

# **Success for all:** SACE Review at a glance

## **OVERVIEW OF THE SACE REVIEW**

**Report to the Minister for Education  
and Children's Services on the  
Review of the South Australian  
Certificate of Education (SACE)**



Government  
of South Australia

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Please note:  
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# Contents

<b>An overview</b>	4
<b>Why does the SACE need to change?</b>	5
Trends and patterns	6
Listening to the community	7
<b>Principles for reform</b>	8
<b>What the SACE Review recommends</b>	9
A ‘learning space’ for 15–19 year olds	9
A ‘new SACE’	10
Credit points	12
Capabilities—the heart of the new SACE	12
Learning units and learning unit frameworks	13
Core learning units	14
Approved Learning Program	16
Focusing on key skills: literacy and numeracy	17
Stages 1 and 2 and the role of Year 10	17
Reforming assessment	18
Reporting	20
Quality assurance	21
Certification, documentation and accreditation	22
Implementing reform	24
<b>Governance and the SSABSA Act</b>	26
<b>Appendix: Recommendations</b>	27



## An overview

South Australia's Strategic Plan includes targets designed to generate education, training and work opportunities for young South Australians and, in turn, support the social and economic development of the state. Specific strategies have been designed to build the skills, values, knowledge and citizenship of young people through school, structured training and employment.

The South Australian Government has taken a number of actions to support these endeavours, including raising the school leaving age to 16 as its first legislative initiative on coming to office in 2002. Since then, there has been significant investment by government, schools, TAFESA and communities to engage more young people in education and training, particularly those most at risk of leaving school early.

For example, initiatives, including the South Australia Works employment program, innovative community action networks (ICANS), and related school retention strategies, have been established by government working in partnership with communities across the state.

In January 2005, the Premier Mike Rann announced a South Australian Youth Engagement Strategy, aimed at engaging all 15–19 year olds in 'learning or earning', that is, full-time schooling, training or work, or combinations of these activities.

This strategy connects with South Australia's Strategic Plan targets of further increasing the school leaving age to 17 years by 2010, and within 10 years increasing to 90 per cent the number of students completing Year 12, or its equivalent.

To achieve these objectives, a priority of South Australia's Strategic Plan was to review the certificate gained by young people on successful completion of their senior secondary education, the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

The aim of this review, established in 2004, was to create more flexible arrangements, broaden student pathways and develop the enterprise, interpersonal and employment-related skills needed for the future, for individuals and for the best economic and social interests of South Australia.

The subsequent Report of the Review of Senior Secondary Education in South Australia followed wide ranging consultation throughout the state and the Northern Territory, involving educators, all education sectors, parents, employers, unions, politicians, community members and young people themselves.

The Report proposes significant reform that builds on the many achievements of the senior secondary education system in South Australia, to ensure success for all young South Australians.

## Why does the SACE need to change?

The last major review of senior secondary education in South Australia, the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education, known as the Gilding Enquiry, resulted in the introduction of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in 1992–93.

In the 15 years since the Gilding Enquiry report was presented, there have been enormous economic, political, cultural and social changes at the global, national and local levels.

Concepts such as the ‘information age’ and ‘globalisation’, which were only beginning to emerge in 1992, are now commonplace. Young people at senior secondary level are growing up in a world vastly different from the one that existed when the SACE was introduced.

Still, senior secondary education remains vital for all young people. Education and training are central to the health of a democracy, to individual and community strengths, and to the growth and effectiveness of the economy. Education is a key driver that assists young people to develop their capabilities for effective citizenship, learning and work, and their capacity to embrace the future with confidence.

Research shows that successful completion of senior secondary education increases significantly a young person’s opportunities. For example, a 2003 report by the Australian Council for Educational Research points out that young people ‘who obtain a Year 12 qualification or its vocational equivalent are more likely to continue their involvement in education and training, gain employment-related skills and generally fare better in the labour market compared to those who do not complete Year 12 or its equivalent’.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, there are significant social and economic consequences associated with leaving school before the completion of Year 12. For those young people who are unable to obtain secure employment or to gain a place in an approved training course, there are risks of ‘dropping out’ and getting caught in a downward spiral which can lead to damaged confidence, low self-esteem and sustained alienation.

The evidence of retention levels over more than 10 years confirms that significant numbers of young people in South Australia do not find senior secondary schooling sufficiently attractive or purposeful to encourage them to stay to the end of Year 12. Of those who do stay, some groups fare significantly better than others for a number of reasons.

State government initiatives to increase retention in recent years have resulted in some improvement in the engagement of young people in school and training. However, the long-term trend indicates that the retention rate has been essentially static for more than a decade. This and other demographic factors impacting on the state confirm the need for significant reform.

Young people need to be more engaged in learning that equips them with the skills, knowledge and capabilities they will require to participate fully in their post-school world. At a more pragmatic level, the state cannot afford to allow a substantial proportion of its young people to languish in a situation of unemployment and under-employment.

During its consultations, the Review Panel found strong community support for fundamental reform to the SACE and senior secondary education. Superficial tinkering at the edges was not considered to be an option. Rather, an evolving, long-term, collaborative approach to engage all young people was considered to be more likely to lead to sustained improvement in school retention and the engagement of young people in productive learning and work.

<sup>1</sup> Fullarton S, Walker M, Ainley J & Hillman K (2003) *Patterns of participation in Year 12, LSAY*, Research Report No 33, Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, p viii.

## Trends and patterns

The long-term trends since the current SACE was introduced in South Australia in 1992 emphasise the need for reform. For example, school retention rates have declined since reaching a peak of 90 per cent in 1992. The full-time apparent retention rate of students from Year 8 to Year 12 fell to around 67 per cent by the mid 1990s, then showed a small upward trend from 2000 when it had reached its lowest level in over a decade.

Other issues include:

- The number of South Australian students who achieve the SACE each year is a little over half (55 per cent) of the number of students who were enrolled in Year 8 in South Australian schools four years earlier. This 'apparent SACE completion rate' has remained remarkably steady over the 13 years since the current SACE was introduced, despite attempts to increase the appeal of the SACE to a wider range of students. Over the last decade, for example, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA (SSABSA) has done much to broaden the curriculum through the expansion of vocational education and training (VET) in schools and the introduction of new programs to encourage young people to stay engaged with learning. However, it appears that these changes have, at best, arrested any decline that might otherwise have occurred.
- School leaving is strongly correlated with the 'SACE years'. There are many reasons why students leave school early. However, the fact that the rate of withdrawal increases markedly between the tenth and twelfth year of schooling, and has done so every year for a decade or more, suggests that systemic factors are operating to draw students away from full-time school education in the middle and senior years.
- Young people are under-engaged in full-time learning and work. While this is a problem nationally, the situation in South Australia reveals that since 1999 the proportion of young South Australians aged 15–19 years who are not engaged in full-time learning or work, or an equivalent amount of part-time learning and part-time work, has ranged between 14 per cent and 20 per cent.
- Young people in South Australia are generally less well qualified than their equivalents in other states. Continuing low rates of SACE completions are a contributing factor. An estimated two out of every five students (39 per cent), or 7200 of the 18 600 young South Australians who left school in 2002, had not progressed beyond Year 11 and almost one in four (4300) had not progressed beyond Year 10. In addition, 37.5 per cent of the school leavers in 2002 who had not progressed beyond Year 11 were unemployed in May 2003. By contrast, the unemployment rate for school leavers who had completed Year 12 was 17.5 per cent. A disproportionate number of early school leavers in South Australia come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and particular cultural groups and areas of the state.

