

What's the TER?



ACT

## What is the TER?

TER stands for Tertiary Entrance Rank. It is a percentile ranking which indicates how a student has performed compared to other Year 12 students in the ACT. It ranges down from 99.99 for the highest ranked student. For example, a student with good results might have a TER of 85.00 indicating a performance of better than 85% of the student group.

A TER is calculated for all students who meet the requirements set down by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies for the award of a Tertiary Entrance Statement. The TER is reported on this Statement.

## What is it used for?

The TER is used to select students for entry to tertiary institutions.

## How is it calculated?

The TER is calculated on the basis of the performance of students in their best T courses.

The main steps in the process are:

1. In all T courses, colleges calculate a course score for each student.
2. Course scores are adjusted (scaled) to make all scores in all courses comparable.
3. An Aggregate Score is calculated for each student by adding together the scaled scores in the best three T majors plus 0.6 of the next best T score, whether a major or minor.
4. An overall ranking of students based on their Aggregate Scores is produced, and each student's TER is calculated.

## **STEP 1 - Course Scores**

*Each college calculates a course score for each student in each T course completed. A course score indicates how well a student has performed in a particular course compared to all other students in that course's moderation group at the college. A moderation group may consist of just one course, or it may be a grouping of a number of related courses. For example, a college may group English and Media courses together.*

*Course scores are calculated from unit scores received by a student.*

## **STEP 2 - Scaling**

*Several course scores are added together to produce an Aggregate Score. In order to obtain a valid Aggregate Score, the scores in all the different courses must be on a common scale. However, a course score calculated by a college only indicates how a student has performed within a particular moderation group. Because there are different students in each moderation group, the scores from different moderation groups are on different scales. Adding scores without scaling would be like adding quantities measured in different units. For example, if we wanted to add a distance measured in miles and a distance measured in kilometres, we would first need to convert the measurements to a common unit.*

*The scaling process allows for the different achievement levels of students in different moderation groups. Only scaled scores are used to determine the Aggregate Score.*

*The system of scaling used in the ACT is called Other Course Score (OCS) scaling. It is based on the performance of students in their best four T courses and on the Australian Scaling Test (AST). A brief explanation of the OCS procedure may be found near the end of this pamphlet in Appendix A.*

*Note that while the scaling procedure will change each student's score in a course, it does not alter the ranking of students within each moderation group. The ranking will remain the same as in the original course scores produced by the college.*

### *STEP 3 - Using scaled scores to produce an aggregate score*

*The best three scaled scores from T major courses, and 0.6 of the next best T course score (either major or minor) are added together to produce an Aggregate Score. This may be illustrated through these three examples:*

#### **EXAMPLE 1**

A student with 4 major and 1 minor course

<b>Course Length</b>	<b>Scaled Scores</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Weighted Scaled Scores</b>
Major	118.10	0.0	0.00
Major	143.22	1.0	143.22
Major	171.87	1.0	171.87
Major	125.85	1.0	125.85
Minor	176.60	0.6	105.96

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Aggregate Score} &= 143.22 + 171.87 + 125.85 + 105.96 \\ &= 547\end{aligned}$$

#### **EXAMPLE 2**

A student with 3 major courses and 1 double major course.

<b>Course Length</b>	<b>Scaled Scores</b>
Major	118.10
Major	143.22
Major	176.60
Double Major	171.87

For score calculation purposes, this package is equivalent to 5 majors as follows:

Course Length	Scaled Scores	Weighting	Weighted Scaled Scores
Major	118.10	0.0	0.00
Major	143.22	0.6	85.93
Major	176.60	1.0	176.60
Major	171.87	1.0	171.87
Major	171.87	1.0	171.87

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Aggregate Score} &= 176.60 + 171.87 + 171.87 + 85.93 \\ &= 606 \end{aligned}$$

### EXAMPLE 3

A student with 3 major courses and 1 major minor course

Course Length	Scaled Scores
Major	118.10
Major	143.22
Major	176.60
Major-Minor	171.87

