

2026 Higher School Certificate

RULES AND PROCEDURES



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Cover image (detail, modified for cover):
Imogen Gavin, Casino High School, Bundjalung Country
My Jarjum Country, painting
2024 HSC Visual Arts student

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About the HSC Rules and Procedures guide 2026

This guide helps you understand the rules and requirements that an HSC student must follow.

Each student must review and sign their Confirmation of Entry. By signing the Confirmation of Entry, you are certifying you have read this guide. You can now check your Confirmation of Entry by accessing the *Students Online* website and digitally sign while logged into your account. Your school can help you with how to do this.

The *Education Act 1990* (NSW) governs the award of the HSC. Under this Act, NESA is empowered to make and enforce rules and requirements for the HSC.

The main rules and requirements for the HSC are in this guide.

Students can obtain more detailed explanations by referring to the NSW Curriculum website, Assessment Certification Examination (ACE) rules.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this guide:

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
HSC	Higher School Certificate
NESA	New South Wales Education Standards Authority
PDF	Portable Document Format
RoA	Record of Achievement
RoSA	Record of School Achievement
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE NSW	Technical and Further Education New South Wales
UAC	Universities Admissions Centre
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Students Online

Overview

The *Students Online* website is an important channel of communication between you and NESA. It provides information and advice. NESA will publish important information in *Students Online*, including your HSC timetable and HSC results. In *Students Online*, regularly check your personal details are correct:

- name
- student number
- email address
- mobile phone number.

Your account will close on **30 June** the year after you complete your final HSC course.

Activating your Students Online account

If you have not previously logged into your *Students Online* account to see your Years 10 and 11 course entries and results, **activate your account now**. If there is an error in activating your account, please ask your school to enter your email address in *Schools Online* to ensure your account has been created.

Once logged into your account, you will be able to see your personal study details such as your HSC exam timetable, assessment ranks, HSC course entries and results, and all your previous Years 10, 11 and 12 course entries and results. Remember you can digitally sign your Confirmation of Enrolment once you have checked your details are correct.

1. Students with atypical circumstances

1.1 Understanding HSC pathways

While most students complete their HSC over 2 years during Years 11 and 12, there are other study options. For example, if you want to study while you work, care for your family or take part in elite sports or cultural activities, one of these 5 pathways may suit you.

Pathway	Description
1. Accumulating	You can take up to 5 consecutive years to finish your studies, starting from the first year you complete an HSC course.
2. Repeating	You can repeat one or more courses within the 5 years (see pathway 1) without a penalty. Your RoSA will report the results of all completed courses. Courses not completed will be listed with a date you stopped participating. If eligible, the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) will calculate your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) from your most recent HSC results
3. Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL)	<p>You may be able to count courses you did at TAFE or other non-school educational institutions towards your HSC as Credit Transfer.</p> <p>Or you may not need to complete some course components, if you can show that you have met the necessary outcomes in another way via RPL, such as through interstate study.</p> <p>For general education this may apply to an entire Preliminary course, part of a Preliminary course or part of an HSC course. For more information, see the ACE rules for Credit transfer and RPL on the NSW Curriculum website.</p> <p>For VET this may apply to part of a course or the entire course. For more information, see Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer within VET courses on the NESA website.</p>
4. Accelerating/Early commencement	<p>You may be able to complete an HSC course, sit for the HSC exam in that course and accumulate these results before you are in Year 12.</p> <p>You may be able to start a Stage 6 course while in Year 9 or Year 10 and accumulate the course unit credit towards the HSC.</p>

Pathway	Description
5. Undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship	You can start an apprenticeship or complete a traineeship while you study at school. A school-based apprenticeship or traineeship combines paid work, training and school studies. You will gain an industry recognised national VET qualification and credit towards your HSC. For more information see School based apprenticeships and traineeships.

1.2 Leaving without your HSC

If you decide to leave school before completing the requirements for your HSC, you can access various records that summarise the courses you have studied and any results:

- **eRecord:** You can retrieve a record of your results from *Students Online* in the Certificates/eRecord section at any time until 30 June the year after you leave school.
- **Transcript of Study (ToS):** If you do not meet the eligibility requirements for a RoSA, you may be eligible for a ToS. Once your school nominates you as a school leaver, you can download a PDF copy from *Students Online* in the Certificates/eRecord section until 30 June the year after you leave school.
- **Record of School Achievement (RoSA):** You may be eligible for a RoSA if you meet certain criteria. The RoSA shows your courses and results for Years 10 and 11, and any HSC courses you have taken. If you leave school before completing HSC courses, your school can nominate you for a RoSA that includes HSC courses you participated in but did not complete before leaving school. If you complete one or more HSC courses but do not meet the requirements for your HSC, a RoSA will be automatically available in *Students Online* in the Certificates/eRecord section from the day HSC results are released until 30 June the year after you leave school.
- **Reading, writing and numeracy test results:** While you are still enrolled in school, you can take online minimum standard reading, writing and numeracy tests and show the results to potential employers. Access results via the Messages section in *Students Online*.

If you are thinking about leaving school before you complete the HSC, talk to your teachers about the RoSA and the reading, writing and numeracy tests.