The aspiration of a 'SACE for all' has not been realised over more than a decade. While the current SACE is meeting the needs of some groups of students, there is also evidence that many others are not being well served.

## Listening to the community

In order to better understand the issues behind the trends and statistics, the Review Panel engaged in an extensive community consultation during 2004. Submissions were received from young people, both in and out of school; their parents and teachers; business, community and government leaders; unions; employers and employer organisations; the education community; and the broader community. The consultation included:

- more than 200 meetings involving more than 1600 individuals, in South Australia, the Northern Territory, interstate and overseas
- over 1200 pages of text from 170 written submissions
- more than 600 responses to an online survey
- a major conference
- commissioned research, a Reference Group and two working parties, one to consider curriculum and assessment and one to consider transitions from school to further education, training, and work.

Broadly, respondents felt that in order for senior secondary education and an effective SACE to 'work' for the full range of students, two key areas need major attention:

- provision of a supportive learning environment that recognises the complexity of students' lives
- increased flexibility within the structures and processes of the SACE, particularly at Stage 2.

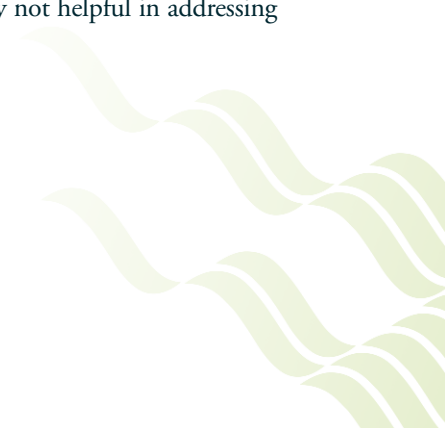
Many of those consulted claimed that the current SACE structures and processes are not responsive to student needs, interests and aspirations. People felt this was a major contributing factor to the decision by young people to leave school before the end of Year 12. These sentiments were also echoed by many of the students who went on to complete the SACE.

An almost universal perception of those who contributed to the consultations was that what and how students are taught is driven by university selection requirements and university aspirants. The perception is that this dictates how schools allocate their resources; the types of courses available to students; teaching and assessment methods; and the perception that some courses and subjects are valued above others. However, analysis of the statistics shows that in any year, fewer than one in four of the students who started secondary school four years earlier went directly to university.

Some other perceptions were:

- University pathways are seen to be more highly valued than other non-university pathways.
- The SACE is seen to be too theoretical and not sufficiently practical.
- The pattern of studies required to achieve the SACE is seen to be restrictive, and to support the university pathway over others.
- Young people who do not aspire to go to university feel short-changed.
- What is taught and how it is taught fails to capture students' interest.
- Assessment is unduly burdensome, unreasonable and not appropriate.

Both the statistical trends and the community consultation point to the need for new ways of thinking about senior secondary education. Old mindsets are simply not helpful in addressing the challenges of new times.





## Principles for reform

The Review Panel developed seven principles as foundations for reform of senior secondary education and a new approach to the SACE. The new SACE needs to be:

- **responsive** to the needs of individual students and groups of students
- **credible** in terms of the rigour of the learning process, the standards and methods used to assess students' learning achievements; and in terms of the reliability of what the certificate says graduates know and can do
- **inclusive** of all students, all cultures and all study pathways so that *success for all* is the prevailing dominant culture
- **worthwhile** in terms of the benefits perceived by students
- **futures oriented** so that students have the skills and attributes they need to survive in a globally competitive world, and also to help shape it
- **connected** to learning that precedes the current SACE years (particularly Year 10), to work and study destinations beyond the senior secondary years, to students' lives, and to the wider, global community
- **supportive** of quality learning and teaching for all students.

## What the SACE Review recommends

The Review makes 26 broad recommendations which address the issues and concerns raised by community consultation, and by research in South Australia and internationally.

The recommendations are in the Appendix. However, the broad directions for creating a more flexible SACE, in line with the seven principles for reform, cover the following areas.

### A 'learning space' for 15–19 year olds

One of the proposed new ways of thinking about senior secondary education is the concept of a 'learning space' for 15–19 year olds.

The Review Panel coined the term 'learning space' to refer to the rich array of learning opportunities that is potentially available to young people.

The idea is that young people working towards a first qualification—the new SACE or an equivalent qualification—are supported as they move around this 'learning space' to engage in work, training, education and community and civic life in various combinations and ways, learning as they go.

The learning space suggests a whole-of-education-and-training, whole-of-community commitment to developing the capacities of all young people, and new approaches to the provision of resources for education and training for all young people, whether in school or beyond school.

This concept resonates with the approach of the South Australian Youth Engagement Strategy announced by Premier Mike Rann in January 2005, in that it proposes that all young people are engaged in school, structured training and work, or combinations of these activities.

Saying that all students should be able to complete their SACE or its equivalent does not imply that all young people must stay on at school to the end of Year 12. There are other avenues that can be followed, including moving into full-time work and continuing to learn through training or education opportunities.

It is clear that the conventions that have separated education from training, academic from vocational learning, and theory from practice have outlived their usefulness. A contemporary senior secondary education should include the full range of learning opportunities that can assist students to achieve their learning goals. For this to happen effectively, a broader and more seamless education and training system needs to be created.



The learning space concept is designed to enable all young people to access the full range of learning opportunities and experiences provided by the education and training system. Students will be able to draw from learning experiences beyond the school, including:

- TAFE and other VET studies
- community learning
- learning associated with work and other roles such as being caregivers, parents and participants in community service organisations
- university studies and courses from interstate and overseas
- courses undertaken by means of the internet or other distance education technologies.

The learning space will strengthen partnerships between everyone engaged in education and training so that young people, and the system as a whole, can make best use of the resources available. It will support all young people at a critical point in their transitions to independence and adulthood.

A new SACE has been conceived as part of this broad education and training system, operating within the 'learning space' as opposed to being seen as a predominantly school-based experience.

In other words, the learning space is part of a wider strategy aimed at achieving 'success for all' that is also in keeping with the key objectives of South Australia's Strategic Plan.

### **A 'new SACE'**

The Review Panel recommends that the current SACE be replaced by a single, new qualification—a 'new SACE'—that will continue to be known as the South Australian Certificate of Education.

The terms 'new SACE' and 'SACE' are used in the Report to distinguish between the qualification that would result from the implementation of the Report's recommendations and the current qualification issued by SSABSA.

