

Focus On: Course Scaling



The courses that can be used towards a TE Score are scaled each year based on how difficult it was to achieve a particular award when compared to the awards achieved in other courses that year. The scaling process determines what the final result range should be for each of the overall course awards.

What is course scaling?

The scaling is a complex mathematical process that analyses the results achieved by senior secondary students. The following courses are scaled:

- TASC accredited Level 3 and Level 4 courses (including [NIAL courses](#)).
- University of Tasmania High Achiever Program ([HAP](#)) units and selected University Connections Program ([UCP](#)) units.

Scaling is done after all external assessments are complete and course awards for individual students have been finalised but before student results documents are issued.

During the scaling process, the score ranges are assigned for each [award](#) (Satisfactory Achievement or higher) per course. Score ranges are based on student results and reflect how difficult it was to achieve a particular award in each scaled course that year. Course scores summarise achievement across courses on a common scale solely for the purpose of ATAR calculation.

Example score ranges for a course showing the minimum and maximum for each award:

SA		CA		HA		EA	
Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
1.0	6.7	7.2	16.3	16.8	22.5	23.0	24.8

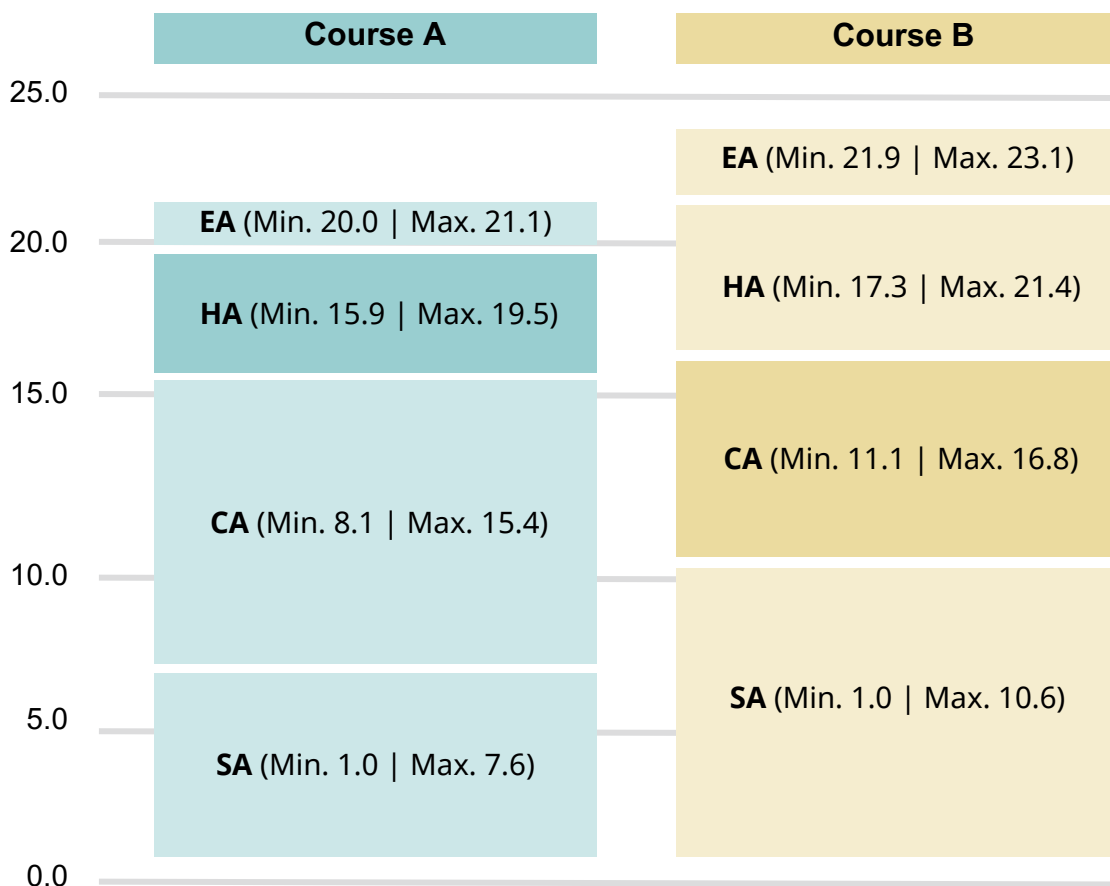
The scaling is designed to ensure comparability and prevent any disadvantage or advantage in choosing some courses over others. The thousands of calculations used during scaling recognise and address any concentration of students with high academic ability. Course selections should not be based on previous years' scaling outcomes.

