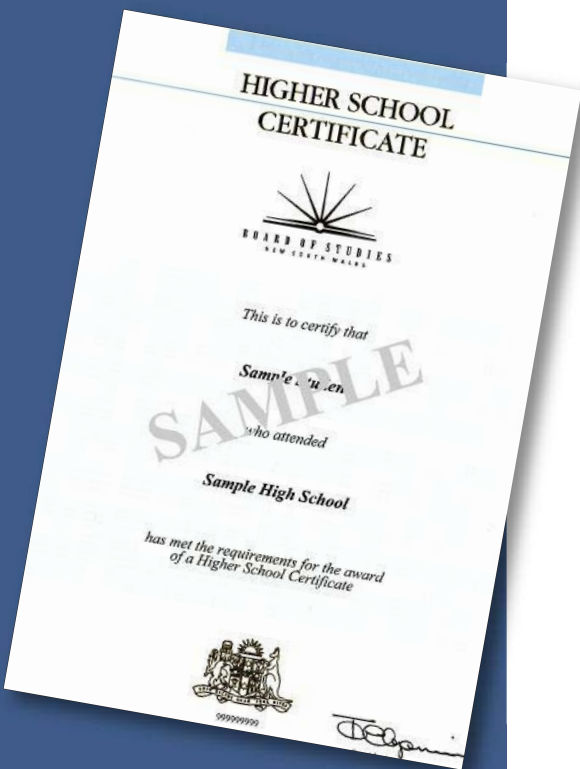


Studying for the NSW Higher School Certificate



The HSC – your VIP pass to a range of opportunities after high school from tertiary study at home or abroad, to an apprenticeship, a course at TAFE or the workforce



Achieving your HSC

Studying the HSC begins with the Preliminary year, usually studied in Year 11, after you have completed your Year 10 School Certificate.

The HSC will involve completing school-based assessment tasks throughout the HSC year and also sitting the HSC exams with the rest of the state. The results of your school-based assessments and HSC exams will contribute equally to your final HSC mark.

To be eligible for your HSC, you need to:

- be enrolled at a NSW government school, or

a registered and accredited non-government school, or a TAFE NSW institute.

- study the right number and type of Preliminary and HSC courses (see Choosing your courses)
- satisfactorily complete the requirements of those courses, including any practical or project work, or work placement
- complete assessment tasks set by your school for each course
- sit for the required HSC exams with the rest of the state

The Higher School Certificate (HSC) is the culmination of your school career and the highest educational award you can achieve at secondary school in New South Wales.

Your HSC is your VIP pass to a range of opportunities after high school.

This guide provides information and advice for choosing your HSC path, including selecting the HSC courses that are right for you.

Choosing your courses

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

When considering which courses to study, explore the content of a course. For example, what are the course outcomes? Will you be required to submit a major work or perform as part of your exams? Talk with your teachers about your strengths and weaknesses, as well as individual course requirements, before making your selections.

To achieve your HSC you must complete a minimum of:

- 12 Preliminary units (usually studied in Year 11)
- 10 HSC units (usually studied in Year 12)

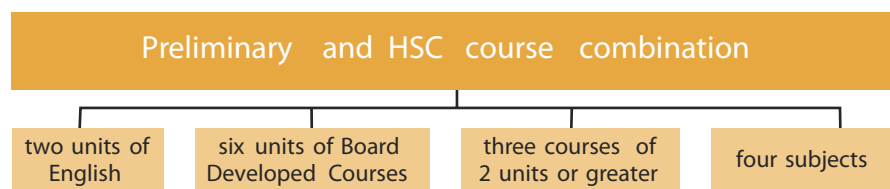
In both Year 11 and Year 12 your course selection must include at least six units of Board Developed Courses, two of which must be English; three

courses of two units or greater; and four subjects.

Most courses are worth 2 units, although some, including HSC Extension courses, are worth 1 unit. You must satisfactorily complete a Preliminary course before you can continue studying that course for your HSC.

No school can offer every HSC course to its students, so be prepared to make some compromises. Talk to your Year Adviser or Careers Adviser about the courses available at your school and individual course requirements such as prerequisites and eligibility rules. Also, make sure you ask for information about any prerequisites for your future study or work plans. You will also find the syllabuses for all HSC courses on the Board's website.

If you want an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), check that you are studying at least 10 units of eligible Board Developed Courses.



Board Developed Courses

These are the large number of courses set and examined by the Board of Studies which also contribute to the calculation of the ATAR.

Board Endorsed Courses

These courses are developed by schools, TAFE and universities. They count towards your HSC but do not have an HSC examination and do not contribute towards the calculation of your ATAR.

Special Education – Life Skills

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

You will need to talk with your Year Adviser or Careers Adviser to find out whether these courses are suitable for you. Life Skills courses do not count towards the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).



Vocational Education and Training (VET)

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

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

Satisfactory completion

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

HSC pathways

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

Accumulation

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

Repeating courses

You can repeat one or more HSC courses, but it must be within the five-year accumulation period. Results of all attempts will appear on your Record of Achievement. In calculating your ATAR, the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) will use the marks from your most recent attempt. There is no penalty for repeating a course.

