

Recognition of Courses Guidelines

The SACE Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Policy defines the framework for the accreditation of subjects, the recognition of learning, and the certification of the requirements for completion of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

The Board accredits, recognises, and certifies learning that meets the diverse needs and interests of students and offers young people rigorous, practical, and engaging pathways from school to further and higher education, training, work, and the community.

These guidelines provide the framework for the recognition of learning that contributes to the SACE, enabling students to acquire knowledge, skills, and understanding through formal education and training or informal learning experiences in a variety of situations.

The terms 'Board-accredited subjects' and 'Board-recognised courses', which are used in these guidelines, are defined as follows:

- Board-accredited subjects are accredited and quality assured by the SACE Board for teaching, learning, and assessment in schools.
- Board-accredited courses are accredited and quality assured by other education and/or training providers and recognised by the SACE Board for SACE completion.

Principles

The following recognition principles, derived from the SACE Policy Framework, are a guide to the recognition process:

1. That the recognition of learning is consistent with the principles, requirements, and standards of the SACE. (consistency with SACE principles)
2. That the amount and level of recognition of learning maintain and enhance the integrity of the SACE. (integrity of the SACE)
3. That the recognition arrangements enable students to personalise the components of the SACE and at the same time maintain coherence in the SACE. (coherence in the SACE)
4. That the recognition arrangements promote diverse pathways but do not duplicate the pathways provided by the SACE. (not duplicate identical pathways)
5. That the recognition process focuses on the learning achieved. (achievement-focused)
6. That the recognition process takes into account the nature, scope, and complexity of learning, and that judgments about the complexity of learning are made against evidence of learning. (evidence-based)
7. That the certification of student achievement in Board-recognised courses is conducted on the basis of satisfactory completion or achievement of the relevant course standards and competencies, that is, that the certification aligns to the use of the C grade for Board-accredited subjects. (satisfactory completion or achievement of course standards)
8. That the reporting of Board-recognised courses is consistent with the valuing of other, accredited learning that contributes to the SACE. (consistency in reporting)

9. That the quality assurance processes of learning providers in guaranteeing the integrity of student results are respected. (quality assurance)
10. That the integrity of assessments for Board-recognised courses depends on the interconnected responsibilities of the students, providers, school leaders, SACE Board, and other educational providers who have an accreditation function for the relevant course. (interconnected responsibilities)
11. That the recognition process is based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency. (equitable process)

Recognition criteria

A key question for the recognition process is whether or not the curriculum being submitted for recognition is commensurate with the nature, scope, and complexity of the SACE subject or requirement.

Submissions need to:

- show how the proposed course contributes to the overall aims of the SACE (e.g. the level of congruence with the aims of the SACE; the level of correspondence with SACE capabilities; the promotion of diverse pathways; the promotion of personalised learning; the development of active, responsible citizens). (congruence with the aims of the SACE)
- give details of the nature, scope, and complexity of the proposed course (e.g. note if the curriculum is similar to that of other SACE subjects; if any overlap with SACE subjects is acceptable; whether the demands of the course are at Stage 1 level or at Stage 2 level). (nature, scope, and complexity)
- show how the assessment processes to be applied to students' achievements in the proposed course promote validity, reliability, and fairness. (validity, reliability, and fairness)
- give details of how satisfactory achievement (i.e. the equivalent of a C grade at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2) is described and quality assured. (satisfactory achievement)
- give details of the quality assurance framework that is in place to ensure the consistent and fair reporting of students' achievements (e.g. the structure of the organisation, including personnel and governance; the teaching/training qualifications of providers; record-keeping; documentation of student achievements; facilities; longevity of program/organisation). (quality assurance)

The Recognition process

The four key areas for the recognition of courses in the SACE are as follows:

- vocational education and training (VET) courses (i.e. qualifications and/or partly completed qualifications) provided by the VET sector
- courses submitted by a school, institution, or other authority or organisation (e.g. courses submitted by schools or other Australian or overseas authorities or organisations)
- courses that meet the literacy and numeracy requirements of the SACE (submitted by schools, institutions, or other authorities or organisations)
- community learning, including community-developed programs and self-directed community learning programs (submitted by community organisations or institutions).

Guidelines for the recognition of VET courses

The guidelines for the recognition of VET qualifications and/or partly completed VET qualifications are described through a separate Board process. See the Recognition arrangements for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the SACE policy.

Guidelines for the recognition of courses submitted by a school, institution, or other authority or organisation

The SACE Board recognises learning from appropriate courses that are accredited and quality assured by schools, institutions, authorities, or organisations in other Australian states or overseas at a:

- level that is equivalent, in nature and scope, to Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the SACE
- standard of complexity in which the satisfactory completion or achievement of standards and competencies is equivalent to a C grade for Board-accredited subjects at Stage 1 or Stage 2.

