

HSC scaling 2025: every course's scaled mean and percentiles

From UAC's Report on the Scaling of the 2025 NSW HSC, Table A3. Scaled marks are per unit out of 50 and reflect two things only: the student's position in the course and the strength of the course's candidature across all their courses. P90, P50 and P25 are the scaled marks of the students at the 90th, 50th and 25th percentiles; the last column is the HSC mark (on the certificate) of the middle student, for comparison.

Course	Students	Scaled mean	Scaled P90	Scaled P50	Scaled P25	HSC mark at P50
Mathematics Extension 2	3,844	43.4	48.3	44.7	41.5	43.5
Mathematics Extension 1	9,279	39.7	47.2	41.5	36.6	42.0
English Extension 1	3,691	36.1	43.9	36.9	32.2	44.0
English Extension 2	1,423	35.8	44.0	36.5	31.9	42.0
French Continuers	520	34.4	44.2	35.4	29.7	41.5
English Advanced	26,292	32.8	42.6	33.7	27.7	41.0
Chemistry	10,369	32.0	43.6	33.9	25.8	38.0
Mathematics Advanced	16,809	31.9	42.9	33.2	25.9	40.0
Economics	5,741	31.4	43.0	33.0	25.0	40.0
Physics	8,817	31.0	43.0	32.2	24.0	37.5
Japanese Continuers	794	30.8	42.4	32.1	25.1	40.5
Studies of Religion I	8,169	27.7	39.9	28.1	20.8	39.0
Studies of Religion II	6,731	27.3	40.5	28.1	19.7	39.5
Software Engineering	1,768	26.7	40.5	27.2	19.0	38.0
Biology	20,710	26.2	39.9	26.7	18.0	37.5
Engineering Studies	2,558	26.2	39.6	26.4	18.6	37.0
Legal Studies	10,080	25.3	39.9	25.9	16.5	39.0
Geography	4,419	25.2	40.5	25.4	16.5	38.5
Modern History	10,953	25.0	39.2	25.8	16.6	38.0
Drama	3,191	24.0	40.7	23.4	14.6	41.0
Business Studies	20,452	23.9	39.2	23.4	15.1	37.5
Enterprise Computing	1,869	23.8	39.1	23.7	15.6	37.5
Mathematics Standard 2	31,762	23.3	37.3	23.2	15.1	36.5
Textiles and Design	1,482	22.8	38.3	22.4	13.8	39.5
Ancient History	7,495	22.4	37.4	22.5	13.7	37.5
Visual Arts	9,047	21.7	37.4	21.1	12.6	41.5
English EAL/D	1,504	21.3	37.6	20.0	12.1	35.5
Music 1	4,681	20.8	36.4	20.4	12.0	42.0
Investigating Science	3,292	20.5	35.5	20.0	11.5	38.0
English Standard	33,651	20.4	31.5	20.0	14.5	36.5
Agriculture	1,509	19.1	35.4	18.7	9.6	37.5
Food Technology	4,187	18.9	35.6	17.6	9.3	37.0
Industrial Technology	5,999	17.7	32.7	16.6	9.1	35.5

English Standard and English Advanced are scaled as one group on a common scale; the Standard mean is lower because its candidature is weaker, not as a penalty. The 90th-percentile Business Studies student (39.2) outscores the median Chemistry student (33.9): the spread inside a course is larger than the gap between courses.

Aggregate to ATAR, the ATAR distribution, and the subject-choice rules

2025: aggregate (best 10 units, out of 500) to ATAR

Aggregate	Average per unit	ATAR	Share of ATAR cohort at or below
450	45.0	99.10	98.4%
400	40.0	94.40	90.3%
350	35.0	86.45	76.5%
300	30.0	77.40	61.1%
250	25.0	67.55	44.8%
200	20.0	57.20	29.3%
150	15.0	46.80	15.7%

An ATAR of 90 needed an aggregate of about 365 (36.5 per unit over the best ten); 80 needed about 315. Share of ATAR students in 2025: 99+ 1.7%, 95+ 8.7%, 90+ 17.3%, 80+ 34.6%, 70+ 51.3%. Median ATAR 70.75; 53 students at 99.95. Of 77,693 students in an ATAR course, 77.8% received an ATAR.

UAC's own examples: position beats scaled mean

Example (report table)	What happened	Lesson
Liam and Kellie (6.1)	Both at the 50th percentile of all their courses, average HSC mark 40.0; ATARs 60.00 and 80.00	Same marks and positions; Kellie's courses have higher scaled means
Food Technology v Korean Beginners (6.6)	HSC mark 48.0 in both; Food Tech student at P99 scaled 43.3, Korean Beginners at P90 scaled 42.8	Scaled mean 18.9 v 27.7, and the lower-mean course still won on position
Chinese Extension v Music 2 (6.7)	Both at P90 with 48.0; scaled 44.4 and 44.9	Music 2's wider spread (SD 8.5 v 5.4) lifts its top students further

The subject-choice checklist (Year 10)

- [] Which two or three courses will this child rank in the top quarter of? Those are the ATAR courses.
- [] English is in every aggregate: which English course will the child rank highest in?
- [] Mathematics: the highest level the child will sit in the top half of (Advanced 25th percentile 25.9 is barely above Standard 2's median 23.2).
- [] Where the child would rank the same in two courses, take the higher scaled mean (Economics 31.4 v Business 23.9; Chemistry 32.0 v Biology 26.2).
- [] Extension courses only for a child who belongs in the top half of them.
- [] Ignore 'scales up' and 'scales down' talk unless it is about this child's likely rank.

My child's likely courses

Course	Likely rank in the course (top 10% / 25% / half / lower)	Scaled mark at that rank (table)