

BSSS News | Autumn 2024



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Hello Papua New Guinea

The BSSS acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, the traditional Custodians of the land on which our department is located and where we live, learn and work, and all others who have familiar or ongoing connections to this land.

We pay our respects to Ancestors and Elders, past and present.



Acknowledgements

Images pp. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14 sourced from Canva for Education

Image of Harrison on p.9 supplied

All other images from BSSS Officers.

If you are interested in seeing your images or content in this newsletter, contact bsssenquiries@act.gov.au

We are very keen to have student-created images and content in the newsletter. Please consider it!

ACS for Moderation Day 2



After several years of Dropbox, ACS is finally ready to take uploads for Moderation Days. The movement of moderation presentations into ACS means:

- Auto-importing of a number of pieces of data and metadata, including Unit Outlines, Clean Copies of assessments, student numbers, student results. No more downloading from ACS to just upload it in Dropbox!
- On Moderation Days, no need to log into different services to see the work and moderate it; it'll all be there on the one screen.
- More functionality on the day for SGLs and AGLs.

There are a number of documents and videos about preparing moderation portfolios for Moderation Day 2, 2024, including a short explanatory video, a longer explanatory video, and a help file.

Uploading Student Work to ACS

Key takeaways:

- Format doesn't matter (except inasmuch as others need to be able to view it; common file formats like PDF, docx and mp4 are recommended).
- Max file size 50MB
- Upload all the files for a particular student for an item all at once. ACS will overwrite each time it uploads for a student
- Choose between item-by-item upload or bulk upload

File upload on ACS is based on size, not format. As long as your format is one that is decodable by a standard computer (i.e., you don't need paid or specialist software to access it), you can use that format.

The maximum size for all files for a single student for a single item is 50MB.

How do I make my files smaller?

- Check your pictures; are they needlessly large? You can reduce the size of pictures through cropping and changing the resolution of pictures.
- Save PDF files as a "reduced size PDF" or use Adobe's online compressor: <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/online/compress-pdf.html>

- Save audio or video files in a compressed format
- Use automatic tools such as the "reduce file size" option on Pages, or the option to reduce photos in Powerpoint

[This explanation from a commercial provider](#) is quite thorough in its exploration of file sizes and how to reduce file sizes. Please note no endorsement of this service is implied or should be inferred.

Important: each time you upload for a student, the old file is overwritten. If you want to upload multiple files, this is 100% fine and easy to do – just upload them as a batch so that nothing is lost.

Item-by-item upload

You can upload student files one-by-one. Click on the small "document" icon next to the item for the student, select the file/s that you want to upload for that item, and upload. Remember that if you are uploading multiple files for that student, for that item, that you need to upload them all as a single batch. So for example, you might have a file for Part 1 of the assignment, Part 2 of the assignment, and the rubric – select and upload all three at the same time.

If there are multiple files, ACS will turn them into a .zip for you.

