This handbook details the policies and procedures for assessment, grading (including V-grades for absences) and appeals followed at Merici College. This information is relevant to ALL students, in both Tertiary and Accredited packages, and includes relevant BSSS policies and procedures. Full BSSS documents are available at: http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/publications/policies_and_procedures
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1. Introduction

This booklet is designed to assist students understand their obligations and meet their responsibilities during their two years of senior study.

Merici College wants all our senior students to experience success and this handbook contains important information about the assessment program during Years 11 and 12.

It is important to read and understand this information about assessment in the Senior College, including the College Assessment Policy. Assessment Outlines for each unit of study need to be read in conjunction with this information to allow students to form a clear understanding of course requirements and assessment procedures. These include procedures for calculating raw and standardised scores for ‘T’ units and moderation procedures undertaken by teachers of all senior classes.

The demands of the Senior College require students to devote sufficient time to their studies both at school and at home for the successful completion of courses. The College advises that senior students complete at least 12 hours of study per week outside class. The key to managing this is using study periods wisely.

Remember, the College has well-developed support structures to provide assistance if students need to discuss any aspect of their study or workload. Seek advice EARLY!
2. ASSESSMENT IN THE SENIOR COLLEGE

1. PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do. Senior courses are based on ACT-wide Course Frameworks that provide a structure for course development, assessment and the allocation of semester grades. From these, assessment programs are developed to allow students to demonstrate achievement on assessment criteria contained in the frameworks.

There are two purposes of assessment reporting in the ACT senior college system:

- **Standards achieved by students**: Each course studied in the senior college is written using assessment criteria and grade descriptors as outcomes for learning.
- **Ranking Students**: This is where individual assessment items are aggregated to form a mark or score for the unit. Unit Scores are then calculated for T students.

Student achievements measured against the Course Framework’s Assessment Criteria provide the basis for allocating grades at the end of the unit. Marks/scores provide the means to rank students on individual assessment tasks throughout the semester.

For Tertiary units, students should expect to be given their ranking for each assessment task so that final rankings are as expected.

![Assessment Diagram](image)

The result obtained on each task indicates the extent to which the student has achieved the criteria that the instrument is supposed to test. Assessment tasks also provide feedback to the student during the unit. Marked assessment tasks are expected to be returned to students within three weeks unless advised by the teacher. If this does not occur and you cannot get a satisfactory reply from the teacher, please see the relevant Studies Coordinator.
2. UNIT ASSESSMENT OUTLINES
Teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and specific subject area expertise to design the assessment program for each Unit. All information concerning assessment in a Unit is available in the form of a written Unit Assessment Outline finalised in the early stages of the semester. A copy is retained on files and distributed to students within the first 2 weeks of the start of the unit. Copies can be made from your Moodle page.

The unit assessment outline identifies:
- The assessment tasks to be used in the unit
- Due dates
- Weightings for assessment items

3. GRADES
All students will receive a Unit Grade (A to E, S, V or R based on the assessment tasks completed in the Unit (in both T and A). The grade/s will be reported at the end of each semester and will be based on achievement against Assessment Criteria. The award of a grade in a unit is in line with the grade descriptors in the relevant Course Framework. Students should receive a copy of the Grade Descriptors for each particular course they are studying or have it made available through their Moodle page. If this has not happened, see your teacher.

Generic Grade Descriptors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Awarded to students who have demonstrated a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the full range of concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a very high level of cognitive and practical skill in a wide variety of assessment situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Awarded to students who have demonstrated a comprehensive level of knowledge and understanding of most of the concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a sound level of cognitive and practical skill in a range of assessment situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Awarded to students who have demonstrated a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of most of the key concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a satisfactory level of cognitive and practical skill in most assessment situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Awarded to students who have demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of some of the key concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown evidence of a basic level of cognitive and practical skill in assessment situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Awarded to students who have demonstrated limited knowledge or understanding of the key concepts and principles of the unit. They have shown little evidence of cognitive and practical skill in assessment situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>A ‘Void’ grade is given where the student cannot receive a grade due to an insufficient amount of assessment submitted and/or poor attendance. Consequently, this unit cannot be used as part of the Year 12 Certificate and will not count towards tertiary entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>A Status grade is awarded when a student has been unable to complete the unit through illness or misadventure and the college does not have enough evidence to award a grade. Status units count toward the award of the Year 12 Certificate. There can only be a maximum of half the normal units required in a course, e.g. two Status units for a Major and one Status unit for a Minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>A Recognition grade is awarded when a student has completed some Year 11/12 studies outside the ACT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. SCORES ‘T’ UNITS AND COURSES
Students must take every opportunity to ensure that published scores are accurate. The capacity to appeal often relies on timely reviewing of marks and scores.

The purpose of scores, which are issued in T units, is to rank students for tertiary entrance. It should be taken into account that ranking and spacing are crucial to the final distribution of scores. At the end of a unit, marks given on each of the assessment tasks for that unit are aggregated (combined) to produce a Unit Raw Score in accordance with the Unit Assessment Outline negotiated at the commencement of the unit. These Raw Scores need to be scaled following BSSS procedures.
Scaling

Scaling is a process used to convert your mark into a scaled score: it is an estimate of the effect of the AST. This may mean that your marks will change slightly from the 'raw' marks you receive on your completed assessment tasks. Sometimes they will move up, and sometimes they will move down - but scaling should not change your mark by a significant amount in most cases. Your final scaling will be determined by the AST but in the mean time we make an informed guess about how well the group you are studying with will perform. For each subject the mean and the standard deviation are determined by the scaling. The marks you receive for assignments and exams can change your rank within the class but they cannot change the performance of the class as a whole. This can only be improved by preparing well for your AST. Scaling groups with less than 12 students do not have their scores scaled.