Although it is recommended that the name remain the same, the new qualification will be significantly different. It will have a much simpler set of requirements than the current SACE. It will provide for greater flexibility, responsiveness and rigour, while at the same time being more easily understood by students, parents and educators. The increased flexibility in the design and delivery of the curriculum is intended to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of the new certificate.

The decision to continue with a single certificate is supported in the views expressed by most respondents to the Review.

The proposal is to base the new SACE on:

- credit points
- Capabilities: what students know and can do.

The new SACE would be awarded to students who have gained 200 credit points by successfully completing:

- two core Extended Learning Initiative units at Stage 1 and 2 levels (a total of 20 credit points)
- two core Personal Learning Plan units at Stage 1 and 2 levels (a total of 20 credit points)
- an Approved Learning Program totalling 160 credit points. The Approved Learning Program would consist of a range of possible learning units based on, for example, frameworks developed by or commissioned from the SACE Authority; units developed by schools and accredited by the SACE Authority; programs of vocational education and training; informal or non-formal learning that has been accredited by the SACE Authority; and curriculum developed outside the state as part of an equivalent senior secondary qualification and accredited by the SACE Authority for the purposes of the new SACE. This range of options enables the senior secondary curriculum to be both broadened and ‘internationalised’
- at least 60 credit points achieved at Stage 2 level.

An overview of the structure of the new SACE is represented in two different ways in Figure 1 and the features are described on the following pages.

Figure 1



Stage 1		Stage 1 or Stage 2		Stage 2	
<b>CAPABILITIES</b> Communication—Civic participation—Health, wellbeing and personal development—Work—Knowledge work					
<b>Extended Learning Initiative</b>	<b>Personal Learning Plan</b>	<b>Approved Learning Program</b> Learning units to the value of 160 credit points including at least 60 credit points at Stage 2		<b>Personal Learning Plan</b>	<b>Extended Learning Initiative</b>
10 credit points	10 credit points	160 credit points		10 credit points	10 credit points
<b>Total = 200 credit points</b>					

## Credit points

The new SACE is based on the concept of credit points, rather than semester-length units, as the 'basic currency'. Student would need to accrue 200 credit points to achieve the new SACE.

The 200-credit-point structure of the new SACE increases substantially the ability of schools to respond to the needs of all students. It means schools can design learning programs that are responsive to students' needs, interests and aspirations. It opens up a range of possibilities for students to access different learning opportunities from sources within the 'learning space', and have each component accredited and awarded credit points.

The Review Panel was reminded frequently that young people learn in many places other than schools. This is why it seeks to extend the recognition of other forms of learning, including the recognition of community work that SSABSA has begun.

A SACE Authority is proposed as the body that will have legislative responsibility for the new SACE. An essential part of the 'accreditation' role of the SACE Authority would be to determine the number of credit points that each learning unit earns. Students would be able to select learning units according to their needs and interests, and 'bank' credit points as they go.

The move away from semester-length units to credit points would enable schools to develop comprehensive, integrated learning units and programs, or to offer smaller learning units and have them accredited.

It is more flexible than the current system because the credit point system also enables students to gain recognition for part completion of a learning unit. Where a student has completed some but not all of the requirements for a particular learning unit, the proposal is for the completed work to be granted a credit point value that contributes to achieving the new SACE. This would allow students to resume their studies at a later time without loss or penalty.

## Capabilities—the heart of the new SACE

At the heart of the new SACE is a set of 'Capabilities' that are intended to form the foundation for curriculum, assessment and teaching.

Capabilities are a combination of the knowledge, skills and attributes that enable people to live, work and be responsible and active citizens and members of their various communities in a changing world.

They are important indicators of what a person is able to do and be in different arenas such as work and civic and community life. The extent to which citizens possess certain capabilities is an important measure of the civic health of a society. Education is a key to the development of these capabilities in a society.

The Panel found widespread support for a certificate that helps to build such capabilities.

Five broad Capabilities are proposed as important to the development of knowledge, skills and attributes of citizens. They also are the hallmarks of employability.

- **Communication.** This capability enables people to express themselves through a range of forms of communication, and to understand and appreciate how others communicate. It includes literacy, numeracy and use of information and communication technologies.
- **Civic participation.** This capability enables people to be informed and active citizens who are able to participate in political and community debate and public decision making in reasoned, ethical, civil and respectful ways.

- **Health, wellbeing and personal development.** These capabilities enable people to know about and to care for themselves in ways that promote self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem. Since these capabilities are central to the development of personal wellbeing and happiness, they are fundamental to the collective wellbeing of a society.
- **Work.** This capability enables people to participate in work in productive, creative and fulfilling ways. The changing nature of the economy and work demands capabilities in such areas as creativity, inventiveness, critical thinking and problem solving, designing, planning, being organised, taking initiative, being enterprising and entrepreneurial, and being able to collaborate and work in teams.
- **Knowledge work.** This capability enables people to know and grasp issues and concepts in depth, and gain the skills to learn and keep learning. It is particularly important in a society awash with information, and with new knowledge growing at such a rapid rate. It includes technical skills such as accessing and organising information, abilities in critical and reflective thinking and inquiry, ethical thinking and reasoning, and discernment.

This concept of capabilities is a new way of considering the idea of core study. From this perspective, subjects or disciplines are not studied as ends in themselves. They are also a means by which young people develop their capabilities for knowing and applying knowledge, skills and values. Young people develop these capabilities through subject knowledge, which continues to be important in its own right. The interplay between the Capabilities and disciplinary knowledge would be central to teaching and learning.

The Report proposes that the Capabilities be a central consideration in shaping learning outcomes in the new SACE. Further community and professional discussion about the details of the Capabilities is expected to take place before implementation. Once determined, Capabilities would form the foundation for all curriculum and teaching in the proposed new SACE. They would be assessed and reported on in ways that are meaningful to students, parents, tertiary education providers, employers and others.

## Learning units and learning unit frameworks

The new SACE involves a move to the concept of learning units, which can vary in length and contribute to the certificate through credit points. This move is recommended because a common and major concern voiced about the current SACE is that the Stage 2 curriculum statements are too restrictive, making it difficult for schools and communities to shape a curriculum that meets local needs and contexts. Many students also complained that some subjects, especially at Stage 2, are largely theory-based, and that there is often no attempt to assist them to connect learning to their lives. The need for a better balance between theory and application and a greater consistency between Stage 1 and Stage 2 curriculum statements were strongly suggested.

It is recommended that learning unit frameworks be developed for each learning unit at Stage 1 and Stage 2, and that they follow a common set of design specifications to provide greater commonality of curriculum design, while being broad enough to allow for local interpretation. The framework approach, combined with the flexible credit point concept, provides for much greater flexibility in the construction of senior secondary curriculum. Learning units should be broad enough to allow for local interpretation and to respond to change, and therefore be focused more on the future.



In the short term, learning units offered by schools are most likely to be one semester in length with a value, typically, of 10 credit points. However, as schools and their communities seek to capitalise on the flexibility that is available through the credit point system, a far more diverse range of curriculum learning units will emerge. For example, schools could:

- use only learning unit frameworks developed and accredited by the SACE Authority, supported by ‘illustrative teaching and learning programs’ or exemplars developed for each learning unit
- develop one or more of their own learning unit frameworks in order to suit local needs and contexts, where it could be shown that the existing provision could not meet these needs. These might be semester length or could be for shorter or longer periods of time
- construct whole learning programs in a range of different ways to meet the needs of specific students or groups of students. These might wholly comprise learning units developed and accredited by the SACE Authority, or might be a combination of these with learning options drawn from many different sources both within and beyond South Australia. These could include informal and non-formal community-based learning, learning undertaken in and through workplaces, other vocational education and training programs, adult education programs, university courses, online and e-learning courses, community languages, awards and certificates, and formal programs such as curriculum developed by other countries, including the International Baccalaureate.

The Panel was often told that there was too much content and too detailed assessment task requirements for many subjects, reducing the capacity for teachers to tailor learning programs and assessment that met local conditions and individual needs. To address this concern, it recommends that there be a small number of learning outcomes in each learning unit to explain what students will know, understand and be able to do at the end of a unit of study. Rather than long lists of content, as is the case currently, the focus would be on key ideas and concepts associated with the area of learning.

## **Core learning units**

### **Personal Learning Plans (20 credit points)**

Research shows that young people who have a greater sense of purpose and who ‘know where they want to go’ are more likely to engage in learning and be successful. One of the clearest messages from young people was a perceived lack of purpose associated with many SACE-related activities. They wanted a greater sense of direction and individual control over their education.

In addition, the senior years of schooling come at a time of considerable personal change and challenge. Many young people observed that the current SACE structure seemed to be inordinately focused on subject knowledge. There was not much space for exploring issues confronting young people in their daily lives, such as physical and emotional health, issues in relationships, and practical living skills including dealing with finances. Young people also wanted more personal support and mentoring.

The Review Panel is convinced that there should be a formal curriculum response to address these issues. The process should not be an ‘add-on’ but integral to learning programs. For this reason, it has proposed that two core learning units, a Personal Learning Plan at Stage 1, and a Personal Learning Plan at Stage 2, be developed, with these units generally taken in Year 10 and Year 12 respectively.

This provides two formal opportunities in the curriculum where students can think seriously about their futures, monitor their progress and amend plans through engaging in a substantive and rigorous program of study that will strengthen the possibilities of success for all students.

The Panel believes that the Personal Learning Plans would contribute to student retention by attracting more young people to stay actively engaged in learning at the pivotal point of Year 10. The fact that these new programs contribute 20 credit points towards a 200-credit-point SACE recognises their importance.

The Personal Learning Plan is a structured approach designed to:

- help young people to make informed decisions about their education, training and personal development
- involve students in learning to understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests and aspirations
- include a 'strategic planning' element in which young people explore the range of possibilities open to them and plan to achieve their chosen outcomes
- enable young people to explore the issues facing them in their personal lives, to clarify their aspirations and begin to plan the next stages of their journey in and beyond school.

At Stage 1, the Personal Learning Plan focus is on schools working with students to review and assess each student's skills, supporting students to plan a SACE learning program, and further developing the knowledge and skills that will help students to participate successfully in that program.

It also provides the foundation on which students will be able to negotiate access to learning resources and opportunities within and beyond the school, in line with the learning space concept.

At Stage 2, the Personal Learning Plan provides students with a structured opportunity to reassess their goals, take stock of what has been achieved so far in their SACE program, and identify where further work might be needed. A particular focus at Stage 2 is on what happens beyond their senior secondary education, and the knowledge and skills they will need to make successful transitions to work, further education and training. While a key outcome is a strategy or plan that focuses on the individual student, it is the process of arriving at that plan that constitutes the substance of the Personal Learning Plan. This Personal Learning Plan would be worth 10 Stage 2 credit points.

Schools would have a primary role and responsibility in helping students to access learning opportunities both within and beyond their school in order to enact their plans.

### **Extended Learning Initiatives (20 credit points)**

Many students want more time to pursue topics in detail. During consultations, many young people said there were pressures of getting through the volume of work and, in one student's words, 'having to move on before really grasping things'. A number of those consulted observed that there were few opportunities in the SACE for students to pursue in depth a topic of interest or passion. There were not enough opportunities to really stretch themselves through being imaginative and creative—elements that South Australia's Strategic Plan suggests are integral to the social and economic wellbeing of individuals and the future of South Australia.

The Review Panel strongly believes that this requires a formal curriculum response. It proposes that the new SACE include two learning units, one each at Stage 1 and 2 levels, that are called the Extended Learning Initiative. These units would be taken, most often, in Year 10 and Year 12 and each unit would attract 10 credit points.





The Extended Learning Initiative units are not necessarily 'book' exercises. They may be undertaken in workplaces or the community, for example, and may involve the development of practical ideas or products. The outcome could, for example, be a performance or demonstration, an artefact or a product, a report or a portfolio. The Initiative could be undertaken individually, in partnership with another student, or collaboratively in a small group.

Whatever the form or context of a student's particular Extended Learning Initiative, it involves a substantial unit of study that will engage the student in an in-depth investigation of a topic.

The aim is to support students in developing and applying a broad range of thinking, analytical and research skills. They will be expected to develop deep knowledge and skills related to their interest, and to develop skills associated with thinking, planning, acting and evaluation. Students will be able to explore a topic in a planned and well-managed way, with a view to presenting the knowledge gained, and the conclusions reached. They will need to develop and display skills in research, creativity, knowledge organisation, planning, time management, presentation and communication, and, in some cases, teamwork.

At Stage 1, the Extended Learning Initiative enables students to develop an area of deep individual learning within a broad framework focusing on Australia and the world.

At Stage 2, the Extended Learning Initiative is seen as a self-directed learning experience that encourages students to demonstrate a higher level of autonomous learning than at Stage 1 level. Apart from being an opportunity for students to engage in rigorous and challenging independent learning, the Extended Learning Initiative at Stage 2 is also an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge by drawing on each of the Capabilities that they have developed during their senior secondary education. This Extended Learning Initiative would be worth 10 Stage 2 credit points.

## Approved Learning Program

In addition, it is proposed that students undertake an Approved Learning Program totalling 160 credit points. Students would be able to construct an Approved Learning Program from an array of learning units, which might be based on, for example:

- **learning unit frameworks** developed by or commissioned from the SACE Authority
- **accredited learning units** developed by schools
- **accredited programs of vocational education and training**
- **activities undertaken outside the formally accredited curriculum**, such as informal or non-formal learning that has been accredited by the SACE Authority
- **curriculum developed outside the state** as part of an equivalent senior secondary qualification and accredited by the SACE Authority.

In this way, the senior secondary curriculum is able to be broadened, 'localised' and 'internationalised' to meet students' personal learning needs, while maintaining rigour and formalised accreditation processes.

## Focusing on key skills: literacy and numeracy

The Panel's proposals for the new SACE will ensure that literacy and numeracy continue to be developed throughout a student's senior secondary education through a rigorous and systematic set of expectations and required processes. The proposals would mean that literacy and numeracy are essential elements of all required learning outcomes and performance standards for all learning units. Literacy includes being literate in information and communication technologies (ICTs).

To enable teachers to address literacy and numeracy effectively, they need access to information about each student's level of skills at a senior level of schooling. To do this, the Panel recommends that all students undertake a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills as part of each student's Personal Learning Plan in Year 10.

The diagnostic assessment results would be used to help students, and their teachers/mentors, map out what is needed to assist them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills over the course of their SACE studies. The flexibility of the proposed new SACE structure provides ample opportunity for this to occur. Linking the need for literacy and numeracy skills to students' goals and aspirations and real-world contexts means young people are likely to be more motivated to work on, achieving the level of skill they need to seek opportunities in different fields of endeavour.

## Stages 1 and 2 and the role of Year 10

The current SACE pattern is built around two stages. The dominant practice has been to equate Year 11 with Stage 1 and Year 12 with Stage 2. This practice positions Year 10 ambiguously. During consultation, many students and teachers referred to Year 10 as a 'lost year', a period of unrealised potential.

Most people who commented on the role of Year 10 argued that any attempt to align it more closely with the SACE should not be taken as an opportunity to increase the overall requirements for successful completion of the SACE, or to create a three-year SACE. The Review Panel agrees with this view, but believes that the process of reforming SACE should play a part in strengthening Year 10, by creating a clearer and more systematic connection between the current compulsory and post-compulsory years of education.

This can best be achieved by understanding Year 10 as a sort of 'staging post' in a student's education journey. From this perspective, most students would continue a broad general education while starting a process of reviewing where they want to go next. However, during Year 10, students should be able to take two SACE required learning units (worth 10 credit points each) at Stage 1 level: one Personal Learning Plan and one Extended Learning Initiative, and gain 20 credit points towards the SACE before entering Year 11.

This should act as both a reward and an incentive for students, with the result that a higher percentage of students would stay on into Year 11. Research indicates that making firm connections between different stages of education in this way is more likely to retain students in education, rather than a system where there are clearly defined breaks between one educational phase and the next.

## Reforming assessment

A number of reforms to assessment and reporting within the SACE are proposed. The reforms are based on a belief that assessment processes should be consistent with a culture of success for all. Assessment should contribute to the process of student learning, as well as being a means of providing quality information about student achievement to students, parents and future employers.

## Learning outcomes and performance standards

In order to complement the approach to learning outcomes proposed for the new SACE curriculum, it is proposed that performance standards be developed for each learning unit, against which teachers can make judgments about the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes.

When teachers and external assessors make judgments about student learning they have in mind a reference point against which these judgments are made. The Panel believes that in senior secondary education these reference points should be explicit, transparent and defensible for at least two main reasons.

- If assessment is to contribute to student learning, then students need to have the richest forms of information and feedback possible. This means that they must be aware of the reference points that are being used to assess their work.
- For there to be public confidence in the outcomes of the SACE, the community, including those who use the results of the Certificate for selection purposes, should know that standards are comparable. This means that assessment should occur against agreed and publicly available reference points.

Research in Australia and overseas indicates that student learning is likely to improve with a focus on the use of performance standards, because explicit information is available to students and teachers, and they have a common reference point for discussions about learning. It means students, teachers and the community know what is intended and why, and how students are going as the teaching and learning process proceeds. Currently, SSABSA curriculum documents describe criteria for judging performance in each of the required assessment components, and teachers are expected to use these to guide their teaching and assessment. However, the criteria do not provide a sufficient guide to teachers or students because they provide no indication about the standard of achievement.

Performance standards developed on the basis of increasing levels of demand, sophistication, complexity and student autonomy should provide more useful information about the standard. Performance standards will enable teachers to make a fundamental decision about whether or not students have met the standard on the basis of the set of evidence they have about a student's learning taken as a whole, before they move to discriminate about 'how well' the standard has been met.

## Valuing teachers and external quality assurance

### Teacher professional judgment

The Report recommends that more weight should be attached to the professional judgment of classroom teachers in the assessment process than is currently the case. Reasons for this proposal include:

- Teachers are closest to the action of student learning and are in the best position to make decisions about when, where and how assessment can be used to promote student learning. There is greater opportunity to assess students as they go about their learning than there is with assessment processes that take place outside the learning situation. Teachers can gather evidence to make judgments either under structured and specified conditions or through a process of observation and discussion with students. Validity and reliability are increased because teacher-led assessment enables a wide range of skills, concepts, processes and understandings to be demonstrated.
- Teachers are well placed to make quality final judgments about student learning. There is a wealth of educational research about the consistent validity and reliability of teacher judgments. Research shows that the reliability of their assessments is equal to that of examination marking, and the current system is based on a belief in the assessment expertise of teachers. Many teachers are employed each year by SSABSA as Year 12 examination markers and moderators; and SSABSA also relies heavily on teacher expertise to design and set examinations.

### External verification

It is recommended that the new SACE continue to be wholly assessed at the school level for Stage 1.

While the Panel is proposing a greater reliance on teacher judgment in the new SACE, it also believes that there is a place for external assessment involving a range of strategies to review student learning. As such, it is proposed that all learning units at Stage 2 level should have a significant proportion of external assessment that allows students to demonstrate their learning. Reasons for this approach include:

- All young people deserve to have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning to others external to their learning environment. This can be an important part of the learning process, and it can add a sense of authenticity and importance to the completion of assessment tasks. Having both internal and external assessment is a way of ensuring fairness in assessment. It allows for different perspectives on the assessment of student learning, and means that a student's final assessment in a learning unit is not entirely dependent on one person. External assessment provides an additional mechanism for ensuring comparability of standards.
- A system that allows some subjects to be externally assessed and not others is building in mechanisms that lead to subjects being valued differently. Attempts in the past to cater for diversity by using different assessment regimes have resulted in further disadvantage for those students for whom the alternatives were designed.

While external assessment is already a feature of Stage 2, there were aspects that received a great deal of criticism during the Review. The Panel believes, therefore, that external assessment should be thought about differently, and in ways that can open up a greater range of possibilities than currently exist. For example, external assessment does not simply equate with written three-hour examinations, which are only one form. There are many ways in which students can demonstrate their learning to 'outsiders' that can be more closely linked to the learning. It can include performance, vivas, project or artefact production, physical skills tests, and presentation of a portfolio of work to a community meeting or roundtable gathering. It can happen at any time during the learning process.

Assessments do not have to be identical to be comparable. Using outcomes and performance standards to describe what students will know, understand and be able to do at the end of a learning unit will allow the basis and demonstration of achievement to vary from student to student. Comparability will come in judging whether the quality of different students' performances is equivalent in terms of the standards and criteria.