Past Moderation Days	Moderation Day 2, 2024 Onwards
“Documents” folder	
Unit Outline	Unit Outline automatically imports from ACS
Clean Copies of assessment tasks	“Coversheet” function – assessment task and information is uploaded here when the task is set, and will be available from here for moderation
Conditions Relevant forms	No longer needed. If you want to add a comment pertaining to the whole presentation, use the “presentation comments” box.
Solutions files (e.g., for tests)	Uploaded by you if required.
Extra files (e.g., listening task files, proof of cluster moderation)	Uploaded in the “upload supplementary” box in the top right.
Student Portfolios	
Students selected by teacher/s according to the requirements in the Moderation Day memo (this is published on the BSSS website under the “quality assurance” tab).	Students selected by ACS according to the requirements in the Moderation Day memo (this is published on the BSSS website under the “quality assurance” tab).
Where cohort does not fit the requirements of the Moderation Day memo (e.g., no As), teacher submits the closest, most complete portfolio in a different band.	Where cohort does not fit the requirements of the Moderation Day memo (e.g., no As), teacher submits the closest, most complete portfolio in a different band. ACS will not automatically add the student – you need to add using the “add student” button.
Where there is a significant problem with the work (e.g., no ethics approval for a major task, files irrevocably corrupted), the next nearest student in that band can be submitted.	Where there is a significant problem with the work (e.g., no ethics approval for a major task, files irrevocably corrupted), the next nearest student in that band can be submitted. ACS will not automatically add the student – you need to remove the original student and add the replacement using the “add student” button.
Where the student who is supposed to be submitted for moderation according to the Moderation Day memo has an estimate or not submitted, and there is another similar student in that band, teacher submits the closest, most complete portfolio. If there are no other students in that band, student assessment evidence is submitted regardless of estimates or non-submits.	Where the student who is supposed to be submitted for moderation according to the Moderation Day memo has an estimate or not submitted, and there is another similar student in that band, teacher submits the closest, most complete portfolio. If there are no other students in that band, student assessment evidence is submitted regardless of estimates or non-submits. ACS will not automatically add the student – you need to remove the original student and add the replacement using the “add student” button.
In a unit where there are multiple classes taught by multiple units and the grade/s identified by the Moderation Day memo aren’t in the portfolio creator’s class, the portfolio creator needs to get a digital copy of all assessment documentation and student work from the teacher of the identified student/s.	In a unit where there are multiple classes taught by multiple teachers and the grade/s identified by the Moderation Day memo aren’t in the portfolio creator’s class, the portfolio creator only needs to get a digital copy of selected student assessment evidence from the teacher of the identified student/s. ACS automatically imports all other data for the student/s.
Student assessment evidence uploaded to Dropbox.	Student assessment evidence uploaded to ACS.
Extremely large or complex files uploaded to a link or brought in on the day with a note on the PRP.	Extremely large or complex files uploaded to a link or brought in on the day with a note on the Presentation Comments.
Individual Student Profiles (ISP)	Grades and scores automatically import from ACS. If you want to add a comment on an individual student, click the plus by their name and enter as you would in a markbook.

Bulk upload

You can bulk upload student files. You need to do a little bit of prep for this; the files need to be titled with the student number (including leading zeros) at the start of the file name. If you aren't sure of the student number, hover over the student's name in ACS and it will appear. We recommend asking students to title files with their student number as part of your hand-in protocols if you'd like to bulk upload.

Click the "bulk upload" link in the header for the item. Add all student files for that item. It's okay to have multiple files for the one student as long as the student number is at the beginning of the file name. As with item-by-item, the maximum per student is 50MB and the format isn't an issue. If there are multiple files, ACS will turn them into a .zip for you.

Uploading your "Clean Copies"

Key takeaway:

- This is done through the "Coversheet" functionality and will automatically import into the Moderation Portfolio.

If you use the coversheet function, you only need to publish/do things once. Publishing Assessment Items to Student Profiles Online using the Assessment Item Coversheet function on ACS is all that is required by policy – the OBSSS does not mandate upload onto any other platform or the physical handout of any assessment task that is on SPO other than where necessary to maintain assessment conditions.

If you haven't yet created a coversheet, there are help files on the website.

Some key points:

- Coversheets are under the "Unit Information" menu in the subpage "Unit Outlines and AI Coversheets"
- The metadata will be pre-filled for you from the information in the Unit Outline and the Markbook
- There are boxes to fill in the major details, and a facility to upload files if you want a complex or custom-formatted assessment sheet

- You can choose the level of detail that goes to Student Profiles Online (abbreviated to SPO on the screen) – tick the "coversheet and attachments" box for an assignment, and the "coversheet only" box for a test
- "Coversheet and attachments" = students can see everything you uploaded
- "Coversheet only" = students can only see the coversheet
- You can include information like the teacher's name, student ID, and a mark/grade box by ticking them in the optional fields
- There are options that let you add additional date information (e.g., if the assignment is multi-part, or if the test is on different days for different classes), VET competencies, assessment conditions, and assessment policies
- There are options to import the same assessment item into multiple units in whole or in part

If something goes wrong, like someone accidentally ticks "coversheet and attachments" when they mean "coversheet only", there is policy to deal with that and the Office certification team can help you with what action to take next. (There's also an "are you sure" pop up so hopefully an accidental tick will get caught before going live!)





