



**All About Your ATAR:
for 2020 NSW HSC
students**



Contents

Essentials and key dates	ii
Your ATAR notification	2
The ATAR: what is it?	3
Why do we need the ATAR?	3
Who gets an ATAR?	3
Your HSC marks and your ATAR	4
Your HSC marks	4
Your HSC results	5
Calculating your ATAR	6
Tertiary selection and the ATAR	9
Frequently asked questions	10
Next steps	16
Consider your course options	16
Lock in your course preferences	16
What to do when you get an offer	17
Contacting institutions	18
Definitions	21

Essentials and key dates

2020 NSW HSC Students

Friday 18 December	NSW HSC results released by NESA at 6am
Friday 18 December	ATARs released from 9am on UAC's website at uac.edu.au

2020 ACT Year 12 Students

Wednesday 16 December	ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement (including ATAR) released by ACT BSSS and available for collection from your college
Friday 18 December	ATARs released from 9am on UAC's website at uac.edu.au

How to get your ATAR

When: From 9am Friday 18 December

How: Log in to UAC's website at uac.edu.au.

You will need your Year 12 student number and your UAC PIN to log in.

Your Year 12 student number: In NSW, this is your HSC student number. It is issued by NESA. It can be confirmed by your school or you can call NESA on 1300 13 83 23.

Your UAC PIN: This was emailed to you in April and August. If you've forgotten it and you have applied through UAC, go to the application login page on UAC's website, click the 'Forgotten your PIN?' link under the login button, then follow the prompts to receive an email containing a link to reset your PIN. Otherwise, call UAC.

ATAR Enquiry Centre 1300 MY ATAR (1300 692 827)

from mobiles: (02) 9119 5012 from overseas: +61 2 9119 5012

The ATAR Enquiry Centre is open at the following times from the release of the ATAR until 22 December.

Friday 18 December	8.30am – 6.00pm
Saturday 19 December	8.30am – 4.30pm
Monday 21 December	8.30am – 4.30pm
Tuesday 22 December	8.30am – 4.30pm

Advisers are available at the times listed above to answer your ATAR-specific queries. After these dates, and for any queries about your UAC application, call UAC on (+61 2) 9752 0200.

All About Your ATAR

This booklet is for Year 12 students completing their HSC in 2020. It explains what the ATAR is, the relationship between HSC marks and the ATAR, how the ATAR is calculated and how it is used for selection to tertiary study.





Your ATAR notification

When you log in to view your ATAR you'll also be able to see a list of the ATAR courses you studied and their category, and the number of units of each ATAR course that contributed to the calculation of your ATAR.

While you're there, download your ATAR Advice Notice. It's available for free until the end of February 2021.

Here is an example of the details you will see:

Course name	Category	Year completed	Unit value	Units included in calculation of ATAR
English Standard	A	2020	2	2
Geography	A	2020	2	2
Legal Studies	A	2020	2	1
Mathematics Advanced	A	2020	2	2
Studies of Religion I	A	2020	1	1
Hospitality Examination	B	2020	2	2

In this example, the table shows that:

- all courses were completed in 2020
- all courses are Category A courses except Hospitality Examination
- both units of English were included, as is required
- all units of Geography, Mathematics Advanced, Studies of Religion 1 and Hospitality Examination were included
- 1 unit of Legal Studies was included.

If your ATAR is recorded as:

- '30 or less', your ATAR is between 0.00 and 30.00
- 'not eligible', you haven't met the requirements of the ATAR.



The scaled mark in Legal Studies was lower than the scaled marks in the other courses so only 1 unit was included to make up the required 10 units.

The ATAR: what is it?

The ATAR is a rank, not a mark.

It is a number between 0 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. It allows us to compare the overall achievement of students who have completed thousands of different combinations of HSC courses. An ATAR of 80.00 places you in the top 20% of students in your age cohort.

It is important to note that your ranking depends solely on your performance in the HSC.

Your ATAR is only accessible by you or your authorised agent. ATARs are also released to institutions for the purpose of making offers to courses. UAC doesn't provide ATARs to parents, schools or careers advisers.



This year, around 55,000 NSW students will receive an ATAR. They have completed close to 27,000 different combinations of HSC courses.

Why do we need the ATAR?

The ATAR has only one purpose: it helps universities efficiently and objectively select students for tertiary study.

UAC calculates the ATAR on behalf of the universities.

Who gets an ATAR?

To be eligible for an ATAR in 2020 you must have satisfactorily completed at least 10 units of ATAR courses, including:

- 8 units from Category A courses
- 2 units of English
- three Board Developed courses of 2 units each
- four subjects.

The fourth point can easily be overlooked or misunderstood. A subject is an area of study (eg mathematics). Within that subject there may be a number of courses (eg Mathematics Standard 1, Mathematics Standard 2, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Mathematics Extension 2).

If you're an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma student, you don't get an ATAR. Instead, when you apply through UAC, you'll be allocated a UAC rank based on your total IB score.

The same applies to students undertaking tertiary preparation programs such as the Tertiary Preparation Certificate (TPC) and Open Foundation.



Your HSC marks and your ATAR

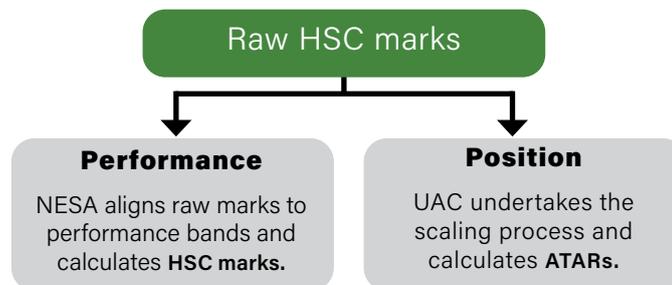
When Year 12 students receive their results, they often ask, 'Why is my ATAR low compared to my Year 12 marks?'

The answer is that they are very different measures of achievement: HSC marks tell you about your performance in the HSC, whereas your ATAR tells you about your position, or ranking, in the HSC.

It's fair to say that, depending on what you study, marks around 70 in the HSC could lead to an ATAR in the 50s, while marks closer to 80 could lead to an ATAR around 80.00. This is because most students usually achieve marks between 70 and 80 (Band 4) and, when they are ranked, that group really spreads out.

The example of Fred and Laura on page 10 shows how these small differences in marks can lead to large differences in ATARs.

HSC marks and ATARs are calculated separately using different methods:



The following table outlines the main differences between these two measures of achievement.

