

ALL ABOUT YOUR ATAR

A guide for Queensland Year 11 and 12 students in 2020



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CHANGING TERTIARY ENTRANCE
QTAC.EDU.AU

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The information in this Guide is relevant for students completing Year 12 in Queensland in 2020.

Two further editions of this publication are planned for release in 2020:

- In March 2020 with the commencement of the Year 12 schooling year
- In December 2020 in conjunction with the release of ATARs to students.

These further editions will include any updated or new information.



BACKGROUND

Education in Queensland is changing with the introduction of a new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system starting with Year 11 students in 2019. As part of this change, from 2020 Year 12 students will be certified for tertiary entrance with the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) will be responsible for calculating and issuing the ATAR. QTAC administers the application and offer process for tertiary institutions in Queensland (and a few institutions interstate) and has over four decades of experience in tertiary admissions.

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

WHAT IS THE ATAR?

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is the primary mechanism used nationally for tertiary admissions and indicates a student's position relative to other students. It is the standard measure of a student's overall academic achievement in relation to other students where these students have studied many different combinations of subjects.

ATARs are expressed as a number on a 2000-point scale from 99.95 down to 0.00 in steps of 0.05. So, the highest ATAR is 99.95, then 99.90, then 99.85, and so on, down to 0.00. ATARs below 30 are reported as '30.00 or less'.

The ATAR is a percentile rank, not a mark, and indicates a student's position relative to other students in any given year. An ATAR of 80.00 does not mean a student got 80%. It indicates that the student was placed in the top 20% of students in Queensland in their Year 12 cohort.

There is no 'Pass' or 'Fail' ATAR and the ATAR is intended to be used as a measure for tertiary study selection only.



ATAR ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an ATAR in Queensland, a student must:

- Satisfactorily complete an English subject at Units 3 and 4 (one of English, English as an Additional Language, English and Literature Extension, Literature, or Essential English); and
- Complete five General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) or complete four General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) plus one Applied subject (at Units 3 and 4) or a completed VET qualification at AQF Certificate III level or higher; and
- Accumulate their results within a five-year period.

ENGLISH SUBJECT REQUIREMENT

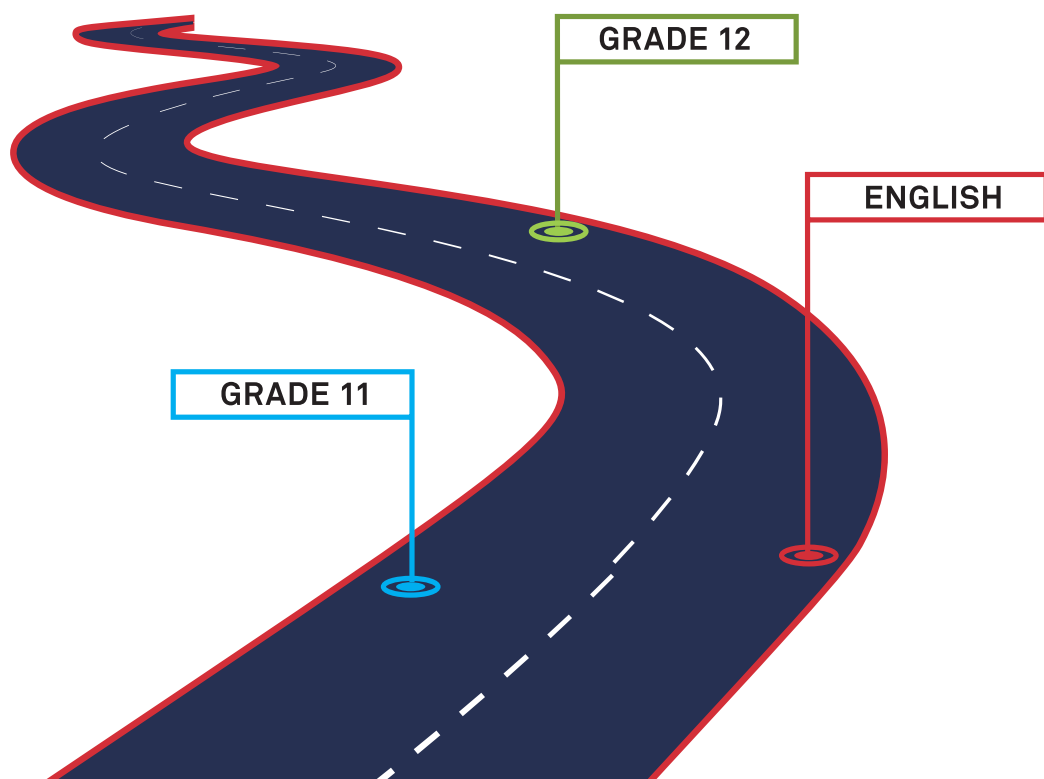
“Satisfactorily complete” means attaining a letter grade of ‘C’ or better. While students must satisfactorily complete an English subject to be eligible for an ATAR, the result in the English subject will only be included in the ATAR calculation if it is one of the student’s best five scaled results.

ACCUMULATED AND ACCELERATED RESULTS

Most students are expected to follow a traditional pattern of accumulating their results over two years of study in Grades 11 and 12, with results at Units 3 and 4 expected to be achieved over the one year (Grade 12).

However, to accommodate Variable Progression Rate (VPR) students and others who are not able to undertake a full-time secondary workload, ATARs can be calculated based on results from within five consecutive years. At the extreme, this means that a student could complete one ATAR-eligible subject per year over a five-year period to qualify for an ATAR.

It also means that students can take breaks between their subject attempts, for example: do two subjects one year, take a year off, do another 2 subjects, and take another year off, and then return in the fifth year to complete one more subject to qualify for their ATAR.



