# THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

## MAKING CHOICES – THE HSC EXPLAINED
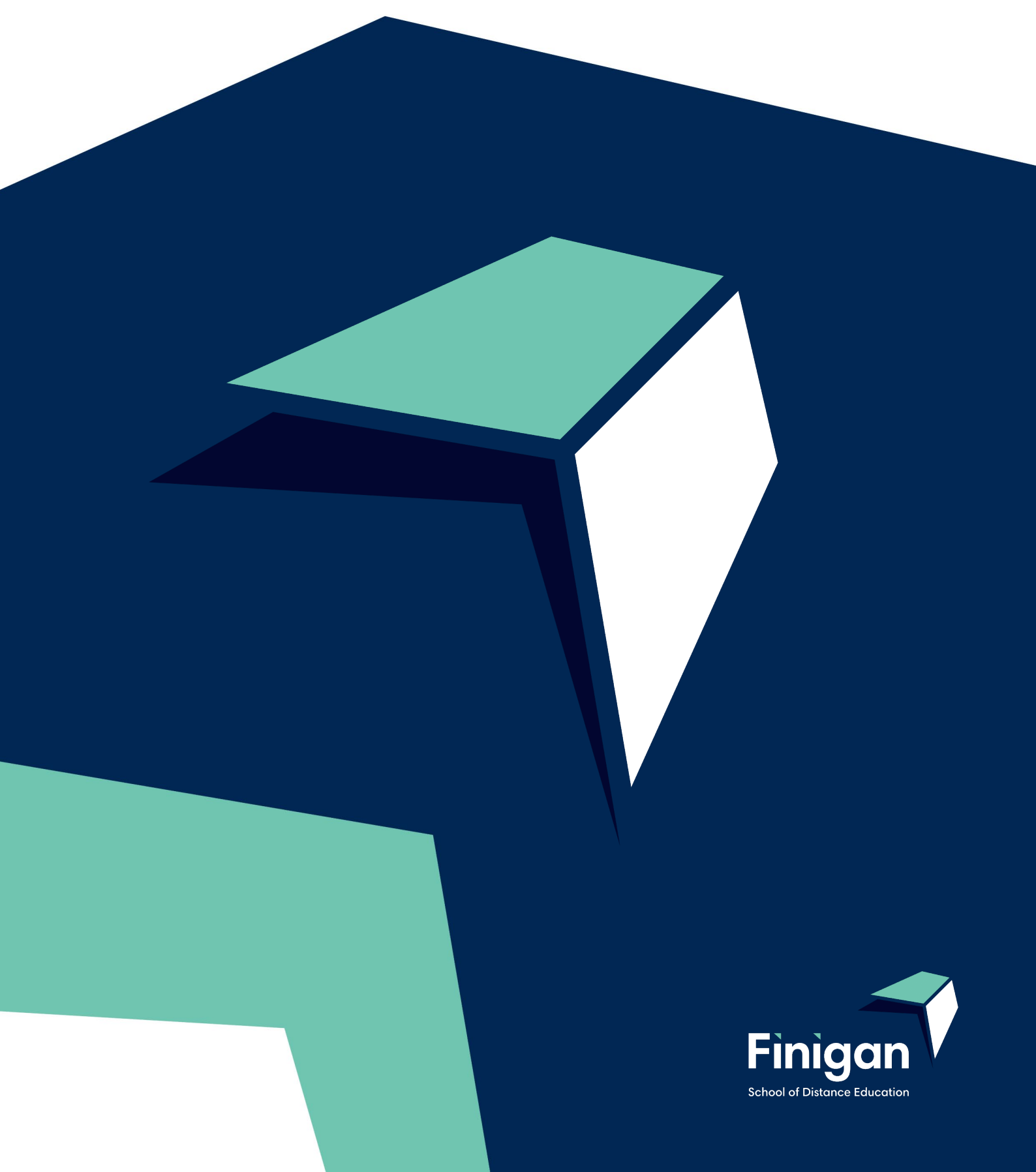
2024

**Finigan**
School of Distance Education

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# Common Terms and Meanings

**NESA**

New South Wales Education Standards Authority

**ATAR**

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank

**UAC**

University Admissions Centre (NSW, ACT).

