

Information Booklet for **Year 10** Students 2009



Studying for the NSW Higher School Certificate

About this booklet

This booklet is for Year 10 students who are planning their Year 11 and Year 12 studies. It will also help anyone returning to school to finish Year 11 and Year 12.

The information contained in this booklet is accurate at the time of printing. Schools will be notified of any changes to the rules and requirements.

You should always check the Board of Studies website for the most up-to-date advice.
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The Higher School Certificate

The Higher School Certificate (HSC) is the highest educational award you can gain in NSW schools. It is an internationally recognised qualification that provides a strong foundation, whether you wish to pursue tertiary study, vocational training or employment.

What is the Board of Studies NSW?

In relation to the HSC, the Board of Studies NSW

develops courses

sets guidelines for school assessment tasks

sets, organises and marks the HSC examinations

calculates and records HSC marks

issues the HSC and Record of Achievement to students

gives advice to schools, employers and the public on educational issues.

Who is eligible for the HSC?

To be eligible for the HSC you need to:

- ▶ be enrolled at a NSW government school, or a registered and accredited non-government school, or a TAFE NSW institute
- ▶ study the right number and type of courses (see page 5)
- ▶ satisfactorily complete the course requirements, including any practical or project work, or work placement
- ▶ complete tasks set by your school for the assessment of each HSC course
- ▶ sit for the required HSC examinations.

All students studying an HSC course must also complete the *HSC: All My Own Work* program in ethical scholarship (or its equivalent). Your school will arrange this and help you to understand your rights and responsibilities in HSC assessment.

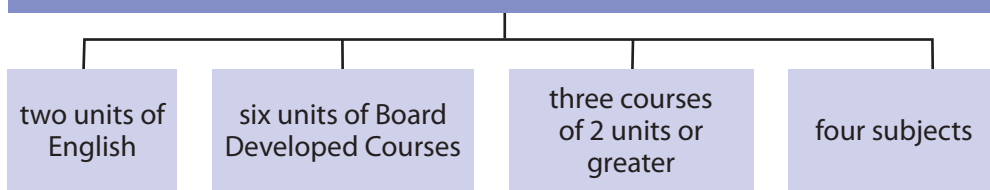


You can find out more about eligibility rules in the Board's publication, the *Assessment, Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual*, which can be found on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/acemanual.html. It is also available in every NSW secondary school and TAFE NSW institute.

What courses do you have to study?

There are some rules about the courses you need to study to gain an HSC. You must complete at least 12 Preliminary units (usually studied in Year 11) and 10 HSC units (usually studied in Year 12). Most courses are worth 2 units although some, including HSC Extension courses, are 1 unit. The Preliminary component of a course must be completed before starting the HSC component.

In Year 11 and Year 12 your subject selection must include at least:



Are there different categories of courses?

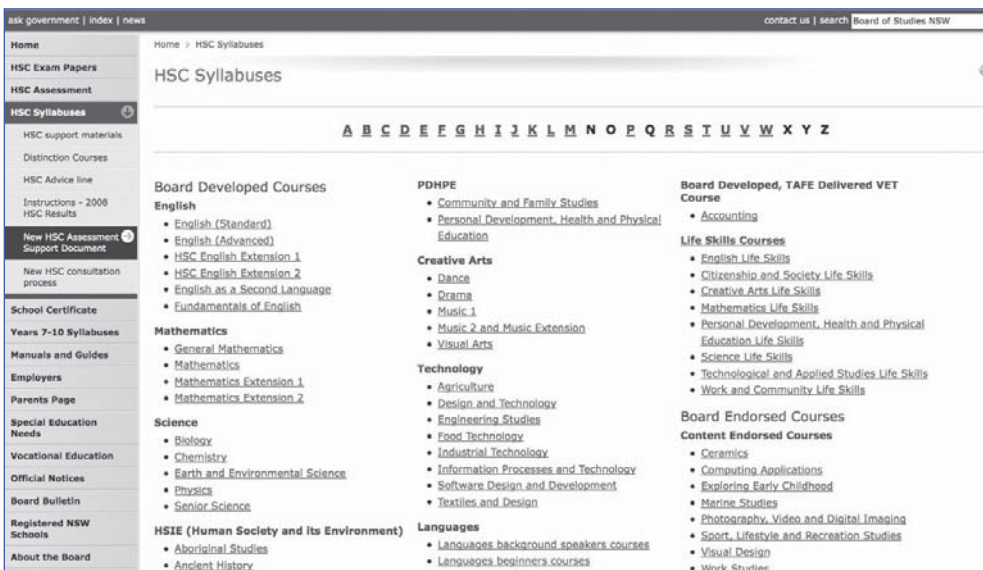
There are two main categories of courses – Board Developed and Board Endorsed.