Your HSC marks	Your ATAR
Provide information about how well you have achieved in each of the courses you have completed.	Provides information about how well you have performed overall against other students.
Indicate your performance in the different courses you have studied.	Allows you to be compared with students who have completed different combinations of courses.
Are reported against standards.	Is a rank, not a mark.
Are provided by NESA.	Is provided by UAC.

Your HSC marks

NESA describes the standards for a course using a performance scale; for 2-unit courses there are six performance bands and for extension courses there are four performance bands. Each year and for each course, NESA determines the range of raw examination marks that correspond to each performance band, so that every raw examination mark is aligned to a performance band.

To enable school assessments from different schools to be compared, assessment marks submitted by schools are moderated using the raw examination marks. These moderated school assessment marks are also aligned to performance bands.



It is these aligned marks, together with an HSC mark, that you receive from NESA.

Your HSC mark is the average of your aligned examination mark and your aligned moderated school assessment mark, and it determines your performance band for the course.

Most HSC courses usually have a median (middle) mark above 75, but the median ATAR is usually around 70.00.

Your HSC results

Your HSC results present a profile of your HSC achievement.

For example, here are Elizabeth's 2019 HSC results:

	Units	Examination mark	Assessment mark	HSC mark	Performance band
Business Studies	2	83/100	77/100	80	5
English Advanced	2	77/100	73/100	75	4
Mathematics	2	75/100	83/100	79	4
Modern History	2	88/100	86/100	87	5
Visual Arts	2	85/100	83/100	84	5
French Continuers	2	88/100	86/100	87	5

If you have questions about your HSC results, visit the HSC results area of the NESA website at educationstandards.nsw.edu.au, or call the HSC Results Inquiry Centre on 1300 13 83 23.



Calculating your ATAR

Your ATAR is based on the sum of your scaled marks in 10 units of ATAR courses. These 10 units will be made up of:

- your best 2 units of English
- your best 8 units from the remaining units.

No more than 2 units of Category B courses can be included.

To show you how it's done, let's calculate the ATAR for Elizabeth based on the HSC marks shown in the previous table.

There are several steps in the process.

STEP 1

The first step is to calculate the average of the raw examination mark and the moderated school assessment mark for each of Elizabeth's courses.

These averages are called raw HSC marks. They are not reported to the student.

STEP 2

Next, we need to find out how Elizabeth's performance compared to other students. To do this, we look at the percentiles. The percentiles indicate a student's position in their courses compared with other students in those courses. Elizabeth's percentiles are set out in the following table:

	Units	HSC mark/100	HSC median/100	Percentile
Business Studies	2	80	74	69
English Advanced	2	75	82	22
Mathematics	2	79	79	51
Modern History	2	87	76	85
Visual Arts	2	84	82	60
French Continuers	2	87	84	61

The *Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW HSC*, available on UAC's website, shows, for each course, the distribution of NESA's HSC marks (as reported to students – Table A2) and the scaled marks (as used in the 2019 ATAR calculation – Table A3) at specific percentiles.

Table A3 also includes information on means, standard deviations and maximum marks.

Table A2 and Table A3 from the 2020 HSC will be available on UAC's website when ATARs are released on Friday 18 December 2020.

From the previous table you can see that although Elizabeth's HSC marks in English Advanced and Business Studies differ by only 5, the percentiles are very different. In English Advanced she has performed better than 22% of other students in that course whereas in Business Studies she has performed better than 69%.

Your position and your mark in a course depend on how well you have done in that course and how well other students have done in that course.



These examples show that your marks in different courses are not comparable. They cannot just be added together to derive your ATAR. Some form of adjustment must be carried out before an overall measure of achievement can be determined. This is called scaling.

Scaling allows a proper and fair comparison of students who have studied different courses. It determines what your marks would have been if all students attempted all courses and all courses were marked in a way that produced the same distribution of marks.

It does this by modifying the mean, the standard deviation and the maximum mark for each course.

The scaled mean for a course is based on the average academic achievement of the course candidature, which is determined by the marks the students in that course have achieved in all their courses.

The average scaled mean is 50 for 2-unit courses. If a course candidature is strong academically, the scaled mean will be higher than the average scaled mean.

Courses dominated by high-achieving students, who do well in all their subjects, will be scaled positively. Courses with many students who do not perform well in all their subjects will be scaled negatively.

The table below shows that the scaled means of most of Elizabeth's courses are greater than 50. This means that most of these courses included many high-achieving students. The HSC means have been included to further illustrate Elizabeth's performance compared to other students.

	Units	HSC mean/100	Scaled mean/100
Business Studies	2	72.6	48.0
English Advanced	2	81.2	63.8
Mathematics	2	78.4	62.2
Modern History	2	73.8	51.2
Visual Arts	2	81.2	44.6
French Continuers	2	82.6	69.2

STEP 3

So the next step is to scale Elizabeth's raw HSC marks. As you can see from the table below, Elizabeth's scaled marks are different from the HSC marks she received from NESA.

	Units	HSC mark/100	Scaled mark/100
Business Studies	2	80	60.2
English Advanced	2	75	50.4
Mathematics	2	79	64.0
Modern History	2	87	74.4
Visual Arts	2	84	48.7
French Continuers	2	87	74.7

Like Elizabeth, your scaled marks are likely to be different from, and lower than, your corresponding HSC marks. This is not surprising: your HSC marks and scaled marks are meant to be different. HSC marks are aligned to standards, whereas scaled marks are the marks you would have received if all course candidatures were the same.

Your position in a course is not altered by scaling.



Courses completed in previous years: Scaled marks are calculated in the year that you complete the course. If you accumulate courses towards your HSC, your marks are not re-scaled in the year you become eligible for an ATAR.

STEP 4

Now we need to calculate Elizabeth's aggregate of scaled marks. According to the ATAR rules, 2 units of English must be included, then the best 8 units from her remaining courses.

From the table of Elizabeth's scaled marks above, you can see that, ignoring English, Visual Arts has the lowest scaled mark. Therefore, both units of Visual Arts are omitted.

Elizabeth's aggregate is 323.7.

STEP 5

Elizabeth's aggregate is used to determine her position compared with other students. This position will be expressed as a percentile in an interim phase of the ATAR calculation.

STEP 6

The last step is to truncate the percentile to the nearest 0.05.

Elizabeth's ATAR is 81.45.

This means that Elizabeth did well enough overall to perform better than 81.45 per cent of her age cohort.

