



Learning Towards Your Pathway

At the ASMS, we put students learning and developing connections with their pathways firmly at the centre of all we do. Our students are driven towards STEM based university pathways and these are offered using both non-ATAR and ATAR options.

Non-ATAR options are the genesis of our close relationship with Flinders University, and are gaining in popularity in ever increasing numbers of students utilising these. Alternative pathways require students to demonstrate their readiness for university along with completion of any pre-requisite subjects, with the opportunity to receive an early university offers.

Context

Increasingly, the importance of learner disposition is being recognised as being critical for long term success. This is evident in the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 vision, as well as numerous reports such as the World Economic Forum's Skills for Your Future that identifies a range of what have historically been called life skills', 'competencies' or 'dispositions' critical to success in the workforce.

This aligns closely with our Learning@ASMS cornerstones of agency, coherence and connection, and the learning design at the ASMS.

What does this look like?

All learners are provided with multiple opportunities to access different post-school pathways as well as multiple methods for achieving this pathway. By having a strong relationship with a support teacher and guided expertise, students are able to best select their preferred pathway option and the preferred mechanism for achieving this pathway.

Alternative to ATAR programs have been de-stigmatised as evidence has built that they provide excellent preparation for university and reduce the pressure of the 'ATAR crush', with a focus on capabilities and dispositions of university readiness.

Learning Towards your Pathway

- + Offering a range of post-school pathway options is integral to the future success of our students
- + Multiple pathway entry programs allow students to focus much more on their learning than their ATAR
- + Strong relationships between schools and universities lead to better outcomes for students





Case Study

Achieving an ATAR is no longer the only way for Year 12s to enter University. There's now a range of pathways into your dream degree. Under the Portfolio Accreditation for Tertiary Entrance (PATE) arrangement with Flinders University, ASMS students can receive an early offer for a range of degrees, well before other school leavers have even received their exam results.

Portfolio Accreditation for Tertiary Entrance (PATE)

The portfolio approach is an evidence based way of demonstrating university readiness, allowing students to demonstrate their capabilities by way of problems solved and challenges overcome. Australian Science and Mathematics School deputy principal Glenys Thompson says PATE offers a "far superior" pathway to University than the ATAR, which has been condemned by educators for not being indicative of future academic success.

Example

ASMS student Paige Lawson has started a Bachelor of Science (Molecular Science) at Flinders University after gaining entry into the program through PATE. Paige was driven to pursue further study in science and achieved this by extending her Research Project, providing evidence of how she examined the effectiveness of organic soap compared to synthetic soap and how bacteria changed through soap use.

"Because of how I was doing with my school work, and the feedback from teachers, I knew by Term 3 that I was definitely going to get into the course. I know I got in based on my achievements, rather than the ATAR which is really just comparing (how you are ranked) to everyone else" Lawson, 17 says. "In fact, I didn't even bother to check my ATAR because my pathway was assured and I felt prepared for the next stage of my journey".

Further reading & resources:

- + The Capable Country – Cultivating Capabilities in Australian Education (vu.edu.au) 2018 Accessed 18 May 2021
- + Fadel C, Bialik, M, Trilling, B (2015) *Four Dimensional Education – The competencies learners need to succeed* Centre for Curriculum Redesign