**BDC**

Board Developed Courses

**BEC**

Board Endorsed Courses

**CEC**

Content Endorsed Courses

**SDBEC**

School Designed Board Endorsed Courses

**VET**

Vocational Education and Training

**RTO**

Registered Training Organisation

**RoSA**

Record of School Achievement

**AQF**

Australian Qualification Framework

**HSC**

Higher School Certificate

**RPL**

Recognition of Prior Learning

**ACSF**

Australian Core Skills Framework

**EVET**

Externally Delivered Vocational Education and Training

# Stage 6 - Year 11 & Year 12 Curriculum Information

This booklet is designed to help students and their caregivers/supervisors enrolling in Stage 6 to:

(a)    Understand the curriculum structure in Stage 6

(b)    Understand the requirements for the Higher School Certificate as set by NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Department of Education

(c)    Make subject selections suitable to a student's needs and abilities

**This document needs to be read in conjunction
with The Higher School Certificate Course Descriptions booklet**

Finigan School of Distance Education management ask that 'The Higher School Certificate Making Choices' document and 'The Higher School Certificate Course Descriptions' document be filed by supervisors. Reference to this curriculum information will be necessary as students complete Year 11 and begin Year 12.

**DISCLAIMER: Information current at time of printing**

# What Types of Courses Can I Select?

There are different types of courses that you can select in Years 11 and 12.

## Board Developed Courses

These courses are developed by NESA. NESA provides the following information for each course:

- A syllabus containing the course objectives, structure, content and outcomes, as well as specific course requirements.

- Assessment and reporting documentation.

- Sample examination papers and marking guidelines.

- Performance band descriptions and the common grade scale.

All students entered for the HSC who are studying these courses follow the NESA requirements. Most of these courses are examined externally at the end of the HSC course and can count towards the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

## Board Endorsed Courses

There are two main types of Board Endorsed Courses:

- Content Endorsed Courses (CEC) have syllabuses endorsed by NESA to cater for areas of special interest not covered in the Board Developed Courses.

- School Designed Courses are specialised designed courses that meet student needs (SDBEC). These courses must be approved by NESA. Once approval is granted, schools offer selected courses to senior students as part of the Higher School Certificate.

Some Board Endorsed Courses are one-year courses.

There is no external examination for any Content Endorsed Course or School Designed Course, and these courses do not count toward an ATAR.

All subjects studied for the HSC will appear on the HSC Record of Achievement.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VET courses can be studied either at school or through other training providers. You will need to check with Finigan School of Distance Education about which courses are available and the requirements of the different courses. For example, some VET courses require a minimum number of hours in the work place.

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

# Life Skills Courses as Part of a Special Program of Study

Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) Life Skills courses may be available for students following a Special Program of Study for the Higher School Certificate.

Students accessing a Special Program of Study in Stage 6 will have usually completed Life Skills courses within a Special Program of Study in Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10). Further, participation in a Special Program of Study will be based upon an individual transition-planning process, which will occur for both Year 11 and Year 12.

Life Skills courses will have Board Developed status and can be used in place of other Board Developed Courses to meet requirements for the award of the Higher School Certificate.  Each Life Skills course comprises a 2 unit Year 11 course and a 2 unit Year 12 course.

There are specific entry requirements for Life Skills courses.

**Please call the school if you would like information about Life Skills.**

# HSC Minimum Standards

## What are the HSC Minimum Standards?

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has implemented the HSC minimum standards to help ensure that students have the key literacy and numeracy skills for life after school.  Students in New South Wales will need to demonstrate a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy to receive the HSC testamur.  The standards are assessed through online tests which are 45 minutes long and include a multiple choice reading test, a multiple choice numeracy test and a short writing test based on visual or written prompts.

Students who do not meet the HSC minimum standards can still:

- Sit the HSC exams

- Receive an ATAR for University applications

- Receive a RoSA

- Receive a HSC minimum standard report

Students do not need to achieve the minimum standards to choose a subject they will study in Stage 5 or 6.

