

SUPPORTING MATERIAL TO INTERPRET SENIOR SECONDARY ATTAINMENT PROFILES AND DIRECT CONTINUATION REPORTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFILES AND REPORTS

Senior Secondary Attainment Profiles and Direct Continuation Reports describe continuation and attainment for students at Tasmanian schools. They build on former reporting in 2014 and prior, using some previous measures for Year 12 attainment. The reports now include a richer context of measures tracking progress of students from Year 10 to Year 12, and include data over a five-year period with contextual measures such as indicators of socio-economic profile of the student population.

Senior Secondary Attainment Profiles provide a range of measures for schools and colleges with at least 5 students in Year 12. Profiles are based on the Year 12 cohort, and indicate:

- the gender and socio-economic profile of the student cohort,
- the numbers of students with various measures of attainment, including TCE and ATAR, and
- average scores and credit points.

Direct Continuation Reports show data for students in Year 10 at a school with at least 5 students, with data showing their subsequent participation and attainment in Years 11 and 12, irrespective of where they undertook these studies in Tasmanian schools or through Registered Training Organisations for Vocational Education and Training (VET).

In some cases, students in Year 10 at a school are not at the same school two years later, having moved to another school offering Year 11 and 12 within Tasmania.

CAUTIONS INTERPRETING THE PROFILES AND REPORTS

Changes over time

Senior Secondary Attainment Profiles and Direct Continuation Reports include measures that will fluctuate when based on smaller numbers of students.

While the reports show outcomes for a particular student group, caution should always be exercised when attempting to draw inferences how these outcome reflect school improvements; in some cases they might be considered chance variations.

Trend indicators balance short-term change from the previous year, with longer-term change over five years. These are calculated using the average of three slopes: for 2015 data, slopes from 2014-2015, 2013-2015, and 2011-2015. Values where this average slope exceeds $\pm 1.0\%$ per year are highlighted. These highlights are not intended to certify changes as statistically significant, but rather to invite further review of the data values presented over recent years.

Comparing a school result to other schools

Comparisons of a school's outcomes with those for the state, sector or other schools, may be less relevant for many school contexts than focusing on school changes over time.

The most important state measures are based upon the *total* age-cohort, whereas school measures are based upon the student cohort. For example, Tasmanian TCE attainment in 2015 of 50.4% is of the age weighted cohort of Tasmanian people aged 15-19, and hence is concerned with the "potential" Year 12 student population. School figures are based only on those students already engaging with Year 12, and hence tend to result in higher values than would be obtained using a "potential" Year 12 student population.

Comparisons across schools should consider contextual measures, such as indicators of the socio-economic profile of the student population. These contextual measures are provided within the reports.

Explanation of Measures in Senior Secondary Attainment Profiles

Year 12/13 and adult students	The cohort of students completing the second or subsequent year since completing Year 10. Achievement data is for these students in any year up to and including this particular year. Students are included only if they have attained one or more units of credit in TASC accredited, TASC recognised or nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) in this year for which information has been provided to the TASC. That is, students who are not assessed or who do not successfully complete any competencies or other studies are not included.
are Australian residents	This figure allows comparisons with state-wide data to be more meaningful as it excludes exchange students, those on student visas and those taught overseas.
aged over 19 years old	There can be big differences between schools/colleges in their proportions of 'mature' age students. Participation and achievement patterns would be expected to be different for 'mature' age students.
aged between 15 and 19	The age group expected to complete senior secondary soon after finishing Year 10. This population forms the state-wide, post-compulsory, student cohort against which comparisons further are made.
... SES advantage / disadvantage	Estimated from ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data linked by address. Values are standardised for Australia, with average of 1000 and standard deviation of 100. Values lower than 900 are in the bottom 16% of Australian values.
... Remoteness	Estimated from Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) data linked by address. ARIA is a remoteness value (a continuous variable between 0 and 15) that measures the physical distance which separates people in a particular area and where their goods, services and opportunities for social interaction may be accessed.
Of these students...	That is, the group of year 12/13 students who are Australian Citizens/permanent residents aged 15 to 19 as at December 31 in the year for which the data are provided.
... completed at least 120 credit points	The group of students that completes the equivalent of two years of 'full-time' study. This provides a basis for comparison of the completion rates of 'full-time' study with the school/college's expectations.
... achieved TCE in this year	The group of students who this year meet the requirements for the award of the TCE : standards for participation and achievement (120 credit points with at least 80 at level 2 or above) in VET, TASC accredited senior secondary courses or TASC recognised courses everyday adult reading, writing, mathematics, use of computers and the internet The standards may be met by a student over time and in a wide range of settings.
... have an ATAR	An (indirect) indicator of the aspirations and expectations of the cohort – an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) is used for direct entry to university. A school/college with a high proportion of ATAR eligible students may be seen as attracting a different mix of students in comparison with a school/college with a low proportion of ATAR eligible students.