2. Before you start your HSC

2.1 Maintaining honesty and integrity

Honesty is key for all students and staff

The academic honesty of students completing assessment tasks, exams, and tests is critical to the integrity of the HSC. Dishonest behaviour carried out for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage in the assessment process undermines the standard of scholarship represented by the award of the HSC and constitutes malpractice. Students, teachers and others who guide them are responsible for knowing and complying with

NESA's rules regarding malpractice. These rules are outlined in this guide, and in the All My Own Work program, ACE rules for malpractice, Course completion, non-completion and appeals, HSC minimum standard, and HSC practical exams, on the NSW Curriculum website.

You must be honest when completing all your school-based assessment tasks, exams and submitted works.

Always acknowledge your sources

You must acknowledge any part of your work that was written, created or developed by someone other than you. Failure to appropriately acknowledge sources can constitute plagiarism and may be penalised through malpractice procedures. This includes any material from other sources, for example:

- books
- journals
- generative artificial intelligence
- the internet and all electronic resources
- music
- art
- peers' work.

For projects, submitted works, and performances this includes work undertaken by others.

You do not need to formally acknowledge material that you learnt from your teacher in class.

2.2 Understanding malpractice

Any form of malpractice is unacceptable

Malpractice is any dishonest behaviour and/or attempt to gain an unfair advantage over other students. This includes knowingly helping other students to engage in malpractice.

Malpractice in any form including plagiarism, collusion, misrepresentation and breach of assessment conditions is unacceptable. NESA treats allegations of malpractice very seriously and there are significant penalties for detected malpractice in HSC exams.

If you are found to have engaged in malpractice in your HSC exam, it may result in **penalties such as a reduction in marks or the cancellation of the course, which could make you ineligible for the HSC.**

If your school determines that you have engaged in malpractice in a school-based assessment task, it will be recorded in the Malpractice Register and your school may take further action.

Some examples of malpractice are:

- copying part or all of someone else's work and presenting it as your own
- using material directly from books, journals, the internet, or any other offline/online resources, without acknowledging the source
- unauthorised use of generative AI (artificial intelligence) tools
- building on someone else's ideas without acknowledging the original source
- buying, stealing or borrowing someone else's work and presenting it as your own
- submitting work that someone else, eg a parent, tutor or subject expert, substantially contributed to

- using someone else's words, ideas, designs or work in projects and performance tasks without mentioning the source
- paying a third party to produce or prepare material and presenting it as your own
- not acknowledging any work completed by others for your submitted work or performance
- not acknowledging the use of your own work previously submitted for another purpose or course
- referencing fabricated or non-existent sources
- breaching school exam rules
- cheating in an HSC exam
- sharing answers to an assessment with another student through digital, written or verbal means
- using an unauthorised electronic device, unapproved calculator or unauthorised material in an HSC exam
- using non-approved aids in a school-based assessment task
- giving false reasons for not handing in work by the due date
- impersonating another student sitting for the HSC
- helping another student to engage in malpractice
- providing fraudulent evidence in applications for disability provisions or illness/ misadventure
- being responsible for actions done or omitted to be done that confer an unfair advantage relating to the outcome of any HSC exam –irrespective of whether such actions occur before, during or after such an exam or assessment.

You might need to prove your work is your own

If you are suspected of plagiarism, you will need to show that all work is entirely your own. You might need to:

- prove and explain your work process with diaries, journals, notes, working plans, sketches or progressive drafts that show how your ideas developed
- answer questions about the assessment task, exam or submitted work being investigated to show your knowledge, understanding and skills.

3. Early in Year 12

3.1 Meeting HSC eligibility requirements

Know the eligibility basics

To be eligible for the HSC, you must:

- have completed Year 10 or its equivalent that is recognised by NESA
- attend a NSW government school, an accredited non-government school, TAFE NSW or a school outside NSW recognised by NESA
- complete All My Own Work (or its equivalent) on the NESA website, unless entered in a pattern of study comprising only Life Skills courses for Years 11 and 12

- satisfactorily complete courses in a Year 11 (Preliminary) and Year 12 (HSC) pattern of study required by NESA (detailed below)
- demonstrate the minimum standard of literacy and numeracy
- sit for and make a serious attempt at the required HSC exams.

Patterns of study and course requirements

You must satisfactorily complete:

- a preliminary pattern of study that includes at least 12 units
- an HSC pattern of study that includes at least 10 units.

Both patterns of study must include at least:

- 2 units of a Board Developed course in English
- 4 more units of Board Developed courses
- 3 courses of 2 or more units (either Board Developed or Board Endorsed Courses)
- 4 subjects.

Some courses have additional rules, for example:

- you can only study a maximum of 6 units of Preliminary Science courses and 7 units of HSC Science courses
- for students entered in Mathematics Extension 2, both Mathematics Extension 1 and Mathematics Extension 2 are counted as 2-unit courses
- there are specific eligibility rules for some Language courses
- course specific exclusions are detailed in the course descriptions of each syllabus.

Additional rules apply if you are seeking an ATAR. For example, the HSC pattern of study must include 10 units of examinable courses including English. The ATAR eligibility rules are determined by UAC.

NESA advises students of their ATAR eligibility on behalf of UAC.

3.2 Confirming your entry for the HSC

Make sure you are entered for all your courses

You must be entered with NESA for all the courses you are undertaking this year. This includes any courses outside your school that your principal has approved, for example, VET or distance education courses and study with an outside tutor.

Your school will direct you to review your Confirmation of Entry, which shows the following:

- your personal details
- your NESA student number
- your courses
- whether you are eligible for an HSC and an ATAR.

