



25 May 2017

Principals, SA/NT Secondary Schools
cc School SACE Co-ordinators

Changes to some tertiary entrance rules concerning 2017 Stage 2 SACE/NTCET students

Dear Principal

I trust your school has had a good start to the 2017 academic year.

There have been two significant changes to the tertiary entrance arrangements for 2017 Stage 2 SACE/NTCET students. SATAC has recently informed schools of these changes through its regular Bulletins and website.

In response to recent queries from some schools, I am writing to reinforce some key points relating to these changes.

The Tertiary Entrance status of Research Project A

The SA and NT institutions have agreed that, from the 2017 school year, the Stage 2 subject Research Project A will be classified as a Tertiary Admissions Subject (TAS) and will therefore be taken into consideration in the calculation of the university aggregate (and hence the ATAR) and the TAFE SA Selection Score.

Please note:

- Research Project A will remain non-TAS for the years 2011 to 2016, and university aggregates, ATARs and TAFE SA Selection Scores calculated in these years for student presenting these subjects will *not* be recalculated for prior year students
- Results in this subject obtained in the years 2011 to 2016 will *not* be considered in 2017 and future re-calculations of the university aggregate, ATAR and TAFE SA Selection Score for students who obtain a result in any Stage 2 subject in 2017 or in a future year.

Scaling outcomes for Research Project A

A number of schools have asked what the scaling outcomes will be for Research Project A, as opposed to those of Research Project B, and hence on the advisability of students enrolling in this subject as opposed to Research Project B.

In 2017 Research Project A will have sufficient candidates to be "scalable in its own right". It is anticipated that this will also be the case in future years. Scaling outcomes for the subject from 2017 onwards will therefore be *fully independent* from those of Research Project B.

SATAC therefore cannot accurately predict whether enrolling in the “A” or “B” versions of the subject would be more beneficial for students.

Generic advice on scaling

SATAC can never accurately predict the scaled score outcomes for any subject in any year. It cannot be predicted whether enrolling in alternative versions of similar subjects would be of “benefit” to students.

SATAC provides the following general advice regarding scaling:

- The purpose of scaling is to provide a numeric measure of students’ ability in subjects so that these measures can be aggregated across subjects of differing learning outcomes
- Its purpose is to uncover the true ability of each student across all their subjects
- Typically, students cannot improve their overall scaled score outcomes through subject selection
- The scaling outcomes for a given subject are determined by the performance of the students not in that subject, but in the other subjects they undertake, therefore:
 - scaling outcomes for individual subjects can never be predicted in a given year
 - and scaling outcomes for a given subject are not identical year to year.

As always, SATAC advises that students select subjects based on their interests, skills, abilities and motivation in order to maximise their performance against the SACE Board’s assessment standards. This should then maximise the subjects’ contributions to the students’ tertiary selection aggregates.

Further information about scaling can be found at www.satac.edu.au/scaling.

The reporting of finer-grained scaled scores

SATAC has previously advised schools that, from 2017, scaled scores will be reported on a finer scale than in the past. Information is available from the SATAC website at www.satac.edu.au/scaling under the heading ‘Granularity of scaled scores’.

SATAC has recently received enquiries regarding whether prior year results would be recalculated on a finer scale- they will not.

Schools have also queried whether the university aggregates, ATARs and TAFE SA Selection Scores for students who completed any subjects prior to 2017 would also be recalculated - they will not.

Scaling and aggregation undertaken in previous years was accurately undertaken under the rules current at the time. The scaled scores, ATARs and TAFE SA Selection Scores calculated in previous years are now an historical record for the students concerned, are archived and used nationally, and therefore cannot be altered.

Candidates with both pre-2017 results (scaled to 0.2 intervals for 20 credit subjects and 0.1 intervals for 10 credit subjects) and 2017 and later results (scaled to 0.1 intervals for 20 credit subjects and 0.05 intervals for 10 credit subjects), will have these results simply aggregated.

It is acknowledged that this will mean that candidates on the same pre-2017 scaled scores in a subject will not have reflected for them any slightly better or worse performance in that subject compared to other candidates with the same scaled score.

This scenario previously occurred in 2010/2011 with the transition from scaled scores for 20 credit subjects being reported in 0.5 intervals to 0.2 intervals. From our experience in 2010/2011, the current transition is expected to go smoothly and should not affect the tertiary entrance outcomes of students.

For information regarding selection matters for SACE/NTCET students, please refer to SATAC's website at www.satac.edu.au/year-12-for-tertiary-entry.

For complex enquiries please do not hesitate to contact SATAC's Manager of Strategy and Policy Mr David Hallam, david.hallam@satac.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Luchich', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr Michael Luchich
CEO