1. What is QTAC?
1. What is QTAC?

**QTAC is:**

- A not-for-profit organisation
- Owned by seven Queensland universities

**What do we do?**

- Provide information about tertiary study and courses
- Receive and process approximately 75,000 applications per year
- Make offers in 1,700 tertiary courses on behalf of 16 institutions
- From 2020: calculate and award ATARs.
2. Terminology in the new QCE System
2. Terminology in the new QCE System

Subjects in the new QCE System

- General subjects
- General (Extension) subjects
- Applied subjects
Subjects in the new QCE System

What we see in English:

- English
- English and Literature Extension
- English as an Additional Language
- Literature
- Essential English (Applied Subject)

What we see in Maths:

- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Methods
- Specialist Mathematics
- Essential Mathematics (Applied Subject)
2. Terminology in the new QCE System

The grading system in the new QCE System

**General subjects** reported:
Numerical Result (0 to 100)
Letter Grade (A to E, A highest)

**Applied subjects** reported:
Letter Grade (A to E, A highest)
Units of Study

Unit 1 and Unit 2:

• Represent the formative years of study.
• Developmentally less complex than Units 3 and 4.
• The results in Units 1 and 2 will not be provided to QTAC.
• Will not be included in the calculation of the ATAR.
Units of Study

Unit 3 and Unit 4:

- Represent the summative years of study.
- Students undertake the 3 internal and 1 external assessments in Units 3 and 4 (administered by QCAA).
- This will lead to the overall raw subject result to be provided to QTAC for scaling, and from which the ATAR will be calculated.
3. Overview of the ATAR
What is the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)?

Primary mechanism used nationally for tertiary admissions.

Indicates a student’s position relative to other students.

2,000 point scale from 99.95 down to 0.00.

ATARs less than 30.00 will be expressed as “30 or less”.

Will be calculated by QTAC for entry into courses in 2021.

Is the new standard pathway to tertiary study in QLD.
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.

For questions about the QCE, including assessment and subject results, please contact www.qcaa.qld.edu.au
3. Overview of the ATAR

ATAR requirements

5 General Subjects

4 General Subjects

+either:

• Applied Subject

• Completed Certificate III or Higher level VET Qualification
3. Overview of the ATAR

Students must successfully complete one of the following:

- English
- English as an Additional Language
- English & Literature Extension
- Literature
- Essential English

Successfully complete = ‘C’ letter grade.

No specific subjects are mandated inclusions in the ATAR.
Examples of Study Patterns for ATAR

English
Mathematical Methods
Specialist Mathematics
Physics
Chemistry

Essential English
Accounting
Modern History
Japanese
Music
General Mathematics

English
Dance
Visual Art
Study of Religion
AQF Certificate III in Business
Accumulating Results

• Most students will follow a traditional pattern of accumulating their results over two years of study in Grades 11 and 12

• ATARs can be calculated based on results from five consecutive years

• One eligible subject a year over a five year period would qualify for an ATAR.
3. Overview of the ATAR

Precluded Subjects and Subject Combinations

1. Only General English subjects or Applied English subjects can be included in the ATAR, but not both:

   It is not possible to include both

   – **English** (a General subject) and

   – **Essential English** (an Applied subject) in a student’s ATAR.
3. Overview of the ATAR

Precluded Subjects and Subject Combinations

2. Only General Mathematics subjects or Applied Mathematics subjects can be included in the ATAR, but not both:

   It is not possible to include both
   
   – **Mathematical Methods**
     (a General subject) and
   
   – **Essential Mathematics**
     (an Applied subject) in a student’s ATAR.
3. Overview of the ATAR

Precluded Subjects and Subject Combinations

3. Only one result for the **same subject** taken as a **General subject** and via **Senior External Examination** can be included in the ATAR:

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**
4. Inter-subject Scaling
Scaling is necessary so that student results in different subjects can be compared fairly:

- Students can study thousands of different combinations of subjects in their senior schooling. Scaling ensures that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged based on the subjects they choose.
- The process adjusts 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.
4. Inter-subject Scaling