The ATAR is a measure of overall academic achievement in the HSC. It enables universities to rank applicants for selection in a fair and equitable way.

The ATAR is designed to be used as an indicator of readiness for university study. There is no notion of pass or fail.



Tertiary selection and the ATAR

Each year more than 45,000 current school leavers apply through UAC for admission to courses offered by NSW and ACT universities. For the majority of courses there are more applicants than places. Applicants must be ranked to allow selection to take place.

The first step in the selection process is to check whether applicants have satisfied the prerequisites specified for the courses for which they have applied. For example, the Bachelor of Advanced Computing at The University of Sydney specifies Mathematics Advanced (Band 4) as a prerequisite. If you do not achieve a Band 4 in Mathematics Advanced you will not be considered for the Bachelor of Advanced Computing, regardless of your ATAR.

The second step is to rank all applicants who satisfy the prerequisites for that course. For most courses, applicants who are current school leavers are ranked using the ATAR. If a university takes other factors into consideration – such as performance in a Year 12 subject or eligibility for Educational Access Schemes – then the applicant’s selection rank for the relevant course will increase (but their ATAR will remain the same).

Some courses have additional selection criteria, such as a portfolio, interview, audition, questionnaire or test. Any additional selection criteria is specified in the course description on the UAC website.

**ARE YOU STARTING
UNI IN 2021?**

Get your USI now.

It’s your lifelong education
number.



www.usi.gov.au



Frequently asked questions

What is the median ATAR?

The median ATAR is usually around 70.00. To achieve a higher ATAR, you'll need to get HSC marks of around 80 in all your courses.

Why is my ATAR low in comparison to my HSC marks?

Your ATAR depends upon your position in your courses and the ability of the other students in your courses (reflected in the scaled means of your courses).

Consider the following two students who completed the same courses.

Fred received an HSC mark of 70 in each course, while Laura received an HSC mark of 80 in each course.

	Units	Fred		Laura	
		HSC mark/100	Percentile	HSC mark/100	Percentile
Biology	2	70	42	80	71
Business Studies	2	70	41	80	69
English Advanced	2	70	10	80	43
Mathematics	2	70	24	80	54
Modern History	2	70	36	80	63
Visual Arts	2	70	12	80	41
ATAR		58.70		78.70	

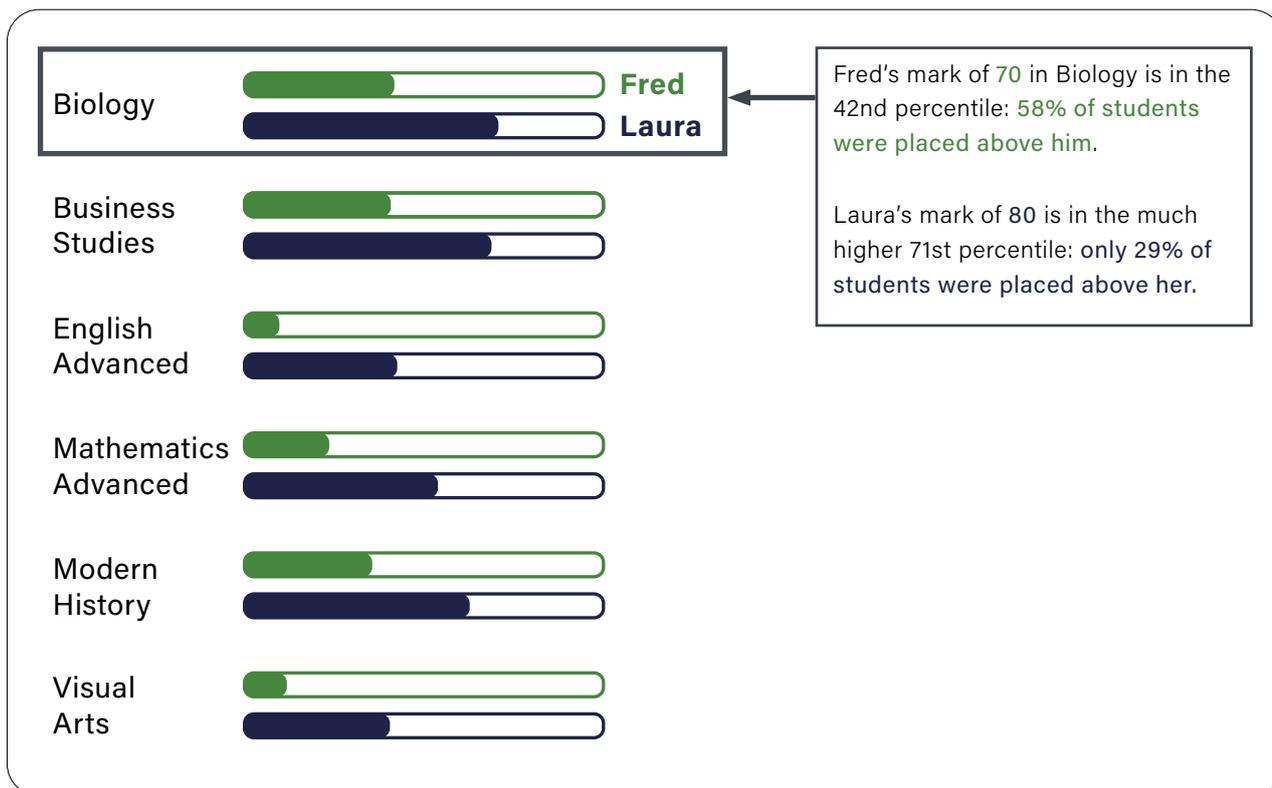
Their HSC marks in each course differ by only 10, yet their ATARs differ by 20.00. Laura's ATAR is similar to her HSC marks while Fred's ATAR is much lower than his HSC marks.

The reason for the large difference in the ATARs can be found in the differences in the percentiles. The percentiles are much higher for Laura than for Fred. Laura's lowest percentile is almost the same as Fred's highest percentile.

From the table you can also see that in each course a significant percentage of the course candidature has marks in the range 70 to 80. For example, in English Advanced, 33% of the candidature has marks in this range (43rd percentile for 80 minus the 10th percentile for 70).

Given the differences in their course percentiles, it is not surprising that Fred's and Laura's ATARs are very different.

The differences in their positions are demonstrated further in the illustration opposite: it shows where their respective marks placed them in each course.



The ATAR is all about position, whereas HSC marks indicate standards achieved in individual courses.

Remember that ATARs are calculated afresh each year and are based on position – the same marks in the same courses in two different years will not necessarily produce the same ATARs.

