

HSC Student Profile: Kristina

Question 1

Please state your name.

Kristina

Question 2

Which year did you complete your HSC?

2009

Question 3

Did you study any Year 12 HSC subjects (accelerated) in Year 11?
If yes, please list the subject(s).

No

Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

Sefton High School

Question 5

What scores did you obtain for each of your Year 12 studies?

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Assessment Mark</i>	<i>Examination Mark</i>	<i>HSC Mark</i>	<i>Performance Band</i>
<i>Mathematics Extension II</i>	<i>96/100</i>	<i>93/100</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Mathematics Extension I</i>	<i>97/100</i>	<i>96/100</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>English Advanced</i>	<i>85/100</i>	<i>91/100</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Physics</i>	<i>94/100</i>	<i>88/100</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>90/100</i>	<i>94/100</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>6</i>

Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

99.15

Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Bachelor of Dentistry

Question 8

Which university/tertiary institution are you enrolled in/planning to attend?

James Cook University, Cairns



The following questions relate to a typical week where there were no major examinations forthcoming:

Question 9

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside school) across a typical week?

On a typical weekday without private tutoring or extracurricular activities I would study for at least 5-6 hours. On the weekdays that I had tutoring, excluding tutoring hours, I would study 3 – 4 hours. On a typical Saturday I would attend Chinese school or else study in the morning from 9am till 12noon, and then have Physics and Chemistry tutoring from 1:30pm till 6pm. On Saturday nights I would try to fit in 2 or 3 hrs of study before going to bed, or otherwise take the night off. On Sundays I would spend the morning studying till 12 and then take the rest of the day off, until night time, and revise work for the next school day.

Question 10

What was your typical weekday routine?

Wake up at around 7am, get ready for school and walk to the train station to catch the train at 8am and then walk to school. School would start at 8:45am and finish at 3:10. I would get home by 3:30, eat a snack and rest until 4:30pm, then study until 6pm and then shower and eat dinner. At 7pm I would start studying again till 1am and go to sleep. During 7pm till 1am I would take 2 or 3 short 15-20 minute breaks in between studying.

Question 11

Where did you engage in the bulk of your study on a day to day basis?
(eg. bedroom, school library etc).

In my bedroom or on the dining table at home.

Question 12

How many hours did you dedicate to study across school holidays?

About 14 hours, 3 in the morning (9am – 12pm), 5 during the day (1pm – 6pm) and then 6 hours during night time (8pm – 2am).

Question 13

Did you engage in any extra curricular activities across Year 12? If yes, please indicate the activities and how much time was dedicated to each activity.

I played piano outside of school from the beginning of year 12, but then I completed the grade halfway through year 12. I would dedicate an hour a day to piano practice, but skip practice once in a while depending on my workload. I also went to Chinese school every Saturday morning from 9am to 12noon, but completed my course halfway through Year 12 as well.

Question 14

How did you balance/organise your study with other commitments like work or sport or family?

I was poor at balancing study with other commitments. I spent most of year 12 studying so I was sedentary for most hours of the day, sport was merely walking to school or the tutoring, which was about a half an hour to 1 hr walk. Family time was devoted to meal times and car trips and contact with friends was mostly during school times and at tutoring. I wish I balanced my time better, I probably would have been healthier, been able to focus better and wouldn't have gotten sick as often.

The following questions relate to a typical week where there were major examinations forthcoming:

Question 15

How did you approach the task of preparing for the exam? (For example, would you start the process by writing notes? If so, which resources did you use to compile materials etc).

Writing notes was a gradual task which I did throughout the term when I learnt the material, but before a major examination I would reread and rewrite those notes, using the syllabus as a go-to to be sure of what information was needed to be known for the examination. For physics and chemistry, I mainly used 2 textbooks, Chem/Phys in Context and Jacaranda, and the resources my tutor gave me. I also did HSC past papers with answers from Odlum and Garna, and past papers from other high schools. For English I would prepare by writing a 'generic' essay with all my quotes and techniques and re-edit that essay, with the help of my English teacher and school and my English tutor. For my maths subjects, all I could do for preparation was to make sure I understood all the concepts taught and know all the basic concepts and how to implement them. I also did a lot of maths past papers which gave me exposure to different types of questions. I would always do past papers timed and in exam conditions which helped me improve my speed in exams.