**Practice tests** are available for students to sit to help them become familiar with the online test structure and for schools to help determine student readiness to meet the minimum standards.

Students will have four opportunities per year to sit the minimum standards online tests in each area of Reading, Numeracy and Writing, in Years 10 and 11. They will have up to six opportunities in Year 12.  Students will also have up to 5 years from the time they start the HSC courses to sit the minimum standards online tests.  The tests must be administered by schools via a lockdown browser.

**Disability provisions and exemptions**: Students with additional learning needs may be eligible for extra provisions for the minimum standards online tests or be exempt from meeting the HSC minimum standards in order to receive their HSC.  Students taking four or more Life Skills courses can be exempt from meeting the HSC minimum standard.  Students studying Life Skills English will be exempt from the Reading and Writing minimum standards test.  Students studying Life Skills Mathematics will be exempt from the Numeracy minimum standard test.

Further Information please visit the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) website via the link below.

https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/hsc/hsc-minimum-standards

# All My Own Work

HSC: All My Own Work is a program designed to help HSC students follow the principles and practices of good scholarship. This includes understanding, valuing and using ethical practices when locating and using information as part of their HSC studies.

Students and supervisors will receive more information in Term 4 on how to complete the **All My Own Work** course.  The course needs to be completed by the end of November before starting Year 11.

# What are Units?

All courses offered for the Higher School Certificate have a unit value. Subjects may have a value of 1 unit or 2 units. Most courses are 2 unit.

Each unit involves class time of approximately 2 hours per week (60 hours per year).

The following is a guideline to help you understand the pattern of course.

**2 Unit Course**  ⇒  This is the basic structure for all courses.

⇒  4 hours per week (120 hours per year).

**Extension Course**  ⇒  Extension courses build on the content of the 2 unit course and carry an additional value of 1 unit. They require students to work beyond the standard of the 2 unit course.

⇒  English and Mathematics Extension Courses are available at Year 11 and Year 12 levels. Students must study the Year 11 extension course in these subjects before proceeding to the Year 12 extension courses (Extension 1 and Extension 2). The Extension 2 course requires students to work beyond the standard of the Extension 1 course.

⇒  Year 12 Extension courses in subjects other than English and Mathematics are offered and examined in Year 12 only.

**1 Unit Course**  ⇒  1 unit equals approximately 2 hours of class time each week or 60 hours per year.

⇒  There are a number of 1 unit Board Endorsed Courses. These courses do not count in the ATAR.

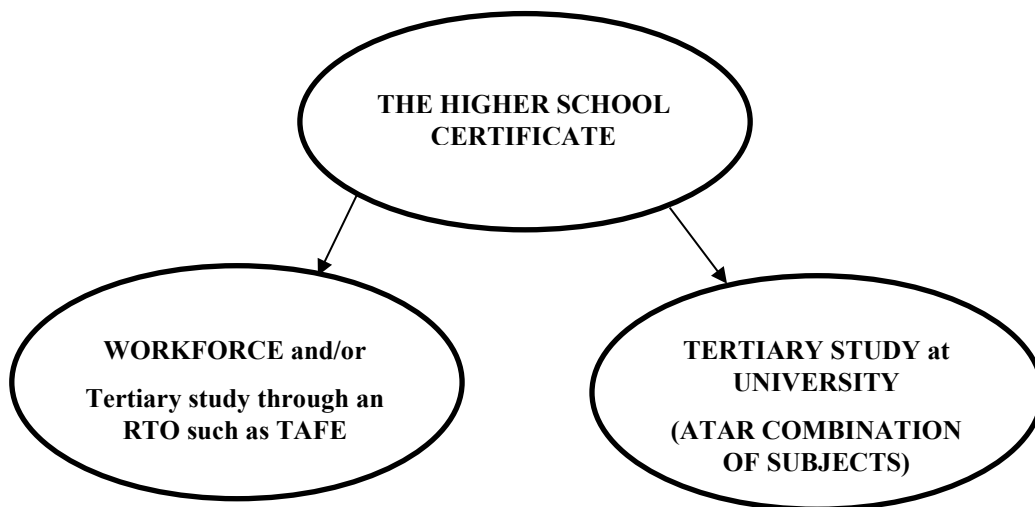⇒  Finigan offers 1 unit Studies of Religion which is a Board Developed Course.