In the *Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW HSC*, available on UAC's website, Table A2 shows the distribution of HSC marks (the percentage of students in performance bands 2 to 6 and the median HSC mark for each course) in 2019.

Table A2 from the 2020 HSC will be available on UAC's website when ATARs are released on Friday 18 December 2020.

Is there a general rule when comparing HSC marks and ATARS?

Some students ask if there is a general rule they can use to understand the relationship between their ATAR and their HSC marks. There is no general rule because the pattern of HSC marks varies across courses and each course has a different scaled mean.

However, it can be said that, in general, if you are in the middle group of students enrolled in your courses (with HSC marks typically in the 70s), you are likely to get an ATAR around 70.00. But sometimes marks in the 70s can mean a much lower ATAR depending on your courses and your position in your courses.

The middle ATAR in 2019 was 69.75.

Below are examples of students with ATARs of 65.00, 75.00 and 85.00 in 2019.

James		Amy		Tom	
	HSC mark		HSC mark		HSC mark
Business Studies	79	Economics	75	Biology	87
English Standard	70	Engineering Studies	80	Chemistry	76
Legal Studies	78	English Advanced	71	English Advanced	85
Mathematics Standard 2	78	Mathematics	78	Mathematics	77
Textiles & Design	77	Software Design & Development	84	Modern History	85
ATAR	65.00		75.00		85.00

To see where these 2019 HSC marks stand in comparison with all of the students in the course, check the tables available in the *Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW HSC*, available on UAC's website.

The tables based on the 2020 HSC data will be available on UAC's website when ATARs are released on Friday 18 December 2020.

Which courses count towards my ATAR?

Your ATAR is calculated from your aggregate of scaled marks, including 2 units of English and your best 8 units from the remaining courses, according to the ATAR rules.

When you receive your ATAR you will also see which of your courses were actually included in the calculation of your ATAR. It is not possible to tell which courses will be included in your ATAR just by looking at your HSC marks, because your ATAR uses your scaled marks. Sometimes the course with the lowest HSC mark will not count, but this is not always the case.

Why is one course counted towards my ATAR when another course for which I received a higher HSC mark does not count?

A higher HSC mark does not always mean a higher scaled mark, and the calculation of your ATAR is based on your scaled marks.

As an example, let's look at Elizabeth's marks from Step 3 on page 8.

Elizabeth's lowest HSC mark is in English Advanced but, since 2 units of English must be included, the scaled mark for English Advanced will contribute to her ATAR.

Of her remaining courses you might expect Mathematics to have the lowest scaled mark as it has the next lowest HSC mark and lowest percentile. Visual Arts, however, has the lowest scaled mark because it has a lower scaled mean.

If I get the same HSC mark in two different courses, will the one with the higher scaled mean count towards my ATAR?

Not necessarily. It's important to remember that the scaled mean indicates the average academic achievement of the students in that course. When you look at your results, you also have to consider your position in the course. A higher position in a course with a lower scaled mean may be enough to warrant its inclusion in your ATAR calculation.

Both your position in the course and the scaled mean are important in determining which of your courses contribute towards your ATAR.

In the *Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW HSC*, available on UAC's website, Table A3 shows the distribution in each course of both NESA's HSC marks (as reported to students) and the scaled marks (as used in the 2019 ATAR calculation) at specific percentiles.

This table also includes information on means, standard deviations and maximum marks.

Table A3 based on the 2020 HSC will be available on UAC's website when ATARs are released on Friday 18 December 2020.

Consider the following example of Jane who sat the HSC in 2019 and completed 12 units.

Jane got an HSC mark of 94 for both Community & Family Studies and German Beginners – so, 47.0 per unit. The scaled mean for Community & Family Studies was much lower than the scaled

mean for German Beginners, but her German Beginners mark did not count towards her ATAR. Why?

If we look at the table below (an extract from Table A3 of the *Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW HSC* – available on UAC's website) we can see that Jane's HSC mark of 47.0 for German Beginners places her at the 90th percentile for that course so that her scaled mark is 39.9. However, her HSC mark of 47.0 per unit for Community & Family Studies places her on the 99th percentile for that course and gives her a scaled mark of 41.0 per unit. Consequently, Community & Family Studies was included before German Beginners.

Jane's higher position in Community & Family Studies, compared with her position in German Beginners, was enough to compensate for the lower scaled mean in Community & Family Studies.

Extract from Table A3 of the Report on the Scaling of the 2019 NSW Higher School Certificate

Course	Number of students		Mean	SD	Max.	P ₉₉	P ₉₀	P ₇₅	P ₅₀	P ₂₅
Community & Family Studies	8,406	HSC	37.2	5.4	49.5	47.0	43.5	41.5	38.0	34.0
		scaled	18.8	10.5	44.2	41.0	33.8	27.0	18.2	10.1
German Beginners	95	HSC	39.0	6.0	50.0	50.0	47.0	44.0	38.5	34.5
		scaled	26.0	10.6	50.0	50.0	39.9	33.0	25.5	16.8

Note: The marks in this table are marks per unit.

I have similar HSC marks to my friend, but we don't have similar ATARs. Why not?

Your ATARs will only be similar if your courses are the same. If your courses are different and your courses have different scaled means, your ATARs may be very different. Looking at the table on page 12, we can see that James, Amy and Tom had all of their HSC marks in the 70s and 80s. But those marks were in different courses and their ATARs were very different.

Does the school I attend matter?

No. The school attended does not feature in the ATAR calculation. The ATAR calculation is based only on marks provided by NESA; no other information is used.

Are certain courses always 'scaled up' or always 'scaled down'?

No. Scaling is carried out afresh each year. If the quality of the candidature changes, then the scaled mean will also change. Your position in your courses is just as important as the scaled means of your courses in determining your ATAR.

In some courses more students are in Performance Band 6 than in other courses. Does this affect the scaled mark for the course?

No. It is the raw HSC marks that are scaled, not the HSC marks that you receive. The percentage of students placed in Performance Band 6 differs across courses, but this has no effect on the calculation of the ATAR.

In some courses more students get high HSC marks than in other courses. Does this affect the ATAR calculation?

No. Raw HSC marks are scaled and used in the ATAR calculation. Also remember that your position in the course is important for the ATAR calculation.

How are extension courses scaled?

For most extension courses the scaled means and standard deviations are determined by the performance of the extension students on the corresponding 2-unit course.

How is English scaled?

English Studies, English Standard and English Advanced are scaled as a single group as the raw marks are put on a common scale by NESA.