PRECLUDED SUBJECTS AND SUBJECT COMBINATIONS

The following rules apply regarding precluded subjects and subject combinations in the ATAR calculation:

- Only General English subjects or Applied English subjects can be included in the ATAR but not both. **For example:** it is not possible to include both English (a General subject) and Essential English (an Applied subject) in a student's ATAR.
- Only General Mathematics subjects or Applied Mathematics subjects can be included in the ATAR but not both. **For example:** it is not possible to include both Mathematical Methods (a General subject) and Essential Mathematics (an Applied subject) in a student's ATAR.
- Only one result for the same subject taken as a General subject and via Senior External Examination can be included in the ATAR. **For example:** it is not possible to include both the General subject Chinese and the Senior External Examination subject Chinese in a student's ATAR. Similarly, it is not possible to include both the General subject Biology and the Senior External Examination subject Biology in a student's ATAR.

There are no other restrictions on the inclusion of subjects in the ATAR, for example a student may count the following General subject results in their ATAR:

- both English and Literature
- both Mathematical Methods and Specialist Mathematics
- both Chinese and Chinese Extension
- both Italian (General) and Spanish (General)
- both German (General) and French (Senior External Examination)

REMEMBER! Some university courses have subject prerequisites that you must satisfy before you can be considered for tertiary entry so if you have a desired tertiary course(s) in mind, consider this when choosing your subjects.

STUDY PATTERN EXAMPLES

Following are examples of possible study patterns chosen by students for Years 11 and 12 that could lead to an ATAR.

AMY



English (Units 3 and 4)	General
Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4)	General
Specialist Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Physics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Chemistry (Units 3 and 4)	General

Provided Amy satisfactorily completes English (i.e. achieves a minimum Grade of C or better), she **will** be eligible for an ATAR because she has five General subjects studied at Units 3 and 4.

CHO



English (Units 3 and 4)	General
Dance (Units 3 and 4)	General
Visual Art (Units 3 and 4)	General
Study of Religion (Units 3 and 4)	General
AQF Certificate III in Business (completed)	VET

Provided Cho successfully completes English (i.e. achieves a minimum grade of C or better), Cho **will** be eligible for an ATAR as she has four General subjects plus a completed VET qualification.

GEORGE



Essential English (Units 3 and 4)	Applied
Accounting (Units 3 and 4)	General
Modern History (Units 3 and 4)	General
Japanese (Units 3 and 4)	General
Music (Units 3 and 4)	General
General Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Design (Units 3 and 4)	General

Provided George satisfactorily completes Essential English (i.e. achieves a minimum grade of C or better), he **will** be eligible for an ATAR. To be eligible for an ATAR you need five General subjects, or four General subjects plus an Applied subject or VET qualification, so even if George withdraws from a subject (other than Essential English), he will qualify for an ATAR.

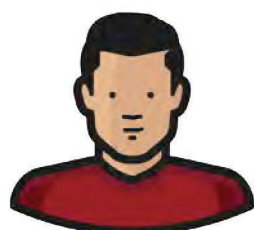
BILLIE



English (Units 3 and 4)	General
General Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Drama (Units 3 and 4)	General
Religion and Ethics (Units 3 and 4)	Applied
Information & Communication Technology Skills (Units 3 and 4)	Applied
Certificate III in Business	VET

Billie **will not** be eligible for an ATAR because she has only three General subjects. To qualify for an ATAR a student needs five General subjects or four General subjects plus one Applied subject or one completed VET qualification.

OLLIE



2020	
English (Units 3 and 4) (Grade D)	General
Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4)	General
Japanese (Units 3 and 4)	General
Accounting (Units 3 and 4)	General
Study of Religion (Units 3 and 4)	General
2021 Work and Travel	
2022	
Essential English (Units 3 and 4) (Grade C)	Applied

In 2020 Ollie **will not** be eligible for an ATAR because he has not achieved a minimum grade of C in his English subject.

In 2021, he takes a gap year to work and travel and in 2022 returns and completes Essential English with a grade of C.

Ollie **will** qualify for an ATAR in 2022 as he has achieved the minimum grade required in an English subject to be eligible for an ATAR and has completed the minimum number of required subjects within a five-year period.

REPEATING SUBJECTS

If you repeat the same subject, the result of the most recent attempt as reported by the QCAA will be used in the calculation of the ATAR, even if this result is lower than the result from the earlier attempt at the subject.

QUALIFYING FOR A NEW ATAR

A student who has already qualified for an ATAR may qualify for a new ATAR. For a new ATAR to be calculated, a student must complete and receive results from the QCAA in a minimum of:

- Three General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) or
- Two General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) plus one Applied subject (at Units 3 and 4) or completed VET qualification at Certificate III level or higher.

Results from the latest subjects attempted (where these are eligible ATAR inputs) will be included in the calculation of the new ATAR even if the scaled results from the latest attempts at the subjects are lower than the results from the earlier attempt.

EXAMPLE

SIMONE



2020	
English (Units 3 and 4) (Grade of C)	General
Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4)	General
Specialist Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Physics (Units 3 and 4)	General
Chemistry (Units 3 and 4)	General
Biology (Units 3 and 4)	General
First ATAR Awarded	

2021	
Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4)	General
Biology (Units 3 and 4)	General
Engineering (Units 3 and 4)	General
New ATAR Awarded	

In 2020 Simone qualifies for an ATAR. She decides to undertake more subjects in 2021. She qualifies for a new ATAR in 2021 because she has undertaken a minimum of three General subjects.

The scaled results from the latest subjects attempted in 2021 (ie Mathematical Methods, Biology and Engineering) will be included in the ATAR calculation along with the best scaled results from eligible subjects from 2020 (that are not repeated subjects) to total five ATAR inputs.

