

Understanding the VCE System

What is an ATAR score?

The ATAR is a ranking of Year 12 results that measures your overall academic achievement compared with all other final year students in Australia (excluding Queensland). The ATAR is not a score out of 100 – it is a rank. The ATAR allows tertiary institutions to compare the overall achievements of all students who have completed Year 12.

In Victoria, ATARs are calculated by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) when you complete the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). VTAC uses the VCE results issued by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to calculate ATAR scores. You must have completed at least four VCE studies in a recognised combination to have your ATAR calculated.

When you complete VCE, VTAC notifies you of your ATAR. If you apply for tertiary courses, VTAC forwards the ranking and applications to tertiary institutions. In addition to other course requirements, the ATAR score can determine your eligibility for tertiary courses. Each tertiary institution sets the ATARs required for its courses, as well as other course entry requirements.

How is the ATAR calculated?

The ATAR is calculated by VTAC based on up to six VCE scaled study scores. Study scores are scaled up or down by VTAC according to the performance of students in a study in a particular year – which means scores change each year, making ATARs difficult to predict.

The ATAR is calculated from an aggregate, produced by adding together:

1. your highest scaled study score in one of the English studies (English, English Language, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Literature),
2. highest scaled study scores for three additional permissible studies, and
3. 10% of the scaled study scores for the fifth and sixth permissible studies.

Students are then ranked in order of their aggregate and a percentage rank is assigned to distribute students as evenly as possible over a 100-point scale.

Finally, the percentage rank is converted to an ATAR score. The ATAR is an estimate of the percentage of the population that you outperformed. So if you receive an ATAR of 60, it means you performed better than 60% of students that year.

The ATAR is a number from 0 and 99.95 in intervals of 0.05. The highest rank is 99.95, the next highest 99.90, and so on. The lowest automatically reported rank is 30.00, with ranks below 30.00 being reported as 'less than 30'.

To calculate your ATAR you can visit:

<http://vce.atarcalc.com>

or

http://bettereducation.com.au/Resources/vce/vce_atar_calculator.aspx

What is a study score?

A study score shows how well you have performed in a study at Unit 3 and 4 level, compared to everybody else in Victoria who took that study. Study scores calculated by the VCAA will be used by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) to calculate the ATAR.

The maximum study score is 50. Each year, and for every study, the mean (average) study score is set at 30. A score of between 23 and 37 shows that you are in the middle range of students; a score of 38 or more indicates that you are in the top 15%.

For studies with large enrolments (1,000 or more):

2% of students will get a score on or above 45

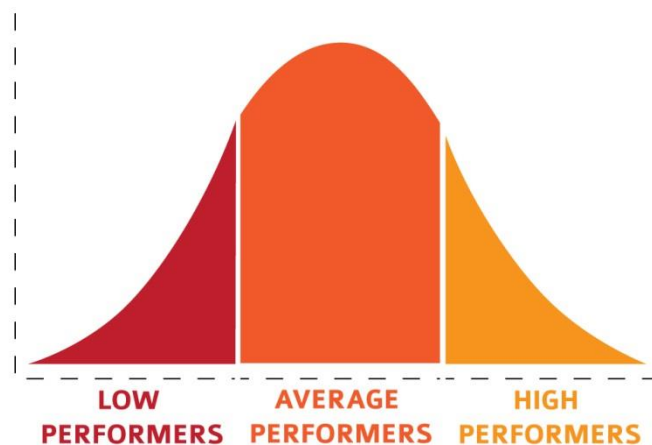
9% of students will get a score on or above 40

26% of students will get a score on or above 35

53% of students will get a score on or above 30

78% of students will get a score on or above 25

93% of students will get a score on or above 20.



How are study scores scaled?

The study scores are adjusted so that the overall level of scores in that study matches the scores obtained by the same group of students in all of their studies. For example, in Economics in 2006 the average VCE Study Score was 30, but the students averaged 32 for all their studies. This shows that the students who did Economics in 2006 were of above average strength in their other studies. Therefore the scaling process adjusted the Study Scores upwards so that the average ATAR Subject Score for Economics was set at 32.

Scaling is calculated each year and can change year by year.

Greek in 2006, for example, received no scaling. A 30 score stayed 30. In 2008 it received a scaling of +3. A 30 score increased to 33. In 2012 it received a scaling of +5. And last year, 2016, it received a scaling of +6. A 30 score last year was set to 36.