Z-Scores

Z-scores explain how far away you are on average from the middle of the group. If your z-score is negative, you scored below the average. If your z-score is positive, you scored above the average. They also give you an idea of how far away you were from the average. A z-score of 1.0 means that you are around halfway between the middle student and the top student, so a -1.0 z-score implies you are about halfway between the middle and the bottom. Usually, in a class of around 25 people, the top student will have a z-score close to 2.0 and the bottom student will have a z-score close to -2.0.

Unit Scores

For students studying 'T' courses, a Unit Raw Score is produced. This is obtained by adding together marks for various assessment tasks after using the weightings given on the Assessment Outline. The Raw Scores are then standardised to ensure:

- Unit Scores should be comparable from unit to unit throughout the course
- Unit Scores should be comparable across courses/subjects in a particular semester

Course Scores

For students studying 'T' courses, the basis for constructing Course Scores is as follows:

- Course Scores are based on scaled Unit Scores reported over the duration of the student's program of study

  For all course types (Minor, Major, Major-Minor, Double-Major) the top 80% of unit scores is used to calculate the Course Score. For example, 80% of four units in a Major equals 3.2 units, which means that the top three unit scores are used along with 20% of the fourth best unit. If a student completes more than the minimum, e.g. three units in their Minor, separate calculations will be made using the 80% rule with the first two scores and then using all three scores and the best result will be taken. In this way students cannot be disadvantaged if they do more units.

- Students studying units through ANU Secondary College will be given supplementary information regarding course score calculations.

Estimates

Students seeking Tertiary entry will receive an estimate of their ATAR at the beginning of Year 12 and again after their first semester in Year 12. These are, as titled, estimates and are our best attempt to predict how the AST will impact College scores. Students should use them as a rough guide only.
3. ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Choosing to study at Merici is in fact selecting a whole package that involves social, spiritual, physical and cultural components above the academic commitment required at some schools. Senior students at Merici are required to do more than the minimum required by the BSSS. Students who do not abide by the College’s policy on the completion of courses are in jeopardy of foregoing the end of year functions for Year 12 students.

1. ATTENDANCE

It is expected that students will attend all scheduled classes / contact time / structured learning activities for the units in which they are enrolled, unless there is due cause and adequate documentary evidence is provided. Any student whose attendance falls below 90% of scheduled classes / contact time / structured learning activities in a unit, without due cause and adequate documentary evidence, will be deemed to have voided the unit. However, the Principal has the right to exercise discretion in special circumstances if satisfactory documentation is supplied.

A written note, from a parent/guardian must explain all absences within 5 school days of returning to College. Doctor’s certificates should be produced for absences exceeding 3 consecutive days. Absentee notes are to be placed in the box outside Student services. They DO NOT go into PC rolls.

It will not be acceptable to bring in a note at the end of a semester with explanations going back to absences accrued through that semester unless they fall within the previous 5 school day period. In other words, these absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.

Excuses will not be accepted for absences during a school day where the student has already attended classes if the student has not signed out in the book outside Student Services detailing the reason why the student has left the College. Please note that driving lessons are not to be made during a student’s scheduled classes and will not be counted as an explained absence. In other words, these absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.

Excuses will not be accepted if the student arrives late to the College and had not signed in late with Student Services. In other words, these absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.

Evidence of appointments or a note from parents will be required to substantiate reasons for leaving the College when a student’s scheduled classes are on.

All students leaving the College due to illness must report to sick bay before signing out.

A holiday scheduled during semester time is not a valid reason for being absent from class. Absences in such cases will contribute to unexplained absences and could lead to students receiving a ‘V’ grade. Applications for approved leave must be made in writing to the Principal, through the Senior School Coordinator, prior to the leave being taken. Approval will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Failure to follow these procedures will add to the unexplained absences that may cause a ‘V’ grade to be awarded.

2. COMPLETION OF ASSESSMENT

Students are required to substantially complete all assessment items that contribute to the assessment for a unit unless adequate documentary evidence is provided demonstrating due cause. Exemption from an item and / or alternative assessment without penalty is available to students providing adequate documentary evidence. Students submitting less than 70% of unit assessment will be deemed to have voided the unit.

3. LATE SUBMISSIONS OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students are compelled to submit work on time, as this is a valuable organisational skill. Students are encouraged to complete work even if it is late as there are educational benefits in doing so. The purpose of the late penalty is to ensure equity for all students. Failure to submit assessment tasks will affect the student’s result for the Unit.
Except in exceptional circumstances, students must apply in advance for an extension to the due date for completing an assessment task. The request must be made to the Studies Coordinator through the class teacher **before the task is due providing due cause and adequate documentary evidence.** Requests on the due day will not be considered. Copies of the extension form are available at the back of this booklet, on the Shared Drive, in the Curriculum Coordinator’s folder or from the display area outside the office of the Assistant Principal for Curriculum.

Submission of work via email is not permitted.

### 4. LATE PENALTIES

Mark penalties for non-submission of work will apply in Tertiary courses. A late penalty will apply unless an extension is granted. If an extension is not granted the penalty for late submission is 5% of possible marks per calendar day late (including weekends and public holidays) to a maximum of 35% (or to the limit of the ‘notional zero’ – see below). Submission of work on a weekend or public holiday is not possible. The Principal has the right to exercise discretion in the application of the late penalty in special circumstances where satisfactory documentation is supplied.