Have you ever wanted to know how changes and fixes are applied in ACS? Or do you just want to know if that background is a map of Canberra (it is). Or just what ACS is? We asked the certification team to tell us how ACS gets added to, or changed.

The ACT Certification System, or ACS, is a multifaceted, online database that contains: all the assessment, unit and course results of students; the VET data for school-based RTOs; student work and external moderation results; all the rules for the award of the certificate; and scales end of year 12 course scores into scaled course scores for the ATAR.

Given that complex set of custom data and the unique needs we have, there is no off-the-shelf product that could be used. ACS is therefore a bespoke product developed in partnership with the Digital, Data and Technology Solutions (DDTS) group of ACT Government.

Work on ACS is always occurring with continual refinements and enhancements.

How do bugs or minor improvements get implemented into ACS?

It all starts with identifying the bug or minor improvement.

These bugs are evaluated by the BSSS team for the pros and cons, perceived cost-benefit, and other considerations like ease of use vs added functionality.

From there these bugs and minor improvements are written up by BSSS as detailed jobs. As the BSSS team form what is called the Business Owner, these jobs will largely be from a business perspective, detailing the steps to follow, and what should occur. The jobs are then prioritised in the backlog.

At fortnightly planning meetings with the developers, these jobs are refined and clarified through questions

and answers, and an 'effort' is determined. Assuming its priority has not been re-evaluated after this, work will then begin.

Work is generally divided into two week iterations called sprints, during which the developers break down a job, develop a solution and make the solution available for the BSSS to check. This process can go back and forth in getting to the desired solution.

The certification team in the BSSS meet with the developers for a 15 minute standup meeting every day to maintain momentum and monitor progress through the sprint.

There is flexibility over when a release to ACS occurs but as there are some overheads of effort, and a release causes an outage, they are usually scheduled for the school holidays. When a release is to occur, all the jobs to be implemented are put into a final test version of ACS for BSSS to accept, and then the release can occur.

How are larger projects, such as the recent moderation changes, implemented in ACS?

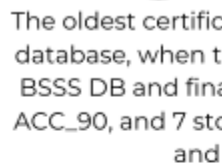
For a project that cannot be funded by typical annual administrative allocations the BSSS may participate in the budget proposal process within ACT Government.

This requires a detailed set of requirements to be costed, timelines determined, and the need and benefit to be justified for the cost.

If a project is approved, the requirements are further refined into discreet components to assist planning, final costings, and development.

From here?

ACS continues to serve as a cornerstone in fostering quality assessment data, transparency, and equity for students across the territory.




The oldest certification database we have access to is the 1990 database, when the program was called ACC. Then it became BSSS DB and finally ACS in 2009. There were only 10 tables in ACC_90, and 7 stored procedures. Compare that to 304 tables and 837 stored procedures in 2024.

Two of the early programmers for the database put in easter eggs in the code by naming some functions after themselves. These don't appear on the user side, sadly, but Fred and Steve can be found in the names of tables and other assets.

ACS is a bespoke program made for the ACT Senior Secondary System.

ACS History



Curriculum Updates

Courses up for comment

We have two courses with development documents up for feedback on the BSSS Website:

Bridging Literacy A/M course document

Health Science (Human Biology) A/T/M shape paper

These courses are at two different stages in their development – one is almost ready to go to the accreditation panel, and the other is being described prior to the writing of the full course. Please check them out and offer some feedback.

You can find course redevelopment on our website, under:

ACT BSSS System > Curriculum > Curriculum Development > Curriculum Development Consultation

You can find curriculum transition arrangements in the same menu, under Curriculum Transition Arrangements. When a course changes, there are always transition arrangements to allow the outgoing cohort to transition to the new course. Sometimes this is a teach-out period, and at other times it's the creation of a temporary integrated course so that students can count units from both courses toward a major. You'll find the information on the website, and it is disseminated to curriculum and certification coordinators through regular meetings.

Vocational Education and Training



There has been much recent national discussion and review regarding senior secondary pathways, specifically the role of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and its benefits both in and post senior secondary education. Commentary throughout these discussions and reviews frequently centred on how best to communicate to students that the achievement of an ATAR is not the only option available to them and that VET is an extremely beneficial option.