Also, it is strongly urged that all proposals for external assessment be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, rather than being used because of custom and practice. This means that a case will need to be mounted to justify the particular form of external assessment chosen for a learning unit, and this justification will need to be in learning terms, based on its fitness for learning purpose.

### External assessment weightings at Stage 2

Currently, many subjects weigh external assessment at 30 per cent of the total mark. The Review Panel proposes that this should be the proportion for all learning units. The major component, that is 70 per cent, should be moderated teacher assessment. The exception will be the Extended Learning Initiative at Stage 2. Here, it is proposed that the weighting of the external assessment should be 70 per cent, with 30 per cent teacher assessment.

The Stage 2 Extended Learning Initiative, as described in the Report, involves students in presenting to an external audience a project that is of personal interest and significance to them. This will enable students, near the end of their SACE study, to demonstrate their growth in what they know and can do across the five broad Capabilities, and will be a culminating activity of the SACE. As part of the development of the learning unit framework for the Extended Learning Initiative, further consideration should be given to the optimal balance between teacher assessment and external assessment.

## Reporting

After looking at a number of reporting systems around the world, the Review Panel suggests that a four point scale is used for reporting achievement in the SACE at Stage 1:

- Achievement with Excellence
- Achievement with Merit
- Achievement
- Not Yet Achieved.

The designation 'Not Yet Achieved' indicates that the potential is there for further achievement to be accumulated and counted towards completion.

Various end users, including tertiary education organisations and employers will want access to more finely grained information on student achievement for students completing SACE. Therefore, there is a need to be more specific about how student achievement can be recorded and reported at Stage 2. The proposed scale for Stage 2 is similar to that suggested for Stage 1, but includes the possibility for more specific distinctions. This is outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 reporting levels

Standard	Stage 1 four-point scale	Stage 2 seven-point scale
Achieved	Achievement with Excellence	A+ (Merit)
		A
	Achievement with Merit	B
		C
		D
Achievement	E	
Not Yet Achieved	Not Yet Achieved	Not Yet Achieved

This report scale has many advantages:

- It satisfies the strong community desire for consistency between the reporting systems at Stage 1 and Stage 2.
- It provides the capacity to report more finely grained distinctions in the form of grades and, if even more detailed distinctions are required in the form of marks, teachers can assign a range of marks within each grade band. This approach allows the tertiary sector to receive marks for selection purposes.

## Quality assurance

The Report recommends that quality assurance mechanisms should be in place through all stages of the assessment process so that judgments about student performance are reliable, dependable and comparable.

The assessment reforms proposed must be underpinned by a robust and comprehensive quality assurance system. It must provide the community with a guarantee of rigorous and comparable standards at local and state and territory levels, as well as nationally and internationally.

The approach to quality assurance for the current SACE involves some inspection along the way, although this is often conducted at a distance from the classroom. However, increasingly, it is being recognised that quality assurance is not simply a matter of ‘inspecting’ at the end. The new approach proposes combinations of different quality assurance components that offer more rigour and confidence in the assessment system as a whole.

It involves a rigorous new assessment system at the local school, regional and state level including a proposal for Australia’s first Institute for Educational Assessment.

## Sharing moderation and assessment

One of the most important priorities in establishing the quality assurance system is to ensure that it supports and assists teachers to exercise their professional responsibilities as assessors, and that it develops further their professional knowledge and expertise about assessment.

The intention is to build a community of assessors who have a shared understanding of learning outcomes, criteria and performance standards. Reliable quality assurance processes will ensure that standards are maintained and applied consistently across the state. One way is to provide structured opportunities for teachers to engage in shared and rigorous professional dialogue with colleagues through participation in moderation and assessment verification meetings. In these forums, teachers can engage in professional dialogue about assessment in meetings with their colleagues in the same school, in other schools, and with members of the team of Accredited Assessors (see below). Having processes in place that build and share assessment expertise among teachers is likely to be more useful in developing teachers’ professional capacities in the long term than having the expertise reside with only a few people.

## Accredited Assessors

It is proposed that Accredited Assessors be a significant component of the quality assurance system for the new SACE. The concept of Accredited Assessors is a dispersed leadership model of service delivery for schools to support curriculum and assessment. Accredited Assessors would be trained and qualified educational professionals who play several roles in relation to assessment for the new SACE. They would initially be drawn from eligible practising teachers, although others could also qualify.

Accredited Assessors would operate at three levels: in schools, in regions, and across the state. Within a school, they would lead the school community in professional learning about assessment for the new certificate. They would develop the quality assurance processes of their schools. This could involve, for example, self-monitoring and self-managed review against external parameters, and ensure that assessments are conducted appropriately, and judgments are made consistently and to a common standard.

Accredited Assessors could also be assessment experts at the regional level. They would help to organise, coordinate and lead professional conversations between groups of teachers working on moderation and assessment verification. Among other responsibilities, they would verify school standards and advise statewide Accredited Assessors of any disputes between the school and the regional moderators that cannot be resolved.

The SACE Authority could also employ Accredited Assessors. Their role would be to maintain a statewide perspective, and work with the Accredited Assessors who are in the field to ensure parity of standards across regions and across schools. The SACE Authority Assessors would be assessment experts, available to provide advice and support to other Assessors. Statewide Accredited Assessors would analyse the outcomes of moderation and verification and use the information to inform future training of school and regional Assessors. The information could be made available to schooling systems and the Minister for Education and Children's Services through regular reports, and to external auditors.

### **Institute for Educational Assessment**

A third component of the proposed comprehensive quality assurance system is the establishment of an Institute for Educational Assessment. Located in South Australia, the Institute for Educational Assessment would be established as a joint venture between the schooling systems, the training sector, the SACE Authority, the business and industry community, and universities in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Institute would play a vital role in developing assessment expertise by offering accredited post-graduate courses and other professional development opportunities to teachers and others. It would negotiate with universities and other providers to enable the delivery of a series of qualifications in assessment, from graduate certificate to degree and post-graduate levels.

### **Quality assurance across the education system**

Regular internal and external reviews and audits of the quality assurance system as a whole are proposed to complete the robust and comprehensive quality assurance system. The operations of the SACE Authority and all aspects of the quality assurance processes would be included in this process.

Regular reviews and audits should be built into the quality assurance process so there is always provision for continuous improvement.

## **Certification, documentation and accreditation**

The SACE, along with other senior school certificates, is being asked to meet a wide range of individual and community interests and expectations. It must, therefore, be inclusive, adaptable and flexible. The challenge is to balance both the need for a certificate that is broad and that simplifies the means by which students can meet its requirements, while also ensuring rigour and sound educational standards. The Review Panel considers the credibility of the SACE can be maintained by making it even more flexible and inclusive. Authorities in Australia and elsewhere are devising effective ways to open up learning options to meet the changing needs, interests and aspirations of young people, while maintaining the standing and worth of senior school certificates.

