

## Top tips for choosing HSC courses

- Make the link between your choices now and where you want to go after Year 12.
- If you want to get an ATAR, make sure you will be eligible. In 2028, NSW Year 12 students must complete at least:
  - 10 units of Board Developed courses
  - 2 units of English
  - three Board Developed courses of 2 units or greater
  - four subject areas.
- Choose HSC courses that you're good at and interested in, and that will lay a foundation for your future plans. In particular, choose courses that will prepare you well for the areas of university study you're planning to pursue.
- If you're not sure what level maths and English to take, choose the level that suits your ability and future plans, rather than trying to take advantage of how courses are scaled: you will not necessarily get a higher ATAR just by studying a lower level course. Just about any combination of courses can lead to a good ATAR; it all depends on how well you do in all your courses in comparison to other students. The table below addresses a number of scaling 'myths'.
- Be aware that while unis often increase your selection rank in recognition of your performance in particular HSC courses (usually for Bands 5 and 6), they don't always reward your performance in the lower level courses, no matter how well you do.
- Check if the uni you want to go to, or the course you want to study, has prerequisites (these can include a high-level maths or English course) and assumed knowledge. Details are published in Part 2 of this booklet.
- To make good choices about what to study, work to the best of your ability and focus on your goals for life after school.

### MYTH



Some courses are always 'scaled up', therefore I should study those.



Some courses are always 'scaled down', therefore I should avoid those.



I need to study 'hard' subjects to get high scaled marks.



I should study Mathematics Standard 2 rather than Mathematics Advanced to get a better ATAR.

### VS

### FACT



The way a course is scaled depends entirely on the average academic performance of all the students doing that course that year – and it can change from year to year. For most courses, your scaled mark will be lower than your HSC mark. To get the best possible position and maximise your scaled marks, select the courses you'll do best in.



'Hard' is a subjective term. Everyone has different strengths and interests. Students who achieve an ATAR of 99.95 study a large variety of subjects.



It's very difficult to predict which course will lead to a higher scaled mark. Your scaled mark depends on the average academic ability of the students studying that course and your position in the course. When considering which maths course to study, remember that some university courses have prerequisites or assumed knowledge of Mathematics Advanced. It's important to choose the level of maths that best suits your plans for further study.