Scaling – Documents
www.qtac.edu.au/atar

For:
Non-technical readership

What is in it:
Technical definitions
The need to scale
The ‘how’ of scaling
4. Inter-subject Scaling

Scaling – Documents

www.qtac.edu.au/atar

For:
A technical readership

What is in it:
Full end-to-end calculation of ATAR
Includes inter-subject scaling

\[
P_{m,s} = \sum_{i} r_{m-1,i,j} l_{i,j,s} / \sum_{i} l_{i,j,s}
\]

\[
S_{m,i,j} = \sum_{s} P'_{m,s} l_{i,j,s} / \sum_{s} l_{i,j,s}
\]
Students should continue to choose subjects
• they enjoy,
• that they are good at, and
• that are prerequisites for the courses they want to apply for
5. Calculation of ATARS
How are ATARs calculated and awarded?
5. Calculation of ATARs

Step 1: The results in Units 3 and 4 are added together by QCAA at the completion of each subject.

Step 2: QCAA provides these overall raw subject results and completed VET qualifications to QTAC.

Step 3: QTAC undertakes the subject scaling process.

Step 4: The best 5 scaled subject results (from eligible inputs) are added together for each student:

= Best 5 Subject Aggregate

Step 5: Students are placed in a descending order of merit based on their Best 5 Subject Aggregates.

Step 6: Students are allocated into the 2000 ATAR bands.

For more information about the allocation model used, please refer to Calculating the ATAR in Queensland found at www.qtac.edu.a/atar.
5. Calculation of ATARs

Sequence of Events

QCAA collects Unit 3 and 4 subject results & completed VET qualifications

QTAC receives raw results

QTAC scales results

QTAC releases ATARs and students access their ATAR account

ATARs calculated on a ranked scale 99.95 To 0.00
Accessing the ATAR

Each year, the ATAR will be communicated to eligible Yr 12 students using a purpose-built ATAR portal.

The ATAR release is an online release ONLY.

There will be a facility to print the ATAR results notice.

For 2020 Yr 12s:
- Yr 12s can open their ATAR account with QTAC when admissions open on 4th August.
- the ATAR will be released on 19 December, the same day and time as the QCAA Results.
5. Calculation of ATARs

Adjustment factors

ATARs will be based on the actual subject results achieved by students which have been scaled.

Adjustment Factors (EAS, subject, etc) will continue to be applied after the ATAR is calculated.

QTAC will continue to administer Adjustment Factor schemes which have been determined by individual institutions.

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6. ATAR Publications

ATAR quick factsheets

ATAR: An overview (PDF_656.3KB)
ATAR and subject prerequisites for tertiary entrance (PDF_765.4KB)
ATAR and VET qualifications (PDF_503.2KB)
ATAR and Senior External Examinations (PDF_660.6KB)
OP to ATAR conversion table (PDF_772.3KB)
Tertiary Entrance in 2021 – Quick reference for students and parents (PDF_696KB)
OP to ATAR Conversion

For the 2019–2020 admissions period, offers were made for the last time based on an Overall Position (OP).

This is reported as the ‘Lowest OP offered’ in the course entries in the QTAC Guide. In 2020, ATAR will replace OP as the standard pathway to tertiary entry in Queensland for 2021 admissions.

There is no possible direct translation of OP to ATAR because the two are derived from different sets of information and by different statistical methods.

As a rough guide, the table on the right provides details of the lowest ATARs awarded within each OP band for OPs awarded in 2019. *

**Online Calculators**

QTAC does not endorse or support the use of “ATAR calculators” due to the changing nature of the student cohort from year to year. ATAR calculators do not use current data so cannot accurately predict a student’s ATAR.

*Using ATAR information provided by the QCAA.
7. Subject Prerequisites
Subject Prerequisites

– Course Entries

Subject (Units 3 and 4, Letter Grade).

