



Frequently Asked Questions – WACE Refreshment – C grade equivalents (ATAR courses)

The Board of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is undertaking the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment to ensure the WACE continues to maximise its value for students as they move into further education, training, and employment.

The following questions and answers are based on queries from teachers and school leaders regarding the application of the C grade equivalent WACE Refreshment.

From 2025, a C grade equivalent will be applied for the pair of units in a Year 12 ATAR course by the Authority where a student has achieved a D grade and also achieved a moderated written school mark or ATAR course written examination mark at or above a specified cut point of approximately 40.

Definitions

1. What is the C grade equivalent for Year 12 ATAR courses?

Each student who receives a final D grade from their school for a Year 12 ATAR course and a moderated written school mark or ATAR course written examination mark at or above a specified cut point of approximately 40 will receive a C grade equivalent applied by the Authority.

2. Why is the Authority implementing this WACE Refreshment?

The C grade equivalent recognises the higher cognitive demands of ATAR courses in comparison to General courses to encourage students to study ATAR courses in the knowledge that, should they receive a D grade from their school, there is support in place for their WACE achievement.

3. What is the specified cut point?

The specified cut point is the minimum mark determined by the Authority for a C grade equivalent to be applied for that course. The specified cut point is course specific and may change on an annual basis.

4. When is the specified cut point calculated?

The Authority will calculate the specified cut point for each Year 12 ATAR course during the ATAR course post-examination processes at the end of each year.

5. Why is the specified cut point 'approximately' 40?

The specified cut point may vary slightly from one Year 12 ATAR course to another reflecting the different levels of cognitive demand between Year 12 ATAR courses. The specified cut point may also vary from year to year for a Year 12 ATAR course depending on the performance of students in the external examination.

6. What was the research basis for this policy decision?

The research for this WACE Refreshment included:

- a. The development and testing of an equating procedure by the Authority to compare the results of a pair of Year 12 ATAR units with the results of a pair of Year 12 General units for the same course.
- b. In addition to the equating procedure, a pair-wise process was undertaken by curriculum consultants to compare the grades achieved for the pair of Year 12 ATAR units with the grades achieved in the pair of Year 12 General units from the same course.

The equating and pair-wise analysis concluded that a D grade in a Year 12 ATAR pair of units at or above the specified cut point of approximately 40 equates to a C grade in the Year 12 General pair of units of the same course.

Responsibilities

1. What is the role of the school in supporting the C grade equivalent?

The role of the school is to assist in communicating the change to students, parents and carers. The school is not responsible for calculating, applying or reporting on C grade equivalents.

2. Do teachers need to change their marking practices as a result of the change?

No, teachers must not change their marking practices in response to the implementation of C grade equivalents. Teachers should continue to follow syllabus requirements and make grade judgements in accordance with the grade descriptions found in each syllabus. Schools will report student results to the Authority as per the current process.

3. Do teachers report a D grade in an ATAR course as a C grade?

No, teachers should not change their reporting practices and should continue to report accurate student achievement, including student achievement of a D grade. The Authority is responsible for the calculation, application and reporting on C grade equivalents.

4. Who will be responsible for calculating if students will be eligible to receive Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents?

The Authority will be solely responsible for calculating the eligibility and applying C grade equivalents.

Students

1. Which students will be eligible?

All Year 12 students in 2025 who have completed a Year 12 ATAR course this year or in a previous year and achieved a D grade are eligible for the Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents so long as they meet the specified cut point for that course in their moderated written school mark or ATAR course written examination mark.

2. Will all students who receive a D grade in an ATAR course automatically be awarded a C grade equivalent?

No, the achievement of a D grade in an ATAR course does not automatically equate to a C grade equivalent. Students who achieve a D grade for a Year 12 ATAR course need a mark above a specified

cut point of approximately 40 in either their moderated written school mark or the ATAR course written examination mark to be eligible.

3. Will Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents be applicable beyond 2025?

Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents will be applicable beyond 2025. Any change to this policy will be communicated to schools with sufficient notice.

4. Will Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents be granted to students repeating Year 12?

Students who are repeating Year 12 in 2025 will be eligible to receive C grade equivalents for Year 12 ATAR courses completed in 2025 or 2024.

5. Will schools need to submit any additional information to support a student to receive a Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalent?

Schools are not required to supply any additional information to the Authority to support a student to receive a C grade equivalent. Schools and teachers should continue to mark and report as per the Authority's existing requirements.

6. How will students know if they have received a Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalent?

The application of a Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalent will be recorded on a student's Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA) and ATAR examination report. All grades reported by a school will appear on the WASSA and ATAR examination report for a student, with an asterisk placed against the D grades for which C grade equivalents are granted (i.e. D*). An explanation for the asterisk will be included under the school grades section of the WASSA.

7. Will the receipt of a Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalent impact a student's post-secondary school admissions pathway to training or a university degree?

The Authority is not involved with the admissions process for post-secondary pathways. Students will need to check the admissions requirements with the relevant provider for more details.

8. Will the Authority be updating the *WACE Manual* or any of its other publications with this information?

The *WACE Manual* will be updated for 2026. Relevant publications such as the *Year 12 Information Handbook*, information for Year 10 subject selection and the *WASSA + WACE What you need to know* will also be updated with information about C grade equivalents.

Other

1. Is there a maximum number of Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents a student can receive?

No, there is no maximum number of Year 12 C grade equivalents that a student can receive.

2. Will C grade equivalents be granted for General and Foundation courses?

No, C grade equivalents will only be awarded for Year 12 ATAR courses, recognising that these courses are more cognitively demanding than other types of WACE courses.

3. Is there any impact on the WACE achievement standards?

C grade equivalents will contribute to WACE achievement through the achievement standard. Students must still meet all other requirements to achieve a WACE including the literacy and numeracy and breadth and depth standards.

4. Does the ATAR C grade equivalent WACE Refreshment apply to Year 11 ATAR courses (Units 1 and 2)?

No, C grade equivalents do not apply to Year 11 courses.

5. What information will be made available to schools about the application of Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents?

Schools may run individual Student Summary Statistics reports through the Student Information Records System (SIRS) following the publication of Year 12 results to see how C grade equivalents have been applied at student level. The Authority will also make available new reporting which provides cohort level information about the application of C grade equivalents. Schools may access this new reporting through SIRS for their eligible students.

6. Who do I contact for additional information regarding the Year 12 ATAR C grade equivalents?

If you have any further questions, email the Authority at info@scsa.wa.edu.au.