Summary of the recognition process for courses submitted by a school, institution, or other authority or organisation

1. The school, institution, authority, or organisation applies to the SACE Board for a particular course to be recognised as contributing to the completion of the SACE.
2. The Board consults and supports the school, institution, authority, or organisation in preparing the application.
3. Relevant documentation in support of the application is submitted.
4. A SACE Board review panel considers the documentation and prepares a recognition report.
5. The SACE Board Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Committee considers the recognition report.
6. The Board approves the recognition arrangements.

Guidelines for the recognition of courses that meet the literacy and numeracy requirements of the SACE

Students can meet the literacy and numeracy requirements of the SACE through a range of accredited subjects and recognised courses.

The Board has endorsed the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) level 3 descriptions in reading, writing, and numeracy as reference points for the SACE literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

The Board will recognise courses in literacy and/or numeracy that:

- have a primary focus on the development of literacy or numeracy skills
- are at a level that is equivalent in nature and scope to Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the SACE
- are at a standard of complexity in which the satisfactory completion or achievement of standards and competencies is equivalent to a C grade for Board-accredited subjects at Stage 1 or Stage 2
- demonstrate the conduct of quality assurance processes whereby students' literacy and/or numeracy outcomes are directly moderated by the SACE Board or by the relevant institutions, authorities, or organisations.

Summary of the recognition process for courses that meet the literacy and numeracy requirements of the SACE

7. The school, institution, authority, or organisation applies to the SACE Board for a particular literacy or numeracy course to be recognised as contributing to the completion of the SACE.
8. The Board consults and supports the school, institution, authority, or organisation in preparing the application.
9. Relevant documentation in support of the recognition process is submitted.
10. A SACE Board literacy and numeracy review panel considers the documentation and prepares a recognition report.
11. The SACE Board Accreditation, Recognition and Certification Committee considers the recognition report.
12. The Board approves the recognition arrangements for the literacy or numeracy course.

Guidelines for the recognition of community learning programs

The SACE Board recognises, as contributing to completion of the SACE, community learning that is gained through one of the following:

- a learning program that follows a formal, accredited curriculum (a community-developed program)
- learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formal, accredited curriculum (self-directed community learning).

Community learning is learning that is not accredited as part of the Australian Qualifications Framework but, when compared with the learning expressed in Board-accredited subjects, is deemed by the SACE Board to be at a:

- level that is equivalent in nature and scope to Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the SACE
- standard of complexity in which the satisfactory completion or achievement of standards and competencies is equivalent to a C grade for Board-accredited subjects at Stage 1 or Stage 2.

A learning program that follows a formal, accredited curriculum (community-developed program)

1. The SACE Board appraises the nature, scope, and level of complexity of community learning gained through a learning program that follows a formal, accredited curriculum of a community organisation or youth development program.
2. The SACE Board bases its appraisal on the evaluation of various pieces of information provided by the community organisation or youth development program (e.g. curriculum documents, assessment specifications or guidelines, evidence of performance at various documented levels, quality assurance mechanisms, discussions, and scripts) against learning from Board-accredited subjects.
3. The SACE Board makes decisions about the value of the learning that has taken place in terms of the:
 - number of SACE credits
 - SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
 - standard achieved (satisfactory completion or achievement of the relevant course standards and competencies, equivalent to a C grade).

4. The student and the school, in collaboration with the relevant learning provider (e.g. community organisation), will supply documentation of evidence of the satisfactory completion of community learning from a program of instruction that follows a formal, accredited curriculum. Evidence of community learning that is presented for recognition (e.g. the award, certificate, or other evidence of learning) must be verified as current by the relevant provider.

Learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formal, accredited curriculum (self-directed community learning)

1. The SACE Board is responsible for appraising the nature, scope, and level of complexity of community learning that is gained through learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formal, accredited curriculum.
2. The SACE Board bases its appraisal on the evaluation of the evidence presented by the student. School-based assessors, who have been trained for the purpose, evaluate the evidence on behalf of the Board. There are a variety of ways in which the student can provide evidence of community learning gained through learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formal, accredited curriculum (e.g. interviews, portfolios, witness statements). The responsibility for documentation of the evidence of a student's learning rests with the student. A mentor, teacher, or school-based assessor may help the student in this task. The SACE Board may also help in this process.
3. The school-based assessors evaluate the community learning on the evidence presented by the student. Using SACE Board guidelines and forms, the assessors make decisions about the value of the learning that has taken place in terms of the:
 - number of SACE credits
 - SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
 - standard achieved (equivalent to a C grade for a Board-accredited subject).

Summary of the recognition process for community-developed programs

Community organisations are invited to have their community-developed programs considered for recognition as contributing to the SACE.

The appraisal of community-developed programs involves the following process:

1. The Board consults and supports the community organisation in preparing the application.
2. Relevant documentation in support of the recognition process is collected.
3. A recognition panel is established.
4. The recognition panel considers the documentation and prepares a recognition report and recommendations.
5. The SACE Board Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Committee considers the recognition report and the recommendations of the recognition panel.
6. The Board approves the recognition report.

Summary of the recognition process for self-directed community learning

Individual students can have their self-directed learning considered for recognition as part of their SACE. These students must apply for status.