Depending on the school, engagement and participation in VET may be possible in a variety of different ways, such as:

- At school, through a BSSS integrated vocational course (A/T/M/V or A/M/V)
- At school, through a competency only VET program delivered by the school as the RTO
- At school, through an arrangement whereby a schoolteacher delivers the training on behalf of another RTO
- At school, through an arrangement whereby an external RTO delivers training to students using the school's facilities
- External to school, whereby the student undertakes their VET studies independently of the school at an external RTO
- Through a formal Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) or Traineeship

Whatever the arrangement, recommendations and responses from the national discussions and reviews offer many elements for consideration of schools when fostering and improving the engagement in VET pathways. Such considerations include:

VET should be encouraged for students who have the interests, strengths and passions that align to the offerings of the VET sector. (Report of the Review of senior

secondary pathways into work, further education and training, 2020)

Responses highlight the importance of promoting the benefits VET offers in terms of employment prospects and earnings, including:

- *The median full-time income of a VET graduate is \$2,000 higher than that of a graduate of a Bachelor's degree*
- *78% of VET graduates are employed after training*
- *Young people in apprenticeships have reported the highest level of wellbeing compared to any other post-school pathway*
- (VET for School Students: repositing VET within secondary education in South Australia)

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) is committed to assisting schools in their provision of high quality, outcomes-based VET to ACT senior secondary students. Schools and teachers are encouraged to contact the Office of the BSSS to discuss innovations and opportunities for VET delivery.

Below are some of the exciting ways students in the ACT are engaging in VET and having this contribute to their attainment of an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

St Francis Xavier College - Harrison, Year 11 – Pursues his dream career through an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA)

Harrison began a Certificate III in Carpentry under the Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASBA) program in February 2024 as a component of his Senior Studies package.

The college provides support to Harrison along his chosen path to ensure optimal chances for success and development. He allocates two days per week to his ASBA commitment and dedicates three days to school attendance.

Harrison successfully balances his responsibilities and continues to pursue his personal interests. He serves as a Level 4 referee for Capital Football, actively participates in the BelWest Committee, and indulges in his passion for racing simulation.

I'm very happy doing my ASBA. It's a good balance for students wanting to get ahead in an apprenticeship. With my Host employer, there's potential for me to earn a bit more money on top of my regular ASBA workday. I get paid extra for any overtime that I do, I worked on Moderation Day, and I can work an extra week during the holidays if I want. It can be a little challenging to manage everything, but I catch up on school-work and get assignments done as soon as possible to take the pressure off me.

Southside Training RTO – CISCO Networking and Security including a Certificate III in Information Technology.

South Canberra Schools Vocational Training are launching the CISCO Network Academy Program - for any students in our four southside colleges (Narrabundah, Canberra, Erindale and Lake Tuggeranong) as an online IT based course linked with the [ICT30129 Certificate III Information Technology](#) VET Qualification. Students who complete the CISCO online program will receive a Certificate from the Network Academy program. These Certificates are highly valued in the networking field when added to your CV. The academy program provides students with a strong portfolio ready for future employment. course is intended for students who want to complete a CISCO based course as an alternative to the BSSS Networking and Security course.

Students who complete units of competency within the course may contribute these as BSSS External VET Credit Units (E Units) towards gaining their Senior Secondary Certificate.

St Edmund's College Canberra – Nurturing Future Athletes and Fitness Enthusiasts: A Collaborative Approach to Delivering Certificate II in Sport and Recreation and Certificate III in Fitness.



Harrison at work on his VET skills

In the realm of education, innovation often arises from blending traditional methodologies with modern technology. Such is the case with the collaboration between St Edmund's and St Clare's College, supported by Binnacle Training (RTO Code 31319) in the delivery of the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation and Certificate III in Fitness.