For score calculation purposes, this package is equivalent to 4 majors and 1 minor as follows:

Course Length	Scaled Scores	Weighting	Weighted Scaled Scores
Major	118.10	0.0	0.00
Major	143.22	1.0	143.22
Major	176.60	1.0	176.60
Major	171.87	1.0	171.87
Minor	171.87	0.6	103.12

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Aggregate Score} &= 143.22 + 176.60 + 171.87 + 103.12 \\ &= 595 \end{aligned}$$

## *STEP 4 - Calculating the TER*

*Students can now be ranked on the basis of their Aggregate Scores.*

*We then calculate, for each student, what percentage of the Year 12 candidates (those students who have completed at least one T minor course and who were enrolled in semester 2 of Year 12) achieved an Aggregate Score equal to or lower than the student. This percentage ranking is the student's Tertiary Entrance Rank.*

*For example, if on the basis of an Aggregate Score a student is ranked 1500 out of a Year 12 candidature of 4000, that student's Tertiary Entrance Rank would be calculated as  $1500/4000 \times 100/1$  (i.e. 37.50).*

*A TER of 85.00 would indicate that a student had achieved an Aggregate Score equal to or better than 85% of the student group (or is in the top 15%), and a TER of 40.00 would indicate an Aggregate Score equal to or better than 40% of students (top 60%).*

*The TER is comparable to the rankings used for tertiary entry in NSW, Victoria and South Australia. A different ranking, the Percentile Rank By Age Cohort, is used by the Tertiary Admissions Centres in Queensland and Western Australia. The Age Cohort is the total number of 17 year olds in the ACT population. The Rank by Age Cohort is calculated for each student and is available from your college on request.*

## *APPENDIX A - The OCS scaling method*

*Briefly, the stages in the process are :*

- 1 For each student, a measure of general achievement (GA) is calculated from an average of his/her AST score and four best course scores. The course scores from the best 3 majors and the next best course score - either major or minor - are used.*
- 2 The average and the spread of the GA's in each moderation group are calculated, and the course scores are then adjusted so that they have the same average and spread as the GA's. A further adjustment is made to allow for the degree of association between scores in a moderation group and the GA's.*
- 3 ASAT and the adjusted course scores are used to calculate revised GA values.*
- 4 The course scores are adjusted again (as in step 2).*

*The process continues working through steps 3 and 4 until the adjustments made to the course scores from one step to the next are no longer significant. In practice this usually takes less than twenty steps of calculations. (Note that it is the group GA scores which are used throughout this process. An individual student's performance on the AST or his/her GA is not used directly in adjusting his/her own course scores.)*

*This final stage in the calculations provides course scores which are on the same scale across all courses and across all colleges. The course scores can be added together to produce Aggregate Scores, which are then used in the calculation of the Tertiary Entry Rank.*

## *More Information.*

*Remember, your college is keen to help you. There are staff members who can explain and give advice on this brochure or any others in this series.*

*Other pamphlets in this series that are available from your college are:*

- Reviewing Your Year 11/12 Study Program*      *Outlines what study packages you need for an ACT Year 12 Certificate and a Tertiary Entrance Rank.*
- Your Rights to Appeal*      *A guide to what your rights are in appealing against results, and procedures to follow.*
- Certificates You Could Obtain*      *Explains all the different certificates you could be awarded at the end of Year 12, and what's on them.*
- Applying to Tertiary Institutions*      *Advice about what to do if you want to go on to a tertiary institution.*
- What's the AST?*      *Explains the Australian Scaling Test and its role in your assessment.*

*Enquiries could also be directed to:*

*Executive Officer  
Board of Senior Secondary Studies  
PO Box 1584, TUGGERANONG ACT 2900  
Phone: (06) 205 7181*

### *Also note:*

*Both the Australian National University and the University of Canberra have been willing to look at a broader profile of information about students who are seeking entry, especially any recommendations from secondary colleges about special circumstances of students.*

- The Australian National University      249 5111 or 249 3046 or 249 5594*
- University of Canberra      252 2225*

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