You must carefully check all your personal details such as name, date of birth, address and contact details. Advise your school if any of these need to change. Carefully check your courses, any eligibility messages and discuss these with your school.

You **must** complete the declaration on the Confirmation of Entry either physically or digitally. If you would like an ATAR so you can apply to universities, make sure your Confirmation of Entry indicates that you are eligible for an ATAR.

Your Students Online account will show key details

Your *Students Online* account is automatically updated as your school enters or updates your course enrolments and other details with NESA.

You can log in with your NESA student number and NESA PIN to see:

- messages from NESA
- your personal details
- your results history, for example your grades for Years 10 and 11.

When available, you will also be able to see your:

- personalised exam timetable
- assessment ranks
- HSC results
- VET qualification, if the VET course was delivered by a school system Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

3.3 Changing or correcting your entry, school or contact details

Check your Confirmation of Entry carefully

When reviewing your Confirmation of Entry, check it closely and tell your school about any changes as soon as possible. Examples of changes could include:

- name
- date of birth
- address details.

Also raise with your school:

- any incorrect details about course or exam eligibility errors, or
- if your school has not provided all information about you (eg Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin).

You **must** then repeat the steps to sign your new and updated Confirmation of Entry.

If you transfer to another school after entering for the HSC, you must complete and sign a new Confirmation of Entry.

Update your contact details immediately

You should log into *Students Online* and update your details if, during your HSC year, you change your:

- postal address
- email address
- mobile phone number.

You should provide a **personal** email address and mobile phone number. We need your current contact details to send you important information, for example:

- exam details
- the status of applications (eg disability provisions or illness and misadventure)
- nomination for any showcase events
- your HSC results
- other relevant communications after you leave school.

If you are eligible for an ATAR, you should also make sure you update your details with UAC. Visit the UAC website or phone (02) 9752 0200.

3.4 Applying for disability provisions

NESA may approve disability provisions for HSC exams if you have a disability that would, in a normal exam situation, prevent you from:

- reading exam questions, or
- communicating responses.

If you need to apply for disability provisions, speak to an appropriate staff member you are comfortable with at your school. This could include your:

- principal
- school learning and support team member
- disability provisions coordinator.

Your school must submit applications for known conditions by the end of Term 1 in the year of your first HSC exam. If you know you will need disability provisions, ensure you speak to your school as early as possible so they can submit your application on time.

Emergency arrangements can be made if you have an illness or injury immediately before or during the exam that affects your ability to read or communicate your answers in the exam. If this happens, tell your principal, the disability provisions coordinator or learning and support teacher immediately.

We **cannot** approve disability provisions to compensate you for:

- difficulty completing a course or preparing for the exam
- lack of familiarity with English.

When we have processed your application, we will send a decision letter to your principal. We will also send you a *Students Online* message to let you know that we have made a decision. Your school will provide you with your decision letter.

If the school does not give you your decision letter, contact your school's disability provisions coordinator.

Read your decision letter carefully. If we have approved certain provisions, your decision letter may include links to detailed rules. Make sure you go to these links and familiarise yourself with these rules. Speak to your school if you are unsure about the decision or how to use any of your approved provisions.

4. During Year 12

4.1 Completing your school-based assessments

For most Board Developed Courses with HSC exams, school-based assessment makes up 50% of your HSC mark and is shown on your RoSA (see 6.1 Getting your HSC results).

Schools prepare and run an assessment program for each course, in line with NESA requirements. NESA determines which course components are assessed, and how they are weighted in the assessment and reporting sections under each syllabus.

Schools set individual assessment tasks and decide due dates and weightings for each. These tasks measure knowledge, skills and understanding for a wide range of outcomes. They may include:

- tests
- written assignments
- practical activities
- fieldwork
- projects.

When you start your HSC courses, your school must give you details of your assessment schedule, including weightings and due dates.

All work that you present in any HSC school-based assessment task or exam must be your own. Malpractice, including plagiarism, could mean that you receive zero marks for that task or exam (see 2.1 Maintaining honesty and integrity and 2.2 Understanding malpractice).

NESA moderates your final school-based assessment mark in calculating your final results for courses that have HSC exams

Your school uses your performance in assessment tasks to calculate your school-based assessment mark for each course. If you study a course at an institution outside your home school, that institution provides your assessment mark.

At the end of the assessment program, your school (or other institution delivering the course) sends your assessment marks to NESA. NESA then moderates these marks to calculate the assessment marks that appear on your results (see 6.1 Getting your HSC results).

Moderating means adjusting your school assessment marks so they are on the same scale as your school's exam marks for that course. Each school group's assessment marks are adjusted based on how the school group performs in the HSC exam. NESA does not change your rank order (your position in the school group for each course) that your school submits. To find out more, see Assessment moderation on the NESA website.

4.2 Completing your courses and work placements

Your principal certifies that you have completed a course

Your principal will certify that you have completed a Board Developed or Board Endorsed Course if, in your principal's view, there is enough evidence that you have met the following criteria:

1. followed the course
2. applied yourself with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences that the school provided in the course
3. achieved some or all the course outcomes.

For courses where school-based assessment marks are submitted, students must make a genuine attempt at assessment tasks that contribute more than 50% of the available marks.