Where an applicant has a new ATAR, institutions use the best ATAR and not the most recent ATAR for selection to tertiary courses.

STUDENTS WITH RESULTS STRADDLING THE CURRENT AND NEW QCE SYSTEMS

For a limited time, there will be students with study patterns that will span the current and new QCE systems. **For example:** a student may be undertaking the OP (Overall Position) pathway and QCAA Authority subjects in 2019 and then undertake more subjects under the new QCE system from 2020 onwards.

Where an OP (Overall Position) has been awarded, the student will need to complete a minimum of three QCAA subjects under the new QCE system to be awarded an ATAR.

EXAMPLE

KIT



2019	
English (4 semesters)	Authority
Maths B (4 semesters)	Authority
Maths C (4 semesters)	Authority
Physics (4 semesters)	Authority
Chemistry (4 semesters)	Authority
Biology (4 semesters)	Authority

2019 OP awarded

2020	
English (Units 3 and 4) (Grade C)	General
Biology (Units 3 and 4)	General
Engineering (Units 3 and 4)	General

2021 ATAR awarded

Kit will meet the requirements to be awarded an OP in 2019 (assuming the Queensland Core Skills Test was undertaken).

In 2020 Kit undertakes more subjects in the new QCE system. As a minimum of three QCAA subjects have been undertaken, and the English subject requirement for an ATAR has been satisfied, an ATAR is awarded.

Institutions will use the best of the OP (Overall Position) or the ATAR for selection to tertiary courses.

How is the ATAR Calculated?

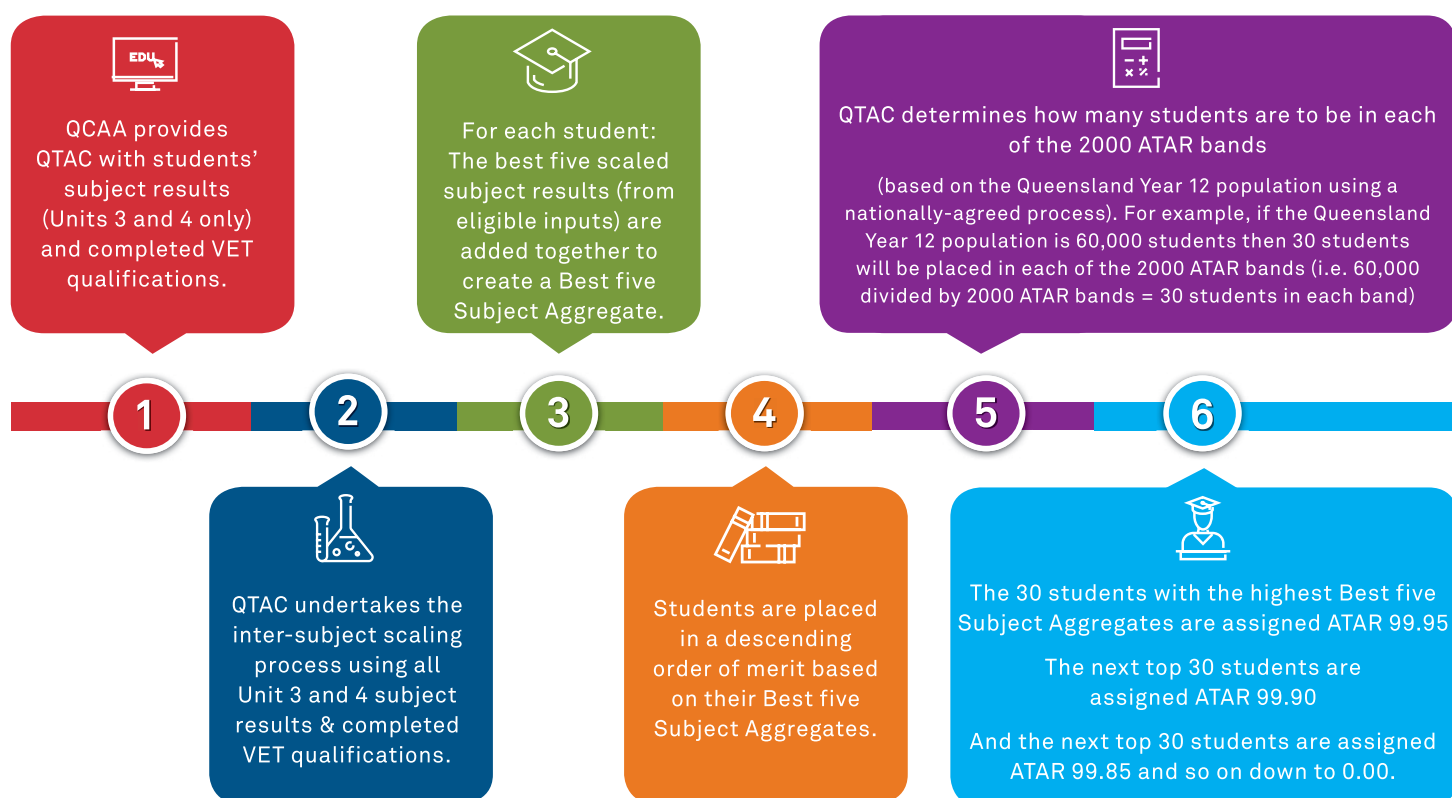
Your ATAR is calculated based on an aggregate of the best five scaled results from ATAR eligible inputs from three different schemes:

- Five General subjects (at Units 3 and 4); or
- Four General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) **plus** an Applied subject (at Units 3 and 4); or
- Four General subjects (at Units 3 and 4) **plus** one completed VET qualification at Certificate III level or above.

