St. Andrew’s Anglican College

Senior School – Senior Subjects
Overview

- Each student is expected to do 6 subjects in Year 11 and a minimum of 5 subjects at Year 12 (most students choose to do 6 subjects at Year 12 – the weakest of the 6 subjects is discarded when the Overall Achievement Indicators are calculated). **The subjects should be chosen based on student interest and as pre-requisite subjects for intended University Courses.**
CHOOSING SUBJECTS

• Do not choose subjects based on what your friends are doing.
• Do not choose subjects because you think they will “improve your OP”.
• If you choose subjects that interest you, or that you are good at, you are more likely to work hard and enjoy yourself in the process = SUCCESS!
• Most Universities these days appear to emphasize the importance of thinking skills, rather than content knowledge.
• What am I planning on pursuing at the end of Year 12?
• What combinations give me the greatest flexibility?
Range of subjects

• The Queensland Studies Authority provides formal syllabus documents for a range of “Authority Subjects”. Schools are required to have an accredited work program for each “Authority Subject” they offer.

• Final levels of achievement for each subject are determined in a 2-step process. The school will provide each student with a level of achievement for each subject they complete on a 50 point scale.
For example:

- The highest possible level of achievement is a VHA10 (think of this as an A+++)
- The lowest possible “A grade” is a VHA1 (think of this as an A---)
- The “B grades” range from the highest “B grade” of an HA10 down to an HA1
- This continues for an SA (“C”), LA (“D”) and VLA (“E”)
- In total, there are a range of 50 possible Levels of Achievement
• The level of achievement is determined through a variety of assessment tasks as outlined in the school’s work program for that subject. These assessment tasks are usually made up of assignments and tests, and can be formative (not counting towards the determination of final levels of achievement) or summative (counting towards the determination of final levels of achievement). A folio of assessment tasks for each student provides the evidence for the level of achievement allocated.
• In the second step, a controlled sample of assessment folios are sent off to a moderation Panel (monitoring in Year 11, verification in Year 12) to ensure that the assessment tasks accurately reflect the school-assigned level of achievement. This Panel is made up of subject teachers from schools within the region.

• Authority subjects are then used to determine a student’s OP (Overall Position) and FPs (Field Positions).
• There are also “Authority-Registered Subjects”. These are more vocational in nature. These subjects are outlined by the QSA “Study Area Specifications”, publications that describe the nature, amount and context of learning.

• These contribute credit points to the QCE (i.e. Prevocational maths is equal in credit value to Mathematics C) but DO NOT contribute to the calculation of a student’s OP (Overall Position) and FPs (Field Positions).
The QCE (Queensland Certificate of Education) involves earning 20 credits over (typically) 2 years. Each student, at the completion of Year 12, may receive:

- **a Senior Statement.**
  This reports all learning undertaken and the results achieved during the senior phase of learning.

- **a QCE.**
  This confirms a significant amount of learning at a set standard, which meets literacy and numeracy requirements.

- **an OP.**
  This indicates a student’s rank order position based on overall achievement in QSA subjects.
Choosing Subjects

At every school there are clashes when timetabling draws to its climax during Term 4. No student can be guaranteed their first 6 choices, and while we will endeavor to minimize the number of clashes, we will need students to nominate 6 subjects + 2 back-ups.

The first 2 selections must be an English and a Mathematics subject.
• Some restrictions we place on subject selection:
• English is compulsory
• Students must study either Mathematics A or Mathematics B
• The QSA regulates that Mathematics C can only be studied in conjunction with Mathematics B
• We then use these student selections to construct the Year 11 lines. The lines allow the greatest number of students to achieve the highest number of subjects selected.

• Once constructed, students may choose to change subjects if their new choice fits the subject lines and the class is not already full.
At this point, the following 3 pieces of advice will be useful:

- All Authority subjects are viewed equally by the QSA when determining OPs. However, similar results in 5 different subjects will not carry the same “weight” when OP’s are calculated.

- Since OP’s use the QCS Test results to scale groups of students, an HA5 (for example) in a subject with a group of students who have done very well in the QCS Test will be worth more than an HA5 in a subject with a group of students who have NOT done so well in the QCS Test.
Furthermore, if an HA5 is the top level of achievement in that subject, it is worth more than if it is the bottom level of achievement in that subject. (This will be explained in more detail later on.) Consequently, a “middle of the road” result in a subject where the competition is tough may well contribute more value than a high result where the competition is weak. However, do not choose a suite of “tough” subjects. Poor results will not lead to a high OP, regardless of the competition.
• Listen to your teachers. If they are advising you not to attempt a particular subject, there is a sound reason for their advice.

• Subject changes should be made early in the semester. Late changes are counter-productive as each completed semester counts, and the later you change into a subject, the less likely you are to perform to the best of your ability. Also – changing a subject in which the student is NOT achieving an SA of better at the end of Year 11 allows a student to use 2 concessional credits towards their QCE – but dropping a subject at the midway point of Year 12 when failing does not allow the credits to be used concessionally.