

General and Applied subjects – what’s the difference?

General subjects	Applied subjects
General subjects are suited to students who are interested in going to university. They tend to be more ‘academic’ than Applied subjects.	Applied subjects are suited to students who are interested in vocational education and training, or work. They tend to have a more ‘real world’ focus.
General subjects have external exams at the end of Year 12, which are set and marked by the QCAA ¹ . For most subjects the external exam is worth 25% of the final grade. For Maths and Science subjects ² , the external exam is worth 50%.	Applied subjects do not have external exams.
Summative work (i.e. work that counts towards the final grade) starts in Year 11 Term 4.	Summative work starts in Year 12 Term 1.
Each General subject has a total of four summative assessments - three internal and one external.	Each Applied subject has a total of four summative internal assessments.
In general subjects, the weighting of each summative assessment task is specified by the syllabus.	In Applied subjects, tasks are not weighted.
In general subjects, each internal summative assessment task is given a provisional numerical mark by the teacher, and this provisional mark is then confirmed by the QCAA. Students receive their ‘confirmed’ marks for the internal assessments before they do the external exam.	In Applied subjects, each summative assessment task is given an A-E grade by the teacher for each of the relevant dimensions/criteria.
<p>At the end of Year 12, results for the three internal and one external assessments will be added up and students will receive a numerical mark out of 100. The numerical mark is used by QTAC³ for ATAR calculation.</p> <p>The numerical mark will then be converted to a grade from A-E. The letter grade is used for calculating QCE credit.</p> <p>The QCAA decides the grade cut-offs for each subject each year, after the external exams are completed. They will be different from subject to subject, and from year to year.</p>	<p>In Applied subjects, there are no numerical marks. At the end of Year 12, the teacher assigns an overall grade from A-E by looking at the standard of achievement in the folio of summative work as a whole. The letter grade is used for calculating QCE credit.</p> <p>If the student is ATAR-eligible, QTAC will convert the letter grade to a numerical mark for the purposes of ATAR calculation.</p>
A student must study five subjects, at least four of which must be General subjects, to be eligible for an ATAR.	A student may count a maximum of one Applied subject OR one VET Cert III (or above) towards an ATAR.

¹ QCAA = Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

² Subjects with 50% external exams: General Maths, Maths Methods, Specialist Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Psychology.

³ QTAC = Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre