

Subject Achievement Indicators (SAIs)

Fact Sheet 1: The Basics

What are they?

SAIs are a numerical way of showing how Year 12 students have achieved compared with others in their subject groups, within their school. Students are assigned a number between 400 (highest) and 200 (lowest) to show their position in the rank order of students in each subject.

Who gets them?

SAIs are allocated to students who are eligible for Overall Positions (OP-eligible students) in large subject groups of ≥ 14 OP-eligible students. Students who are not OP-eligible are not assigned SAIs. For OP-eligible students in small or intermediate subject groups their rung placement on the Form R6 becomes their SAI.

What are they used for?

SAIs are the primary input data used by the QSA for the scaling process used to calculate OPs and Field Positions (FPs). OPs are calculated from SAIs, not levels of achievement.

Why SAIs?

SAIs allow for fine-grained decisions about differences in student work. When awarding levels of achievement, teachers compare student work to syllabus standards. When assigning SAIs they compare students' work to other students' work and decide how similar or different their achievement is. SAIs allow the relative achievement of students to be represented in a way that placing them on the Form R6 does not.

For example, students with lower levels of achievement are likely to be more similar to each other than students with higher levels of achievement. This is because of the greater range of cognitive processes demonstrated in the work of higher achieving students.

Who assigns SAIs?

Teachers are the best people to assign SAIs — they know the assessment tasks and understand individual differences. When a number of people teach the same subject, they should work together to compare students' folios of work.

How are they assigned?

SAI decisions should be made using professional judgment, based on the evidence in student folios. SAIs are not a calculation, even though they involve assigning numbers. The numbers are simply a way to represent where students sit in the rank order, and how close together or far apart. The BonSAI program, the only software program for this purpose endorsed by the QSA, is a very helpful tool for assigning SAIs.

Can SAIs be compared?

SAIs cannot be compared between subjects or schools. SAIs only have meaning in an individual subject group in a particular school.