It may not be possible to accept late work after marked work is returned to other students. If marked work is to be returned to students sooner than seven days after the submission date, students are to be informed on the assessment task when it is given out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received Monday</th>
<th>Due Monday</th>
<th>Due Tuesday</th>
<th>Due Wednesday</th>
<th>Due Thursday</th>
<th>Due Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received Tuesday</td>
<td>5% Penalty</td>
<td>0 Penalty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Wednesday</td>
<td>10% Penalty</td>
<td>5% Penalty</td>
<td>0 Penalty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Thursday</td>
<td>15% Penalty</td>
<td>10% Penalty</td>
<td>5% Penalty</td>
<td>0 Penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Friday</td>
<td>20% Penalty</td>
<td>15% Penalty</td>
<td>10% Penalty</td>
<td>5% Penalty</td>
<td>0 Penalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Received Monday</th>
<th>35% Penalty</th>
<th>30% Penalty</th>
<th>25% Penalty</th>
<th>20% Penalty</th>
<th>15% Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received Tuesday</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>35% Penalty</td>
<td>30% Penalty</td>
<td>25% Penalty</td>
<td>20% Penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Wednesday</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>35% Penalty</td>
<td>30% Penalty</td>
<td>25% Penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Thursday</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>35% Penalty</td>
<td>30% Penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Friday</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>Notional Zero</td>
<td>35% Penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5. NOTIONAL ZEROS

The ‘notional zero’ is defined as the mark that is between 10% of a standard deviation below the lowest score awarded and a score of zero for the assessment item. Students in Accredited units who fail to submit a task can be awarded an actual zero score.

Students and parents are reminded that taking holidays during a semester is not grounds for being awarded estimates for assessment tasks.

### 6. ABSENCE FROM AN ASSESSMENT TASK ON THE DAY

Students should only miss assessment tasks in the case of illness or exceptional circumstances. The teacher concerned, the relevant Studies Coordinator or the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) must be contacted on the day of the absence by phone or email. On the first day of return to the College after the absence the student must present a parent’s note or doctor’s note to the teacher indicating an understanding that the absence took place when an assessment task was due. Students are required to complete the task on their first day of return or if this is not practicable, as soon as is possible. The teacher concerned and/or the Studies Coordinator will decide when is practicable.

The College understands that it is difficult on occasions to see a doctor to get a medical certificate, and that it can be expensive, so a parent’s note will be accepted. However, a central record of absences from assessment tasks will be kept in order to monitor incidences.
4. BREACHES OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The College has the power to impose any one of the following penalties for a substantive breach of rules:
- reprimand of the student, except in cases where the student would have derived benefit from such breaches
- the making of alternative arrangements for the assessment (e.g. through a reassessment)
- cancellation of the result in the particular component of the college assessment concerned
- cancellation of the total college assessment result in the unit/course concerned
- cancellation of all the student’s results for Years 11 and 12 in assessments conducted.

The College keeps a file of all significant breaches of discipline in relation to school-based assessments. Students and their parents will be informed in writing of any consequence of a breach of academic discipline.

In all cases in which a school assessment result, or a component thereof, has been cancelled by the College as a result of discipline procedures, the student has a right of appeal to the Board’s Discipline Committee, provided that she, within fourteen days after the day on which the college principal’s written decision was given to the candidate, gives written notice to the Executive Officer of the Board of her/his intention to appeal.

1. PROVEN DISHONESTY

A ‘notional zero’ mark will be given in Tertiary units for the task/part of the task if a student is found to be cheating. This also applies to the student who allows another to cheat from her. Unless specifically stated in the assessment task students must not work together on a task. This is particularly important in tasks where groups may have collected the data together but where individual discussion of results is paramount to the task. An example of this might be for Biology practical assessment tasks. Students in Accredited units found to have cheated will be given a zero score.

2. PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious offence and it is your responsibility, as a student, to ensure that you do not commit this breach of discipline whether intentionally or otherwise. It is essential that you acknowledge the use of all sources and that direct quotations are explicitly footnoted. The BSSS booklet What's Plagiarism? How you can avoid it will be issued to all Year 11 students and is also available through the board website http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/publications/brochures. Students have an obligation to read this booklet and seek advice should they require clarification.

Any suspected case of plagiarism will be investigated. Where plagiarism is suspected, students could be asked to substantiate or verify the authenticity or integrity of completed assignments. If there is evidence of plagiarism the student must be interviewed and given the opportunity to explain her case before a penalty is determined. If plagiarism is shown to have occurred, a committee of independent teachers will determine the penalty. The BSSS booklet also details the steps followed for repeat offences.

5. REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT & QUERY OF A RESULT OR PROCEDURE USED TO DERIVE A RESULT/FORMAL APPEALS.

Students have rights to question an academic result at every stage of the College assessment process: against individual assessments, unit grades or course scores, but not against their ATAR. There are several levels to the query procedure outlined below.

The final dates for raising concerns and querying results are published at the beginning of every semester on MOODLE. There is a strict time line (outlined below) which must be followed to query procedures and/or results. Any query outside this timeframe cannot be actioned by the College.

If a STUDENT (not parents or guardians) is dissatisfied with an assessment result for a task or the procedures used to calculate Unit Grades and Unit Scores and Course Scores, you need to follow the following steps in the review of your result. At no stage in this initial process is this a formal appeal.

1. ASSESSMENT TASKS COUNTING TOWARDS A UNIT SCORE
   - Any initial inquiry about an assessment item should be directed to a class teacher. This takes the form of a clarification or explanation of a mark or a remark if felt necessary.
   - If you are not satisfied with the resolution, a query can then be made to the relevant Studies Coordinator. This should be made within five working days following the return of the work.
   - In Year 12, Term 4, the query should be made within two working days.