The appraisal of self-directed community learning involves the following process:

1. The student applies for recognition of learning that is the result of self-directed community learning.
2. The student collects relevant documentation to support the application.
3. The student presents the evidence of his or her learning at a meeting with the SACE Board assessors and/or the Board-trained school-based assessors.
4. SACE Board assessors, and/or the Board-trained school-based assessors, consider the evidence against the specified criteria.
5. The outcomes of the application are reported to the student.

General guidelines for the recognition of courses

1. A school, institution, authority, or organisation may develop a course to meet emerging needs. The Board recognises courses that may contribute to the completion of the SACE.
2. The school, institution, authority, or organisation applies to the SACE Board for a particular course to be recognised as contributing to the completion of the SACE.
3. The SACE Board consults the school, institution, authority, or organisation about the nature, scope, and complexity of the course.
4. The school, institution, authority, or organisation submits the relevant documentation, including:
 - a copy of the course
 - details of the school, institution, authority, or organisation
 - information about assessment and quality assurance mechanisms
 - details of qualifications of staff
 - details of facilities
 - the longevity of the course and the course review schedule.
5. A SACE Board review panel considers the documentation for the course and prepares a submission for the SACE Board's Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Committee to consider. The review panel appraises the nature, scope, and level of complexity of the course. The review panel bases its appraisal on the evaluation of various pieces of information provided by the school, institution, authority, or organisation (e.g. curriculum documents, assessment specifications or guidelines, evidence of performance at various documented levels, quality assurance mechanisms, discussions, and scripts) against Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the SACE.
6. The Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Committee uses the following criteria when considering the documentation for the course:
 - The nature of the learner profile.
 - Consistency with the SACE capabilities
 - The course develops the students' capabilities for literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding.
 - Integrity of the course (curriculum and assessment documentation).
 - The course is at least consistent with the legislative principles of the SACE Board Act.
 - The course is at Stage 1 and/or at Stage 2 level.

- The course promotes the development of the student's literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Accreditation processes.
 - Quality assurance and delivery.
 - There is sufficient expertise (including community expertise) to provide for the teaching/training of the course.
 - There is sufficient expertise (including community expertise) to provide for valid, reliable, and fair assessments in the course.
 - There are clear documentation, certification, and record-keeping procedures.
 - There are appropriate quality assurance processes, including moderation of outcomes, where appropriate.
 - There are adequate record-keeping and reporting procedures.
 - The intention is for the course to be available for a long period.
 - Monitoring and review processes are in place.
7. The Accreditation, Recognition, and Certification Committee recommends to the Board the recognition of the course.
 8. The SACE Board recognises the course, in terms of:
 - a SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
 - a number of SACE credits
 - standard achieved (satisfactory achievement or the equivalent)
 - possibly meeting a particular requirement of SACE completion (e.g. the literacy or numeracy requirement).
 9. The SACE Board develops memoranda of understanding with the school, institution, authority, or organisation whose assessments contribute to the SACE. These memoranda include information about:
 - the number of SACE credits the course contributes to the SACE
 - whether the course is recognised at Stage 1 level or at Stage 2 level
 - the length of the period of recognition
 - the SACE Board's expectations for accreditation, assessment, and quality assurance
 - the requirement to notify the SACE Board of any changes to the recognised course.
 10. Once the course is approved for recognition the SACE Board informs all schools via a list on its website.
 11. It is the responsibility of the school, institution, authority, or organisation to provide schools with curriculum documentation, and information about assessment processes, recording and reporting, quality assurance, and so on.
 12. The SACE Board respects the quality assurance processes of the school, institution, authority, or organisation.
 13. The SACE Board recognises the course on its certification documentation, with the term 'granted' and the number of SACE credits.

Characteristics of Board-accredited subjects and Board-recognised courses

Board-accredited Subject	Board-recognised Course
The details of the subject are described in a subject outline.	The details of the course are determined by the provider (school, institution, authority, or organisation), and described in the provider's documentation.
The subject is classified as belonging to one of nine learning areas.	The course is not classified as belonging to one of the nine learning areas. However, it may be linked to one or more learning areas.
The subject is quality assured by the Board (e.g. assessment cycle of planning, clarifying, confirming, improving).	The Board respects the quality assurance processes of the provider (school, institution, authority, or organisation).
The Board reports achievements to the student on a scale of A to E at Stage 1, and A $\frac{1}{2}$ to E $\frac{1}{2}$ at Stage 2, according to performance standards.	Achievements that are recognised as contributing towards the SACE are reported on SACE documentation, usually as 'granted', and the number of SACE credits, on the basis of satisfactory achievement as defined and quality assured by the provider. The provider reports achievements to the student (e.g. in a statement of attainment for VET or the provider's own statement).
The subject complies with the Board's assessment requirements (i.e. 70% school-based and 30% external assessment for Stage 2 subjects).	The course complies with the provider's assessment requirements.
The Board makes the subject available to all schools for teaching and assessment.	The course is made available to those schools that have arrangements with the provider.
The Board publishes documents. The Board holds copyright.	The provider publishes documents. The provider holds copyright.