For most VET Industry Curriculum Framework courses and some VET Board Endorsed courses, you must undertake set work placement hours to develop industry competencies and practise learned skills. You must complete any required work placement to complete these courses. If mandatory work placements are not completed, your school will issue you with a non-completion of course requirements (N-determination).

You will receive a warning if you are not meeting course requirements

If you are in danger of not completing a course, your school will give you a written warning in time for you to meet criteria 1 to 3 above.

If you do not complete a course:

- you will receive no result in that course
- the course will not appear on your NESA record
- the course will not count towards your HSC pattern of study.

Your school will tell you, in writing, if your principal determines you did not complete a course. You will then have the right to appeal to the school against this determination. If your appeal is unsuccessful, you can appeal to NESA. Your principal will explain this to you and tell you how to appeal.

4.3 Planning for exams and getting your timetable

Check Students Online for your personal HSC exam timetable

We publish the HSC exam timetable on the NESA website and personalised timetables on *Students Online* in Term 2. Check that all your exams appear and tell your school immediately if any courses are missing. Be especially careful with courses with similar names, such as the different Mathematics courses, and ensure the correct course appears on your timetable. Check your exam centre location and make sure it is correct.

If the published HSC timetable lists an exam clash for you, both you and your principal will have been notified by email. You will be able to see the adjustment in your personal timetable. Please contact your school immediately if there is an error.

You must read your timetable carefully. If you miss an exam because you misread the

timetable, contact your principal immediately. You cannot apply for illness/misadventure on these grounds (for further information, see 5.1 Attending your exams).

If you change any courses during the year, you must be aware of the updates to your personal timetable on *Students Online*. You cannot apply for illness/misadventure due to having an outdated timetable.

If you are studying English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1 or a 240-hour VET Industry Curriculum Framework course, you may sit for the corresponding optional HSC exam. (Students studying the 360-hour Human Services Framework course are also eligible to sit for the HSC exam.) You will not automatically be entered for these exams as they are not compulsory.

If you want to sit for the optional HSC exam, tell your school, even if you are studying the course outside of your school, such as at TAFE NSW or at another RTO. The exam for these courses will be held at your main school, not the school where you are studying the course. If you plan to sit for the optional HSC exam, it should appear on your timetable. Contact your school if it is not listed.

Your exam mark for each Board Developed Course is based on how you perform in the external HSC exam, which we set and mark. Some courses have a practical component (project, submitted work or performance) in addition to the written exam component.

Online exams are held for Enterprise Computing, Science Extension and Software Engineering. You should complete the sample exam for the relevant course to ensure you are familiar with the format and functions of the exam.

There are no external HSC exams for Life Skills courses or Board Endorsed Courses.

4.4 Completing practical exams (projects, submitted works and performances)

Check the requirements

The HSC exams for the following courses include a practical component:

- Dance
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- English Extension 2
- Industrial Technology
- Languages (except classical languages and [Language] and Literature courses)
- Music
- Society and Culture
- Textiles and Design
- Visual Arts.

See Important dates for all practical exams on the NESA website.

You need to maintain general community standards in your HSC practical exams. This means considering the values and culture of your school and its community as you develop these works. Works may not be selected for showcase events if the content and presentation of the work are considered inappropriate for a general audience.

The assessment and reporting documents for each course are also on the NESAs website. They show the requirements for practical exams. You should read and understand them to make sure you meet all the requirements. The markers consider the course requirements when marking your work.

You cannot submit any part of a work for more than one course. If you are repeating a course that includes a submitted work, you cannot resubmit a work that has already been marked for the HSC without NESAs permission. If you developed a major work for a previous HSC exam but did not submit it, you can only submit it for your current course if your school agrees.

Your school must certify all components of the HSC practical exam

For all practical exam components (projects, submitted works and performances), you will need to sign a declaration stating that:

- the work is your own
- you have properly acknowledged anyone else’s words, ideas, designs or work that you have used (see 2.1 Maintaining honesty and integrity).

Your teacher will monitor and record the progress of your work. Your teacher and principal must then certify that you did the work under the teacher’s supervision and that it:

- is your own work
- is consistent with earlier drafts and other examples of your work
- was completed and/or submitted by the due time/date.

If a practical exam component is not certified, your marks may be reduced, or you may get a mark of zero.

If you are planning a work that you will need to work on at home, you must get your teacher’s permission.

Loss or damage

We will take every care with your submitted work but are not responsible for any loss or damage sustained in transit or during marking. You should insure your work if you are concerned.

Keep copies of your submitted works if you can.

Some courses have specific exam details

Course	Practical exams
Dance	Performance exams may be held at different exam centres. Check <i>Students Online</i> or ask your school for details.
Design and Technology	Hand in your major project to your teacher by the due date.