2. UNIT SCORES AND GRADES APPEALS
   - In all cases where there is a STUDENT who has a concern or query regarding a unit score or grade see their class teacher and relevant studies coordinator FIRST
   - If the STUDENT is not satisfied with the resolution then a formal appeal against unit scores and grades must be made to the Assistant Principal Curriculum within five working days of the display of scores except in the last semester for Year 12 where there is only 24 hours for appeals. (See page 20 for grounds to appeal Unit Scores and Grades).

3. COURSE SCORE APPEALS
   - A STUDENT who wishes to appeal against her Course Score at the end of Term 4 of Year 12 must submit the Appeal within 24 hours of publication of the printout. If appeals are not able to be resolved at the college level, officers of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) will hear the Appeal.

LODGING A FORMAL APPEAL AT MERICI

   - After all avenues listed above have been followed the STUDENT must write a formal letter outlining the nature of the Appeal to the Assistant Principal Curriculum.
   - The Assistant Principal will acknowledge receipt of the letter and convene an independent appeals committee comprised of The AP Curriculum, The Senior School Coordinator, an independent Middle Manager and (where required) a representative from another school.
   - The task/ result in question will be examined and a finding made by this panel.
   - The outcome of this process will be delivered to the student.
   - If the STUDENT is still dissatisfied with the finding from the panel, The STUDENT then has the right to lodge a formal appeal with Principal.
   - The Principal reviews the finding of the panel and makes a decision. This is communicated to the student.
   - If the STUDENT is still dissatisfied with the finding from the Principal, the STUDENT then has the right to lodge a formal appeal with the BSSS (details p20)
6. Procedures For Handing In Assessment Tasks

All Assessment Tasks must contain the student’s ID and teacher’s name. Do not use your student name.

All appropriately sized tasks are to be placed in the assignment box adjacent to the Senior Tea Room by 5pm on, or before, the due date.

Attach the next available label number on the top left corner of your assignment and record that number on the assessment page in your planner. This will enable the College to assist with recording who has handed a task in and on which date.

Attach a signed ‘Cover Sheet and Authorship Statement’.

The box will be cleared daily, the Assessment Task dated, the number on the task noted then given to the appropriate teacher.

No Assessment Tasks are to be placed in the Staff Room or given directly to teachers. An exception to this is that oversized items must be handed to the class teacher.

Work Submitted on USB (Technology based subjects only)

The USB itself must be clearly labelled with the following information:

- Student I.D.
- Your teacher’s name
- Subject/Unit

The USB must be accompanied by a sheet showing the following details:

- File name
- Any special instructions for accessing the file (including name and version of applications program), e.g. The Causes of the Depression. Microsoft Word 2007

Include a Cover Sheet and Student Authorship

Work on USB is to be placed in the assignment box. You should not give the assessment task to your teacher.

Secure the above sheets and the USB, eg, use an envelope.

It is the student’s responsibility to keep a copy of the task.

Other Work

Tasks that are too bulky to fit in the assignment box must be submitted directly to the teacher. You still need to complete a Cover Sheet and Student Authorship.
1. STUDENT AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT
The BSSS requires students to verify that the work they are handing to meet the requirements of the courses they are studying is, firstly, their own work and secondly, that any other person's work, words or ideas have been correctly cited and referenced.
You also need to acknowledge any help you have had from another person.

2. PRESENTATION OF WORK
Assessment tasks submitted by students must adhere to the assessment criteria established for each task. The Cover Sheet and Student Authorship document can be found outside the Senior Tea Room or on the Shared Drive

3. WORK SUBMITTED ON PAPER
   All sheets must be stapled/pinned together. You do not have to use a plastic sleeve.
   The assessment task must contain a Title Page.
   A signed copy of Cover Sheet and Student Authorship must be attached to the task.
   Leave a margin (about 2 cm) on the left of each page.
   Number each page.
   Typing or word processing is encouraged.
   Black or blue pen is to be used if you are handwriting.
   Work submitted in pencil cannot be remarked if queried after it is returned.
   Print or write on ONE side of the page only.
   **It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of the task.**

7. PATTERNS OF STUDY
Detailed Course information is available through the Senior Handbook issued earlier which is also available electronically on the Student Shared drive and on the Merici website.

1. STUDENTS STUDYING AN ACCREDITED PACKAGE
You are required to have 17 points to earn a Year 12 Certificate. Considering the structure of Merici Senior study program, this is easily achievable. While it may be the minimum requirement for a Year 12 Certificate, it is a much reduced way of looking at your senior studies. Instead, students are encouraged to think about what their Year 12 Certificate is going to be used for. If it is to go into the workforce, students are advantaged by having a full and varied program of study reflected on their certificate. If you are hoping to go to CIT following Year 12, it would be highly desirable to finish Year 12 with at least one Certificate II and possibly a statement of attainment. Any study you do under the vocational framework is recognised by the CIT and means you will have a head-start in completing your post-school study. Talk to the Careers advisor about this if you require more information.

8. MODERATION
Moderation is the means whereby standards of achievement are cross-referenced with other groups or classes. There are three types of moderation used in the ACT senior college system: moderation within the College, small group moderation and inter-college moderation.

1. MODERATION WITHIN MERICI COLLEGE
   Where there is more than one class in the same unit (eg two classes of Biology)
   In this case all classes use the same assessment tasks and assessment is moderated. The teachers of the unit either mark a section of the piece of assessment across all classes or each teacher corrects
His/her own class work using the assessment criteria contained in the Course Framework. In the latter case, selected pieces of work are then compared across classes to ensure fairness in assessment for all students studying the unit.

