of study represents at least 55 hours of class time. Units are grouped into coherent courses in the following way:

- **Minor:** 2–3 standard units, 110 hours minimum
- **Major:** 3.5–5 standard units, 220 hours minimum
- **Major minor:** 5.5–6.5 standard units, 330 hours minimum
- **Double major:** 7–8 standard units, 400 hours minimum.

Each course is given one or more of the following designations:

A Courses

Educationally sound and appropriate for students in Years 11 and 12

M Courses

An A course providing appropriate educational experiences for students who satisfy specific disability criteria

T Courses

An A course providing preparation for higher education

H Courses

A course that has been designed and accredited by an Australian National University and where successful completion of the course will be recognised towards an undergraduate degree

V Courses

These courses may lead to the award of a Vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment

R Courses

Appropriate for students in Years 11 and 12; and usually provides personal development, recreational or community services activities

C Courses

Accredited vocational education and training programs appropriate for students in Year 11 and 12, which are delivered and assessed by Registered Training Organisations

E Courses

Vocational programs registered with the BSSS which lead to a nationally recognised vocational qualification (Certificate or Statement of Attainment) and are delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation.

All students must study English. However it should be noted that when calculating a student's ATAR it is only the four highest courses which are used. This may or may not include English.

Within some (V) T or A courses there are vocational programs that lead to a nationally accredited Vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment.

There are also one year packages available for older students, mature age students and repeat students.

ANU Extension Courses

ANU extension courses (H Courses) are available for students across a range of areas. The current courses available are available online at: <http://extension.anu.edu.au/>

All courses can be used for a student's ATAR calculation.

- Students will gain access to ANU, one of Australia's leading universities. This will include access to the library and computer systems and other cutting edge facilities at ANU.
- Student's course scores will be eligible to be used in the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).
- Students who complete the program at an appropriate level will be given early offer of entry to ANU programs, even possibly to the [Bachelor of Philosophy \(Honours\)](#), or PhD.

- Students who successfully complete the program will gain credit towards their studies at ANU in each of the subject areas completed.

A Tertiary Entrance Statement is issued with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank if the following requirements are met:

- Completes of a minimum of 20 standard units;
- Completes of at least 18 standard units including at least the equivalent of 12.5 standard T units;
- Completes of accredited (T or A) units arranged into courses to form at least four majors and one minor or three majors and three minors;
- Completes at least at least three majors at the T level;
- Completes the package in no fewer than three and a half semesters and no more than five years;
- Sits all components of the ACT Scaling Test.

Students who do not complete the requirements of a year 12 Certificate are issued with a Secondary College Record.

Curriculum

Courses are developed by individual schools or groups of schools, and are based on the appropriate BSSS Course Frameworks. The frameworks provide a subject rationale, a set of goals, a guide to the selection of content, assessment guidelines, criteria and grade descriptors, a statement of intended learning outcomes, information about key content, concepts and processes, and guidance on assessment criteria and assessment tasks.

Course developers are responsible for detailing the content, cross-curriculum perspectives, and teaching/learning strategies that implement the goals and promote student achievement within identified areas of knowledge and skill. Before a course can be taught it must be submitted for accreditation by the BSSS panel with representatives from tertiary institutions, schools and the community, and approved by the BSSS. Courses classified as 'T' must be authorised by a university representative. Vocational programs must be signed by an industry representative.

Increasingly in the ACT, schools 'share' courses rather than mounting new courses solely for their own use. All schools participating in the system are expected to contribute to the development of the curriculum through the curriculum review process, which operates on a five-year cycle.

In adopting the ACT Year 12 program, all ACT BSSS Courses would then be mapped to the NSW syllabus for the purpose of school registration with the BOSTES.

Assessment

Assessment for the Year 12 certificate is criterion- and standards-referenced and relies on teacher professional judgment. There are no compulsory assessment tasks or external subject examinations.

Grades A (highest) – E are awarded for individual units of A, M and T courses. Students undertaking vocational programs which are not also classified as 'T' are assessed as 'competent' or 'not yet competent'. Assessment for R courses may be shown as 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.

The ACT Scaling Test

The ACT Scaling Test (AST), comprising a multiple-choice paper, a writing paper and a short-response paper, is used to provide group results for calculating the University Admission Index (ATAR) (see Moderation, below).

The AST measures skills considered relevant to success at university, and its purpose is to ensure that all T course scores can be meaningfully compared within and across colleges. It is designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and has been in operation for 30 years.

Students are given a practice and encouraged to familiarise themselves with the style of the test. This is a recognised way of minimising the influence of extraneous variables. Security for the test itself is strict.

AST scores are sent to schools, but not published.

Certification

The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate shows units, courses and grades (A to E).