Why can't I use my HSC marks to check the calculation of my ATAR?

There are two reasons. The first is that scaled marks, not HSC marks, are used in the calculation of the ATAR and the second is that the ATAR is not an average mark; it is a rank that indicates your position.

Can I find out what my scaled marks are?

No. Scaled marks are not reported to students. They are determined during an interim phase in the calculation of the ATAR.

Can I have my ATAR recalculated?

No. If, however, NESA provides amended HSC results, your ATAR is recalculated and you are notified immediately.

Can an extension course contribute to the ATAR if the corresponding 2-unit course has not been satisfactorily completed?

No. You must satisfactorily complete the corresponding 2-unit course before the extension course can be considered.

The exception is mathematics, where you can complete Extension 1 and Extension 2 without completing 2-unit Mathematics Advanced (but you must complete Mathematics Extension 1 to count Mathematics Extension 2). If you have completed both Extension 1 and Extension 2, then your results for each are considered separately in determining the aggregate used to calculate your ATAR; one, both or neither might be included in the calculation.

If I'm eligible for selection rank adjustments, does my ATAR change?

No. Any adjustments to your selection rank apply to a particular course you have listed as a preference; your ATAR does not change.

If selection rank adjustments don't increase my ATAR, then how do they work?

Universities take several factors into consideration when adjusting selection ranks. Examples include students performing strongly in specified HSC subjects, students living or attending school in an area defined by the university, and students applying for consideration through Educational Access Schemes. Selection rank adjustments are applied differently from institution to institution and from course to course within the same institution. Therefore, your selection rank can be different for each course you list in your course preferences.

Some institutions require you to achieve a minimum ATAR before you are eligible for selection rank adjustments – check the information from each institution carefully to see if they have a minimum ATAR requirement.

Where a university publishes a lowest selection rank for a course, does this include adjustment factors?

Yes. The lowest selection rank for a course includes adjustment factors; the lowest ATAR does not. It is important to understand this difference between the lowest selection rank and the lowest ATAR.

The difference is illustrated in the following example: Course A has six applicants and only three places available. The six applicants have the following selection ranks:

1. 89.00 (ATAR of 89.00)
2. 88.00 (ATAR of 87.00 plus adjustment of 1 point)
3. 87.00 (ATAR of 83.00 plus adjustment of 4 points)

4. 86.00 (ATAR of 86.00)
5. 85.00 (ATAR of 83.00 plus adjustment of 2 points)
6. 84.00 (ATAR of 84.00).

Offers will be made to applicants 1, 2 and 3. Applicant 4 won't receive an offer, even with an ATAR higher than applicant 3, and applicant 3 will receive an offer even though their ATAR is below the lowest selection rank. The lowest selection rank required to receive an offer to Course A will be 87.00.

This example shows why it is important not to assume that the published lowest ATAR for a course is the ATAR required to be made an offer to that course. The lowest ATAR for this course is 83.00 (applicant 3). Even though applicants 4, 5 and 6 have ATARs of 83.00 and above, their selection ranks are below the lowest selection rank of 87.00 and therefore they will not receive an offer.

HSC subject adjustments



Most universities will increase your selection rank to recognise achievement in HSC courses relevant to the university course you wish to study. Therefore, even if your ATAR is below the lowest selection rank, you may still get an offer to that course. For more information about selection ranks and adjustment factors, go to uac.edu.au/year12-quals.

For more information about the ATAR, go to uac.edu.au/atar.

Next steps

Consider your course options

If you've received a higher ATAR than you expected, or have rethought what you really want to study, you might want to add or delete courses or re-order your preferences.

If you've not done as well as you expected, you should reassess your course choices to make sure they are realistic. You don't want to miss out on an offer altogether because you don't meet the lowest selection ranks for the courses you've listed. As a guide, check the ATAR profiles of the courses you are interested in. These are based on offers made to recent school leavers and are included in the course descriptions on the UAC website. They will give you an indication of whether your ATAR puts you in the ballpark to receive an offer to each course.

Lowest ATARs and selection ranks for entry to semester 1 courses in 2021 won't be known until all offers have been made. These ranks can change from year to year.

If a university publishes a guaranteed ATAR or guaranteed selection rank for a course and your ATAR matches or exceeds that rank, you can be confident you will receive an offer to that course if it is your highest preference in your UAC application.

UAC's participating institutions are available in December and January to answer specific questions about your course options. Institution contact details are shown on pages 18 and 19.

Lock in your course preferences

You can change your preferences for December Round 2 offers until midnight on Saturday 19 December 2020. Simply log in to your application on UAC's website. You'll need your UAC application number and UAC PIN.

Some courses have closing dates earlier than UAC's deadlines. Check the course descriptions on UAC's website before adding any new courses.

Your new course preferences may also have additional requirements such as questionnaires, interviews or tests. Check that it's not too late for you to fulfill these requirements.

You can list up to five course preferences. Your preferences may include the same course/area of study at five different institutions or five different courses at one institution. The choice is yours.

During the selection process your preferences are considered one at a time in the order in which you have them listed in your application. So put the course you would most like to do first, then the course you would next like to do, and so on.

If you are not selected for your first preference you will be considered equally with all other eligible applicants for your second preference, and so on. Your chances of being selected for a particular course are not reduced because you placed a course lower on your preference list.

YOUR CAREER What's next for you in 2021?

