All About Your ATAR for 2016 NSW HSC students
Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 NSW HSC students</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 15 December</td>
<td>NSW HSC results released by BOSTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 16 December</td>
<td>ATARs released from 9am on My UAC (UAC’s mobile app) and on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 16 December</td>
<td>ATAR Advice Notices received from UAC from this date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 ACT Year 12 students</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 13 December</td>
<td>ACT Year 12 Certificate and TES released by ACT BSSS and available for collection from your college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 16 December</td>
<td>ATARs released from 9am on My UAC (UAC’s mobile app) and on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will be able to access your ATAR from 9am Friday 16 December on My UAC (UAC’s mobile app) and on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au.

You will need your Year 12 student number or UAC application number and your UAC PIN to access your ATAR.

Your Year 12 student number is issued by BOSTES. It can be confirmed by your school or you can call BOSTES on 1300 13 83 23. Your UAC application number is issued when you apply for tertiary study through UAC. It is displayed at the top of your Confirmation of Application pages. If you cannot find your Confirmation of Application, call UAC.

If you have lost or forgotten your UAC PIN and you have applied through UAC, go to Check & Change on UAC’s website, enter your UAC application number, select ‘Forgotten your UAC PIN?’ and follow the prompts. You can also have your UAC PIN re-issued by calling 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 from the release of the ATAR until 22 December. Advisers are available at the times listed below to answer any ATAR-specific queries you may have. After these dates and for other queries about your application, contact UAC.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 16 December</td>
<td>8.30am-6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 17 December</td>
<td>8.30am-4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 19 December</td>
<td>8.30am-4.30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 20 December</td>
<td>8.30am-4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 21 December</td>
<td>8.30am-4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 22 December</td>
<td>8.30am-4.30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contacting UAC

UAC
Locked Bag 112
Silverwater NSW 2128

Quad 2, 6 Parkview Drive
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127
For those travelling by train, UAC is 250 metres from Olympic Park railway station.

8.30am-4.30pm
Monday to Friday (Sydney time)

Customer Service: 1300 ASK UAC (1300 275 822)
from mobiles: (02) 9752 0200
from overseas: +61 2 9752 0200

uac.edu.au
Email online enquiry form:
uac.edu.au/general/contact.shtml

facebook.com/universitiesadmissionscentre
twitter.com/UACinfo
youtube.com/user/UACinfo
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Common terms and abbreviations

Board
In this publication, the Board refers to the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES).

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

ATAR
Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

ATAR courses
ATAR courses are Board Developed courses for which there are formal examinations conducted by the Board 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 2016 the Category B courses are:
- Automotive Examination
- Business Services Examination
- Construction Examination
- Electrotechnology Examination
- Entertainment Industry Examination
- Financial Services Examination
- Hospitality Examination
- Human Services Examination
- Information and Digital Technology Examination
- Metal and Engineering Examination
- Primary Industries Examination
- Retail Services Examination
- Tourism, Travel and Events Examination.

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 per cent from the top of the students in that course.

UAC
The Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) Pty Ltd is the central office that receives and processes applications for admission to most undergraduate courses offered by institutions in NSW and the ACT and other participating institutions. UAC also notifies students of their ATAR and, on behalf of the participating institutions, makes offers to courses.
Release of the 2016 ATAR

You will be able to access your ATAR from 9am on Friday 16 December 2016 on My UAC (UAC’s mobile app) and on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au. Follow the instructions to access your ATAR.

You will need your Year 12 student number or UAC application number and your UAC PIN. Your UAC PIN is different to your Board of Studies PIN. If you have lost or forgotten your UAC PIN and have applied through UAC, you can retrieve it by accessing Check & Change on UAC’s website. Enter your UAC application number and click on ‘Forgotten your UAC PIN?’; it will be emailed to you. If you haven’t applied through UAC, call UAC on 1300 275 822 or (02) 9752 0200 from mobiles.

You will receive written advice of your ATAR from UAC from Monday 19 December 2016.