Board Developed Courses

These are the large number of courses set and examined by the Board of Studies including courses in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Creative Arts, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, Human Society and Its Environment, Languages and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Industry Curriculum Frameworks. Most Board Developed Courses contribute to the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Board Developed Courses are usually 2 units, with the exception of Studies of Religion I (1 unit), most Extension Courses (1 unit) and some VET courses.

Some Board Developed Courses might not be taught at your school and some have prerequisites and eligibility rules. Talk to your Year adviser about the courses available at your school and individual course requirements.



A full list of Board Developed Courses is available on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/

Board Endorsed Courses

These courses are developed by schools, TAFE and universities. They count towards your HSC but do not have an HSC examination and do not contribute towards calculation of your ATAR. The availability of Board Endorsed Courses varies across schools so again, you need to talk with your Year adviser about which courses are taught at your school.

Special education – Life Skills courses

If you have special education needs you can earn your HSC by studying HSC Life Skills courses. There are specific entry requirements for the Life Skills courses and you still need to meet the general eligibility and study patterns to gain your HSC.

You will need to talk with your Year adviser to find out whether these courses are suitable for you. Life Skills courses do not count towards the ATAR. A list of Life Skills courses is on the Board's website at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/lifeskills_index.html

Vocational Education and Training and the HSC

VET courses can be studied either at school or through TAFE NSW and other training providers. You'll need to check with your school about which courses are available and the requirements of the different courses. For example, some VET courses involve a minimum number of hours in the workplace.



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VET courses contribute towards your HSC and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) VET credentials, recognised by industry and employers throughout Australia. Some of the Board Developed VET courses have an optional HSC examination, so if you choose to sit the examination your results can also count towards your ATAR.

Talk to your Year adviser for further details about VET courses, and visit the Board's website: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/



Can you change courses after you've started?

Early in the year, your school submits to the Board the list of courses you expect to complete that year. If you wish to change courses after the list has been submitted, you need to apply to your school principal.

What to consider when making your course choices

You should choose courses that you are good at, interested in and may use in the future. Talk with your teachers about your strengths and weaknesses, as well as individual course requirements, before making your selections. Also, make sure you ask for information about any prerequisites for your future study or work plans. If you want an ATAR, check that you are studying at least 10 units of Board Developed Courses.

Where can you find information about the different HSC courses?

Your school will have a list of the courses available for study in Years 11 and 12 and will be able to help you with course selection. Also, the Board of Studies publishes syllabuses for every Board Developed Course. Board syllabuses contain information about course content and assessment requirements. Some HSC courses also have prescribed texts, topics, projects and works that must be studied for the HSC. Make sure you are aware of the requirements of your courses by talking with your Year adviser. Copies of Board syllabuses are provided to your school and are published on the Board's website. Further course information is also available at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/support-materials.html#hscinfo



Flexible study options with HSC Pathways

Most students study the HSC over two years during Years 11 and 12. However, HSC Pathways offer a more flexible program for people who wish to combine their studies with employment or other commitments, such as family care or elite sporting or cultural pursuits.



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Accumulation

You can take up to five years to complete your HSC studies. The five-year period starts in the first year you complete an HSC course. At the end of the five-year period you need to have met all of the HSC requirements.



Repeating courses

You can repeat one or more HSC courses, but it must be within the five-year accumulation period. Results of all attempts will appear on your Record of Achievement. In calculating your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) will use the marks from your most recent attempt.

Recognition of Prior Learning

You may be granted credit transfer – that is, be able to count courses studied in educational institutions such as TAFE towards your HSC. You may also be granted advanced standing – that is, be exempted from some components of courses if you can show you have met the necessary outcomes in another way, eg overseas study.

Acceleration

Acceleration allows very capable students to complete a course in a shorter time. Students whose studies are accelerated usually sit their HSC examination for that course at the end of Year 11 and accumulate their results.

School-based traineeships and apprenticeships

You can combine HSC study with a part-time traineeship. Traineeships and apprenticeships combine paid work and training and lead to a recognised AQF VET credential. A school-based traineeship or apprenticeship counts towards the HSC.