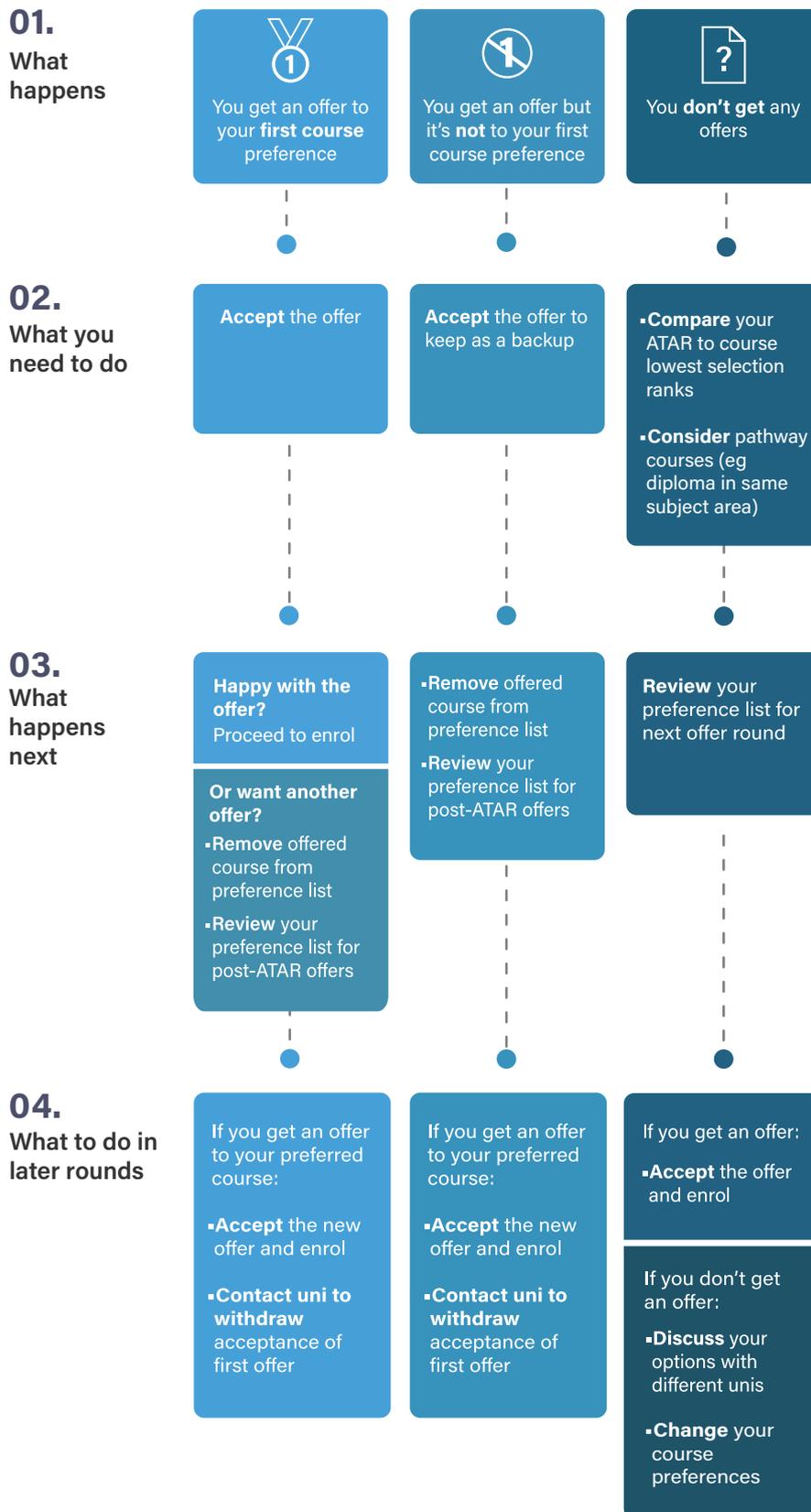
Find the information you need to help you with your education, training and work options online or contact the School Leavers Information Service.

1800 CAREER (1800 227 337)
 text: SLIS2020 to 0429 009 435
 schoolleavers.nci@dese.gov.au

YourCareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support

What to do when you get an offer

Most offers to NSW HSC students will be made in December Round 2 on Wednesday 23 December 2020.



Contacting institutions

from 18 December 2020 to 3 January 2021

Australian Catholic University

Enquiries

call: 1300 ASK ACU (1300 275 228)
email: acu.edu.au/askacu
available: AskACU Contact Centre phone lines:
18–23 December 8am – 6pm
24 December 8am – 1pm
30–31 December 8am – 4pm
AskACU chat:
18–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 8am – 1pm
30–31 December 8am – 4pm
AskACU Centres on campus open:
18–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December* 8am – 1pm
**except North Sydney and Strathfield*

Information events/visit the campus

Know Your Options:
North Sydney campus
18 December 2pm – 4pm
Facebook Messenger Q&A
18 December 11am – 2pm
Blacktown campus
19 December 10am – 2pm
Canberra campus
19 December 10am – 5pm
Book a campus tour at acu.edu.au/campus-tours.

Australian College of Applied Psychology

Enquiries

call: 1800 039 139 (freecall)
email: connect@acap.edu.au
website: acap.edu.au
available: 18, 21–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 12pm
29–31 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

For details on upcoming ACAP information sessions, visit acap.edu.au.
To arrange an appointment or tour of the Sydney campus, call 1800 039 139 or email connect@acap.edu.au.

Australian College of Physical Education

Enquiries

call: 1300 302 867
email: newstudents@acpe.edu.au
website: acpe.edu.au
available: 18–19 December 9am – 5pm
21–4 December 9am – 5pm
29–31 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

To arrange an appointment or campus tour, go to acpe.edu.au/about-us/events/, call 1300 302 867 or email newstudents@acpe.edu.au.

Australian National University

Enquiries

call: 1800 620 032
email: future.student@anu.edu.au
available: 18 December 9am – 6pm
21–24 December 9am – 6pm
29–31 December 9am – 6pm

Information events/visit the campus

ANU virtual advisory events 14–18 December
For information, go to anu.edu.au/events.

Charles Darwin University

Enquiries

call: 1800 061 963
email: student.central@cdu.edu.au
website: cdu.edu.au
available: 18 December 8.30am – 3pm

Charles Sturt University

Enquiries

call: 1800 275 278 (freecall)
email: info.csu@csu.edu.au
website: study.csu.edu.au
available: 18, 21–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 12.30pm
30–31 December 9am – 12.30pm

Information events/visit the campus

Advice day: 18 December 3pm – 8pm
19 December 10am – 2pm
Book at study.csu.edu.au/atar-advice-day.
Book a one-to-one appointment with a student adviser at csu.edu.au/appointment.
Campus tours run Monday to Friday (excl. 24–31 December) at 10am, noon and 2pm. Book your tour at study.csu.edu.au/contact-us.

CQUniversity

Enquiries

call: 13 CQUni (13 27 86)
email: contactus.cqu.edu.au
website: cqu.edu.au
available: 18 December 9am – 4.45pm
20–24 December 9am – 4.45pm

Information events/visit the campus

Change of preference online chat:
19 December 9am – 2pm
Book a one-on-one conversation to explore your options: visit cqu.edu.au/virtualactivities.