For example:

English (Units 3 and 4, C)
Physics (Units 3 and 4, C)
Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4, C)
7. Subject Prerequisites

If English is listed as a subject prerequisite, it can be satisfied by one of the following **General** English subjects:

- English
- Literature
- English & Literature Extension
- English as an Additional Language
Science for initial teacher education programs in early childhood and primary can be satisfied by one of the following General subjects:

- Agricultural Science
- Marine Science
- Biology
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Psychology
- Earth & Environmental Science
8. VET & Performing Arts Qualifications for Admissions from 2021
Completed Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses will continue to be used for tertiary entrance in two ways:

1. VET incorporation into ATAR; and/or
2. VET as the basis of admission
How will VET be included in the ATAR?

Each VET qualification level will have a single scaled score that can be included in the student’s ATAR.

Cert III in Hospitality and Cert III in Lab Skills will have the same scaled score, regardless of duration or content.

A scaled score for a VET Diploma will be higher than a Certificate IV, which in turn will be higher than a Certificate III.
VET as a Standalone Qualification

Institutions determine if, and how, VET qualifications such as AQF Certificates III and IV, Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas can be used as a basis of admission to a course.

- SIT 31007 Certificate III in Hospitality (Catering Operations)
- SIS40210 Certificate IV in Fitness
- BSB50407 Diploma of Business Administration
8. VET & Performing Arts Qualifications for Admissions from 2021

Institutions may also consider completed **VET qualifications (at Certificate III level and higher)** as a basis of tertiary admission on their own (including non-school leavers applying for tertiary study) as summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Institution specific schedules              | Australian Catholic University  
Bond University  
Christian Heritage College  
CQUniversity Australia  
Griffith College  
Griffith University  
James Cook University  
Queensland University of Technology (school leavers must also qualify for an ATAR- see note below about course entry for 2021.)  
TAFE Queensland  
The University of Queensland (for non-current school leavers)  
University of the Sunshine Coast  
University of Southern Queensland  
University of New England  
Southern Cross University |
| Queensland University of Technology         | For course entry in 2021- school leavers with Cert IV & above & who also graduate with a QCE, ATAR or IBD |
Non-AQF performing arts qualifications (such as AMEB awards) are not included in the ATAR calculation. However, some institutions may consider these qualifications on their own (including for non-school leavers) as a basis of admission to tertiary study, as summarised below.

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| Institution specific schedules | Australian Catholic University  
Christian Heritage College  
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James Cook University  
TAFE Queensland  
The University of Queensland (for non-current school leavers)  
University of the Sunshine Coast  
University of Southern Queensland  
University of New England  
Southern Cross University |
| Institutions that will not accept performing arts qualifications as a basis of admission for any category of applicant | Bond University  
Queensland University of Technology |
9. Rumours, myths and legends…
9. Rumours, myths and legends...

Rumour:  
The Queensland ATAR can include other inputs like IB subjects, Music and Dance qualifications, Certificate I and II qualifications…

Reality:  
The ATAR can only include:
• General subjects
• Applied Subjects, and
• Completed VET qualifications at Certificate III level and higher.

The ATAR must include at least 4 General subjects.
Rumour:
Less challenging Mathematics subjects scale better for ATARs.

Reality:
The difficulty of a subject has nothing to do with how well it will scale!
How a subject scales is dependent on the achievement of students in all their subjects (including their Mathematics subject).
9. Rumours, myths and legends…

Rumour:
It is possible to game the system to get the highest ATAR.

Reality:
The ATAR is entirely data-driven. ATAR is a rank, so if a student’s results places them in the top percentile then they will get the top ATAR.
9. Rumours, myths and legends...

Myths & Legends:
Can certain subjects like Physics increase a student’s ATAR?

Reality: **NO**
A student can only maximise their ATAR by performing well in their subjects.

Myths & Legends:
What pattern of subjects will guarantee an ATAR of 99.95?

Reality: **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.
Myths & Legends:
I will only get an ATAR if I apply to QTAC for tertiary entry.

Reality: NO
QTAC will calculate an ATAR for all students who have qualified for an ATAR even if they are not applying for tertiary entry.

Myths & Legends:
I will not qualify for an ATAR so higher education is closed off to me.

Reality:
Some tertiary courses are accessible without a formal tertiary ranking like ATAR. There are other pathways to tertiary study, including via VET.
Contact us

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