Assessment

Most Board Developed Courses have a school-based assessment component. Your school submits your assessment mark for each of your courses to the Board of Studies. Your assessment mark contributes to 50% of your final HSC mark.



For VET courses, you are assessed on your ability in carrying out relevant tasks. This assessment counts towards your AQF VET qualification but not towards your HSC mark.

What you need to know about school assessment

Your school needs to provide you with information on its assessment policies and details of your assessment tasks, such as due dates and the requirements for each task. You are expected to have a copy of your school's assessment program for each course and to complete the tasks that are part of that program.

You can find out more about your rights and responsibilities in HSC assessment in the brochure *HSC Assessments and Submitted Works – Advice to Students* on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/hsc_assess_advice_student.pdf

Satisfactory completion of courses

You must satisfactorily complete course requirements. If you are not meeting requirements your principal will give you written warnings and the opportunity to correct any problems.

Honesty in Assessment – the Standard

The following standard sets out the requirements for submitting your HSC assessments. You, your teachers and anyone who assists you with your work are required to comply with the standard.

The honesty of students in completing assessment tasks, examinations and submitted works, and of teachers and others in guiding students, underpins the integrity of the Higher School Certificate. Throughout the assessment process, the highest level of honesty is required.



Each student's mark will be determined only by the quality of the work produced by the student. To demonstrate honesty, any component of a student's work that has been written, created or developed by others must be acknowledged in accordance with the Board's subject-specific documentation. Use or inclusion of material from other sources such as books, journals and electronic sources, including the internet, must be acknowledged. General teaching and learning do not require formal acknowledgement.

Dishonest behaviour carried out for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage in the assessment process constitutes malpractice, or cheating. Malpractice in any form, including plagiarism, is unacceptable. The Board of Studies treats allegations of malpractice very seriously and detected malpractice will limit a student's marks and jeopardise their HSC. Should malpractice be suspected, students will be required to demonstrate that all unacknowledged work is entirely their own. Serious and deliberate acts of malpractice amount to corrupt conduct and, where appropriate, the Board of Studies will report matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

These requirements should be read in conjunction with Board syllabuses and policies on malpractice and satisfactory completion of a course. Details can be found on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/hsc_assessment_policies/honesty.html

HSC examinations

Your HSC examinations contribute 50% of your final HSC mark. You must sit for your required examinations to receive your HSC. Most examinations for the HSC are written examinations, held in October and November each year. However, some courses have practical examinations and/or submitted works or projects in addition to the written HSC

examination. Talk with your Year adviser or subject coordinator about course requirements before making your final course selections.



What are special examination provisions?

Special examination provisions offer practical support to students with disabilities that affect their exam performance. They include arrangements such as large print or coloured examination papers, rest breaks, writers or readers.

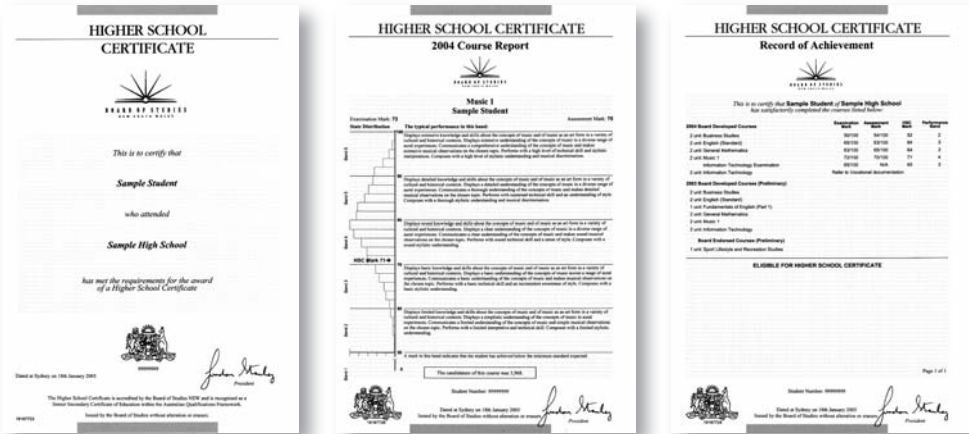
You should contact your Year adviser if you wish to apply for special examination provisions or if you need further information. There is also information on the Board's website at

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/specialexamprovisions.html

Your HSC results

You will receive a summary of your HSC results in mid-December so you can start making decisions about your future. Your official HSC portfolio will be mailed to you in January. For a detailed explanation of the HSC documents, visit the Board's website at

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/employers/hsc/documents.html



How do your HSC results contribute towards university entry?