Central to this innovative approach is the recognition that education extends beyond the confines of physical classrooms. Leveraging e-learning platforms provided by Binnacle Training, the curriculum is made accessible anytime, anywhere, catering to the diverse schedules and learning preferences of students. This flexibility empowers learners to engage with course materials during class time and at their own pace, fostering autonomy and self-directed learning—a crucial skill set for future fitness professionals. In recognition of the diverse commitments and schedules of students, this course is delivered off timetable, before the start of the school day. This structure not only accommodates the busy schedules of aspiring athletes and fitness enthusiasts but also underscores the commitment of both educators and students to prioritise education and personal development.

Students are not only supported in their learning through the digital platform, but also engage in significant practical application and real-world experiences. Through hands-on workshops, field trips, and guest lectures, students are immersed in the vibrant world of sports and fitness. Whether it's organising community events, conducting fitness assessments, or designing personalised training programs, learners are equipped

Vocational Education and Training

Endless opportunities await



with the practical skills and industry insights needed to excel in their chosen field.

The collaborative delivery of the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation and Certificate III in Fitness by St Edmund's and St Clare's College, represents a shift in traditional Vocational Education and Training delivered in years 11 and 12. By delivering this course as a VET qualification, students are exposed to curriculum that is tailored to their specific needs and adds another opportunity to students to gain access to a curriculum on top of what is already provided by the BSSS and which, through the completion of vocational competencies, contributes to the attainment of a ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

2024 marks the third cohort of students to go through the course with an expectation that over 70 students will graduate with their nationally recognised VET qualification by the end of 2025.

By harnessing the power of e-learning, practical experiences, and collaborative partnerships, this program prepares students not only for academic success but also for the challenges and opportunities that await them in the ever-evolving landscape of sports and fitness.

St John Paul II College – Building a diverse portfolio of skills through VET

Senior secondary students are often left thinking *What's next? What will be my point of difference for a training organisation, university or employer?*

To help tackle this question, St John Paul II College has implemented a program to guide students in building a portfolio of skills, to take with them post school. Through the use of a designated flexible period, all senior students are encouraged to participate in a Voca-

tional study to accompany their course work. Remarkably, 88% of the College's senior students have elected to participate in a VET course. Through this process the school has observed what seems to be an acceleration in social and emotional learning among the senior cohort. Students display more empathy and tolerance for others and are more proactive in advocating for social norms within the student body.

This year the College has offered students the following VET qualifications:

- Certificate II in Active Volunteering
- Certificate II in Foundation Skills
- Statement of Attainment in Hospitality (Barista Skills)

Students have especially enjoyed engaging with the Active Volunteering course as it allows them to "connect with a community [they] truly value" (Sienna). Furthermore, students have been surprised at the value and impact their volunteering has had on their broader community, with one student stating "Active volunteering is a great way to further your connection with the people, causes and organisations..."(Sienna).

One key take-away students have gained is the understanding that VET courses have relevance for students undertaking all types of study packages. One of the College's first students to complete the Active Volunteering course continues to advocate for their peers to get involved:

"While I initially entered into the course for academic reasons, the work I completed in the community provided a life lesson on giving back and being selfless. Even though I have received my certificate, I continue to volunteer in the community so I that I can give back." (Sienna)

Through the College's VET program, and with the partnership of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn RTO, St John Paul College II are shifting the view of VET studies, away from a belief it is only for trade students, to there being courses for everyone. The added bonus is students are not only leaving school with a portfolio that sets them apart, which includes a nationally recognised qualification but, more important, a feeling of truly being an active and committed member of their community.



The Office of the BSSS runs a student forum throughout the year; we meet four times with student representatives from all schools to seek their feedback and ideas. In our first meeting of the year, we asked about common concerns and issues that students identified.

What did the student forum have to say about assessment?

Assessment conditions

Students offered ideas about assessment conditions. These included:

- Spreading out due dates so that large assessments for different subjects aren't due on the same day
- Tasks being the commensurate length for the time that the students have to complete them, or for the weighting of the task – neither too large or too small
- Consideration of double courses in relationship to due dates; including study time, and courses with similar in-class assessments being at different times during the week
- Consistency in conditions between different courses at their schools – e.g., a consistent notes policy, a consistent expectation for word counts, consistent expectations for referencing, consistent expectations for AI use.

Students were keen to see more of what they called 'personalised' assessments: i.e., assessments that allowed them to pursue an area of passion or interest within the subject.