Where different units are studied in the same subject area and are part of the same moderation group (eg classes in English studying different themes)
In this case, teachers consult to ensure similar types of assessment tasks are set across all units. Teachers correct their own class work and selected pieces of work are then compared across classes as described above.

2. MESHING WITHIN MERICI COLLEGE

Where two or more subject areas are combined for scaling purposes into the same moderation group (Geography/Business Management/Legal Studies, Visual Art / Fashion /Photography/Media/ Graphics, Mathematics/Information Technology, Chemistry/Physics, Biology/Earth Science, Design, all Languages, Drama/Music/ Dance, Psychology/Sociology) results from subjects are meshed into one group in the following ways:

- Results from common skills testing done in Term 4 of Year 10 of all T students are used as a guide for determining appropriate parameters for each subject
- Results of students in Year 11 in core subjects (English, Mathematics and Religious Education) are used as a guide in the same way
- Historic parameters are used to inform judgements
- Where possible similar assessment tasks are incorporated into all subject areas
- Selected pieces of work are compared by teachers across subjects
- Teacher judgement is used.

The detailed processes used for each meshing group are detailed on the course Assessment Outline.

3. Inter-College Moderation

This takes place twice yearly on Moderation Days where teachers from different colleges compare standards of student work. These days help to establish consistent standards among all ACT colleges so that unit grades are comparable for the award of the Year 12 Certificate.
In 2013, Moderation Day 1 looks at work done by the Year 11 students from Semester 2, 2012.
In 2013, Moderation Day 2 looks at work done by the Year 12 students from Semester 1, 2013.

The AST is the external moderator for T courses within colleges and across colleges.

9. Study Help

In Year 11 students are required to undertake a study skills program following the Year 11 Conference. Additionally, there is a folder on the student shared drive with relevant information. The first port of call for every student, however, is their classroom teacher. As a senior student you are expected to seek assistance as required and teachers are expected to provide you with necessary help.

Students are encouraged to form study groups based around common subjects.

The Senior School Coordinator, will meet with students at any time to assist them with their program of study. He can help in times of difficulty but also can support students to optimise their study habits when things are going well.
The Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) overseas all college courses in the ACT. Their website is [http://www.bsss.act.edu.au](http://www.bsss.act.edu.au)

The following information is a summary from the booklets (of the same name) available from the BSSS and from NSW HSC information.

### 1. WHAT CERTIFICATES COULD YOU OBTAIN?


#### The ACT Year 12 Certificate.

The ACT Year 12 Certificate lists the results of your studies during Years 11 & 12. It is used by a wide variety of people including employees, education or training institutions, and the Australian Defence Forces. The Certificate lists all units, courses and nationally recognised vocational qualifications you have completed and the results you obtained.

The requirements to complete a package are defined in terms of standard units. One standard unit has a minimum of 55 hours of timetabled class time over one semester. A standard student must complete the equivalent of at least 17 standard units.

#### What are standard units and courses?

A standard unit is a combination of lessons, assignments, excursions, tests, organised around a particular theme and offered over a semester. A course is a set of standard units, which are related to each other in a coherent way.

#### What are Minor, Major, Major-Minor and Double Major courses?

Courses have differing values, indicating the depth of study given to a particular subject area. The depth of study is indicated by the labels: Minor, Major, Major-Minor and Double Major.

- Minors require the equivalent of 2 standard units,
- Majors the equivalent of 4 standard units,
- Major-Minors the equivalent of 6 standard units and
- Double-Majors the equivalent of 8 standard units.

#### What are A, T and V courses and R units?

An **A** course is one which is accredited by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACTBSSS) as educationally sound and appropriate for students studying in Years 11 & 12.

A **T** course is a course that is accredited by the ACTBSSS as providing appropriate preparation for higher education.

A **V** course is a learning program, which leads to a Vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment as defined by the Australian Qualification Framework. A course that is both **T** and **V** is called a **T & V** course. A course that is both **A** and **V** is called an **A & V** course.

An **R** unit or course is one, which is registered by the ACTBSSS and developed by the college as appropriate for students in Years 11 & 12 and is usually designed to provide personal development, recreational or community service activities. This recognises that learning can occur outside the classroom. Merici has a wide range of these courses (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, external Dance schools, Blood donations) and students can see the Assistant Principal Curriculum if they are involved in something of a similar nature that is not listed.
The Tertiary Entrance Statement.

A standard Tertiary Entrance Statement package is one for which a student:
- Completes units, which accrue the equivalent of at least 20 standard units during Years 11 & 12.
- Completes accredited units (A, T, V or T&V units) arranged into courses to form at least 4 Majors and one Minor or 3 Majors and 3 Minors.
- Completes at least 3 Majors and 1 Minor at the T level.
- Sits the ACT Scaling test (AST).

The Secondary College Record.

The Secondary College Record is issued on request. You would want one if you were leaving school during Year 11 or Year 12 to seek employment, moving interstate or changing schools. It lists the units and courses you studied up to the time you requested the record. The Secondary College Record groups units under broad subject headings rather than course names.

Vocational Certificates

Vocational courses are delivered to industry standard and provide you, if you meet the requirements, with a qualification that will be recognised by vocational training providers (TAFE, CIT, etc) and employees around Australia. The course leading to a nationally recognised qualification often requires you to complete a component of structured workplace learning with an employee. The Nationally Recognised Training logo is displayed on certificates that meet all the requirements for national recognition under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The certificate level of the course relates to the skills exhibited by the student. The higher the certificate level the more complex the skills.