Students who might be eligible for an ATAR from more than one scheme, or students who might be eligible for the same scheme from more than one combination of subjects, will have their ATAR based on the combination that produces the best result. For example: a student may have completed five General subjects, one Applied subject, and a VET qualification. This student will have their ATAR calculated based on the best of all three different schemes.

Please note that scaled results are not the subject results reported by the QCAA in the Queensland Certificate of Education. See page 12 for more information.

The key steps in the ATAR calculation process are:



NOTE: ATARs below 30 are reported as '30.00 or less'.



Inter-subject Scaling

In the ATAR calculation process, inter-subject scaling (or scaling) is the most difficult part to understand. It is however, a necessary part of the process to ensure fairness.

WHAT IS SCALING?

Students can study thousands of combinations of subjects in their senior schooling and qualify for an ATAR. Scaling adjusts for the fact that it is more difficult to obtain a high result in some subjects than in others. This is not because some subjects are inherently harder or easier, it is because some subjects attract a more able cohort of students.

Scaling ensures that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged based on the subjects they choose. Each state in Australia uses a scaling process in the calculation of the ATAR. In Queensland, subject results are scaled by QTAC.

There is some complex mathematics that underpins the scaling process, but as a simplified explanation, scaling is the process by which 'raw' subject results are adjusted for a given subject to allow the results for that subject to be fairly compared with the results from any other subject when calculating ATARs. The scaling process will adjust the raw results in each subject to take account of how well students achieve in their subjects and how difficult it is to achieve a particular result in the subject relative to achievements in all other subjects.

To assist students, parents, school staff and others understand the scaling process, QTAC has produced a document on the scaling process titled 'Inter-subject Scaling: An Introduction'. This document is written for a non-technical audience (i.e. for people who are not trained statisticians), and can be accessed from QTAC's website.

WHEN ARE RESULTS SCALED?

Subject results are always scaled in the year in which these were completed. This may not necessarily be the same year in which you receive your ATAR.

More information about the inter-subject scaling process can be found on the QTAC website.

Please note that your scaled results are likely to be different to your QCE subject results. Your QCE results show your performance in a subject whereas your scaled results are the results which are included in the ATAR calculation process.

IMPORTANT



Students should not select subjects based on predicted scaling outcomes. Students should select subjects based on:

- What they are good at
- What they enjoy/are interested in and can perform well in
- What are the prerequisites for the tertiary courses they want to apply for when they finish school.

Your QCE and Your ATAR

THE QUEENSLAND CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (QCE)

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) is Queensland's senior secondary schooling qualification. It is awarded by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) to eligible students usually at the end of Year 12. It is internationally recognised and provides evidence of senior secondary achievements.

To qualify for a QCE, students need to accrue a set amount of learning, at a set standard, in a set pattern, while meeting literacy and numeracy requirements.

Set amount: 20 credits from contributing courses of study, including:

- QCAA-developed subjects or courses
- vocational education and training (VET) qualifications
- non-Queensland studies
- recognised studies.

Set standard: satisfactory completion, grade of C or better, competency or qualification completion, pass or equivalent.

Set pattern: 12 credits from completed Core courses of study and 8 credits from any combination of:

- Core
- Preparatory (maximum 4 credits)
- Complementary (maximum 8 credits).

Literacy and numeracy: you must meet literacy and numeracy requirements through one of the available learning options.

WHAT CAN I STUDY?

A flexible range of learning can contribute towards the QCE, including:

- a broad range of QCAA General and General (Extension) subjects
- a range of QCAA Applied and Applied (Essential) subjects
- QCAA short courses
- QCAA Senior External Examination subjects
- QCAA recognised studies
- Vocational Education and Training Courses (VET) such as Certificates and Diplomas
- school based apprenticeships and traineeships
- university subjects

For more information about QCE eligibility please visit the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au).

Most students will plan their QCE pathway in Year 10 when choosing senior subjects. Your school will help you develop your individual plan and open your QCAA learning account. The learning account stores information about the different types of learning that a student may undertake.

Being eligible for a QCE does not necessarily mean you will be eligible for an ATAR – read page 5 for ATAR eligibility requirements.

Your QCE results and your ATAR are different measures of achievement. Your QCE results show your performance in a subject, your ATAR measures your position or ranking against the whole Queensland Year 12 cohort.

YOUR QCE RESULTS

QCAA will calculate and award your QCE subject results.

For General subjects at Units 3 and 4, numerical results from three internal assessments and an external assessment will be added together to calculate a final subject result. Results will be reported as a Letter Grade (A to E, where A is the highest grade) and a numerical result (0 to 100).

For Applied subjects, results will be calculated from four internal assessments. Results will be reported as Letter Grades (A to E, where A is the highest grade).

Senior External Examination results will be reported as a Letter Grade (A to E, where A is the highest grade) and a numerical result (0 to 100).

VET qualifications will be reported as completed qualifications.

UNITS OF STUDY

The typical learning program for senior years in Queensland is completed through 4 units of study per subject over two years (Years 11 and 12). Usually, the first two units, Units 1 and 2, are taken before students proceed to Units 3 and 4 for General and Applied subjects.

Units 1 and 2 are formative – preparing students for Units 3 and 4 and tracking how they are progressing. Units 3 and 4 are studied as a pair and assessment is summative. This means at the end of the subject, the results from both Units 3 and 4 are added together to show how well the student has mastered the subject. This will lead to the overall raw subject result to be provided to QTAC for scaling. The ATAR will be calculated from these scaled results.

QTAC will only receive the results from Units 3 and 4 for General and Applied subjects, and completed VET qualifications from the QCAA.

If you have any questions about your QCE subject results, contact QCAA www.qcaa.qld.edu.au.

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and the ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) are different and have a different purpose.



QCE

Certifies learning, showing the individual has achieved a specific standard of education at senior schooling level and may be considered by employers and the general community.