What do classroom teachers need to know about assessment conditions in the ACT Senior Secondary System?

- If an assessment item is in the same markbook and the same column, the assessment conditions

need to be the same as much as is practicable. These items are directly compared with one another in the statistical processes used by ACS and no amount of statistical scaling or meshing will help sort out unfair conditions at the item level. Unfair conditions might be less preparation time, access to the test questions through friends, more or less notes, or a different word count.

- Assessment conditions must be clearly stated on the task sheet. Watch out for interpretations; for example, a 2-part task with a word limit of 1500 words and no delineation of how these words should be used is a different task to a 2-part task with a word limit of 1000 words in part A and 500 words in part B.
- Special provisions need to be centrally organised and administered by your school, including a record of what provisions were given and when.
- There is now policy to help deal with compromised assessment. If an assessment is compromised – e.g., students get access to a copy early – use this policy in conjunction with your faculty leaders.

What can school leaders consider?

- What is the special provisions policy in your school, and how do you know it's being applied fairly across all faculties?
- Are students in your school aware that extensions fall under special provisions, and need to be formally and centrally applied for, with evidence? What evidence is acceptable for special provisions at your school, and how is this communicated?
- How could you facilitate faculties and classes spreading out due dates? Are there high-enrolment courses that should not have assess-

ments falling in the same week?

- With the best will in the world, clashes are unavoidable. How has your school worked with students to plan their study programs?
- Does your school have consistent policies around word limits, notes pages, and drafts?
- How has the school communicated with new staff about scaling groups and who is compared to whom in the ACT Senior Secondary System?
- Is there opportunity for a PLC/PLT to examine the consistency of assessment conditions in your school, and the impact this has on students?

Finding a balance between at-school and take-home tasks

One of the biggest points of interest for students at the first student forum meeting of the year was finding a balance between the academic integrity benefits of in-class tasks, and the learning and wellbeing benefits of take home tasks. Some direct comments from students included:

“More take-home assessments as this allows for further learning about a topic (as you get to do more independent research and spend more time on it)”

“Too many in-classes; [students would like] more take-home assignments with in-class components”

“AI means too much in-class, a lack of diversity of thinking types.”

“[assessments should be] at home + in-class. 40% for in-class. Understand AI but it is so much more pressure in exams. Two 20% is less stressful than one 40%.”

This is an extremely difficult issue for schools right now as we all grapple with the impact of AI on academic integrity. Although not all schools in the ACT Senior Secondary System permit the use of AI, all students are able to access AI (if they so wish) in non-school environments.

What might teachers experiment with?

- Is there opportunity for a practical or otherwise

spontaneous task in your subject?

- Is there opportunity for hybrid conditions: e.g., part at home, part at school
- Is there opportunity to assess students’ skills in different domains?

School leaders might consider:

- How are you empowering teachers to be creative with assessment?
- What controls are in place to make sure that students are being assessed across multiple modes as relevant to their subjects?
- What controls are in place to make sure that students are not cheating?

It is important to get across to students that the use of AI (or indeed, any other conditions) by students in *another school* will not disadvantage students at your school in their ATAR. In your own school, keep the conditions the same. Keep reminding students that they are scaled in their scaling groups, and that if students in that “other school” are using AI to substitute for their own thinking, those “other” students might see scaled scores that are lower than their assessment scores.

Feedback

Students had feedback about feedback! Mostly, the students requested more targeted feedback on their work.

Students are keen to access exemplars of good work. We are working on creating annotated copies of assessment work for multiple subject; however, this is a long process. If you have some great work in A and C bands for your subject that you would like to help annotate, please contact bsssenquiries@act.gov.au to talk about getting involved in the annotations project.

Teachers might consider:

- Many virtual learning environments have a ‘comment bank’ feature. For example, Google Classroom has a comment bank that is quick and easy to use when commenting on student work. If there is feedback that will be needed by many students, construct one detailed version of the comment bank and then use/edit this as needed;

much less typing of the same information over and over! Flipping the content in a lesson or lesson sequence so that students work on project work and the teacher is able to meet with students during the lesson time either to discuss drafts or feedback on a final option.