Question 16

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside of school) in the weeks leading up to the exams?

Leading up to the HSC exams, or trial exams I would spend as much of the day studying as possible. On school days I would finish school, then have a half an hour break and study for the rest of the day until I go to bed, with half an hour breaks every 3 hours. On weekends, besides attending tutoring I would spend my day studying in 3 hr intervals with a half an hour break in between.

Question 17

What was your typical day to day routine when studying for the exams?

Wake up at 8/9 in the morning, study until 10/11 and have a small breakfast. Then study straight after until 12 and eat lunch. Then study from 1 till 6 and then eat dinner and shower. Then I'd start studying again at 8 pm till 2am with regular breaks every 2 hrs when I would eat a snack or anything to rest my eyes.

Question 18

Did you continue your extracurricular activities in the weeks leading up to the exams?

No, I devoted as much time to study as possible. It felt like extracurricular activities ate up my time.

Question 19

Which technique(s) did you use to learn materials "off by heart"? (eg. writing notes, re-writing, reading texts etc).

Writing and re-writing notes was my way of memorising things. Before every exam I would have a set of detailed notes with all the information I would need to know off by heart. To memorise this information I would learn it verbally and then rewrite the information. It helped to summarise things into dot points and try linking everything together into tables and mind maps.

Question 20

When did you start preparing for your TRIAL exams?

I started preparing for trials a month before the exams, but the 2 weeks before trials I was bed-ridden from the flu and burned out which took me a week to recover. So the week before trials I was completely unmotivated and relied on cramming the night before which was definitely not a wise choice.

Question 21

How much study did you engage in between the TRIALS and the final HSC exams?

During the period between trials and exams I studied daily but it was very unproductive study. It was only until 2 weeks before HSC exams that I did some intense study which really stuck to me. I had lost my motivation before trials and only started recovering from 'burning out' at the time.

Question 22

Do you feel that you invested enough time into study between the Trials and the final HSC exams?
Would you have benefited from additional study across this period?

I felt that I invested more than enough time to study, but a lot of the time was spent inefficiently. If I had worked more effectively across this period my results would definitely had been better.

Question 23

Did your Year 12 peers at school invest in significant study in the lead up to the TRIALS?

Leading up to the trials a lot of my peers were studying very diligently, however a large number of my peers like myself couldn't focus until very close up to the trials.

Question 24

Did your Year 12 peers at school invest in significant study between the TRIALS and the final HSC exams?

Yes, more than myself. I 'burned out' a week before trials and around this time I was still recovering my motivation to study. Of course, I still did study, but not very efficiently.

Question 25

Were the TRIAL exams an accurate reflection of the difficulty and style of questions encountered in the final HSC exams?

The trials were a good indication of what the final HSC exams would be like. For some physics and chemistry the trials felt harder than the actual HSC exam, for maths extension II the trials for my school were easier than the HSC exam, but for maths 3unit and English the level of difficulty was about the same. I think the trials were a good practice test to put all the preparation done in the year to work, and to see how your method of approach for preparing for exams come to pass.

Question 26

Did you suffer from anxiety attacks or mind blocks in any of your exams? What did you do to alleviate or get through these situations?

During the English exam I did have a mind block while writing an essay. I simply went onto the next essay and kept writing. I knew that if I stopped writing I would run out of time so I just completely switched my focus onto the next essay and then came back to the one I was stuck with later on. While I was writing the next essay my mind did start to remember things about the previous essay so I would write these thoughts as dot points quickly on the bottom of the page and then went back to it. For questions that I couldn't do I would get very anxious and stressed out which only makes things worse because your brain won't work when you're that stressed out. To get through this I would go to the next question and come back to it. For maths extension II I would reread the question and then attempt all the parts I could do, listing out methods of completing questions also helped for me to tackle difficult questions.

Questions Relating to the Subject You Have Been Asked to Write About

Question 1

Which subject does this report relate to?

Maths Extension II

Question 2

Based on your results and performance throughout the year, were you confident that you would obtain a Band 6 result? If not, what Band or overall mark were you anticipating/hoping to receive?

Yes I was assured that I would get a band 6 for extension II.