# Guidelines for the Selection of Subjects

## Why Subject Choice is Important

In making a decision about the subjects a student wishes to study in the senior years, there are many considerations that need to be addressed. The first step in making this process is for the student, and their parent, to look beyond Year 12 and to examine the type of career that they wish to consider and the associated training that may be necessary.

At the end of Year 12, the student will either apply for entry at a University or follow a vocation/career that places them in the workforce while completing further training, usually through a Registered Training Organisation such as TAFE.

This basically sets two types of directions towards the HSC that students can consider:



THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

WORKFORCE and/or

Tertiary study through an RTO such as TAFE

TERTIARY STUDY at UNIVERSITY

(ATAR COMBINATION OF SUBJECTS)

## Points to Seriously Consider Before Choosing Subjects

- Students need to think about what they would like to do in the future. There are many options already available and there will be even more before they complete Year 12.

- If a student is certain they wish to undertake further study at university, they should focus on meeting the requirements of attaining an ATAR, see ATAR option on page 13.

- If a student is certain they wish to find a job and follow a vocational pathway, they could focus on meeting the requirements of the non-ATAR option on page 14.

- If a student is unsure at this stage, it is recommended they focus on meeting the requirements of attaining an ATAR, see ATAR option on page 13. This does not lock them into going to university, it just gives them the option if they wish to.

# Who Can Help with Subject Choice?

- Faculty Head Teachers

    - Can advise on levels, course content and course requirements in terms of exams, assessments and practical work.

- Deputy Principal

    - Can advise on the different subjects available and give general information about a variety of courses. They can provide advice on pattern of study, including NESA and ATAR requirements.

- Head Teacher Secondary Studies

    - Can advise on the subjects available and give general information about a variety of courses. They can provide advice on pattern of study, including NESA and ATAR requirements.

- Careers Advisor

    - Can advise on the subjects available and give general information about a variety of courses. They can provide information on options available for students once they have left school including university, TAFE and work options.

- Teachers

    - Can provide advice on the course content and requirements of subjects that they teach.


If parents need more information, they can contact the school and arrange an appointment with a relevant Head Teacher.

# HSC Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the HSC, a student must:

- Satisfactorily complete Years 9 & 10 or gain other qualifications that satisfy NESA.

- Complete HSC: All My Own Work (or its equivalent) before they submit any work for Preliminary or HSC courses, unless they are only entered for Year 11 and Year 12 Life Skills courses.

- Satisfactorily complete courses in the patterns of study.

- Sit for and make a serious attempt at the required HSC exams.

- Demonstrated a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.

# Requirements for the Award of The Higher School Certificate

To be awarded the HSC:

- A student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 units in Year 11.

- A student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 10 units in Year 12.

- Both the Year 11 and the Year 12 course must include the following:
    - at least 6 units from Board Developed Courses
    - at least 2 units of a Board Developed Course in English
    - at least three courses of 2 units value or greater
    - at least four subjects (including English)
    - a maximum of 6 units of science in Year 11 and a maximum of 7 units of science in Year 12
    - students must satisfactorily complete the Year 11 course before commencing the corresponding Year 12 course.

**Notes**:

- It is a Department of Education requirement that Stage 6 students must complete the mandatory 25 hour Life Ready course in Year 11.

- The subject course description document has information on specific subject rules and prerequisites. Please ensure that you read it and contact the school if you would like any further information.

# The ATAR Option

This option allows the student to qualify for an ATAR, as well as studying courses that focus upon a future profession.

**Notes:**

- Particular school subjects are often recommended for studying certain courses. These subjects are called "assumed knowledge".

- Students need to check with the Institution and/or the universities they intend studying with to check for

  - Assumed knowledge for University entry

  - Courses available at University and TAFE

- UAC has a great deal of information on university and assumed knowledge on their website www.uac.edu.au. It also has the booklet, Steps to Uni for Year 10 Students. It can be downloaded from https://www.uac.edu.au/future-applicants/year-10-students

- Careers advisor can assist

## If an ATAR Score is Required

A student must: -

- Successfully complete a minimum of 12 units in Year 11.