ATAR

Tells us about a student's position (or ranking) compared to all other students in the state. The only intended purpose for the ATAR is to assist with selecting applicants for tertiary study.

The ATAR and Tertiary Selection

For most tertiary courses being offered through QTAC, the number of eligible applicants applying is typically larger than the number of places available (the 'quota'). This requires eligible applicants, including current school-leavers, to be placed in an order of merit (i.e. 'ranked') to allow selection to take place.

The **first step** when selecting applicants is to check whether applicants have satisfied course entry requirements. These are typically specified as prerequisites (for example, some Bachelor of Physiotherapy courses will have a science subject prerequisite which must be satisfied). Some courses may have additional selection criteria, such as portfolio, interview, audition, questionnaire or test. Prerequisites and additional selection criteria will be listed in the course description in the *QTAC Guide* and online on the QTAC website.

Applicants who do not satisfy these course entry requirements are not considered for entry to the course, regardless of their ATAR.

The **second step** is to rank order all eligible applicants who satisfy the course entry requirements for that course. For most courses, current school-leavers are ranked using their ATAR.

When offers are made, these are made to the highest ranked applicants in descending order of merit until the quota for the course is filled.



VET Qualifications, the ATAR and Tertiary Selection

Completed Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses will be used for tertiary selection in two ways:

- As one of the five inputs into a student's ATAR; and/or
- As a stand alone basis for tertiary admission.

HOW WILL VET QUALIFICATIONS BE INCLUDED IN THE ATAR?

Each VET qualification level will have a single scaled score that can be included in the ATAR calculation. Relevant VET qualification levels for the ATAR are Certificate III, Certificate IV, and Diploma¹.

Each VET qualification at the same level will have the same scaled score for inclusion in the ATAR, regardless of duration or content. This means, for example, that a completed Certificate III in Hospitality will have the same scaled score as a completed Certificate III in Business.

The scaled score for a VET Diploma is expected to be higher than for a Certificate IV, which in turn is expected to be higher than for a Certificate III.

Important! VET qualifications must be recorded as completed in your QCAA learning account to be included in the ATAR calculation.

VET QUALIFICATIONS FOR TERTIARY SELECTION

Institutions may also consider completed VET qualifications at Certificate III level and higher as a basis of tertiary admission on their own.

Please refer to the QTAC website for more information about institutions and VET qualifications as a basis of admission to tertiary study.

PERFORMING ARTS QUALIFICATIONS FOR TERTIARY ENTRANCE

Performing Arts qualifications such as AMEB awards are not included in the ATAR calculation, however some institutions may consider these qualifications as a basis of admission to tertiary study.

Please refer to the QTAC website for more information about institutions and Performing Arts qualifications as a basis of admission to tertiary study.



¹ While Advanced Diploma is also a VET qualification level, at the time of writing it is expected that due to the very small numbers of Queensland students who complete these qualifications each year, that Advanced Diplomas will be included with Diplomas in the scaling process and therefore share the same scaled result as for Diplomas.

Subject Prerequisites

SATISFYING SUBJECT PREREQUISITES

For entry to most tertiary courses, you must have achieved a certain result in specific senior secondary subjects at Units 3 and 4 level (QCE subjects) (or equivalent).

If a course has a prerequisite(s), you will find this listed in the course entry in the *QTAC Guide* or online using the QTAC Course Search and institution website and publications. The prerequisite requirement will be displayed as “*Subject* (Units 3 and 4, Letter Grade)”.

Successful completion (i.e. minimum Grade of C or better) in Units 3 and 4 of General subjects will satisfy the majority of subject prerequisites. Some courses may require a higher letter grade (e.g. minimum result of Grade B or better) to satisfy a subject prerequisite.

Subjects are structured into 4 units: Units 1 and 2 (typically studied in Year 11) and Units 3 and 4 (typically studied in Year 12). Completion of Units 1 and/or 2 only in a subject will not meet the subject prerequisite(s) for a course.

ENGLISH PREREQUISITE

The most common prerequisite is the English subject (Units 3 and 4, C). General English subjects are: English; English as an Additional Language; Literature; and English & Literature Extension.

SATISFYING PREREQUISITES FOR ENTRY TO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) has accepted the General syllabus subjects in Maths, English and Science (at Units 3 and 4, grade C), as prerequisite subjects to meet the entry requirements for initial teacher education courses as follows:

- English (for early childhood, primary and secondary courses) – one of English, English as an Additional Language, Literature, English & Literature Extension
- Maths (for early childhood, primary and secondary courses) – one of General Mathematics, Mathematical Methods, Specialist Mathematics
- Science (early childhood and primary courses) – one of Agricultural Science, Biology, Chemistry, Earth & Environmental Science, Marine Science, Physics, Psychology.

ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE AND RECOMMENDED STUDY

Not all courses have subject prerequisites. Some courses have assumed knowledge and/or recommended study.

If a course has assumed knowledge or recommended study, it means the institution assumes you have subject knowledge or recommends that you study this subject prior to commencing the tertiary course.

If you do not have the assumed knowledge or recommended study, you can still be offered a place into the course, but you might have difficulty successfully completing your tertiary studies.

OTHER WAYS TO SATISFY SUBJECT PREREQUISITES

If you didn't study a prerequisite subject to Year 12 (or didn't pass it), you may be able to meet the requirement in other ways such as via bridging or preparatory courses, depending on the policy of the institution you want to study at.

Visit <https://www.qtac.edu.au/applying/admission-criteria> for more information.



ATAR Frequently Asked Questions

How many subjects should I take in Years 11 and 12?

To qualify for an ATAR, a minimum of five General subjects, or four General subjects plus one Applied subject or one VET qualification must be completed. Satisfactory completion of an English subject is also required.