## **A single certificate**

The Report recommends that there should be one senior school certificate of completion, which should continue to be known as the South Australian Certificate of Education, and there should be no time limit on how long it takes for a student to complete the new SACE. One certificate can include all students by introducing significant flexibility, and ensuring that all learning that counts towards the new SACE is equally valued and equally rigorous.

The Panel did examine whether there should be one or more certificates to meet calls for more 'hands on' and practical learning. However, it was felt this would be best achieved with a single certificate that confirms achievement of what a student knows and can do. Differences do not have to be accommodated by offering separate certificates and multiple certificates could lead to a hierarchy, with some being relegated to 'second class' certificates.

## **Documentation**

It is proposed that the new SACE be accompanied by documentation that fully reports the learning achievements of young people in ways that are clear to people who may be beyond the education sector, including parents and employers.

Young people should also have access to information about their learning achievements. This includes formal records including the SACE and a Record of Learning Achievements, and access to web-enabled record-keeping to allow young people to record other achievements and experiences and produce reports.

## **Recognition of learning**

The proposed new SACE offers students and schools the potential to broaden what and where young people learn. The Panel has proposed, therefore, that the SACE Authority should develop open and responsive accreditation and recognition of learning procedures. There must be clearly defined and publicly available criteria and procedures that support the tailoring of curriculum and assessment at the local school level to meet the needs of students and the SACE.

Vocational education and training (VET) studies are significant areas of learning for students and should continue to contribute credit points towards the achievement of the SACE. Further work is needed to ensure the new SACE recognises VET studies more broadly, especially in regard to the gaining of credit points at Stage 2.

## **Informing others of student achievement**

The needs and interests of key users of the SACE, including employers, universities and the further education and training sector, have been addressed through the proposed new SACE reporting mechanisms. They would be given richer, more useful information about the interests and achievements of young people.

However, the Review Panel became aware of a strong community perception that university selection mechanisms had a negative impact on senior secondary curriculum and assessment arrangements. While the university sector clearly has a right to select people for courses using any means it chooses, the Review Panel recommends that the process should be separated from the SACE Authority, and conducted by an independent organisation such as the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC).

It is important to ensure that the system is transparent and maintains the kind of university–school partnerships associated currently with university selection, such as is evident in the Schools and Higher Education Liaison Forum (SHELF).

Throughout the Review, the Panel was impressed by the willingness of the universities to work cooperatively with the schooling sector, and to consider alternative selection procedures. And there seems to be a real willingness in the education community to work with the universities to arrive at selection processes, based on an aspiration to reduce or eliminate some of the problematic effects of the current selection mechanisms.



The Report recommends that the SACE Authority provide information to SATAC for its use in constructing a tertiary entrance rank (TER), recognising universities' rights to select candidates into courses using whatever methods they choose. They would have available to them all of the information contained on the Record of Learning Achievements, which will give a richer profile of the learning that young people have been engaged in and a profile of their development of the Capabilities. On request, more fine-grained marks for Stage 2 learning units could be made available to them if required.

## Implementing reform

### Evolution not revolution

The Panel is proposing significant changes to the senior secondary school certificate system, and such changes would not occur overnight. They would be more evolutionary than revolutionary to maintain continuity with what currently exists and to ensure that those most affected by the changes are given every opportunity to be influential in the development of the new SACE.

In particular, the Report notes that teachers will play a critical role in implementing the reform proposals. The Review provides a strategic opportunity to build the capacity of the teaching workforce to support and sustain the significant reforms proposed. This also offers a unique opportunity to involve teachers in the wider reforms that will emanate from initiatives such as the state government's South Australian Youth Engagement Strategy, designed to connect all young people with school, work or training.

### Four principles to guide reform

Four principles are proposed to guide a gradual implementation of reform. The principles are:

- **The change process does not disadvantage any student.** The proposed reform agenda will clearly take a number of years before it is fully implemented and, while that is happening, care must be taken with the transition arrangements.
- **The change process builds partnerships.** The implementation process of the new SACE is an ideal opportunity to consolidate and expand partnerships within and beyond education. These include new alliances and collaborative partnerships between school-based educators, unions, business and industry, employers, training organisations, TAFESA and the wider VET sector, the universities and the general community.
- **The change process is based on research and inquiry.** Effective and sustained change is more likely when educators have the opportunity to engage in deep and ongoing discussions and investigations into their professional practice. This enables them to reflect on and plan for how best to engage young people in learning and to bring about improved learning outcomes.
- **Teachers are supported with the necessary time and resources.** The successful implementation of the new SACE is largely dependent on teachers. Teachers will need time, professional development and support materials on a continuous basis to enable effective exploration of the ideas and processes.

## Process for implementation

An interim group within an office for senior secondary renewal is proposed to start the processes for implementing the reforms.

There are two major reasons why this office should be established:

- The scope of the reforms proposed goes well beyond the authority vested in the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA (SSABSA) under its establishment Act. For example, the Act does not give SSABSA the authority to work in a way that could develop the 'learning space' concept.
- It is important that the quality of learning and stability of the current system for students taking the existing SACE is maintained, and this should continue to be the primary focus of SSABSA.

It is recommended that the office be a cooperative arrangement with the three education sectors, reporting through them to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. This approach is in line with their legal responsibility for curriculum and professional development.

The Report also recognises that consideration must be given to how the new SACE arrangements might best support the learning of students with special needs. The introduction of the SACE in 1992 was followed by similar discussions.



## **Governance and the SSABSA Act**

The roles and responsibilities of the Minister, schools, school authorities and the central accrediting agency would need to be redefined in light of the proposals for a new SACE. The relationships of these bodies to the business community, universities and the VET sector would also need to be reconsidered.

The Report recommends an examination of the SSABSA Act so that the statute can give effect to the wide-ranging reforms proposed. In addition, governance and operational arrangements would need to be externally examined to ensure that both the legislation and its supporting structures are capable of effectively enacting the new SACE.

## Appendix: Recommendations

The Review Panel recommends that:

### Towards a new SACE for all

#### Recommendation 1

The South Australian Certificate of Education be replaced by a new South Australian Certificate of Education that is based on the principles, design concepts and features outlined in Chapter 4 [of the Report].

### Positioning senior secondary education and the new SACE within a broad 'learning space'

#### Recommendation 2

The concept of a learning space with the characteristics and features outlined in Chapter 5 [of the Report] be adopted by government as the basis for planning and delivering post-compulsory education and training.

#### Recommendation 3

New funding arrangements for the operation of the learning space be explored with a view to ensuring that the services provided by government within the learning space are coordinated, equitable and responsive to the needs of individual young people.

#### Recommendation 4

The government explore the concept of a 'youth learning entitlement' as a basis for public funding of youth engagement in the learning space.

### Curriculum for a new SACE

#### Recommendation 5

Capabilities be placed at the heart of the new SACE, and that:

- a comprehensive set of student Capabilities be developed through an extensive process of professional and community consultation, using as a basis the draft list identified in this Report
- a thorough research program be initiated to support the development, implementation and evaluation of Capabilities
- a comprehensive program of teacher professional development and community awareness be implemented in order to build professional knowledge so that Capabilities become a central part of the new SACE.