Question 3

Which section/topic of the syllabus did you find most challenging?

I found mechanics the most challenging.

Question 4

How much time did you spend preparing/working on school assessments?

Usually 2-3 days before an assessment I would study specifically for the assessment and its topics tested. I would study the topics from the basics and then find a range of questions to practice the concepts with.

Question 5

What was the best source of help/information for your assessments? (Text book, teacher, friends, lectures, tutorial programs, private tutors, internet, own research etc).

The best source of help for your assessments is your teacher. While a textbook or your tutor will be helpful, it is always wise to go to your teacher because they are the ones marking the assessment and that means they know what format you need to write your answers in to get marks.

Question 6

Did you regularly use a private tutor in this subject? If so, did you find this assistance beneficial?

Yes

Question 7

Did you attend a tuition college/tutorial classes/lectures to assist in this subject? Did you find this assistance beneficial?

I went to private tutorial classes for mathematics extension II. It was really helpful because it let me learn the extension II topics twice during the year, once with my tutor and once at school. My tutor helped me understand concepts better and really broke down the topics from the basics and explained the complex concepts really well. He also taught me the way to approach a question which related to all topics of the course, rather than just show different examples of different questions which was what my school teacher did. He also put pressure on me to study which was a good motivation.

Question 8

If applicable, do you feel that you would have obtained the same score if you did not use tutors/coaches/lectures/tuition programs?

I definitely would not have had the same score, without the help of my tutor I definitely would not have performed as well.

Question 9

What was your best source of help across the year (teacher, tutor, lecture program etc)?

The best source of help across the year was both my tutor and teacher. While I did say going the teacher before an assessment is the best choice, without my tutor teaching me the subject and explaining the topics the way he did I would not have been able to understand the subject as much as I did, vice versa.

Question 10

Did you do anything differently study wise in comparison to your peers at school?

Compared to the peers at my high school, I think I did a lot more past papers, and studied quite differently. I always made sure I would study from the very basics of every topic before learning any specific questions and I found that this helped me a lot to understand what a question was asking for or how to approach questions better.

Question 11

Do you feel that you had an advantage over other students in this subject? If so, what was this advantage?

I enjoyed the subject which was probably the only advantage I did have, because it meant I enjoyed studying for it.

Question 12

Compare the subjects for which you obtained your lowest and highest HSC Marks/Bands.

Detail what you did differently between the two subjects and if applicable, provide your opinion on why you obtained such different scores.

My lowest HSC mark was English 88, highest was mathematics extension 1 97. The large difference in scores was due to my performance throughout the year, i.e. my assessment marks from school. I performed poorly for English from the beginning of the year until halfway through the year when I got an English tutor which explained the things I was doing wrong in my essays that didn't get me any marks. It was after this that my performance improved. For maths I performed consistently well at school which resulted in the higher score.

Question 13

As part of your HSC/TRIAL exam preparation for this subject, did you spend time writing up a comprehensive set of notes from which to learn? If yes, how many hours do you believe you invested into this task?

Yes, I did write comprehensive notes, not to study from but more as a checklist to see what I still remember, what areas I needed to touch up on and what areas required more attention. I think I spent a good 15 hours to finish writing up these notes for the HSC/TRIAL exams.

Question 14

Did you purchase/acquire quality notes to assist in your examination preparation? If yes, did you find this acquisition beneficial? Why/why/not?

I did not purchase notes to study from because it's always best to learn from your own notes since you learn things during the process of writing the notes, not when you read them.

Question 15

How many examination papers did you work through as part of your exam preparation?

At least 50

Question 16

Which exam papers did you work through?

(List the names of the entities/organisations that produced the exam papers).

Past HSC exams from the board of education, Sydney boys high school past papers for trials, James Ruse past papers for trials and assessments, Sefton past papers for trials and assessments, Sydney Grammar trials.

Question 17

Did you work through any exam papers under exam conditions? If yes, how many?

Yes, definitely. I worked through the majority of the papers under exam conditions in order to build up speed when approaching and answering questions. I would say 9/10 papers would have been done under exam conditions, then marked and then I would go through in detail the questions I could not do or did wrong.

Question 18

How much time was invested into preparing for the TRIAL examination?