- Complete courses that meet the pattern of study required by NESA for the award of the Higher School Certificate.

- Complete practical, oral or project works required for specific courses and the assessment requirements for each course.

- Study 10 units of Board Developed courses.

  o 2 units must include English.

- Study at least four subjects

**Notes:**

Board Endorsed Courses cannot be studied as part of the minimum 10 units but can be taken as extra units.

# Non-ATAR Option

This direction considers the combination of subjects that gives the student experience in work related situations as well as courses that may allow credit transfer to Registered Training Organisation.

## If an ATAR Score is Not Required

- A student must study a minimum of 12 units in Year 11.

- A minimum of 10 units in Year 12.

- 6 of the units required for Year 11 and Year 12 must be chosen from Board Developed Courses (BDC) (which include 2 units of English) and VET courses (VET).

- The remaining units can be chosen from Board Developed Courses (BDC), and Board Endorsed Courses (BEC).

## School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs)

School based apprenticeships and traineeships allow senior high school students to commence an apprenticeship or complete a traineeship while at school. School based apprentices work part-time and undertake the first stage of their apprenticeship training before the end of the HSC year. School based trainees work part-time and complete their traineeship by the end of their HSC year.

Both the on-the-job and off-the-job training undertaken by school-based apprentices/trainees can contribute to their HSC. School based apprentices should commence full-time employment as a 2nd year apprentice from January after their HSC, providing that they have successfully completed both their on-the-job and off-the-job training program during their senior high school years.

For further information visit http://www.sbatinnsw.info/

# Pathways

This may be an option for some students in some enrolment categories.

You will need to contact the school if you want to discuss the Pathways option. This can be discussed with the Head Teacher Secondary Studies or Deputy Principal Year 11 and 12.

# Board Developed Courses

| Subject | Courses (2 Unit) | Year 11 Extension Courses (1 Unit) | Year 12 Courses (1 Unit) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aboriginal Studies | Aboriginal Studies | | |
| Agriculture | Agriculture | | |
| Ancient History | Ancient History | | |
| Biology | Biology | | Science Extension |
| Business Studies | Business Studies | | |
| Chemistry | Chemistry | | Science Extension |
| Community and Family Studies | Community & Family Studies | | |
| Dance | Dance | | |
| Design and Technology | Design and Technology | | |
| Earth and Environmental Science | Earth & Environmental Science | | Science Extension |
| Economics | Economics | | |
| Engineering Studies | Engineering Studies | | |
| English | English Standard English Advanced English Studies English EAL/D | English Extension | English Extension 1 English Extension 2 |
| Enterprise Computing | Enterprise Computing | | |
| Food Technology | Food Technology | | |
| Geography | Geography | | |
| Industrial Technology[1] | Multimedia Graphics | | |
| Languages | **Please see next table** | | |
| Legal Studies | Legal Studies | | |
| Mathematics | Mathematics Standard 1[2] Mathematics Standard 2[2] Mathematics | Mathematics Extension 1 | Mathematics Extension 1 Mathematics Extension 2 |
| Modern History | Modern History | | |
| Music | Music 1 Music 2 | | Music Extension[3] |

| Subject | Courses (2 Unit) | Year 11 Extension Courses (1 Unit) | Year 12 Courses (1 Unit) |
|---|---|---|---|
| PDHPE | PDHPE | | |
| Physics | Physics | | Science Extension |
| Society and Culture | Society and Culture | | |
| Software Engineering | Software Engineering | | |
| Studies of Religion[1] | Studies of Religion 1 | | |
| | Studies of Religion 2 | | |
| Textiles and Design | Textiles & Design | | |
| Visual Arts | Visual Arts | | |
| **Languages** | | | |
| French | French Beginners | | |
| | French Continuers | | |
| German | German Beginners | | |
| | German Continuers | | |
| Italian | Italian Beginners | | |
| | Italian Continuers | | |
| Japanese | Japanese Beginners | | |
| | Japanese Continuers | | |