The number of subjects you can undertake depends on your school requirements and subject offerings, and the workload you can manage. There is no guarantee that doing more subjects will result in a better ATAR. Some students who take more subjects may achieve higher ATARs, but there may be a number of factors why, such as ability, interest, motivation, effort, and time management.

I want to withdraw from a subject in Year 11, what should I consider?

It is recommended you speak with your school about how this will affect qualifying for the QCE and your future plans. You will also need to consider if this affects your eligibility for an ATAR and meeting any subject prerequisites for tertiary entrance.

I have completed Units 1 and 2 of a subject only, can this subject be included in my ATAR calculation?

No. Only eligible subjects reported to QTAC by QCAA as completed at Units 3 and 4 level can be included in the ATAR calculation.

I have received a result of Unsatisfactory in Units 1 and 2 in a subject, and then received a grade of C in Units 3 and 4 of the subject. Will the unsatisfactory grades impact on my ATAR calculation?

QTAC will only know about a student's results in Units 3 and 4 of a subject as reported to us by the QCAA, and will not know about the unsatisfactory results achieved in Units 1 and 2.

Can I accelerate my studies?

This is something you will need to discuss with your school. There is no guarantee that accelerating studies will improve your ATAR.

If I complete an accelerated subject in Year 11, who am I ranked with?

Subjects are scaled in the year you complete these. If you do not immediately qualify for an ATAR, your results will be banked by QTAC and used in a subsequent year when you have satisfied the requirements to be awarded an ATAR.

Remember: You can accumulate results within a five-year period towards your ATAR.

Am I required to study all four units in a subject for that subject to be included in the ATAR?

No. Only Units 3 and 4 of a subject are considered in the ATAR calculation. There is no reference back to a student's study of Units 1 and/or 2 of a subject. However, students who do not study subjects at Units 1 and 2 may not be successfully prepared for the rigours of Units 3 and 4, and skipping units could lead to a student falling short of the requirements for the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). Studying only Units 3 and 4 of a subject is a matter between the student, the school and the QCAA.

What happens if I repeat a subject?

If a student repeats a subject, only the result for the latest attempt will be included in the calculation of the ATAR, even if this result is lower than the result from the earlier attempt at the subject.

Can I get a higher ATAR by studying certain subjects?

No. A student can only maximise their ATAR by performing well in their subjects. High ATARs can be achieved from a variety of subjects.

Can you tell me how specific subjects will scale?

No. Scaling is based on actual subject achievement data. It is not possible to know in advance how a particular subject will scale, particularly new subjects like Psychology and Engineering.

I heard that less challenging Mathematics subjects scale better for ATARs, is this correct?

No. The difficulty of a subject has nothing to do with how well it will scale! How a subject will scale is dependent on the achievement of students in all their subjects (including their Mathematics subject).

Do certain subjects always 'scale up' or always 'scale down'?

No. Scaling occurs afresh each year. The quality of students and their achievements will determine the scaling.

What pattern of subjects will guarantee an ATAR of 99.95?

No pattern will. The ATAR is entirely data driven, so if a student's results place them in the top percentile, then they will get the top ATAR.

Can I include other inputs like International Baccalaureate subjects, music and dance qualifications and Certificate I and II qualifications in the ATAR calculation?

No. The ATAR can only include:

- General subjects OR Applied subjects
- Completed VET qualifications at Certificate III level and higher.

I am studying Senior External Examination subjects; can I get an ATAR?

Senior External Examination results also contribute to ATAR calculations, and are considered like General subjects for this purpose. The same ATAR eligibility and subject preclusion rules apply.

I am completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma; will I get an ATAR?

QTAC will only be calculating ATARs for QCE students. However, IB students awarded the IB Diploma are assigned a measure called the Combined Rank which is expressed on the ATAR scale from 99.95 highest down to 0.00. Refer to the QTAC website for more information about the IB.

Can university subjects count towards the ATAR?

No. Institutions (where applicable) choose to recognise university subjects through adjustment factors rather than through the ATAR.

I completed a Certificate III in Year 11, can this be used in the ATAR calculation?

Any completed VET qualifications at Certificate III level and higher that are recorded in your QCAA learning account and provided to QTAC by QCAA can be included in the ATAR calculation regardless of the year that you completed the qualification.

I have completed my VET qualification at a private registered training organisation. Can this be included in the ATAR calculation?

Any completed VET qualifications at Certificate III level and higher that have been accepted by QCAA and recorded in your QCAA learning account can be included in the ATAR calculation. VET qualifications at Certificate III level or higher that are not recorded by QCAA can be presented with your QTAC application. These may be considered alone as a basis of admission for tertiary entrance dependent on institution policies, but will not be included in the calculation of an ATAR.

Why is one subject counted in my ATAR when another subject for which I received a higher QCE mark does not count?

The ATAR is calculated using eligible inputs (see page 10 for more information) and the scaled results from these inputs. A higher QCE mark in a subject does not mean a higher scaled result in that subject for the ATAR calculation.

I have similar QCE marks in my subjects to my friend but we don't have the same ATARs. Why not?

Your ATARs will only be similar if your subjects and subject results are exactly the same.

If I do not achieve a minimum grade of C in a subject, will it be included in the ATAR?

A minimum grade of C must be achieved in an approved English subject to qualify for an ATAR. Other than that, if the subject is an eligible ATAR input, and the scaled score for the subject contributes as one of the best 5 scaled scores for the ATAR calculation, it can be included, regardless of the grade that has been achieved.

Can I be disadvantaged by where I live?

No, where you live is not a factor in the ATAR calculation.

Can I be disadvantaged by the school I attend?

No, the school you attend does not feature in the ATAR calculation.

Does QTAC have an ATAR calculator?