Entry from Year 12 into university courses in NSW and the ACT generally depends on your ATAR. If you have requested an ATAR, the University Admission Centre (UAC) will use your HSC marks to calculate your ATAR. Your ATAR is not part of your HSC and is not calculated by the Board of Studies NSW.

Details of ATAR requirements can be found in the UAC Guide, published each year by UAC. You can phone UAC on (02) 9752 0200 or view the UAC website at www.uac.edu.au



Useful websites

Board of Studies NSW

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Students Online

www.studentsonline.bos.nsw.edu.au

NSW HSC online

www.hsc.csu.edu.au

Universities Admissions Centre

www.uac.edu.au

Careers Advisory Service

www.cas.det.nsw.edu.au

NSW Department of Education and Training – Training and Industry

www.det.nsw.edu.au/trainingindustry

NSW Apprenticeships and Traineeships

<http://apprenticeship.det.nsw.edu.au/>

TAFE NSW

www.tafensw.edu.au

NSW Government – Jobs and Careers

www.nsw.gov.au/jobs.asp

Career Information Centres

www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/services/career_centres.htm

My Future – Occupations

www.myfuture.edu.au

Australian JobSearch

www.jobsearch.gov.au

VET credit transfer

The skills and knowledge you have gained through your HSC studies may be recognised by TAFE NSW and other registered training organisations. If you complete a VET qualification as part of your HSC you are eligible to apply for national recognition of this qualification with another registered training organisation.

Further information

For more information you should first contact your Year adviser at your school. You can also contact the Board of Studies Liaison Officer (BOSLO) in your area:

Board of Studies Liaison Officers

BOSLO Metropolitan

Phone: (02) 9367 8248

Fax: (02) 9367 8080

BOSLO South Coast

Phone: (02) 4224 9940

Fax: (02) 4227 2775

BOSLO North Coast

Phone: (02) 6659 3274

Fax: (02) 6659 3275

BOSLO North West

Phone: (02) 6755 5043

Fax: (02) 6766 9405

BOSLO Hunter

Phone: (02) 4924 9976

Fax: (02) 4924 9979

BOSLO Riverina

Phone: (02) 6937 3889

Fax: (02) 6937 3809

BOSLO Western

Phone: (02) 6334 8048

Fax: (02) 6334 8049



Glossary

| | |
|---|--|
| Acceleration | allows very capable students to complete a course in a shorter time |
| Accumulation | allows students to take up to five years to complete their HSC studies |
| Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) | a rank calculated by the Universities Admissions Centre to select students for university entry |
| Board Developed Course | developed and examined by the Board of Studies, these courses count towards the HSC and the calculation of an ATAR |
| Board Endorsed Course | developed by schools, TAFE and universities, these courses count towards the HSC but do not have an HSC examination and do not contribute towards calculation of an ATAR |
| Course | a focused area of study within a subject, eg French Beginners is a course within the French subject |
| Extension Course | expands on the related 2 unit course. Extension courses are available in English, Mathematics, History, Music and some languages and VET courses. Students must study the related 2 unit course to be eligible to enrol in an extension course |
| HSC: All My Own Work | program in ethical scholarship all students are required to complete as part of their HSC studies |
| HSC course | HSC courses are divided into two sections – the Preliminary component and the HSC component. The Preliminary course must be studied before the HSC course. |
| Life Skills Course | designed for some students with special education needs |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Major Work | some courses require students to complete a practical work or project which contributes towards the HSC examination mark. Major Works are usually due in Term 3 of Year 12 |
| Pathways | allow students to take longer than the standard two years to complete their HSC studies |
| Preliminary course | HSC courses are divided into two sections – the Preliminary component and the HSC component. The Preliminary course (usually studied in Year 11) must be studied before the HSC course |
| Recognition of Prior Learning | allows students to count courses studied in educational institutions such as TAFE, towards their HSC or be exempted from some components of courses if they have already achieved course requirements |
| Special examination provisions | offer practical support to students with special needs and can include provisions such as Braille or large print papers, the use of a reader or writer, rest breaks, permission to take medication and other requirements as judged appropriate |
| Syllabus | describes the aims, objectives, content and outcomes to be achieved in a course |
| Units | all HSC courses have a unit value – most courses have a 2 unit value, extension courses usually have a 1 unit value |