Course	Practical exams
Drama	<p>Your teacher will confirm with you the date, time and location of your performance exam(s) before the exam period.</p> <p>Performance exams may be held at different exam centres. Check <i>Students Online</i>.</p> <p>Hand in individual projects in Critical Analysis, Design, Scriptwriting and Video Drama to your teacher by the due date.</p> <p>Your teacher will tell you if you need to submit your project electronically as a PDF.</p>
English Extension 2	<p>Hand in your major work and reflection statement to your teacher electronically by the due date. Multimedia students should talk to their teacher about submitting their work.</p> <p>Your teacher will tell you if you need to submit your project in hard copy.</p>
Industrial Technology	Hand in your major project to your teacher by the due date.
Languages	Oral exams take place in Term 3 and may be held at different exam centres. Check <i>Students Online</i> for your Student Confirmation Sheet or ask your school for details.
Music	<p>Your teacher will confirm with you the date, time and location of your performance exam(s) before the exam period.</p> <p>Hand in compositions and musicology essays to your teacher as PDFs and MP3s by the due date.</p> <p>Performance exams may be held at different exam centres. Check <i>Students Online</i>.</p>
Science Extension	Hand in your Scientific Research Report to your teacher electronically as a PDF by the due date. Ensure you verify and check your Report is correct after it is uploaded by your teacher.
Society and Culture	Hand in your Personal Interest Project to your teacher electronically as a PDF by the due date.
Textiles and Design	Hand in your Major Textiles Project to your teacher by the due date.
Visual Arts	Hand in your Body of Work to your teacher by the due date.

If you study English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1 or Numeracy, your final result will be a grade (A to E) submitted by your school. If you do the optional HSC exam for English Studies or Mathematics Standard 1 course, your final result will be an exam mark and an HSC Performance band. Your final HSC mark will be the same as your exam mark.

5. Term 4

5.1 Attending your exams

Arrive early and be prepared for each exam

On the day of the first English exam and for the:

- Science Extension
- Enterprise Computing
- Software Engineering exams

arrive at the exam centre at least 30 minutes before the exam starts. For all other exams, arrive at least 10 minutes early. If you arrive more than one hour after an exam has started, you can enter the exam, but you will need to explain why NESA should accept your responses for marking. The presiding officer will give you instructions on how to submit this explanation to NESA.

If you miss an exam because you misread the timetable, contact your principal immediately. You cannot apply for illness or misadventure on these grounds.

If you miss an exam for a course that does not have a practical exam component, you will not be eligible to receive a result in that course. You must see your principal, who will need to write to NESA to explain the situation. If NESA accepts the reason, you will receive zero marks for the exam, but you will retain the course and the assessment mark.

If you miss an exam for which there is a practical exam component, you will:

- retain the course if you have completed the other components
- receive zero marks for the component you missed.

You must:

- be prepared to attend exams at your own expense at the times and exam centres that we arrange
- sit for your exams at the centres specified on your personal exam timetable, even if you studied elsewhere
- contact your school if you cannot get to your exam because of unusual circumstances, eg a flood or other extreme weather conditions. You may be able to sit for the exam at another centre
- only sit for exams in courses for which you are entered. You cannot change or add courses during exams
- sit for all exams you are entered in, unless you are incapable of attending due to unforeseen illness or misadventure.

Students are reminded not to put themselves in danger by attempting to attend an exam, for example during bushfires or floods.

Tell someone immediately if you are ill or have a misadventure

If you have an illness or misadventure:

- and you cannot attend an exam, tell your principal immediately
- before the exam but you can still attend, tell the presiding officer when you arrive
- during an exam and it may have affected your performance, tell the presiding officer immediately.

If you do not attend an exam and NESA declines your illness or misadventure application, you will receive no marks for that component (eg the speaking component of a Language course or one paper of an English course). If the course has only one component, you will receive no result for the course and it will not appear on your NESA record. This could mean you are no longer eligible for your HSC or ATAR (see 5.5 Applying for illness or misadventure).

If you are entered for an Extension course (other than Mathematics Extension 2) and do not sit for the related 2-unit course exam, you will receive no result for either course – unless you submit an illness or misadventure application, and we uphold it.

If you are an English Extension 2 or Mathematics Extension 2 student and you do not sit for the related Extension 1 exam, you will receive no result for either course – unless you submit an illness or misadventure application, and NESA upholds it.

5.2 Bringing the right exam equipment

Know what to bring with you

You should bring the exam equipment you need and know what equipment is allowed for each exam. Make sure that your equipment is in good working order, because we will not uphold misadventure applications for equipment failure.

You can bring the following items into your exams:

- black pens (no pens with ink that can be erased) – make sure you bring spare pens to each exam
- pencils (must be at least 2B), erasers and a sharpener
- a ruler
- highlighter
- water in a clear label-free bottle
- a watch (**not** a programmable or smart watch), which you must take off, place on your desk in clear view and not touch during the exam.

You need to bring certain equipment (eg a calculator) for some exams. Check the list of equipment for specific exams on *Students Online* or the NESA Exam equipment list.

If you are allowed a scientific calculator, make sure you have an approved model.

If you are studying Enterprise Computing, Science Extension or Software Engineering you need to use a supported device with the latest version of the lockdown browser pre-installed. If using a laptop, ensure it is connected to power or has full battery. Speak to your teacher to make sure you have the right computer. Smartphones, Chromebooks or iPads cannot be used for any online exams.

When equipment is listed for an exam, it means that you might need it to answer some questions. If equipment is listed as optional, it is not essential for answering any questions, but you can bring and use it if you wish.

Leave other items outside the exam room

You **must not** bring any of the following items into your exam room:

- mobile phones
- smart glasses
- programmable watches eg a smart watch
- electronic devices (except an approved calculator or wired headphones where permitted). This includes any other communication devices, organisers, tablets (eg iPads), wireless earphones/headphones (eg AirPods), electronic dictionaries, and music players
- stopwatches
- paper, printed or written material (including your exam timetable). You can ask your presiding officer for working paper
- dictionaries (except in language exams, if allowed)
- correction fluid or correction tape
- wallets
- temporary writing on your body, even if it is unrelated to the exam.