Vocational qualifications are awarded in specific areas. Vocational qualifications certify what you have demonstrated you can do, and this achievement is measured through competency-based assessment. Each industry has a list of competencies and students are assessed against these competencies.

The Statement of Attainment

A statement of attainment is issued in recognition of achievement in a specific vocational area. The statement carries the nationally recognised training logo and lists the competencies a student has attained.

2. WHAT’S THE ATAR?

The ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) is a percentile ranking used by the universities to assist in the selection of school leavers for entry into any given course, and to allow them to select an appropriate number of students for each course.

The ATAR is calculated from student’s performances in their best T courses. The main steps in the process are:

1. Colleges calculate a course score for each student completing a T course.
2. The BSSS scales the College course scores against the AST results using the OCS scaling method. This ensures that all course scores can be meaningfully compared.
3. The scaled scores are used to produce an Aggregate Score for each student. This is done by adding together the scaled scores in their 3 best T Majors plus 0.6 of the next best score, whether a Major or Minor.
4. The Aggregate Score for all students who have met the appropriate requirements are listed from highest to lowest and a rank is calculated.

**Eligibility for an ATAR in the ACT**

To qualify for an ATAR a student must fulfil the following requirements:
- Complete 20 standard units
- Complete either 4 Majors and 1 Minor or 3 Majors and 3 Minors
- Sit for the AST

The ATAR is a number, which provides a measure of a student’s overall academic achievement over normally a 2-year period in relation to that of other students and allows the comparison of students who have completed different combinations of Tertiary courses.

The ATAR is used solely for use by universities, either on its own or in conjunction with other selection criteria, to rank or select school leavers for admission to university courses. The ATAR is a number between 30 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. Specifically an ATAR indicates the position of a student relative to their cohort across the ACT. That is, a ATAR of 80.00 indicates that students with that ATAR performed well enough to place them 20% from the top of their cohort in the ACT, had all the students who began studies at the same time completed Year 12 and been eligible for the ATAR.

An ATAR will obviously have greatest predictive validity when there is congruence between the outcomes a student achieves and the knowledge and skills required of the chosen university course. Consequently, students need to be advised to choose Tertiary courses that provide a suitable background for their proposed study.

**An Overview of Scaling**

Students are free to choose what courses they study. Consequently individual course candidatures vary in size and nature. It follows that a student’s position in a course will not necessarily have the same meaning across different courses: it will depend on the nature of the course candidature. Good positions in a course are more difficult to obtain when more students are competing with other good students of high academic ability in the same way that it is more difficult to get into the top 3 in an Olympic 1500m final than it is in the Merici College 1500m race.

Because of the lack of comparability of marks from different courses, marks of individual students are scaled before being used to produce an ATAR. **The scaling process takes marks and estimates what the marks would have been if all students had studied all courses.** The scaling is done to encourage students to take the courses for which they are best suited and which best prepare them for their future studies. The principle underlying the process is that a student should be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by choosing one course over another.
The scaling assumes that the position of a student in a course depends on the developed ability of the individual student and the strength of the competition with whom they compete. Although scaled marks in most cases are different from the raw marks from which they are derived, the ranking of students within a course is not changed. The scaling process is carried out afresh each year. It does not assume that a course is intrinsically more difficult than another or that the quality of the course candidature is always the same.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Does the school I attend matter?**
No. The school attended does not feature in calculations of the ATAR.

**Are certain courses always “scaled down”?**
No. The scaling is carried out afresh each year, therefore if the quality of the candidature changes, the scaled mean and standard deviation will also change.

**Is it true that if I study this course I can't get a high ATAR?**
No. There are students in every course who achieve high ATARs.

**Which course should I study?**
The choice of which course to study should not be determined by what is perceived to be the likely effect of scaling. Choice of which course to study should be determined only by the interests, demonstrated abilities and the utility of the courses for the future career plans of the students concerned. The scaling process is designed to allow students to choose according to these principles and not, as far as university selection is concerned, be disadvantaged by their choice. It treats all students on their merits.
Calculation of the ATAR

Step 1: Course Scores

Colleges calculate a course score for each student in each T course from relevant unit scores. A course score indicates how well a student performed in a particular course compared to all other students in that moderation group at the college. It is not necessarily an indicator of achievement in that course, only a way of comparing student's performances. (E.g. in Mathematics a student in a lower level of difficulty course may get an 'A' grade with a unit score below a student in a higher level of difficulty course who may have got a 'C' grade). A moderation group is the group of students completing T courses in a particular area (e.g. at Merici some of our Moderation groups are Physics and Chemistry or Art, Media, Fashion & Design, and Photography or Mathematics and Information Technology). Course scores are not percentages but rankings and typically lie between 30 and 110.

Step 2: Scaling

Course scores are only useful in the calculation of the Aggregate Score if they are reported on the same scale. The scale is determined when the OCS scaling procedure adjusts the course scores. Scaling is an adjustment of the course scores to bring them to a mean and standard deviation related to the student’s performance on the AST and on their best 4 courses. The scaling procedure changes the score used to represent each student’s rank in a particular moderation group, but it does not alter the ranking of students. For example if student A is above student B on course scores then student A will be above student B after scaling.

Step 3: Using scaled scores to produce an Aggregate Score

Once course scores are scaled, they can be added. The Aggregate Score is the number produced by adding the best 3 scaled scores from T major courses, and 0.6 of the next best T course score (either Major or Minor). This may be illustrated through these examples below.