Griffith University

Enquiries

call: 1800 677 728 (freecall)
email: domesticenquiries@griffith.edu.au
website: ask.secure.griffith.edu.au
available: 18 December – 3 January (excl. public holidays) 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

Explore your options: Chat online at griffith.edu.au/options.
18–19 December 8am – 2pm
21–24 December 9am – 2pm

All times are in Australian Eastern Standard Time

International College of Management, Sydney

Enquiries

call: 1800 110 490 or (02) 9466 1240
email: start@icms.edu.au
website: icms.edu.au
available: 18, 21–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 10am – 12pm
30–31 December 10am – 2pm
2–3 January 10am – 4pm

Information events/visit the campus

Book a personal campus tour for a date and time that works best for you: icms.edu.au/book-campus-tour. Alternatively, call 1800 110 490 or email start@icms.edu.au.

La Trobe University

Enquiries

call: 1300 135 045 (Future Students)
(02) 9397 7600 Sydney campus – normal business hours
chat: latrobe.edu.au/study/contact
email: study@latrobe.edu.au
website: latrobe.edu.au/prefer
available: 18–22 December 8.30am – 5.30pm
29 December 9am – 4pm
30–31 December 7am – 5pm
2 January 9am – 4pm
3 January 10am – 2pm

Information events/visit the campus

Virtual one-on-one consultations: Receive tailored advice on courses, pathways and our campus.
Book at latrobe.edu.au/study/one-on-one-consultations/undergraduate.

Macleay College

Enquiries

call: 1300 939 888
email: study@macleay.edu.au
website: macleay.edu.au
Live Chat: macleay.edu.au/change-of-preference
available: 18 December 8.30am – 5pm
21–24 December 8.30am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

To arrange an appointment or campus tour, call 1300 939 888 to speak with the student recruitment team or email study@macleay.edu.au.

Macquarie University

Enquiries

call: (02) 9850 6767
email: futurestudents@mq.edu.au
website: mq.edu.au
available: 18 December 8.30am – 5.30pm
19–20 December 10am – 4pm
21–23 December 8.30am – 5.30pm
24 December 9am – 3pm
29–31 December 9am – 3pm

Information events/visit the campus

Explore Your Options Week: 16–23 December
Check details at mq.edu.au/explore.
View our virtual tours or book a scheduled campus tour at mq.edu.au/campus-tours.

MIT Sydney

Enquiries

call: (02) 8267 1400
email: info.sydney@mit.edu.au
website: mit.edu.au
available: 18, 21–24 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

To arrange an appointment or campus tour, call (02) 8267 1400 or email info.sydney@mit.edu.au.

National Art School

Enquiries

call: (02) 9339 8651
email: student.services@nas.edu.au
website: nas.edu.au
available: 18 December 9.30am – 4.30pm
21–23 December 9.30am – 4.30pm
24 December 9.30am – 12.30pm

Information events/visit the campus

To arrange an appointment or campus tour, call (02) 9339 8651.

SAE Creative Media Institute

Enquiries

call: 1800 SAE EDU (freecall) or 1800 723 338
website: sae.edu.au
available: 21–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 3pm
29–30 December 9am – 5pm
31 December 9am – 3pm

Information events/visit the campus

Virtual Info Night: 10 December 6pm – 8pm
Register at sae.edu.au/events.

Personalised campus tours are available at Byron Bay and Sydney campuses: call 1800 723 338 to book.

All times are in Australian Eastern Standard Time

SIBT

Enquiries

call: (02) 9964 6555
website: sibtnsw.edu.au
available: 18 December 9am – 5pm
21–24 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

Course advice session: To arrange an appointment or a campus tour, call (02) 9964 6555 or email study@sibtnsw.edu.au.

Southern Cross University

Enquiries

call: 1800 626 481
online: scu.edu.au/options-day
Information events/visit the campus
Virtual Options Day: 18 December 9am – 7pm
19 December 10am – 1pm

Live webinars each day at 12pm.
Register at scu.edu.au/options-day

All times are in Australian Eastern Daylight Time

Torrens University Australia

Enquiries

call: 1300 575 803
email: enquiries@tua.edu.au
website: torrens.edu.au
available: 18, 21–24 December 9am – 5pm
29–30 December 9am – 5pm

University of Canberra

Enquiries

call: 1800 UNI CAN (freecall 1800 864 226)
email: study@canberra.edu.au
website: canberra.edu.au
available: 18–23 December 10am – 4pm
24 December 10am – 2pm

Information events/visit the campus

January Course Advice Day:
15 January 9am–1pm

Tour the campus, engage with staff and current students, and receive course advice. Offer holders are encouraged to attend to accept their offers and enrol in units.

University of New England

Enquiries

call: 1800 818 865 (freecall)
email or webchat: study.une.edu.au
available: 18 December 8.30am – 5pm
21–23 December 8.30am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

To arrange a personalised campus tour, register at une.edu.au/campustours or freecall 1800 818 865.

University of Newcastle

Enquiries (all campuses)

call: (02) 4921 5000
email via: newcastle.edu.au/askuon
website: newcastle.edu.au
available: 18, 21–23 December 9am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 12pm
2 January* 10am – 2pm

*via email, phone and online

Information events/visit the campus

Virtual Info Day: 18 December 10am – 2pm

Talk with our team about changing preferences, degrees, alternative entry options and accommodation. Book a place at newcastle.edu.au/events/future-students/2021-undergraduate-info-session.

Maps of campus locations are available at newcastle.edu.au/maps.

University of Sydney

Enquiries

call: 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864)
online: sydney.edu.au/contact-us
available: (phone and online only)
18 December 7.30am – 5pm
19 December 9am – 6.30pm
21–22 December 9am – 5pm
23 December 7.30am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 5pm
30–31 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

Info Day (on campus and online):
19 December 9am – 3pm
Register at infoday.sydney.edu.au.

University of Technology Sydney

Enquiries

call: 1300 ASK UTS (1300 275 887)
email via: ask.uts.edu.au
website: uts.edu.au
available: 18 December 9am – 5pm
21–24 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

UTS Info Day: online
18 December 10am – 4pm

UTS Info Day: on campus
19 December 10am – 4pm

Register at infodays.uts.edu.au.

University of Wollongong

Enquiries

call: 1300 367 869
email: futurestudents@uow.edu.au
available: 17–24 December 9am – 5pm
28–30 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

Visit uow.edu.au/future/visit or call Future Students on 1300 367 869.

UNSW Sydney

Enquiries

call: 1300 UNI NSW (1300 864 679)
email or live chat: futurestudents.unsw.edu.au/ask-question
available: 18 December 8am – 8pm
19 December 8am – 12am
21–22 December 9am – 5pm
23 December 7.30am – 5pm
24 December 9am – 2pm
30 December 9am – 5pm
31 December 9am – 1pm
3 January 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus

UNSW Info Evening (digital):
18 December 3pm – 7pm

UNSW Info Day (on campus):
19 December 10am – 3pm

Registrations essential: go to experience.futurestudents.unsw.edu.au.