#### Recommendation 6

The new SACE be based on learning unit frameworks at Stage 1 and Stage 2, and that:

- all frameworks conform to the same set of curriculum design specifications, including broad learning outcomes that integrate the Capabilities with key concepts and ideas
- mechanisms be developed to enable students to undertake interdisciplinary study across frameworks
- criteria be developed for determining the appropriate level and credit point value of learning units and other courses and learning achievements that can be credited toward the new SACE
- ways of organising and supporting frameworks based on amalgams of vocational pathways and disciplines be investigated.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) be developed as a learning unit that:

- is accredited at Stage 1 level to assist planning and transition into the SACE, and is undertaken usually in Year 10
- is accredited at Stage 2 level to facilitate planning and transition from the SACE to destinations beyond schooling, and is undertaken usually in Year 12
- must be completed successfully by all students at both Stages for a total of 20 credit points (10 at each Stage) in order to qualify for the SACE
- is supported by mentors and possibly student advocates.

### **Recommendation 8**

The Extended Learning Initiative (ELI) be developed as a required learning unit that:

- is accredited at Stage 1 level to promote deep approaches to student learning, and is undertaken usually in Year 10. This ELI will have a focus on Australia and the world
- is accredited at Stage 2 level to extend deep approaches to student learning, and is usually undertaken in Year 12
- must be completed successfully by all students at both Stages for a total of 20 credit points (10 at each Stage) in order to qualify for the SACE.

### **Recommendation 9**

A new SACE literacy and numeracy requirement be established in which:

- literacy and numeracy constitute a central part of the Communications Capability, and thus are embedded in the learning outcomes, assessment components and performance standards in all learning units
- a diagnostic assessment is used by all students during Year 10 as the basis for the Stage 1 PLP and for ongoing whole-of-school literacy and numeracy development and assessment
- support for teachers is provided to teach for literacy (including ICTs) and numeracy across the curriculum.

### **Recommendation 10**

Further work be conducted to expand the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) related to the new SACE including:

- the continued and relevant embedding of e-learning into the everyday practices of schools, classrooms and other learning sites, including an aim to ensure that all schools are adequately resourced in terms of equipment and infrastructure support
- the development of a contemporary learning environment that allows students and teachers to access a range of learning options from across Australia and the world, beyond current school and system structures
- the extension of the e-learning capacity, materials and staff development processes of the Open Access College.

## Assessment and reporting

### Recommendation 11

Assessment associated with learning unit frameworks be based on outcomes where:

- these are shaped by the Capabilities and described with greater specificity than currently occurs
- they are accompanied by the development of holistic descriptions of Capabilities at two levels of performance, at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

### Recommendation 12

Greater reliance be placed on teacher judgment, consistent with other recommendations relating to curriculum and assessment, and that:

- this move be supported by an enhanced system of quality assurance, including new forms of moderation at Stage 2
- appropriate support be provided to teachers and schools to enable greater involvement of teachers in moderation processes.

### Recommendation 13

There be an external assessment component for all learning units at Stage 2, based on the understanding that:

- the external assessment comprises 30 per cent of the total assessment for all Stage 2 units, with the exception of the Extended Learning Initiative where the external assessment will be 70 per cent
- the final assessment for each of the learning units at Stage 2 will result from the addition of the assessments from the moderated school assessment and the external assessment with no form of assessment being used to statistically moderate another form
- in the process of curriculum design and accreditation, the learning unit developers will justify, in terms of student learning, the form of external assessment proposed.

### Recommendation 14

The SACE Authority:

- explore and trial assessment approaches such as construct-referenced performance standards in order to make the reference point for judgment in the SACE more explicit and transparent for teachers and students
- continue to support a focus on the fullest and latest information for the making of assessment judgments.

### Recommendation 15

Development, research and trialling take place in relation to:

- new forms of reporting at Stages 1 and 2, consistent with the use of performance standards, and that the ideas outlined in Section 7.6 [of the Report] contribute to that process
- ways of recording and facilitating a 'not yet completed' approach to partial completion of work requirements.

### Recommendation 16

Development, research and trialling take place in relation to the use of e-assessment as an integral component of the new SACE.



### **Recommendation 17**

A robust and comprehensive quality assurance system be established that supports and assists teachers to carry out their assessment role consistently and confidently, and that:

- a range of other quality assurance mechanisms including the appointment of Accredited Assessors and the establishment of an Institute for Educational Assessment be considered
- there be regular reviews and audits of the quality assurance system, with triennial reviews by a Quality Assurance Review Panel convened by the Minister for Education and Children's Services, in order to maintain system quality and public confidence.

### **Certification**

#### **Recommendation 18**

One senior school certificate of completion be offered in South Australia, to be known as the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), and that:

- the SACE qualification be drawn from a record of learning achievements
- there be no time limit on completing the SACE requirements.

#### **Recommendation 19**

The Minister establish a group comprising members of the three schooling sectors, disability service providers, educators and parents to consider how the completion arrangements being proposed for the new SACE might best serve the learning needs of students with impairment and/or health conditions.

#### **Recommendation 20**

The SACE Authority be responsible for issuing the following formal documents to students:

- the South Australian Certificate of Education to all students who complete its requirements
- a Record of Learning Achievements—the official transcript of results of all learning achievements that count towards the SACE.

#### **Recommendation 21**

The Record of Learning Achievements not report tertiary entrance information.

#### **Recommendation 22**

Consideration be given to the provision of a web-based system to enable the recording of all results and achievements.

#### **Recommendation 23**

Effective accreditation mechanisms be established in order to:

- accredit and recognise locally developed curriculum
- broaden the capacity of VET studies to contribute to the new SACE, especially in regard to the gaining of credit points at Stage 2
- make available to students credit points for partial completion of units and for short stand-alone courses.

#### **Recommendation 24**

The SACE Authority forward results data to SATAC for its use in making decisions regarding tertiary entry and SATAC be asked to communicate these decisions directly to candidates.

## Implementation

### Recommendation 25

An Office of Senior Secondary Renewal (OSSR), responsible to the Minister for Education and Children's Services and operated through a collaborative arrangement with the three school education sectors, be established immediately to commence the process of preparing for the new SACE.

## Legislation and governance of the SACE

### Recommendation 26

The Minister commission an independent review of the SSABSA Act and the governance and operational arrangements necessary to ensure that:

- the statute is able to give effect to the reforms proposed in this Report and the more general matters related to legislation and governance discussed in Chapter 10 [of the Report]
- South Australia has in place a statutory authority that is appropriate in its design, functions, powers and *modus operandi* to perform the roles expected of it in the proposed new SACE.





## **SACE Review Panel**

Hon Greg Crafter, Chair

Dr Patricia Crook AO

Professor Alan Reid

The full SACE Review Report can be downloaded from the SACE Review website at  
<<http://www.sacereview.sa.gov.au>>



Government  
of South Australia