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, a Bachelor of Software Engineering (Honours) at the Australian National University specifies ACT Mathematical Methods major or NSW Mathematics as a prerequisite. If you have not completed one of these Year 12 courses you will not be considered for the Bachelor of Software Engineering (Honours), 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.

Some courses have additional selection criteria, such as a portfolio, interview, audition, questionnaire or test. You can find more details about additional selection criteria and the selection process in the UAC Guide 2016–17 or online at uac.edu.au/undergraduate/admission/selection.shtml.

The ATAR – what is it?

The ATAR is a number between 0 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. It provides a measure of your overall academic achievement in the NSW HSC in relation to that of other students, and it helps institutions rank applicants for selection. It is calculated on behalf of the universities and released by UAC. The ATAR is a rank, not a mark.

Your ATAR indicates your position relative to the students who started Year 7 with you. An ATAR of 80.00 indicates that you have performed well enough in the HSC to place you in the top 20 per cent of your cohort.

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

ATARS are calculated for all ATAR-eligible students, but not all students are notified. Only NSW HSC students who indicate on their HSC entry forms that they wish to be notified of their ATAR will receive an ATAR Advice Notice from UAC in the post.

Are you eligible for an ATAR?

To be eligible for an ATAR in 2016 you must satisfactorily complete at least 10 units of ATAR courses. These ATAR courses must include at least:

- eight units from Category A courses
- two units of English
- three Board Developed courses of two units
- four subjects.

How is your ATAR calculated?

Your ATAR is based on an aggregate of scaled marks* in 10 units of ATAR courses comprising:

- your best two units of English and
- your best eight units from the remaining units.

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

* see page 4, Step 2 for information about scaling. Scaled marks are not Board HSC marks.

More information on the calculation of the ATAR can be found in the UAC Guide 2016–17 or on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/undergraduate/atar.

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 each year that you are eligible for an ATAR.
Your HSC marks and your ATAR

A common question is how your ATAR is related to your HSC marks. The relationship is somewhat complex because your ATAR serves a different purpose from your HSC marks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your HSC marks</th>
<th>Your ATAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your HSC marks provide information about how well you have achieved in each of the courses you have completed.</td>
<td>Your ATAR provides information about how well you have performed overall against other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your HSC Record of Achievement provides a profile of your performance in the different courses you have studied.</td>
<td>Your ATAR allows you to be compared with students who have completed different combinations of courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your HSC marks are reported against standards.</td>
<td>Your ATAR is a rank, not a mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your HSC marks are provided by the Board.</td>
<td>Your ATAR is provided by UAC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your HSC marks and your ATAR are derived in different ways from the same data: your raw examination marks and your school assessment marks.

Your HSC marks

The Board 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, the Board 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 the Board.

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

Your ATAR

After receiving your HSC mark, you are assigned an ATAR. Your ATAR provides information about how well you performed overall against other students. Your ATAR allows you to be compared with students who have completed different combinations of courses. Your ATAR is a rank, not a mark. Your ATAR is provided by UAC.
Your HSC results

Your HSC results present a profile of your HSC achievement. For example, here are Elizabeth’s 2015 HSC results, which we can use to illustrate the steps taken in the calculation of the ATAR:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Examination mark</th>
<th>Assessment mark</th>
<th>HSC mark</th>
<th>Performance band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>83/100</td>
<td>77/100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>77/100</td>
<td>73/100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>75/100</td>
<td>83/100</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>88/100</td>
<td>86/100</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>85/100</td>
<td>83/100</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Continuers</td>
<td>89/100</td>
<td>85/100</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculating your ATAR

The purpose of the ATAR is to provide a measure of your overall performance compared with other students, so it is based on both the marks you receive in your HSC courses and your position in your courses.

Let’s calculate the ATAR for Elizabeth based on the HSC marks shown above.

There are several steps in the process.