... did some VET	These students completed at least one unit of competence. This is an (indirect) indicator of aspirations of the student cohort and the student response to those aspirations. A school with a relatively high proportion of students doing VET may be seen as responding to the mix of students in the cohort by encouraging the take-up of nationally recognised training.
... did at least one TASC level 3	An (indirect) indicator of aspirations and the response to those aspirations. A high proportion of students taking at least one TASC level 3 (was TCE level 5) may indicate a cohort where most students expect to 'have a go' at a TASC level 3 subject.
... did some maths/science at TASC level 3	An (indirect) indicator of priorities in subject choice [which may, or may not, reflect values and ideals of the student cohort and the values, priorities and culture of the school/college].
... did some VET and have a ATAR	An indicator of the separation in practice between the school's 'academic' and VET pathways. The lower the figure, the greater the separation between the two pathways and their student cohorts.
... did at least 4 TASC level 3 subjects	An (indirect) indication of the mix of students in the cohort.
... proportion of VET units forming part of a complete certificate	Extent to which VET students have sets of VET competencies that make up complete certificates. This statistic may have some meaning when set against a school/college's expectations.
... average TASC credit points	An indicator of the take-up of TASC accredited senior secondary courses by students.
... average VET credit points	An indicator of the take-up of VET courses by students. The divisor for this average is the total number of students in the cohort. VET take-up as a proportion of total educational achievement is generally quite low.
... Mean/median ATAR	An indicator of 'year 12 academic performance'. Provides the 'average' for those students who achieved an ATAR. Mean is simple average, median the middle value.
... Mean/median Year 12 points score	An indicator of 'year 12 academic performance' using performance in all subjects – TASC accredited, VET and TASC recognised. Mean is simple average, median the middle value.

Explanation of Measures in Direct Continuation Reports

Direct Continuation	A student must achieve at least 1 credit point towards their TCE in the next year to be considered a 'direct continuation'. The study can be at any school or Registered Training Organisation.
Year 10 Cohort	Students at the school who submitted a pathway plan to the TQA/TASC in the year.
Year 11 Students	Students who directly continued into Year 11 in the year after Year 10, in any sector.
Year 12 Students	Students who directly continued into Year 12 two years after Year 10, in any sector.
TCE	Attained the Tasmanian Certificate of Education two years after Year 10, in any sector.
ATAR	Attained an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank two years after Year 10.
VET	Attained full Vocational Education and Training Certificate by two years after Year 10.
Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA)	<p>The index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) was created by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).</p> <p>ICSEA provides an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students. ICSEA isn't a school rating. ICSEA is a scale which allows for fair and reasonable comparisons among Australian schools with similar students.</p> <p>Values are standardised for Australia, with an average of 1000 and standard deviation of 100. Values lower than 900 are in the bottom 16% of Australian values, and values lower than 950 are in the bottom 31% of Australian values. Further information is available at http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf</p>