



WACE course scores – 2011

Overview

The calculation of a **WACE course score** is one of the end points of a series of processes used to report the performance of students who sit the WACE examination for a course/stage. The WACE course score provides an assessment of a student's achievement in terms of established standards for the course/stage.

Figure 1 provides the sequence of marks adjustment processes that generate the WACE course score and scaled score for a course with only a written component. For a course/stage with both written and practical examination components, the same set of processes is applied separately to both components. See 'Your Marks 2011' for more detail.

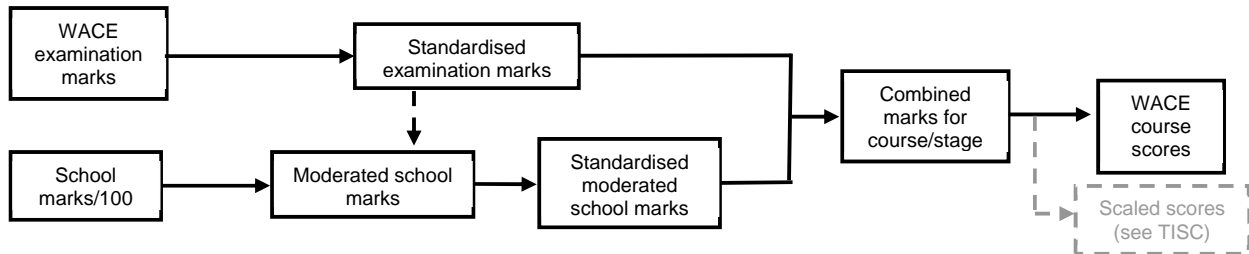


Figure 1 Marks adjustment processes

What does a WACE course score mean?

The purpose of WACE course scores at a particular stage of a course is to report student performance in relation to standards determined by a panel of experienced educators. WACE course scores for a course/stage¹ are based on its combined marks, and where these marks sit in relation to the standards. For a course/stage which has both written and practical components, a combined mark is calculated, as shown in Figure 1, for each component, and the combined mark for the course/stage is the *weighted* average of the combined marks calculated for each component. The weightings for a course/stage are given in the syllabus for the course/stage.

Standards are specific to each stage of a course, and there is no direct comparison between WACE course scores for the two stages of a course. However, the Stage 2 syllabus is less demanding than the Stage 3 syllabus, so a WACE course score of 78 for Stage 2 will represent a lower achievement than a WACE course score of 78 for Stage 3 of the same course. Standards also are specific to a course, so it is not necessarily true that a WACE course score of 78 for Stage 2 of one course is as difficult to achieve as a WACE course score of 78 in Stage 2 of any other course.

Under these standards, for all course/stages, a WACE course score

- of 75 or more indicates *excellent achievement*
- between 65 and 74.9 indicates *high achievement*
- between 50 and 64.9 indicates *satisfactory achievement*
- between 35 and 49.9 indicates *limited achievement*
- of 34.9 or less indicates *inadequate achievement*.

WACE course scores and scaled scores

As shown on Figure 1, WACE course scores and scaled scores are both derived from combined marks for the course/stage, but the two scores are quite different because they each serve a different purpose.

WACE courses scores are calculated by the Curriculum Council for the purpose of reporting student achievements in terms of standards specific to a stage of a course.

Scaled scores are calculated by the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC), in collaboration with the Curriculum Council, for the purposes of reporting achievements in a course/stage on a scale of marks which is common to the scale of marks in all course/stages. This allows marks from different course/stages to be added to determine Tertiary Entrance Aggregates (TEA) for students applying for entry to university.

A WACE course score achieved for study in a course/stage will be different from the scaled score achieved for the course/stage.

¹ WACE course scores are produced only for Stage 2 and Stage 3 studies.

Standard-setting and WACE course score calculation

Each year, a group of experienced educators studies the examination scripts of students to determine the combined mark boundary for each achievement band of a course/stage.