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.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>HSC mark/100</th>
<th>HSC median/100</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Continuers</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Report on the Scaling of the 2015 NSW HSC, available on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/publications/undergraduate, shows, for each course, the distribution of the Board’s HSC marks (as reported to students – Table A2) and the scaled marks (as used in the 2015 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 2016 HSC will be available on UAC’s website when ATARs are released on Friday 16 December 2016.

From the table above 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 25 per cent of other students in that course whereas in Business Studies she has performed better than 67 per cent.

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 achieve 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>HSC mean/100</th>
<th>Scaled mean/100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Continuers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 the Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>HSC mark/100</th>
<th>Scaled mark/100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Continuers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Step 5: Elizabeth’s aggregate is used to determine her position compared with other students, including all students who entered Year 7 with her. This position will be expressed as a percentile in an interim phase of the ATAR calculation.

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 the Board.

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

Elizabeth’s ATAR is 82.00.

This means that Elizabeth did well enough overall to perform better than 82.00 per cent of her Year 7 cohort.

Your ATAR Advice Notice

Your ATAR Advice Notice includes your ATAR, a list of your ATAR courses and the number of units of each course that were actually included in your ATAR calculation.

All HSC students who ask for an ATAR receive an ATAR Advice Notice.

An ATAR, however, is not shown on all ATAR Advice Notices. This could be because:

- you achieve an ATAR between 0.00 and 30.00. In this case, your ATAR will be reported as ‘30.00 or less’, or
- you do not satisfy the requirements for an ATAR. In this case, the statement ‘Not eligible’ will appear on your ATAR Advice Notice.

A 2016 candidate who studied the same courses as Elizabeth and had similar outcomes would receive an ATAR Advice Notice that looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year completed</th>
<th>Unit value</th>
<th>Units included in calculation of ATAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Continuers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that your position in a course is not altered by scaling.

Now we need to calculate Elizabeth’s aggregate of scaled marks. According to the ATAR rules, two units of English must be included, then the best eight 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 329.4.
Here is another example of an ATAR Advice Notice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year completed</th>
<th>Unit value</th>
<th>Units included in calculation of ATAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Standard</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Studies</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies of Religion 1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality Examination</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, the ATAR Advice Notice shows that:
- all courses were completed in 2016
- all courses are Category A courses except Hospitality Examination
- both units of English were included, as is required
- all units of Geography, Hospitality Examination, Mathematics and Studies of Religion 1 were included
- one unit of Legal Studies was included.

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

Information about which courses were included in your ATAR calculation will be available when you receive your ATAR.

Frequently asked questions

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Fred HSC mark/100</th>
<th>Fred Percentile</th>
<th>Laura HSC mark/100</th>
<th>Laura Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern History</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAR</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>57.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>79.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their HSC marks in each course differ by only 10, yet their ATARs differ by 22.15. 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 higher than 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, 36 per cent of the candidature has marks in this range (47th percentile for 80 minus the 11th 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 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.

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 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 2015 was 68.70.
High school doesn’t define you.

Denise Ong
Exercise physiology student

You’re going to change, that’s a good thing.

Josh Lorusso
Law and engineering student

Not knowing what you want to do is OK.

James Cui
Arts and engineering student

Knowledge is better shared.

Simone Armstrong
Veterinary medicine student

Experience everything.

Maha Kamil
Nursing student

Never rule out the weird and the wonderful.

Iain Wood
Engineering student

The things you learn here.

The future is in your hands. University is more than what happens inside the classroom. Our students share what they learned at the University of Sydney.

sydney.edu.au/thingsyoulearn

@sydneyuni

Leadership for good starts here
Below are examples of students with ATARs of 65.00, 75.00 and 85.00 in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Tom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HSC mark</td>
<td>HSC mark</td>
<td>HSC mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Ancient History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Standard</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Business Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Technology</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>English Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Science</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Mathematics General 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To see where these 2015 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 2015 NSW HSC, available on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/publications/undergraduate.