You cannot borrow equipment during exams. The sharing of equipment between peers during an exam can constitute collusion.

Exam supervisors may inspect your equipment when you enter the room and will tell you where to place any unauthorised items. Supervisors are permitted to ask you to remove any unauthorised items. Otherwise, they can take them away from you during an exam. They are not responsible for taking care of any removed items.

If any writing is visible on your body before the exam, you will be asked to remove it. If writing is discovered during the exam, supervisors will follow malpractice procedures.

5.3 Following exam room procedures

Check your desk and papers carefully

Before starting each exam, you must sit at the desk that shows your name and NESA student number. Desks may be set up differently at each exam.

Make sure that you have the correct exam paper for the course you have entered. When the supervisor asks you to, you must also check that no pages are missing from your exam paper. Raise your hand if something is wrong with your exam paper.

For any exams with personalised exam materials, check that you have been issued the correct booklets with your NESA student number and/or name printed. Tell the exam supervisor if the materials issued to you have the incorrect student details.

You will have a set reading time for each paper. During this time, you must not write, use any equipment, including highlighters (except in online exams), or mark your paper in any way.

If you are allowed a dictionary, you can read it, but you cannot write on or mark it during reading time.

Follow all written and verbal instructions

During each exam, you **must**:

- not write on any material until you are instructed to
- only write on exam booklets or other writing material provided by the presiding officer. You should not write on any other equipment including your body, clothing or tissues
- stop writing when instructed
- read the instructions and all questions carefully. Presiding officers and supervisors cannot interpret or give instructions about exam questions
- write your exam centre number and student number on all writing booklets, question and answer booklets and answer sheets (unless that information is already printed on them). This is to be done during writing time, not in reading time
- write clearly with black pen (use pencil only if instructed to)
- write your answers in the correct answer booklets. Tell the supervisor if you use the wrong booklet. Write a note on the front of the booklet(s) stating that you wrote an answer in the wrong place. Do not rewrite your answers, but make sure you label and hand in all parts of your answers
- stop writing immediately when the supervisor tells you to
- follow the supervisor's instructions for arranging completed answers, and wait for the supervisor to collect them
- return all parts of the exam, even if you did not complete the section. Write 'non-attempt' against any question that you do not attempt
- complete the Student Completion Record listing the number of booklets you used. Wait for the supervisor to check and countersign it before you leave your desk.

Take care with identifying information and avoid leaving early

During each exam, you **must not**:

- write your name, your school's name, or any other identifying name, symbol or mark on writing booklets, answer booklets or sheets
- leave the room, except in an emergency. If you have to leave and want to come back to continue the exam, you must be supervised while you are out of the room
- leave (finish) the exam in the first hour. Your school may not allow any students to leave early
- leave the exam in the last 15 minutes
- take any exam materials out of the room. Speak to your teacher if you want to see a paper after the exam
- leave your seat without permission.

5.4 Conducting yourself during exams

Follow your school's usual rules

You must follow the day-to-day rules of the school or institution where you sit for your exams. If you do not follow these conduct rules, you may get zero marks for the exam or no result for the course. If this reduces your completed courses to less than 10 units, you may no longer be eligible for the HSC.

The presiding officer and supervisors are in charge of HSC exam rooms and will enforce HSC exam conduct during the exam period.

Behave politely and take exams seriously

During each exam, you **must**:

- always follow the supervisors' instructions
- make a serious attempt at the exam by answering a range of question types (**note**: answering only multiple-choice questions is not considered a serious attempt – you may have the course cancelled)
- answer in English, unless the question paper directs otherwise. If you do not write in English, you will get zero marks for your answer
- behave politely and courteously towards the supervisors and other students.

During each exam, you **must not**:

- cheat
- include frivolous, offensive, threatening or objectionable material
- write outside of the designated exam writing time
- take any of the items prohibited in section 5.2 into the room
- speak to anyone other than a supervisor, unless approved by NESA (eg if you have a reader/writer)
- share equipment or items with anyone else in the exam room
- behave in any way that may disturb another student or disrupt the running of the exam
- disregard instructions or warnings from a supervisor
- be untruthful or provide false information to a supervisor
- be affected by alcohol or illegal drugs
- eat unless approved by NESA (eg if you have diabetes)
- take any exam material out of the room
- write on your body (eg your arms), tissues or material that is not exam material
- leave the room if your principal requires all students to stay until each exam ends.

Supervisors can ask you to leave the exam if you do not follow these rules. You will then be reported to NESA. You could get zero marks for the exam and retain the course, or your course may be cancelled which may affect your eligibility for the HSC. If your actions might be illegal, you will also be reported to the police.

5.5 Applying for illness or misadventure

Apply if an unexpected illness or misadventure affects your exam performance

If unexpected illness or misadventure stops you from attending an exam or affects your performance in the exam, it is your right and responsibility to submit an illness or misadventure application.

To do this, ask your principal for the application forms and the Information Guide for Students, which explain how to apply. Follow the instructions and keep the acknowledgement letter you will receive in *Students Online*.

Illness or misadventure applications are for cases where an illness or misadventure:

- occurred immediately before or during an HSC exam
- was unexpected
- was beyond your control
- prevented you from attending OR diminished your exam performance.