No. QTAC only advises students of their actual ATAR on the day ATARs are released in December. QTAC does not endorse the use of any ATAR calculators.

Why can't I use the QCE marks in my subjects to estimate my ATAR?

Scaled scores, and not QCE marks are used in the ATAR calculation. Also, the ATAR is a rank that indicates your position, it is not an average mark.

When will I get my ATAR?

ATARs will be released in December in conjunction with the release of QCE results by the QCAA. More information about this will be available soon.

How will I get my ATAR?

QTAC will provide students with electronic access to their ATARs via a secure online portal. More information about this will be available soon.

Do I have to apply to QTAC for tertiary entrance to get my ATAR?

No. QTAC will calculate an ATAR for all students who qualify even if they are not applying for tertiary entrance through QTAC.

Can I apply for tertiary study interstate with my ATAR?

Yes, your ATAR is recognised interstate.

Can I have my ATAR recalculated?

No. If, however, QTAC receives amended results from QCAA, your ATAR is automatically recalculated and you will be notified if there is a change to your ATAR.

If I am eligible for adjustment factors does my ATAR change?

No. Any adjustments will apply to the selection rank that you will be considered on for a course that you have listed as a preference in your QTAC application according to the rules of the tertiary institution; your ATAR does not change.

I will not qualify for an ATAR, is tertiary education closed off to me?

No. Some tertiary courses are accessible without a formal tertiary ranking like the ATAR. There are also other pathways to tertiary study including via VET study and bridging and preparatory courses.

Steps to Tertiary Study

EXPLORE YOUR COURSE OPTIONS

If you are considering tertiary study after you finish school, you can start exploring courses and institution options to help you make an informed choice. Every year QTAC publishes the *QTAC Guide* which lists available courses for participating institutions for the following year. This information also appears in the QTAC online course search on QTAC's website. The course search is updated by August when applications open.

The *QTAC Guide* is delivered to schools and distributed free of charge to all Queensland Year 12 students in July.

EXPLORE ENTRY CRITERIA

Institution admission criteria apply to every applicant for every course offered. The criteria can be different for each institution. Common admission criteria include:

- English language proficiency
- course quota (the estimated number of places available in a course)
- age requirements
- subject prerequisites

Some courses have additional admission criteria such as a personal statements, questionnaires, portfolios, auditions, interviews or tests, which are considered instead of, or together with, your academic qualifications.

Each institution sets its own admission criteria and most offer additional pathway options to applicants who don't meet these general requirements. Visit the QTAC website for details.

MINIMUM SELECTION THRESHOLDS

Entry to many tertiary courses is competitive – the number of places available in the course may be smaller than the pool of eligible applicants applying for entry to the course.

Places for eligible applicants to a course are allocated in order of the applicant's ATAR/selection rank until the places are filled. When the last place in the course is filled, the ATAR/selection rank of the last applicant offered a place becomes the 'minimum selection threshold' – the minimum score needed to be considered for admission to the course.

Minimum selection thresholds vary from year to year, and from offer round to offer round, depending on the number and quality of applicants a course receives.

Applying through QTAC

Before you apply you will need:

- access to the internet to complete the QTAC application online
- your Learner Unique Identifier (LUI) issued to you by QCAA
- a private email address (not a school email address as these may become unavailable when you finish school)
- a way to pay the application fee. Applications will not be processed until full payment is received by QTAC.

QTAC will process your application and institutions decide who receives an offer of a place.

KEY DATES

Applications for tertiary study will open in early August. Some courses have early closing dates so check the QTAC website for specific course information including closing dates.

LISTING QUALIFICATIONS

Your Year 12 qualification will appear automatically in your application if you are applying with your LUI.

Some additional qualifications (including VET qualifications) that are recorded in your learning account will also appear in your QTAC application when you apply using your LUI.

You can list additional qualifications that may be considered for tertiary entrance as well, for example, bridging studies.

Important! To be included in your ATAR calculation, VET qualifications must be listed as completed in your QCAA learning account.

LISTING PREFERENCES

You are required to list at least one course preference, but may list up to six preferences in your application. Ordering your preferences correctly is crucial to the outcome of your application. Using all six preferences maximises your options and gives you your best chance of getting an offer.

Your first two preferences should be for the courses you most want to study (your 'desired' courses).

Your next two preferences should be for courses that you want to study where you are fairly confident you will be competitive based on the previous entry requirements for those courses (your 'back-up' courses).

Your last two preferences should be pathways towards your desired courses (courses that will help you upgrade into a course you really want).

SUPPLYING DOCUMENTATION

Year 12 students are generally not required to supply any documentation with their application. If you do need to provide documentation you will be prompted to do so in your application.

The required documentation will also be listed in your online application. Documentation can be uploaded to your application.

For more information on any of the above, please refer to the QTAC website.

After You Have Applied

CHANGE OF PREFERENCE

You may change your mind about what tertiary course(s) you want to study after you have lodged your application. If this is the case you can change (reorder), add or delete your preferences.

Be aware that some courses have early or fixed closing dates or change of preference dates; please check the QTAC website for more information.

ADDING YOUR ATAR TO YOUR QTAC APPLICATION

Your ATAR will be automatically added to your QTAC application when this becomes available in December.

ADJUSTMENT FACTORS

Adjustment Factors (previously referred to as ‘bonus points’) are additional points that may be added to an applicant’s ATAR (or other rank) to derive an adjusted selection rank for a particular course at a particular institution. These do not change the ATAR.

Each institution has its own criteria for when adjustment factors can apply. They may not be applicable for all courses or all applicants. All institutions limit the maximum number of adjustments that will apply to your selection rank (for example some may cap the increase to your selection rank to 5 points).