The tables based on the 2016 HSC data will be available on UAC’s website when ATARs are released on Friday 16 December 2016.

Which courses count towards my ATAR?

Your ATAR is calculated from your aggregate of scaled marks, including two units of English and your best eight 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 5.

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

Consider the following example of Jane who sat the HSC in 2015 and completed 12 units.

Jane got an HSC mark of 95 for both Geography and French Continuers – so, 47.5 per unit. The scaled mean for Geography was much lower than the scaled mean for French Continuers, but her French Continuers mark did not count towards her ATAR. Why?

If we look at the following table (an extract from Table A3 of the Report on the Scaling of the 2015 NSW HSC – available on UAC’s website) we can see that Jane’s HSC mark of 47.5 for French Continuers places her at the 90th percentile for that course so that her scaled mark is 45.2. However, her HSC mark of 47.5 per unit for Geography places her on the 99th percentile for that course and gives her a scaled mark of 46.3 per unit. Consequently, Geography was included before French Continuers.
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 at the top of page 8, 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 the Board; 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 Standard and English Advanced are scaled as a single group as the raw marks are put on a common scale by the Board.

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, the Board 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.

For English and Mathematics there are two extension courses. You cannot count Extension 2 results towards your ATAR without satisfactorily completing Extension 1. If you have completed both Extension 1 and Extension 2 then your Extension 1 and Extension 2 results 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 to get bonus points, does my ATAR change?

No. Bonus points don’t change your ATAR; bonus points change your selection rank for a particular course you have listed as a preference.

If bonus points don’t increase my ATAR, then how do they work?

Universities allocate bonus points for different circumstances. Examples include students with strong performance in specified HSC subjects, students who live in or attend school in an area defined by the university, and students who have applied for consideration through Educational Access Schemes. As the bonus points schemes for each university, and often for each course at the same university, are different, then your selection rank can be different for each course you list in your course preferences. For most Year 12 applicants, their selection rank for each preference is their ATAR. However, if universities allocate bonus points to you, then your selection rank for that preference = ATAR + bonus points.

Remember that some institutions have minimum ATAR requirements for their bonus points schemes. So you have to have a minimum ATAR before you are eligible to receive any bonus points – check the information from each institution carefully to see if they have a minimum ATAR requirement.

Do cut-offs include bonus points?

Yes. The cut-off for a course is the lowest selection rank (including any bonus points) required for entry into a particular course.

For example, Course A has six applicants and only three places available. The six applicants have the following selection ranks:

1. 99.00 (ATAR of 99.00)
2. 98.00 (ATAR of 97.00 plus 1 bonus point)
3. 97.00 (ATAR of 95.00 plus 2 bonus points)
4. 96.00 (ATAR of 96.00)
5. 95.00 (ATAR of 93.00 plus 2 bonus points)
6. 94.00 (ATAR of 94.00).

Offers will be made to applicants 1, 2 and 3. Applicant 4 will not receive an offer even though that applicant has an ATAR higher than applicant 3. The cut-off for Course A is the rank of the last person in the course; in this case it will be 97.00.

HSC bonus points

Remember that most universities will give you bonus points to recognise achievement in HSC courses relevant to the university course you wish to study. These bonus points are included in the cut-off so even if your ATAR is below the cut-off, you can still get an offer to that course. For more information about bonus points, go to uac.edu.au/atar/bonus-points

How do I receive my ATAR?

You can access your ATAR from 9am Friday 16 December on My UAC (UAC’s mobile app) and on UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/atar.

For more information about the ATAR, visit UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/atar or download the booklet Frequently Asked Questions About the ATAR, available at uac.edu.au/publications/atar.shtml.
Where to next?