These applications do **not** cover:

- difficulty preparing or lost preparation time
- incorrect exam equipment, including devices for online exams with full battery at the start of the exam
- being unaware of exam content or functions
- alleged deficiencies in teaching
- lost time or facilities for study before the formal study vacation
- misreading exam timetables
- misreading exam instructions
- entering or sitting for the wrong exam
- long-term illness (eg glandular fever, asthma or epilepsy), unless you suffer a flare-up of the condition during the exam period
- conditions for which you have been granted disability provisions, unless you have further unexpected difficulties
- conditions for which you should have applied for disability provisions
- courses where you are a self-tuition student
- other commitments such as participation in entertainment, family holiday, work, sporting events, or attendance at exams conducted by other education organisations.

Always attend exams if you can, even if you have had an illness or misadventure. NESA does not expect you to attend an exam against medical advice or if it is unsafe to do so.

Speak to your principal if you are unable to attend an exam.

Understand what happens next

If you apply for illness or misadventure, you will need to include advice from a relevant independent expert. For example, a doctor or police officer must complete Section C of the form, to indicate:

- why you could not attend the exam, or
- how your exam performance was affected.

You **must** seek independent evidence on the **same day**, either immediately before or after each exam for which you are applying. The documentation you provide must be current, specific to the date and time of the exam, and submitted with the Illness or Misadventure form. **A medical certificate that merely states you were unfit for work or study is unacceptable.**

NESA will not uphold an illness/misadventure application without sufficient evidence supporting a genuine reason.

Your school must lodge the illness or misadventure application for HSC written exams with NESA within one week of the affected exam.

If you are affected in multiple exams, the school must submit your application within one week of your last affected exam.

For practical components (projects, submitted works, performances or language orals), your school must submit your application within one week of the submission, performance or oral exam date. Your principal or delegate must certify your application. We will only consider late applications in exceptional circumstances.

If we uphold your application, you will receive either:

- your exam mark, or
- a mark calculated from your assessment mark or estimated mark, or unaffected components of your exam

whichever is higher.

You will receive a decision letter for your illness or misadventure application via *Students Online* on the same day as the release of your HSC results.

5.6 Appealing an assessment rank

Talk to your teacher if you believe your rank is incorrect

You can find out your assessment ranks (your final position in each school course) in your *Students Online* account after the final HSC exam.

You cannot appeal your marks for individual assessment tasks. But if you feel your rank is wrong in a course, talk to your teacher immediately.

If you are still not satisfied that your rank is correct, you can apply to your principal for a review.

Read about the requirements for appealing your rank in an HSC course, on the NESA website.

If you want to apply for a review, you must do this before NESA's cut-off date. Your school will tell you the review outcome and inform NESA if your assessment mark should change.

You can appeal to NESA if you are unhappy with your school's review

If you are dissatisfied with the **process** of the school's review, you can ask your principal to lodge an appeal with NESA.

Read about the requirements for appealing your rank in an HSC course, on the NESA website.

Your school can provide you with an assessment rank appeal form. You must lodge appeals to NESA at your school by the cut-off date on the form. NESA will not process any appeals after this date, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

NESA will not revise assessment marks or rank order. If NESA upholds your appeal, we will ask the school to correct any errors.

6. Results

6.1 Getting your HSC results

In December, your HSC results will be available in *Students Online* and sent to you by email and SMS.

Your RoA or RoSA will list each HSC course you completed and the corresponding results. For Board Developed Courses with an external HSC exam, the results will report your achievement against standards that clearly describe your level of knowledge, skills and understanding.

VET courses will refer to 'Vocational documentation'. Life Skills courses will refer to 'Profile of Student Achievement'.

NESA will provide your full credentials and VET qualifications as free PDF documents in *Students Online* in the Certificates/eRecord section until 30 June the year after you leave school. You should download and save your HSC/VET/RoSA PDF credentials to your personal device before your account expires.

If you are eligible for the HSC, you will receive a hard copy of your testamur by mail from the end of January.

If you want a printed or certified copy of your HSC/RoSA/VET credentials, you can order these for a small fee. Go to Results Services in *Students Online*.

VET qualifications (Certificate and Transcript, or Statement of Attainment) will only be available through *Students Online* for VET courses delivered by a school system/sector RTO. Where a VET course has been delivered by TAFE NSW or another provider, the VET qualification will be available from that RTO.

6.2 Understanding different course records

Your RoA and RoSA will list your completed courses and results for Year 11 and Year 10 on separate pages.

The following table explains the results and records you will receive for your courses:

Course type	Results and records
Board Developed Course	<p>For most courses, you will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a moderated assessment mark • an exam mark • an HSC mark. <p>The HSC mark is the rounded average of your exam mark and moderated assessment mark. You will also receive a performance band..</p>
Board Developed Course with an optional HSC exam	<p>For English Studies and Mathematics Standard 1 you will receive a grade (A to E) for your school-based assessment.</p> <p>If you do the optional HSC exam for the course, you will receive an exam mark. The HSC mark and performance band are based on the exam mark only.</p> <p>For VET courses, all course names and unit values will be listed. You will receive an exam mark for any VET exams you complete. The HSC mark and performance band are based on the exam mark only. You will also receive an AQF VET Certificate and Transcript of Competencies Achieved, or a Statement of Attainment for your achieved units of competency.</p>
Board Developed Course with Life Skills content and outcomes	<p>The course name and unit value will be listed if you completed the course.</p> <p>You will also receive a Profile of Student Achievement listing your achieved outcomes.</p>
VET Board Endorsed Course	<p>All course names and unit values will be listed.</p> <p>For your achieved units of competency, you will also receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an AQF VET Certificate and Transcript of Competencies Achieved, or • a Statement of Attainment.
Board Endorsed Course (other than VET courses)	<p>Your assessment mark is the unmoderated mark that your school or provider submitted. This mark cannot be compared with marks for similar courses at other schools.</p>
Course studied with an outside tutor	<p>Your result will be reported as an exam mark and an HSC mark.</p>