Common types of adjustment factors that may apply include:

- Equity adjustment: if applicants have experienced difficult circumstances or disadvantage this adjustment may apply.
- Subject adjustment: if a current Year 12 applicant has undertaken specific secondary subjects or university enrichment courses.
- Location adjustment: if an applicant has resided in a certain area.
- Elite athlete adjustment: if an applicant is an elite athlete.

To apply or be considered for most adjustment schemes (such as equity, subject, and location adjustment schemes) you are automatically considered when you apply for these as part of your QTAC application.

For more details about adjustment schemes at each institution and any application requirements please refer to the institution website.

You generally do not receive official notification of adjustments that have been made to your selection rank.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS SCHEME

The Educational Access Scheme (EAS) can help you if you have experienced circumstances beyond your control or choosing that negatively affected your most recent studies. Through EAS you can receive adjustment factors and may also be assessed as eligible for scholarships and bursaries.

ELIGIBILITY

You can apply for EAS under the following categories:

- Financial Hardship
- Home Environment and Responsibilities
- English Language Difficulty
- Personal Illness or Disability
- Education Disruption

You can apply for all the categories that are applicable to your situation, but you must provide supporting documentation for each category.

For some categories, you will need to have your school complete part of your EAS application. Please review the EAS documentation for more details.

EAS applications are assessed by QTAC following guidelines approved by all institutions. You will not be notified of how many adjustments applied to your selection rank.

For more information about EAS please visit the QTAC website
<https://www.qtac.edu.au/applying/educational-access-scheme>



Offers

Most offers are made to Year 12 applicants in the December and January offer rounds after ATARs are released in December. Subsequent offers for semester one can be made throughout February and semester two offers are made throughout the year to July.

For more information about offer dates please refer to the QTAC website.

WHO DECIDES IF I RECEIVE AN OFFER?

Institutions decide who receives an offer.

RECEIVING YOUR OFFER

QTAC offer notifications will be released via email and SMS. You only get one offer each offer date to the highest preference for which you are eligible and competitive. Institutions decide who receives an offer and QTAC releases the offers on behalf of institutions.

ACCEPTING YOUR OFFER

Respond to your offer by the date and time specified in your offer notification so that the offer does not expire.

For more information about QTAC offers please refer to the QTAC website
<https://www.qtac.edu.au/applying/apply-here/offers>

ENROLMENT AND DEFERMENT

ENROLMENT

Refer to institution websites for information about procedures on how to enrol.

DEFERMENT

Some institutions may allow you to delay the start of your course, usually from six months to a year. Refer to institution websites for more details.



Essential Information

ATAR KEY DATES

More information about key dates including the date of the release of ATAR results in 2020 will be available soon.

HOW TO GET YOUR ATAR

More information about how to get your ATAR results in 2020 will be available soon.

YOUR ATAR RESULTS NOTIFICATION

More information about your ATAR Results Notice will be available soon.

ATAR ENQUIRY CENTRE

More information about this will be available soon.





Glossary of common terms

Following are definitions of the common terms and abbreviations used by QTAC and its institutions provided to help you better understand the ATAR and the tertiary admissions process.

Adjustment Factors - Previously referred to as 'bonus points', these are additional points added or used in combination with an applicant's ATAR or other tertiary entrance rank. Institutions determine these adjustment factors, and these may be based on factors including subject adjustments, equity adjustments and location adjustments.

ATAR - The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is the primary mechanism used nationally for tertiary admissions and indicates a student's position relative to other students. It is a standard measure of a student's overall academic achievement in relation to that of other students where students have studied many different combinations of subjects. ATARs are expressed on a 2000-point scale from 99.95 down to 0.00 in steps of 0.05. ATARs below 30 are reported as '30 or less'.

Cohort - A group of students working together through the same academic curriculum.

Institution - An educational organisation; a university, college or TAFE.

Institution Admissions Rules - Institution admissions rules apply to everybody who wants to study at a particular institution. Common institution admissions rules include English language proficiency requirements and minimum age requirements.

Offer - The allocation of a tertiary place to an applicant.

Offer round - Refers to the series of dates throughout the year on which offers of tertiary places are made to applicants.

Prerequisites - The eligibility requirements specified by institutions that applicants must satisfy in order to be considered for a place in a tertiary course. These are typically specified in terms of satisfactory completion of Year 12 subjects (for example: applicants must successfully complete a Senior English subject (i.e Units 3 and 4, minimum grade C), in order to be considered for a Bachelor of Education course).

QCAA - The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The QCAA is the Queensland statutory authority responsible for developing and revising syllabuses and guidelines for Kindergarten to Year 12, assessment and moderation in primary and senior phases of learning, certification of senior school achievement and reporting of Year 12 outcomes.

QCE - Queensland Certificate of Education. The QCE is Queensland's senior secondary schooling qualification. To be awarded a QCE, students need to complete a set amount of learning, at a set standard, in a set pattern, while meeting literacy and numeracy requirements.

QTAC - QTAC operates a centralised tertiary application, assessment and offer service for tertiary institutions in Queensland and northern New South Wales and other participating institutions. QTAC also calculates and provides the ATAR to eligible Queensland students from 2020.

VET - Vocational Education and Training. Education and training which provides accredited training in job related and technical skills.

ALL ABOUT YOUR ATAR - A GUIDE FOR QUEENSLAND YEAR 11 STUDENTS IN 2019

Version 0.1

Prepared by QTAC.

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TIMES

Times indicated in this publication are based on Brisbane, Queensland time.

QTAC PRIVACY POLICY

Your privacy is important to us and we are committed to handling your personal information in a responsible way in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). This is our Privacy Policy and it sets out how we collect, store, use and disclose your personal information.

For more information refer to the QTAC website <https://www.qtac.edu.au/about-us/policies>.