The Tertiary Entrance Statement is issued by BSSS for students who meet the requirements for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). It reports the student's aggregate score (defined below), the weighting of the scores used in the calculation of the aggregate score, and the scaled course score of all 'T' or 'H' courses.

ATARs (see Section 3.6, below) are supplied to institutions for the purpose of making offers of university entrance.

The BSSS also issues the Statement of Achievement to those students who have not achieved the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. It also issues a range of VET Certificates and Statements of Attainment.

Moderation

Both statistical and qualitative moderation are used. The BSSS outlines its processes of qualitative moderation as follows:

1. Establishment of system-wide assessment requirements, criteria and standards in Board Course Frameworks;
2. Accreditation of schools' programs of study (courses) from which student results may be recorded on Board certificates;
3. Validation of portfolios of student assessment responses (Years 11 and 12) to establish standards and maintain comparability of assessment outcomes;
4. Feedback to schools about consensus-based grade decisions;
5. Development of school action plans to address problems arising from the review process.

Procedure 3, validation, occurs twice a year on 'moderation days'. Year 11 and 12 teachers from all schools offering the ACT Year 12 participate in the consensus-based peer review process. Portfolios of students' assessment responses are presented, and teachers from several colleges evaluate the assessment instruments, the student work and the grading given by the school. Schools are advised about the quality of their decisions, and issues arising from the process are referred to the BSSS.

Statistical moderation is used to produce scores on the same scale across courses and schools. Group results are used to identify between-school differences, and means and standard deviations of course scores are adjusted accordingly. Scores are changed, but rankings of students are not. A more detailed account of this procedure can be found online at: http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/whats_moderation

Recognition/Currency

The ACT Year 12 candidature in 2015 was approximately 4500, about 2700 of whom receive an ATAR. Some members of the public may perceive the small size of the jurisdiction to be a drawback, but there appears to be no evidence of any substantive disadvantage.

It should be noted that the ACT Year 12 candidature can select courses which will lead to the non-awarded of an ATAR. This is quite a valid choice that they make as for many students who are pursuing a VET pathway there is no need for an ATAR as an exit qualification. Of the 2015 Year 12 candidature, approximately 1800 did not receive an ATAR.

The most recent review of government secondary schools (Year 11 and 12) in the ACT ([Atelier Learning Solutions](#)) made the following points about public perceptions of the ACT Year 12 assessment system:

- 'There is a high level of commitment across colleges to the "continuous assessment" model, and the associated moderation and scaling procedure based on the AST ... The assessment regime established and overseen by the BSSS is widely acknowledged as comprehensive and "thorough", with every effort made to ensure the integrity of the assessment, moderation and scaling processes.'
- There were 'many comments about the level of complexity and regulation.'
- The assessment regime around 'T' courses is widely viewed as reliable and rigorous.
- Some review respondents were critical of the AST scaling process's possible 'bias effects on some students' – this has been addressed in recent years as a result of a review of the AST.

Calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

An Aggregate Score is produced for each student who has completed at least 20 standard units, 18 of which are A or T courses. It is the sum of the best three T major scaled scores plus 0.6 of the next best score in a T course. A student must undertake an English course but the English course score does not have to be included in calculating the aggregate score if it is not one of the best four course scores. (In the NSW HSC English must be used in calculating the aggregate score) Aggregate Scores for all eligible students are ranked and a candidate rank is assigned to each student. The rank is then converted to a cohort rank via a lookup table supplied by the NSW Technical Committee on Scaling. The table is based on NSW student results. The scaling does not change the rank order of students given by a teacher, but it can alter the relative positions of students in different courses and at different schools.

The process for placing the ACT results on the lookup table was reviewed in 2006. This reviewed used results for literacy and numeracy testing for comparability between the ACT and NSW. The result was a fine-tuning of the table with the ACT results 'moving up slightly'.

The ACT scaling system, is conducted in conjunction with the Australian National University and supervised by the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors' Committee, is more open to scrutiny than most. Scaled scores in each subject are published, and calculations are available to the public.

The same cut-off scores at ACT and NSW universities apply to students from both jurisdictions. All Australian universities use the ranking based on the age cohort for each state, and the various states' tertiary entrance rankings have the same currency throughout Australia and overseas. No information is available on recognition of the ATAR by overseas universities, but the BSSS has indicated that they believe the recognition is generally satisfactory.

Further Information

ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum

<http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum>

ACT BSSS Qualifications

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/act_qualifications

Vocational Education and Training

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/vet_information

University Programs

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/what_additional_programs_are_available

ACT Scaling Test

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/act_scaling_test

What's Moderation?

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/whats_moderation

Scaling and the ATAR

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/scaling_and_the_atar