School leaders might consider:

- How do different faculties in your school offer feedback? Which practices are worth sharing across the school?

- How is time being protected for teachers during periods of increased marking load (e.g., exam weeks)?
- What checks help to identify problems (e.g., someone being overwhelmed with marking) and what support is there to help?
- Whose responsibility is it to let students know about the review and appeals process?

We will continue to share information and observations from students as they are brought to us.

Myth-busting

Sometimes students come to student forum with ideas that don't quite match P&P. Please help us to bust these myths when you speak with students and members of the community at your school.

Myth	Reality
Meshing is something that students are not permitted to know about.	A link to the meshing plan for subjects that mesh should be part of the unit outline. Students may ask to see the meshing plan. Your certification coordinator has a copy of this. This has been the case since 2022.
All schools should have identical conditions re: referencing, page of notes, assignment lengths.	Each scaling group is treated as a separate entity, with students only compared to others in the scaling group. As long as the conditions are comparable in the scaling group, the process of scaling is designed to account for any differences between schools in the ACT Senior Secondary System.
Differences between schools – e.g., English texts, use of calculators – should all be stamped out.	Schools have the flexibility to address the needs of their students. Schools and students can be confident, though, that grades are assured through moderation no matter where a student studies or what topics they study, and scores are assured through scaling.
The maths surrounding scaling is arcane.	Arcane in the sense of 'difficult', yes. However, the maths is freely available to the public in the Hyndman Report .
Students in combined Y11 and Y12 classes are marked "against" each other.	Y11 and Y12 have different Achievement Standards and are not processed together. Even in an A markbook where Y11 and 12 are together for administrative reasons, they are assessed using different Achievement Standards.
Students must complete a Y12 certificate over 2 years.	The Y12 certificate can be completed over 5 years if necessary and with agreement from the school.

Can you clarify that?

I've been told by my school that for small group moderation, I have to keep everything – including formative work and class work. Is this right?

We only require you to keep all summative assessment evidence for small group moderation. This means all work that is used to derive the score and grade for the students in your group. Your school may require you to keep all other work; however, this is not needed for small group moderation. For more information on small group moderation, see the last newsletter.

I've heard that retention of student work is in the pipeline; what's the story?

Yes, this is in the pipeline. The Board Meeting on 21 March included the decision for student assessment evidence to be retained beginning in 2026. The formal wording is:

That for all standard and half standard units, schools must retain the original or a copy of all submitted assessment until the end of the first term of the year following a student's exit from the school for the purpose of verifying accuracy in teacher marking judgements; internal and system moderation; and student feedback and appeals.

There is no requirement in this decision for schools to upload all assessment evidence anywhere, or for

schools to retain evidence that was not part of the formal summative assessment of a course (e.g., you don't need to retain class work, exercise books, etc.). It's simply to have a copy of the student work somewhere that you can get to it for appeals, moderation, evidence of work completed, and development work with students. For the most part this is a practice most schools usually do – e.g., virtual learning environments like Google Classroom automatically store copies of student work – although specific protocols will need to be discussed and trialled for some assessment types and subjects.

The next step that the office will take is to create and finalise advice and guidance for schools prior to 2026. We know that physical, practical and performance evidence is an area that will need specific attention by BSSS officers working on the protocols and procedures to make this as easy as possible – for example, one possibility is a requirement that *students* create and upload evidence rather than teachers (as is done in some other states). There will be much more information and planning regarding this decision by the Board across the next 18 months; this information will be disseminated, and feedback will be sought, through principals' and coordinators' meetings, so please make sure your school sends a proxy if someone isn't able to attend.

Reminder: there is a new form for access to the AST second sitting that is known ahead of time; e.g., compassionate or extraordinary reasons. This does not apply to scheduled trips.



Could you put the trip off for work, sport, cost, or convenience? If the answer is yes, it's a scheduled trip and thus **not eligible for AST special provisions or second sitting.**



The OBSSS works with schools in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, China, and Fiji; part of this work involves site inspection visits, sponsored by the schools. In May, two officers went to Port Moresby, Kimbe and Lae International schools in Papua New Guinea.