Saturday campus tour: 12 December. Registrations essential: go to futurestudents.unsw.edu.au/unsw-campus-tours.

Western Sydney University

Enquiries

call: 1300 897 669
email: study@westernsydney.edu.au
web chat: westernsydney.edu.au/future
available: 18–19 December 9am – 5pm
21–24 December 9am – 5pm

Information events/visit the campus:

Discover Western Webinars:
18, 19 and 23 December

Includes Course Decision Session:
23 December

Register at westernsydney.edu.au/webinars.



Definitions

Age cohort

An age cohort is used in the calculation of the ATAR. This means that a student's rank is a measure of their performance against the HSC-aged population of the state (16 to 20-year-olds), not just those who completed Year 12 and were eligible for an ATAR.

ATAR

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

ATAR courses

ATAR courses are Board Developed courses for which there are formal examinations conducted by NESA that yield a graded assessment. These are the only courses that can be included in the ATAR calculations. ATAR courses are classified as either Category A courses or Category B courses.

Category A courses

These courses have the academic rigour and depth of knowledge to provide an adequate background for tertiary studies.

Category B courses

These courses do not have the academic rigour and depth of knowledge to provide an adequate background for tertiary studies in themselves, but they can contribute to the ATAR if the other courses included in the ATAR calculation are more academically demanding.

In 2020 the Category B courses are:

- Automotive Examination
- Business Services Examination
- Construction Examination
- Electrotechnology Examination
- English Studies Examination
- Entertainment Industry Examination
- Financial Services Examination
- Hospitality Examination
- Human Services Examination
- Information and Digital Technology Examination
- Mathematics Standard 1 Examination
- Metal and Engineering Examination
- Primary Industries Examination
- Retail Services Examination
- Tourism, Travel and Events Examination.

Board Developed courses

A Board Developed course is one in which the syllabus has been developed by NESA.

Limited ATAR

Some institutions allow some applicants completing Year 12 to use a Limited ATAR, along with other selection criteria, to gain entry to tertiary study. A Limited ATAR is calculated from the best 5 units of courses completed, rather than the 10 used for the standard ATAR.

FIND YOUR WAY TO UNI

Course Compass draws on the experience of over 100,000 recent UAC applicants to show you the paths taken by students just like you.

Try Course Compass at



uac.edu.au/coursecompass



Students who are over 20 years of age on 1 March in the year they complete their HSC studies and who are taking between 5 and 9 units of ATAR courses, including at least 1 unit of English, are eligible for a Limited ATAR.

To receive a Limited ATAR, all courses must be completed in the same academic year. You can't accumulate courses over several years.

The Limited ATAR is calculated using the scaled marks from ATAR courses, which must include at least 1 unit of Category A English plus the best 4 other units of Category A courses.

If you meet the criteria to receive a Limited ATAR and an ATAR, both will be calculated and you'll be notified of both. However, students usually receive a Limited ATAR in one year and an ATAR in a later year, once they have completed the required number of units.

Percentile

A percentile indicates your position in a course against other students. The top percentile is 100 and the bottom percentile is 0. If your percentile in a course is 73, you are placed 27% from the top of the students in that course.

Satisfactory completion of a course

You'll be considered to have satisfactorily completed a course if, in your principal's view, there is sufficient evidence that you have:

- followed the course developed or endorsed by NESA
- applied yourself with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school
- achieved some or all of the course outcomes
- made a genuine attempt at assessment tasks that total more than 50 per cent of the available school assessment marks for that course.

You also need to make a serious attempt at the examination for the course. For more information about HSC eligibility requirements, visit the NESA website at educationstandards.nsw.edu.au.

Failure to satisfactorily complete a course will result in that course not contributing to the eligibility requirements. If the course is a 2-unit course with an associated extension course, failure to satisfactorily complete the 2-unit course will result in neither the 2-unit nor the extension course contributing towards your ATAR.

Receiving a mark for a course on your Record of Achievement issued by NESA is an indication that you have satisfactorily completed that course.

All About Your ATAR

Prepared by UAC. The assistance of the Technical Committee on Scaling is gratefully acknowledged.

© 2020 Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) Pty Ltd
ACN 070 055 935 ABN 19 070 055 935

Published: December 2020

UAC and individual contributing institutions are the owners of the copyright in this publication.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, criticism or review, or otherwise as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without UAC's written permission. Enquiries should be addressed to the Managing Director, UAC.

UAC has no objection to secondary schools and UAC's participating tertiary institutions reproducing or using the publication in full provided it is for use only within their own institution, and this copyright statement is included.

If the document isn't reproduced in full, sections should not be copied out of context where information could be incomplete and/or misleading. Secondary schools and UAC's participating tertiary institutions must ensure that this information isn't transmitted to any other person or body without prior permission from UAC.

This publication is available on UAC's website.

ATAR is a registered trademark of the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre on behalf of all Australian tertiary admissions centres.

Images

Good Thanks Media

Disclaimer

While UAC and the authors of this publication have used their best endeavours to ensure that information and analyses of information contained in this publication are correct at the time of printing, any use or reliance whatsoever on the publication by any person is that person's responsibility and UAC and the authors of this publication disclaim any responsibility or liability in relation to that use or reliance.

Times

Times indicated in this publication are based on Sydney time.

Your privacy

When you apply to the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) (UAC) you provide a lot of personal information, sometimes including health information.

UAC values the privacy of your personal information and recognises the importance of protecting it. UAC is bound by the following legislation:

- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW).

This means that UAC must uphold the NSW State Information Protection Principles, the Australian Privacy Principles and the NSW Health Privacy Principles. UAC is committed to upholding these principles and has implemented policies and procedures to ensure they are met.

You can view UAC's Privacy Policy and applicant declarations at uac.edu.au/privacy.

ACCESS YOUR POTENTIAL.

UAC

Universities Admissions Centre
(NSW & ACT) Pty Ltd

ABN 19 070 055 935
ACN 070 055 935

Quad 2, 6 Parkview Drive,
Sydney Olympic Park NSW
Locked Bag 112, Silverwater NSW 2128

T (+61 2) 9752 0200

 uac.edu.au

 [uacinfo](#)

 [uacinfo](#)

 [uacinfo](#)

 [uacinfo](#)