Example: Scaling

This illustrates one scaling comparison of difficulty for Course A and B.

Several students achieved a HA in Course A and a CA in Course B. As these students found the HA award easier to achieve in Course A, the CA award for Course B is recognised with a higher score range.

By comparing across thousands of course combinations, scaling aims to determine a fair balance of the relative difficulty of achieving course awards.



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TASC publishes each year's [course scaling information](#) on its website in December.

After scaling is complete, course scores are combined to calculate the highest possible overall Tertiary Entrance Score (TE Score) for each Year 12/13 student who has met the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) [eligibility requirements](#).

Each student's overall TE Score is then converted to an ATAR. An ATAR shows where a student's results rank in comparison to other students in their year group.

For detailed information about how TE Scores and the ATAR are calculated, see [Focus on: TE Score and ATAR Calculation](#).

Why is scaling helpful?

Scaling allows results from different courses to be fairly compared with each other. This helps universities to compare the overall performance of applicants who are applying for the same university course. Every Australian state and territory scales their senior secondary course results.

How does the scaling process compare results from different courses?

In very simple terms, every result a student achieved in their scaled courses is compared with every result achieved by other students in all their courses. Thousands of complex calculations and comparisons occur during the scaling process. Every calculation provides evidence about how challenging students that year found each course.



Remember:

Whatever you want to do in life, there is a pathway to take you there, including further study that doesn't require an ATAR. Speak with your school, the university of your choice or other further education providers about the options available.



Why do score ranges for the same course change from year to year?

Quality assurance activities ensure consistency and comparability in scaling outcomes. However, as scaling calculations are based on student results, the way courses compare to each other will change slightly from year to year. For example, students in a particular year may find the content slightly more difficult (relative to other courses studied) than previous year groups did.



How are HAP and UCP units scaled?

[HAP](#) and [UCP](#)* units are scaled using essentially the same method as other courses, except University of Tasmania results are used. See [Focus on: TE Score and ATAR Calculation](#) for more information about how HAP and UCP can be included in TE Scores.

*Note: Not all UCP units qualify to contribute towards an ATAR. The University of Tasmania publishes which UCP units can/cannot be used for this purpose on their website.

Course Scaling FAQs

Does scaling reflect the complexity of a course's content?

No. Scaling is based only on actual student results, not how complex or difficult the course content may be viewed to be.

Should I pick my courses based on the scaling data TASC publishes?

No. The scaling data TASC publishes only shows what the course scores were for a single year. This information should not be used to predict scaling outcomes in future years.

Choosing courses simply because they have scaled highly in the past is risky. Be mindful that course scores are calculated based on results across Tasmania (not just your class or school), and not everyone will achieve the top course score.

Who decides how courses are scaled?

In Tasmania, the TASC Scaling Committee verifies the outcomes of the scaling analysis, reviewing score ranges for each course and ensuring that they fairly reflect student achievements. The scaling method used in Tasmania is called Rasch Analysis. Rasch Analysis is used across Australia and in other countries as a model to accurately compare student performance.

The TASC Scaling Committee is made up of representatives from:

- TASC (including a representative from the TASC Board)
- Department for Education, Children and Young People
- Catholic Education Tasmania
- Independent Schools Tasmania
- University of Tasmania.

I received the same award as my friend for the same course, so why did they get a higher course score?

While two people may both receive the same award for a course, there can be a range of achievement within that award. The scaling process ensures a student's course scores reflect their specific level of achievement.

For example, if Robin achieved more 'A's and 'B's in Course A than their classmate Jamie, Robin will get a higher course score, even if they both received the High Achievement (HA) overall award.

See [Understanding Assessment](#) for more information about how your criterion ratings affect your overall course award.

