



# St Paul's Catholic College

## HSC Studies: Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the HSC?**

The **HSC** is the highest educational achievement in secondary education in New South Wales. To be awarded your HSC you must complete Years 11 and 12, satisfy HSC course requirements, and sit for the state-wide exams.

The **RoSA** is a credential that shows your cumulative participation and achievement in courses up until you leave school, if you choose to do so after Year 10 but before completing your HSC. Your HSC credentials will list your Year 11 grades, HSC assessment mark, HSC examination mark, HSC mark and Performance Band for each subject. If you leave school and receive a RoSA, what is listed depends on when you leave school. As a minimum, it will list your Year 10 grades.

- **How do I choose the right HSC subjects?**

Your aim is to attain the best HSC result you can. So, you should choose courses that you are good at, interested in and may use in the future.

To achieve your HSC you must complete a minimum of:

12 Preliminary units (usually studied in Year 11)

10 HSC units (usually studied in Year 12).

Most courses are worth two units, although some, including HSC Extension courses, are worth one unit. You must satisfactorily complete a Preliminary course before you can continue studying that course for your HSC.

- **What are category A and category B subjects?**

Category A courses may be included in the calculation of a student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The HSC examination is compulsory for the satisfactory completion of category A subjects.

Category B subjects have an optional HSC examination and no more than 2 units may be included in the calculation of a student's ATAR and only if the student has completed the HSC examination for that subject. Category B subjects include VET courses and have a compulsory work placement.

- **What is the difference between a Board Developed Course and a Board Endorsed Course and a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Course?**

- **Board Developed courses** are the large number of courses set and examined by the Board of Studies that also contribute to the calculation of the ATAR.
- **Board Endorsed 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 the calculation of your ATAR.

- **VET courses** 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 exam so, if you choose to sit the exam, your results can also count towards your ATAR. Students must complete a work placement to satisfactorily achieve the VET qualification.

- **Is the HSC and the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) the same thing?**

The **HSC** is the highest educational achievement in secondary education in New South Wales and the **ATAR** is a **rank** provided to students about how they have performed overall in relation to other students. **The HSC and ATAR are very different.** The ATAR is for students wishing to gain a place at university and it is a rank NOT a mark. The calculation of an ATAR is performed by the Universities Admission Centre (UAC).

To be eligible for an ATAR students must satisfactorily complete:

- at least 10 units of Board Developed Courses, including 2 units of English
- at least 4 Board Developed Courses
- at least 8 units of Category A courses (*no more than 2 units of category B courses will be used when calculating an ATAR*)

- **Where can I find out more information about going to university?**

Mr McLoughlin will be able to provide you with information about post-school pathways including vocational and tertiary education. Throughout this year you will be provided with information about early entry programs, university open days, TAFE enrolments, employment opportunities, etc. If you have any questions about your post-school pathways please take the time to see Mr McLoughlin.

- **What do you mean by balancing school work and other commitments?**

The HSC isn't forever and you need to maintain your perspective on what you would like to achieve by the end of this year. Some advice you need to consider is:

- Make a study timetable and plan your week. Include recreation and work commitments as well as your study lessons at school. Note that, as a guide, you should not be working more than 10 hours per week.
- At a minimum you should be completing 30 minutes study five nights per week per 2 unit subject, eg: you should be spending 2 hours and 30 minutes studying for English per week.
- Consistency is important. During your study time prepare responses to past paper questions and submit these to your teacher for feedback. Do this regularly so you know what your next steps in learning will be.
- Seek support if you are feeling overwhelmed. You have a team of teachers supporting you throughout the year so don't hesitate to let us know if you need our support.

Further information about NESA and UAC can be found at:

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home>  
[www.uac.edu.au](http://www.uac.edu.au)

Further information about HSC studies can be found at:

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home>