Questions about your ATAR
If you have further questions about your ATAR after reading this booklet, call the ATAR Enquiry Centre on 1300 MY ATAR (1300 692 827) or (02) 9119 5012 from mobiles on the following days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 16 December</td>
<td>8.30am–6pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 17 December</td>
<td>8.30am–4.30pm</td>
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<td>Monday 19 December</td>
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<td>Tuesday 20 December</td>
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<td>Wednesday 21 December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 22 December</td>
<td>8.30am–4.30pm</td>
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If you have other queries about your application, call UAC on 1300 MY UAC (1300 275 822) or (02) 9752 0200 from mobiles, or visit UAC, Quad 2, 6 Parkview Drive, Sydney Olympic Park, between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday (Sydney time).

Tables providing detailed information about the distribution and percentiles of HSC and scaled marks used in the calculation of the 2016 ATAR will be available on UAC’s website when ATARs are released on Friday 16 December 2016.

The Report on the Scaling of the 2016 NSW HSC, which includes the percentile table, will be available from UAC in early 2017.

Advice about choosing your courses
Call or visit the institutions – read the leaflet accompanying this booklet.

Questions about your HSC results
After the release of the HSC results, visit the HSC results area of the Board of Studies website at boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au for detailed information, or call 1300 13 83 23.

How to change your preferences
Read the leaflet accompanying this booklet or visit UAC’s website at uac.edu.au/undergraduate/apply/course-preferences.shtml.

More information is available on UAC’s website. View our social media resources and podcasts at uac.edu.au/media-hub.
My UAC allows you to search for courses, manage your course preferences, check your ATAR and view your offers on your phone or tablet.

**Download My UAC**

**Search for courses**
You can search for courses by keyword, field of study, institution name, course name, course cut-off, course code, or distance from your location.

Tag your favourite courses. They'll be saved to your Favourites list so they'll be easy to find next time you use My UAC.

**Manage your course preferences**
Your course preferences are the courses that you have applied for through UAC Apply. In My UAC, you can manage your application wherever you are by adding courses, removing courses or re-ordering your course preferences.

Your UAC PIN. UAC PINs are sent to Year 12 students in August. If you’ve forgotten your UAC PIN and you have applied through UAC, use Check & Change on our website to have your UAC PIN automatically emailed to you. Otherwise, call UAC on 1300 ASK UAC (1300 275 822) or (02) 9752 0200 from mobiles to have your PIN re-issued.

**View your 2016 ATAR**
ATARs will be available from 9am, Friday 16 December 2016.

You’ll need your Year 12 student number or your UAC application number and UAC PIN to view your ATAR.

**Check your offers**
You can view and respond to your offers.

Offers are made in a number of offer rounds throughout the year.

**Need help?**
For more information about using My UAC, visit uac.edu.au/undergraduate/mobile-app.

My UAC is available for FREE in iOS and Android. Download our App today!
All About Your ATAR
Prepared by UAC. The assistance of the Technical Committee on Scaling and the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards New South Wales is gratefully acknowledged.

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About this publication
This booklet is for Year 12 students completing their HSC in 2016. It explains the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) including what the ATAR is, the relationship between HSC marks and the ATAR, how the ATAR is calculated, how it is used for selection to tertiary study and who is eligible to receive it.

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The type of personal information UAC holds includes your contact details (name, address, telephone number, email address), date of birth, gender, citizenship, educational achievements, professional qualifications, employment experience, examination results, information related to your health or the health of a family member and your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

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If you are a NSW Higher School Certificate student, your Year 12 results will be held, along with Year 12 results from other states and territories in Australia, in archive databases at UAC and an Australian-owned data centre. If you are eligible for an ATAR or a Limited ATAR, these will also be held in the databases. Your results, including your ATAR if you are eligible, will be held in similar archives at tertiary admissions centres in other states in Australia. Results held in these archives will only be accessed by the relevant tertiary admission centre if you initiate an application for tertiary study through that centre, or if you submit an application for tertiary study directly with an institution participating in that centre.

Any questions regarding privacy at UAC should be forwarded in writing to:
The Managing Director, UAC, Locked Bag 112, Silverwater NSW 2128.

1 In the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).
2 In the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).
3 In the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW).