

Explanation and use of interstate subject and results mappings

Across Australia, each state and territory jurisdiction administers its own year 12 qualification/s, including the development and revision of subject syllabus and certification of subject results. Tertiary institutions within each state or territory specify entry requirements and subject bonuses in terms of their own local secondary school subjects.

Because students can apply outside their “home” state or territory jurisdiction for tertiary courses, members of the Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admissions Centres (ACTAC) recognised the benefits of working collectively towards development of common subject and result comparabilities.

In 2008 and 2009, members of ACTAC worked on establishing methodologies to enable subject and grade/score comparisons across Australian state and territory jurisdictions, International Baccalaureate diploma and New Zealand National Certificate of Educational Achievement studies.

Subject comparisons were formed following consideration of information from a number of sources including the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) and an examination of current Australian university bonus and prerequisite practices.

Grade comparisons were established, taking into account what each state or territory jurisdiction considered to constitute a “pass”, and the frequency distributions of reported assessments (score, grade, scaled score).

The methodologies used to establish comparabilities were presented and accepted at the October 2009 meeting of ACTAC. This resulted in a subject comparison table and grade comparability tables to be used as a basis for recommending subject and grade mappings to ACTAC member institutions for subject prerequisite and bonus purposes.

From 2010, details of some non-current subjects were incorporated into the subject comparison table following consideration of syllabus content and subject code replacement history. New subjects are incorporated each year as the ACTAC working group becomes aware of them and are placed with respect to current course content.

The ACTAC subject mappings and grade/score comparisons represent a compromise between simplicity, robustness and accuracy; they should not convey an indication nor an implied understanding that the associated subjects are identical in terms of content and outcomes. Their use should be restricted to setting benchmarks for pre-requisite purposes or for the awarding of bonuses to out-of-state applicants. It cannot be assumed that students with equivalent grades in a subject area have achieved exactly the same outcomes either in terms of skills or knowledge.

Tertiary institutions within each state or territory jurisdiction reserve the right to modify the subject comparison and grade comparability tables as they require, and may use these tables as one of a number of tools to determine such comparisons.