## Year 12 Course Notes

These notes and footnotes (1–3) refer to the list of courses above

1. A student may select one course only from each of these subject groups.
2. In Year 12, students must choose between Mathematics Standard 1 and Mathematics Standard 2.
3. You must study Music Course 2 if you wish to study Year 12 Extension Music.
4. Additional information about courses and the HSC is available on the NSW Education Standards Authority Website: http://www.educationalstandards.nsw.edu.au

A number of subjects include a requirement for the development of project work for either internal or external assessment. For example, Visual Arts, Drama, Design and Technology, Textiles & Design, Industrial Technology and Society and Culture. Projects developed for assessment in one subject are not to be used either in full or in part for assessment in any other subject.

**\* Please refer to HSC Course Description Booklet for courses offered at Finigan School of Distance Education.**

# Vocational Education Training

Hospitality

Skills for Work & Vocational Pathways (Non-ATAR subject)

# Board Endorsed Courses

## Content Endorsed Courses

Computing Applications

Exploring Early Childhood

Numeracy

Photography, Video and Digital Imaging

Sport Lifestyle & Recreation

Visual Design

Work Studies

Exclusions applying to Content Endorsed Courses are listed in the course descriptions document with the relevant Board Endorsed Course description.

**\* Please refer to HSC Course Description Booklet for courses offered at Finigan School of Distance Education.**

# Live Lessons

For each Year 11 and HSC course you will be having a weekly live lesson (online lesson). There will be a timetable indicating set times for the live lessons. Students are expected to attend all live lessons to enhance their understanding of the courses. For single subject students who may be unable to attend live lessons (due to other timetabled commitments), recorded copies of live lessons will be made available on the eLearning platform. Students are required to engage with the live lessons as they will address some of the more challenging aspects of the courses and will often contain exam and assessment task strategies. Live Lessons enable students to get to know their teacher.

# Completion of a Course

## Satisfactory Completion of a Course

For subjects to be recorded on a RoSA, a student must satisfactorily complete the course. NESA indicates that satisfactory completion of a course indicates:

- They have met all or some of the course outcomes.
- They have made a genuine attempt at assessment tasks.
- They have worked with sustained diligence and sustained effort.

In addition to this:

- They have adhered to the assessment procedures as outlined in the school's Assessment Policy.
- They have participated in experiences, which are required by the syllabus, eg assignments, tests and examinations, major works, practical projects, effective participation in course work.
- They have prepared themselves sufficiently to enable them to make a serious attempt at the external HSC examination.

Note: Most VET Industry Curriculum Framework courses, and some VET Board Endorsed courses, also require students to undertake set work placement hours to develop industry competencies and practise learned skills. Students must complete any required work placement to complete these courses. If mandatory work placements are not completed, the school will issue the student with a non-completion of course determination.

## You will receive a warning if your performance is unsatisfactory

If a student is in danger of not completing a course, the school will give the student written warning in time for them to meet criteria above.

If the student does not complete a course:
- They will receive no results in that course.
- The course will not appear on their NESA record.
- The course will not count towards their pattern of study.

The school will tell them in writing and inform NESA if the Principal determines that they did not complete a course. The student will then have the right to appeal against this determination.
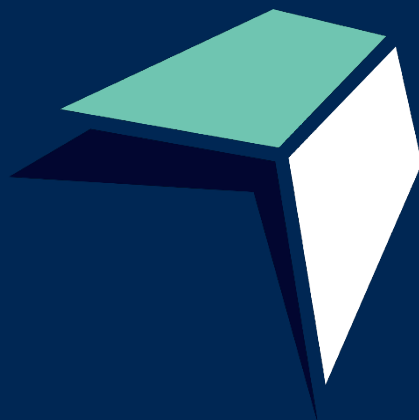
# What do you get at the end?

The RoSA is a **cumulative credential** in that it allows students to accumulate their academic results until they leave school.

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate (HSC) will receive the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

Higher School Certificate (Year 12) credentials issued to eligible students upon completing their HSC include

- Higher School Certificate testamur

- Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement

- VET certificate or statement of attainment (if a VET course was undertaken)

- Student learning profile (if a Life Skill course was undertaken)