Recognition of Prior Learning

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

Acceleration

Very capable students are able to study a course ahead of their year group. If you accelerate in a course, you usually sit the HSC exam for that course at the end of Year 11 and accumulate your results.

Schoolbased traineeships and apprenticeships

You can combine HSC study with a part time traineeship or apprenticeship. These combine paid work and training, lead to a recognised AQF VET credential and count towards your HSC.

Starting your HSC studies

Once you have chosen your HSC courses, you will begin studying your Preliminary year of the HSC (usually Year 11).

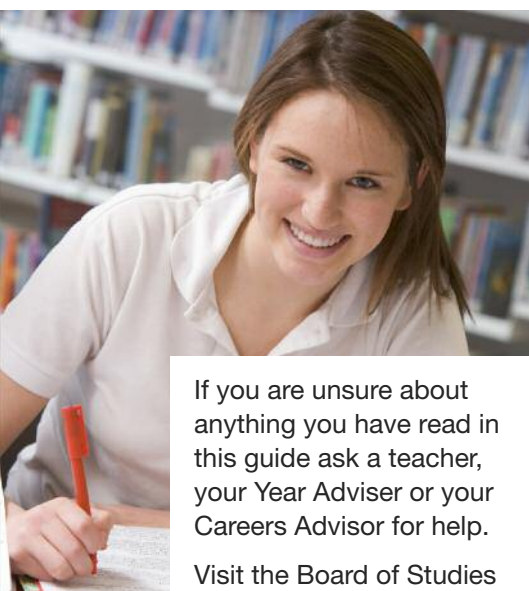
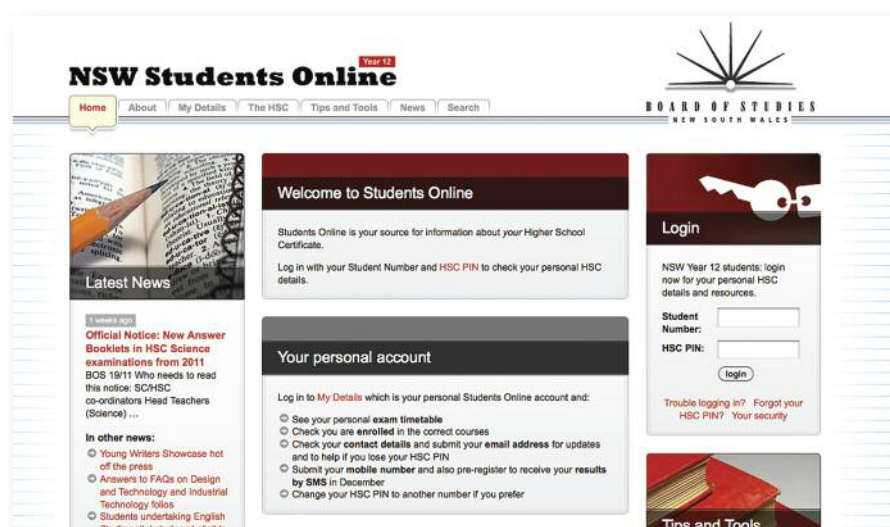
As part of HSC study, you will start to complete assessment tasks and to help you with this is the *HSC All My Own Work* program. This program helps you understand your rights and responsibilities in the HSC and ethical scholarship issues such as plagiarism and copyright. It prepares you for senior study, where you will do more independent learning and your teachers will expect more of your research. Your school will organise a time for you to complete it by the end of Term 1.

You will be awarded a Record of Achievement at the end of your Preliminary year listing all the courses you have satisfactorily completed.

Study for your HSC year will begin in Term 4 for most students, meaning you officially start Year 12 around October. You will be required to read the *Rules and Procedures for the Higher School Certificate* before starting your HSC year. Your school will give you a copy, and it is also on the Board's website.

How the HSC works

Visit Students Online NSW (studentsonline.bos.nsw.edu.au) for a step-by-step guide to how the HSC works — from getting started, completing assessments, sitting exams and understanding your HSC results. You will also find handy study tips and tools and answers to frequently asked questions about the HSC.



If you are unsure about anything you have read in this guide ask a teacher, your Year Adviser or your Careers Advisor for help.

Visit the Board of Studies website for a range of helpful resources and more information about studying for the Higher School Certificate.

MORE INFORMATION

Useful websites:

Board of Studies NSW
boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Students Online NSW
studentsonline.bos.nsw.edu.au

Education and Training – State Training Services
training.nsw.gov.au

Careers Advisory Service
cas.det.nsw.edu.au

NSW HSC online
hsc.csu.edu.au

Career Information Centres
centrelink.gov.au

Universities Admissions Centre
uac.edu.au

My Future – Occupations
myfuture.edu.au

TAFE NSW
tafensw.edu.au

Australian JobSearch
jobsearch.gov.au