How much time was invested into preparing for the final HSC examination?

Which examination did you find more difficult and why?

I found the HSC examination harder than the trial, there is no particular reason why, it just felt that way. It could have been due to the stress of it being a huge exam in which I had to perform really well. I invested probably only 10 hours of preparation for the TRIALS in the week we were given off to study, and for the HSC examination I studied for 2-3 days.

Question 19

Had you previously covered all the questions/concepts that appeared in the exams or did the exam paper contain materials that you had never seen before? If so, did this make you panic in the exams?

I had covered all the concepts in the exams because I studied from the HSC syllabus but there were 3 parts of a question I couldn't answer because I just didn't know how to. This did make me panic slightly but knowing that I did all that I could have for the exam I just tried to make the best out of the question and wrote as much closely answering the question as possible.

Question 20

Did you complete every question in the TRIAL exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

I completed every question in the Trial exam except for the probability question.

Question 21

Did you complete every question in the final HSC exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

Besides the probability question and the last part of the last question I completed every other question in the final HSC exam.

Question 22

Did you use any special exam techniques when working through the actual exams?

I wouldn't call them special exam techniques but I remembered to keep my eye on the time as I worked through. I skipped probability because I simply don't understand it at all and I didn't want to waste time on something I would probably get wrong anyway so I spent my time trying to get every other question.

Question 23

If applicable, what mistakes did you make when preparing for the TRIAL exams?

Did you do anything differently when preparing for the final HSC examinations?

When preparing for the trials, the one mistake was not preparing enough. I only studied for the trial maths extension II the day before because as I explained earlier, I had "burned out" and was really lacking the motivation to study. For the final HSC exams I got my act together and studied diligently which made me a lot more prepared for the exam.

Question 24

Which resources did you find most helpful when preparing for the exams?

Past paper exams with solutions and theory notes from class which explained the concepts.

Question 25

What advice would you provide to those students aiming for a Band 6 in this subject?

Remember to understand all the concepts of this subject taught to you, rather than just memorising concepts. This way you can look at a question and then think to yourself 'what are the ways of answering this question?' My tutor always said that the hard thing about extension II was that there was always more than one way of answering a question. If you grasp the basics and understand your concepts well, this won't be a problem. Also do a lot of past papers, it gives you exposure to a wide range of questions and practice to applying concepts to questions, and helps you develop exam skills if you do them under exam conditions

General Advice**Question 1**

What was the most difficult aspect of completing your HSC studies and how did you overcome this?

The most difficult aspect was to consistently study throughout the year. I overcame this struggle thanks to the encouragement from my tutor and competition with my classmates. I remember when year 12 had just begun, I decided to try my best for my last year in high school and set really high expectations for myself in every assessment. I also chose subjects which I know I would enjoy learning about, or at least be interested in. I 'burnt out' at the end of year 12 and this was really difficult to overcome because my brain was just telling me it was too lazy to study anymore. I didn't really overcome this, but after 2 weeks I eventually got back into the habit of studying, especially because I had trials coming up.

Question 2

If you had your time over again, would you do anything differently across Year 11 and/or 12?

Why/Why Not?

I think if I were to do it again I would include days for a social life or for relaxation. Because I completely devoted year 12 to study, I felt like I did waste a lot of time during studying hours procrastinating. If I gave myself a proper rest to relax and unwind I would have studied better in the long run.

Question 3

Is there anything that you wish you had known about before entering the HSC?

I wish I knew what course I wanted to study in university. Of course that would have been impossible because these decisions are life changing and require a lot of time to think about. I had friends who didn't know what course they wanted to do even after the HSC exams. If I knew what course I wished to take, i.e. medicine, I could have started my UMAT training earlier which would not have clashed with my school studies. But besides that, I think the HSC was a learning curve where you needed to learn things on the way rather than be handed everything beforehand.

Question 4

Are there any resources/services/products that would have assisted you in your studies had they been available?

More practice questions or past papers.

Question 5

If you had one piece of advice to give future students, what would it be?

Give it your best this year for HSC, it only comes once and when it's all over, you'll feel twice as satisfied if you know you've tried your hardest. You have had 4 years of high school to muck around and Year 12 is the year to sit down and study with all your heart and soul (with moderation).