1. Student 1 has 4 Majors courses and 1 Minor course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Length</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Weighted Scaled Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>118.10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>143.22</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>143.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>171.87</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>171.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>125.85</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>125.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>176.60</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>105.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>547</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Student 2 has 3 Major courses and 1 Double Major course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Length</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>118.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>143.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>176.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Major</td>
<td>171.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For score calculation purposes, this package is equivalent to 5 Majors as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Length</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Weighted Scaled Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>118.10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>143.22</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>85.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>176.60</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>176.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>171.87</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>171.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>606</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 4: Calculating the ATAR

The Aggregate Scores for all students who have met the requirements are listed in order from highest to lowest. The students are then given a rank called the rank by candidature. This rank is then converted to an age rank by using a look-up table supplied by the NSW Technical Committee on Scaling. The ATAR calculated is directly comparable to the ATAR calculated in NSW and the same cut offs at ACT and NSW universities apply to both ACT and NSW students.
**The Other Course Scores (OCS) scaling method**

Briefly the stages in the process are:

1. For each student, a measure of General Achievement (GA) is calculated from an average of her AST score and four best course scores. The course scores from the best 3 majors and the next best course score—either Major or Minor—are used.
2. The average and spread of the GA scores in each moderation group are calculated, and the course scores are then adjusted so that they have the same average and spread as the GA scores.
3. The AST and the adjusted course scores are used to calculate revised GA values.
4. The course scores are adjusted again (as in step 2) using these revised GA values.

The process continues working through steps 3 & 4 until the adjustments made to the course scores from one step to another are no longer significant. In practice this usually takes about 20 cycles.

**Note:**

An individual student’s performance on the AST is not used directly in adjusting her own course scores; nor is the individual student’s GA score used directly. It is the group GA scores that are used throughout the process for adjustment of the course score.

The AST scores are not altered during any part of the process.

The final stage in the process produces course scores, which are on the same scale across all courses and across all colleges.

### 3. WHAT’S THE AST?


The ACT Scaling Test (AST) is a test attempted by all Year 12 students wishing to gain a Universities Admission Index (ATAR). The test designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), aims to measure a range of general skills considered to be relevant to success in a variety of courses and to studies at university.

The AST is held in September each year with a second sitting in October for students who were unable, for a variety of reasons, to sit the test in September.

The AST scores of those students who complete a T package provides the basis for scaling course scores awarded to students by the colleges they attend.

The AST is made up of 3 papers – one 150 minute Multiple Choice test containing 80 questions, a 90 minute Short Response Test and a 150 minute Writing Task. You must make a serious attempt at all three papers, or you may not be eligible for an AST score.

The multiple-choice questions are grouped into units, each based on a piece of stimulus material. The stimulus material may be a prose passage, a graph, a table containing words or numbers, a poem, a picture or a map or any combination of these. Any specific information required to answer the questions is contained in the stimulus material or in the questions that follow. The materials are drawn from the humanities, social sciences, sciences and mathematics, but it is not aimed at subject specialists and should be accessible to all senior secondary students.

In the writing task candidates will be offered a selection of written material, which presents various views of a clear argument, addressing some aspects of the issue presented. The time available allows for planning, drafting, editing and producing a final written version of the essay.

The skills required for success in the AST are believed to develop slowly as a result of a variety of experiences, of which formal schooling is one important element. Your best preparation is to read widely and think critically. The college has an extensive range of practices planned over the period of Years 11&12. All students who intend to gain an ATAR must attend all scheduled practices over both years.
4. BSSS FORMAL APPEAL

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained in all appeals. This means apart from disclosures to essential people involved in the appeal, your name and details of the situation are kept private.

To whom and about what you are able to appeal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal to</th>
<th>About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merici</td>
<td>Assessment result for a task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures used to calculate Unit Grades and Unit Scores and Course Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTBSSS</td>
<td>College’s published procedures for calculating a Unit Grade or Unit Score or Course Score not being followed, or being applied unfairly or incorrectly. College’s published appeals procedure not being followed, or being applied unfairly or incorrectly or being unreasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discipline Committee of the ACTBSSS</td>
<td>How the college has penalised you because you have been judged to have broken its rules of assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appeals to the ACT BSSS

After your review at the college, if you still consider that the college Unit Grade or Unit Score or Course Scores or published appeals procedure have not been followed, or have been applied unfairly or incorrectly, you can apply to the ACT BSS for further consideration. Unless there are special circumstances, an appeal to the ACT BSS will only be accepted if an appeal has first been heard at the college.

There is no appeal to the ACTBSSS against its policies on aspects such as calculation of AST scores or ATARs.

Here are some steps to follow before you decide to appeal.

1. Read the procedures which are published by the college on page 10: Assessment task outlines, Unit outlines. Procedures to review assessment tasks, Unit Grades and Unit Scores and Course Scores.

2. When applied to what you are appealing about, check if the college procedures:
   - Are reasonable and fair
   - Have been followed
   - Have been applied correctly
   - Have been applied fairly

If not satisfied with any of these, go to the next step, which is the appeal to the ACT BSSS.
The following information must be supplied

Your name and college;
Statement that the subject of the appeal has had a review by the college and the result of that review:

Or

The exceptional circumstances under which you are appealing directly to the ACT BSSS without having first had an appeal at the college:
Supporting information, including:
- The particular unit/course/assessment procedures and/or tasks being appealed against.
- The procedures used to calculate the mark, grade, unit/course score that you feel have not been followed or have been applied unfairly or incorrectly.
- The published college assessment appeals procedure that you feel has not been followed or has been applied unfairly or incorrectly, or is unreasonable.
- What you think should be the result of the appeal, i.e. what your mark, grade, unit/course score should be; and
- A statement in support of your appeal

Send or deliver the above information to the Executive Officer of the ACT BSSS at:

| 67 Launceston St | PO Box 158 |
| Lyons | Canberra |
| ACT, 2606 or | ACT, 2601 or |
| Fax (02) 6205 7167 |

**Time Limits**

You must lodge your written appeal to the BSSS within seven (7) days of the written decision from the Merici appeal committee. However, if you appeal within the final term of your Year 12, the final date for appeal is set for early December. You need to check with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) for the exact date.