It should be noted that, from year to year, and from course/stage to course/stage, a particular combined mark will not always represent the same standard of achievement. For example, in a particular year the expert group may determine that combined marks

- above 76 meet the standard of Excellent achievement
- between 63 and 76 meet the standard of High achievement
- between 43 and 63 meet the standard of Satisfactory achievement
- between 33 and 43 meet the standard of Limited achievement, and
- below 33 meet the standard of Inadequate achievement.

Figure 2 demonstrates how these particular combined mark boundaries are linked to the unchanging WACE course score boundaries to generate WACE course scores. For example, candidates with combined marks between 63 and 76 will receive WACE course scores between 65 and 75.

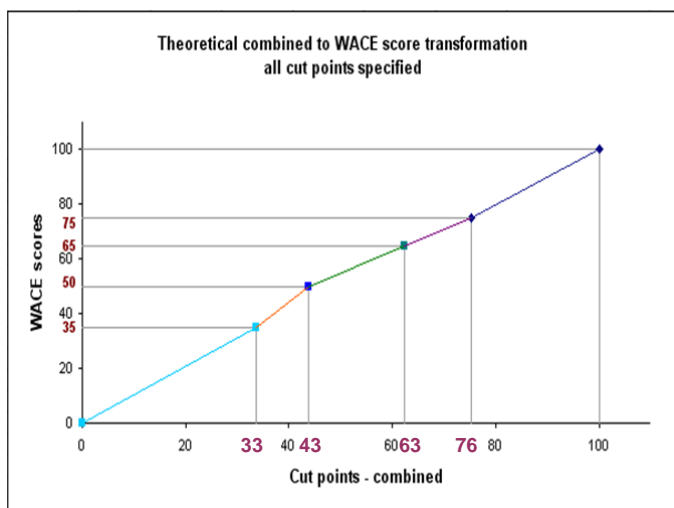


Figure 2 WACE course score calculations

WACE course reports

A feature of the Stage 2 and Stage 3 WACE course reports sent to each student in December of each year is a graph showing the student's WACE course score in relation to:

- the WACE course scores of all other students of the course/stage
- descriptions of typical examination performances in each performance band – these describe the *standard* of performance in the band.

Figure 3 provides an example of a typical WACE course report issued for 2011 studies.

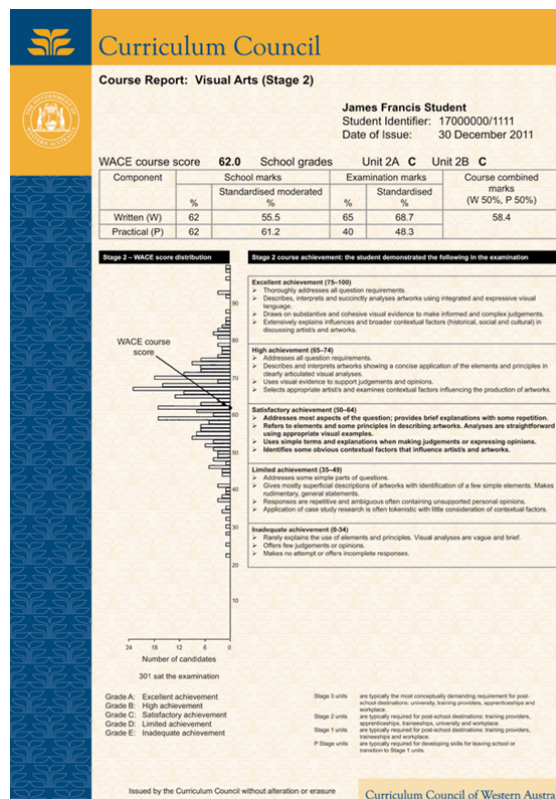


Figure 3 Typical WACE course report

Useful points to remember

- **WACE course scores** report a combination of a student's school and examination performances in terms of standards.
- **Standards** are established via expert assessment of a range of student performances in the WACE examinations.
- **Review** of established standards is conducted on an annual basis.

Further information

The Curriculum Council publishes a number of other information documents describing the marks adjustment processes. These can be found under 'Your marks' on the council website at

http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Senior_Secondary/WACE_Examinations/Your_Marks