6.3 Getting course reports or a RoSA

Course reports for each Board Developed HSC course will be available in *Students Online*. These reports will show you:

- the performance bands
- what a typical student knows and can do at each achievement level
- a graph of the mark distribution for the course.

Students will receive a course report for English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1 or a VET Industry Curriculum Framework course only if they have sat for the optional exam.

If you are not eligible for an HSC and are leaving school, you will receive a RoSA. Your RoSA will show your grades in all the Year 10, 11 and 12 courses that you completed.

If you are not eligible for a RoSA, you will receive a Transcript of Study listing your completed courses and results, and the courses you were studying at the time you left school.

6.4 Finding out your ATAR

For information about your ATAR or UAC PIN, visit the UAC website or call (02) 9752 0200.

The ATAR is provided directly to students from UAC. It will not appear in *Students Online*.

7. Copyright and privacy

7.1 Using your material

NESA publishes a range of educational materials based on the HSC exams to help teachers and students understand the required standards. These materials include samples of students' work and may be in printed or electronic form.

NESA may use your original HSC exam responses in our educational publications. This includes:

- performances
- language oral exams
- submitted works and projects.

7.2 Giving your details to other organisations

The Technical Committee on Scaling calculates your ATAR for UAC. We will give the personal details and HSC results of all NSW HSC students to this committee and UAC, to undertake annual ATAR calculations.

With your consent, we will also give your Year 10 and Year 11 grades to UAC to help with early offers under the Schools Recommendation Scheme. This consent is recorded on your Confirmation of Entry.

We also provide your contact details and school results to the NSW Department of Education to allow the Department to conduct research and surveys related to its

functions. The sharing of information for this purpose is authorised by section 16 of the *Education Standards Authority Act 2013* (NSW). You will not be identified in any publications resulting from the research or survey. Please note that participation in surveys is optional.

Your school or TAFE NSW and your school sector (eg the Department of Education or Catholic Schools NSW), if applicable, can also access information about your results.

7.3 Recognising your achievement

We publish HSC merit lists on our website and give these lists to some media outlets. These lists show the name, school and course of all students who, for example, achieve an HSC mark in the top band in any course. We do not give any other students' names or results to the media.

We also give student details to several organisations to:

- award prizes or scholarships, or
- recognise high achievement in other ways.

You can ask us to keep your details confidential by requesting a privacy flag for your records. If you do, your name will not be:

- published in our merit lists, or
- given to the media or any organisation that awards prizes for HSC achievement.

You can see our privacy policy on the NSEA website.

If you need more information on HSC privacy issues, email privacy@nesa.nsw.edu.au. To request a privacy flag, email Student Records at records@nesa.nsw.edu.au and provide your full name, NESA student number and attach your photo identification.

My checklist

Early in Year 12

- ☐ Read this guide.
- ☐ Check that I am eligible for the HSC (if appropriate).
- ☐ Make sure that my personal details and courses, including entry for any optional exams in English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1 or VET, are correct on my Confirmation of Entry.
- ☐ Record my NESA student number.
- ☐ Check if I meet the requirements for an ATAR if I plan to apply to university.
- ☐ Read the Student Declaration on my Confirmation of Entry, then sign it.
- ☐ Go to *Students Online* to:
 - activate my account if I have not yet done so
 - update my PIN
 - check my postal address, personal email address and mobile number.
- ☐ Read and become familiar with course and assessment requirements, and with key dates. Refer to Section 4. During Year 12 of this document.
- ☐ Talk to my school if I think I need disability provisions.

Term 2

- ☐ View my personal HSC exam timetable from *Students Online*.
- ☐ Check that all my exams appear, including practical and optional exams.
- ☐ Check my exam centre locations and exam equipment I can use.
- ☐ If I applied for disability provisions for practical exams and have not received my decision letter, talk to my school.

Term 3

- ☐ Confirm my due dates for project submissions, performance exams and language oral exams.
- ☐ Submit projects on the due dates.
- ☐ Attend performance and language oral exams.
- ☐ If I applied for disability provisions for written exams and have not received my decision letter, talk to my school.

Term 4

- ☐ Check my exam timetable and the exam equipment I need.
- ☐ Attend and make a serious attempt at every exam.
- ☐ If I experience an unexpected illness or misadventure, immediately before or during an exam, submit an illness or misadventure application.
- ☐ Check my assessment ranks in *Students Online* after the last exam.
- ☐ Check that my *Students Online* account Personal Details section:
 - uses my personal email address, not my school email address, and change to my personal email address, if required
 - has my correct home address for the HSC testamur to be posted to, and correct the address, if required.
- ☐ Note my NESA student number and NESA PIN, so I can get my results online.

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