**What Happens In the Appeal**

The ACTBSSS passes your appeal to its Appeal Committee. You will be advised of a hearing date. You and your representative will be able to put your case at the hearing. The college will also be able to put its case to the Committee and the Committee will come to a decision. You will be formally advised of the outcome.

**Appeals to the Discipline Committee of the BSSS**

If the college feels that you have broken the rules regarding a ‘breach of discipline’ such as cheating in a test or submitting work that is copied from another student penalties will be applied as described below.

You have the right to appeal to the Discipline Committee of the BSSS regarding the penalties applied. You must appeal in writing and your application should include:
- Your name and college
- Details about the situation, including the tasks, unit(s) and course(s) involved, and the penalties imposed by the college and
- Your concerns about the situation.

Before the appeal, the Committee can seek any information or advice it needs. You and your representative will then receive the opportunity of being heard at a meeting with the Committee. After also considering a written report from the college Principal, the Committee will make a decision. It may decide to reject the penalty, confirm the penalty, or to alter what the college has decided.

**5. EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT & SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN ASSESSMENT IN YEARS 11&12**

All students, including those with disabilities, must have equal opportunities to show their achievement, whether it is in class assessment tasks, assignment work, major end of semester tests or the AST.

**Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act (1993) defines disability very broadly to include physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and special needs. It includes physical disfigurement, the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism and any other chronic or short-term illness.

Special needs students are those with functional difficulty caused by a disability or impairment.

**What kind of provisions can be asked for?**

- Computer facilities with spell checks and calculators (except for the AST)
- Extra time for reading and completing exam papers
- Scribes for exams and/or note takers in class
- Audio-taped questions
- Being able to take movement and/or sustenance breaks
- Being able to take a test in a separate room
- Alternative assessment formats
- Negotiated extensions of time for assignments
- Early feedback to let the student know that they are not reaching required standards

Requests for special arrangements will be considered carefully to ensure fairness and equity for all students.

**Special consideration for the AST**

Students with disabilities/special needs should apply for assistance in undertaking the AST. Students should discuss their needs and eligibility for assistance with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) early in the year that they will be sitting the AST. There is a special form to be filled in which will need to be supported by detailed documents from a doctor or other professional person.

**Short-term misadventure/special consideration.**

This information above also applies in part to situations where a student’s ability to demonstrate achievement is impaired by circumstances of a short-term temporary basis. This included situations such as bereavement, depression, illness or injury. In these situations a student could be entitled to one or more of the following:

- Alternative assessments
- Extensions on submission of work
- Sitting assessment at times different to other students
- Extra time allowed for assessment items
- Exemptions from completing items (status for individual items)
- Status for a semester

In these circumstances a student needs to apply for special consideration to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) and must supply appropriate and current documentation to the college.
Merici College Assessment Cover Sheet

Declaration of Original Work

To be used for both hard copy and electronic submissions

The purpose of this declaration is to remind you that all work you submit must be your own work and must not be plagiarised from other sources. This declaration must be completed and submitted with the assessment item. Sign only if you understand what you have read. Ask a teacher, parent or carer/guardian if you need help to understand what this statement means. Refer to BSSS publication: What’s plagiarism? How you can avoid it.

Student ID:

Teacher Name:

Unit:

Task name:

Date due:

I understand the policies on plagiarism of both the College and the Board of Senior Secondary Studies. I certify that:

(a) the work that I have submitted is my own work and has not been submitted for assessment before;

(b) I have kept a copy of this assignment and all relevant notes and reference material that I used in the production of the assignment;

(c) I have given references for all sources of information that are not my own, including the words, ideas and images of others.

Student signature
(for hard copy submissions):

Student name (ONLY for electronic submissions in IT, Media etc):

Date submitted:

Receipt of Assignment

Student’s signature:------------------------ Student’s Name:__________________________

Teacher’s name:---------------------------- Date:---------------------------

Assignment Number: (handwrite same number as above)

Students may be asked to verify their work at any time.
Request for Extension of Time

Student's Name: ____________________________

I wish to apply for an extension of time for the task specified below:

Subject: ............................................. Teacher's Name: ..........................................................
Year Level: .............. Task: ..............................................................

Reason for extension (documentary evidence from parent/doctor may be required)

In applying for this extension I assure the Principal that I am not taking unfair advantage over other students in this course.

Student's signature: ____________________________ Date: __________
Parent's signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Studies Coordinator

I have noted the above request and  have / have not  granted an extension of time.

Extension time: .......... days. Assessment task is now due by: ______________________

Studies Coordinator’s signature: ____________________________ Date: __________
Class Teacher’s signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Request for Extension of Time

Student Copy

Please attach to assessment task

Student’s Name: ____________________________ Subject: ____________________________

Studies Coordinator

I have noted the above request and  have / have not  granted an extension of time.

Extension time: .......... days. Assessment task is now due by: ______________________

........

Studies Coordinator’s signature: ____________________________ Date: __________
Class teacher’s signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

This form must be given to the Studies Coordinator before the assessment task is due.