achieve

A guide for students starting Stage 1 of the SACE

SACE Board of SA | South Australian Certificate of Education
Welcome to the SACE

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a certificate you receive when you successfully complete Year 12. It is internationally recognised, and is the main way South Australian students get into TAFE and university courses in South Australia, interstate and overseas.

Studying the SACE helps you develop project planning, analysis, evaluation, communication and decision-making skills. These skills will help set you up for success in further study and in the workplace.

You can tailor the SACE to suit your needs and aspirations. You can choose to study from a wide range of SACE subjects, or a combination of SACE subjects and Vocational Education and Training (VET) options. There may be other courses you are studying outside school that could also count towards your SACE.

This booklet contains useful information about the SACE and how it can work for you. More information can be found at sace.sa.edu.au or talk to your school’s SACE coordinator.
There are two stages of the SACE – Stage 1 and Stage 2. Most students will start Stage 1 in Year 10, and continue it in Year 11. Stage 2 is usually done in Year 12.

Most students start their SACE in Year 10 with the Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

The PLP is a 10-credit Stage 1 subject. All students need to achieve a C grade or better in the PLP to get their SACE.

Studying the PLP at the start of the SACE gives you a good foundation for your Year 11 and 12 studies, and can help in your subject selection later on. It’s a way to get you thinking about your options for the future and how to use the SACE to help you get there.

Read more about the Personal Learning Plan on pages 14-19.
Year 11 is when most students begin a full year of SACE study. You can choose from a range of Stage 1 subjects offered at your school, as well as Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses and other options.

In Stage 1, all your assessment tasks (reports, presentations, etc.) will be marked by teachers at your school.

There are two compulsory requirements for the SACE that students usually do at Stage 1 – a full-year of an English subject, and at least a semester of a mathematics subject. You will need to get a C grade or better in both. Your assessments in these two areas are marked by your teachers and checked by moderators outside the school to ensure that grades are consistent across schools.

These maths and English requirements highlight the importance of graduating from school with literacy and numeracy skills.

Like Year 11, you choose your subjects and courses – this time Stage 2 – from those offered at your school.

At Stage 2, 70 percent of your assessment tasks (reports, tests, presentations, etc.) will be marked by teachers at your school and checked by moderators outside the school. This ensures that marking is consistent across schools.

The remaining 30 percent will be assessed outside your school. These assessments could take the form of examinations, performances or investigations.

There is one compulsory subject in Year 12 – the Research Project. It is a one-semester (10-credit) subject that gives you the chance to research something you are interested in.
Credits

Credits are like the building blocks of the SACE. You need to achieve 200 credits to get the certificate.

The compulsory parts of the SACE make up 50 credits – 10 credits for the Personal Learning Plan, 20 credits of literacy, 10 credits of numeracy, and 10 credits for the Research Project.

You’ll also need to get at least 60 credits from Stage 2 subjects – you can choose the subjects, but they have to be worth at least 60 credits in total.

You must achieve a C– grade or better in the 60 credits of your Stage 2 subjects, and the 10 credits for the Research Project, to get your SACE.

You will need to achieve at least a C grade for the Stage 1 compulsory subjects.

The table on the opposite page shows how the SACE fits together. Remember: 10 credits are equal to one semester of study in a subject, and 20 credits are equal to a full-year subject.

Grades

We’ve been talking a lot about the C grade or better that you need to successfully complete the compulsory subjects.

In the SACE, you get a grade for every subject. At Stage 1, the top grade is A and the lowest is E. At Stage 2, the top grade is A+ and the lowest is E–.
PUTTING IT ANOTHER WAY

The table below shows you how many credits you need at each stage to meet the 200-credit requirement.

There is also a useful online tool to help you plan your SACE in Students Online (sace.sa.edu.au/students-online). You can find out more about Students Online on page 12.

If you need more help understanding how it all works, talk to your teachers or your school’s SACE coordinator.

You can also find useful information on the SACE website – just click on the link for ‘Students and Families’ on the homepage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 10</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Learning Plan</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 11 (Stage 1) or Year 12 (Stage 2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy (from a range of English subjects and courses)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy (from a range of mathematics subjects and courses)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 12 (Stage 2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Stage 2 subjects and courses*</td>
<td>60 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 11 or 12 (Stages 1 or 2)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects and courses of the student’s choice</td>
<td>up to 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
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*Many students will complete subjects or courses worth more than 70 credits at Stage 2 (usually 80 or 90)
Getting an A on an assignment is great, but do you know why you received that grade? How was your work assessed? And what makes an A different from a B?

In every subject you need to show a certain standard in your work to achieve a grade. This is where ‘performance standards’ come in. Performance standards are the descriptions of the grades you receive for your assessments.

In each subject, each grade has a description attached to it that defines the standard of work. Think of it as a guide to achieving a particular grade.

Whenever you’re given a grade (A to E) in a subject, you can check the performance standards to monitor your own progress through the subject. They describe how well you have demonstrated what you know, can do and understand. They also can help you to set yourself goals for improvement.
About the SACE capabilities

1. Communication
   Building your Communication capability helps you clearly express your ideas and opinions, and interact with people in different settings and situations.

2. Citizenship
   Through the Citizenship capability you can explore how you can contribute to the wider community. This could include building on your understanding of differences in cultural backgrounds, or participating in activities outside the school.

3. Personal Development
   This is where you have the chance to reflect on and improve areas of your own personal development. You have the opportunity to identify your strengths, and areas for development, and build your self-confidence.

4. Work
   Under the Work capability, you can explore workplace learning and employment skills. This might be through participating in work experience or talking to people in a workplace.

5. Learning
   This capability can help you better understand how you learn. You can do this by gaining feedback on your areas for development, or by building on your reflection and evaluation skills.

There are five ‘capabilities’ identified in the SACE: Communication, Citizenship, Personal Development, Work and Learning. You are introduced to these in the Personal Learning Plan subject, usually studied in Year 10.

Each subject develops one or more of these capabilities as you study. The idea is to help connect your learning with the personal attributes needed to live, work and be an active citizen in an ever-changing society.
The SACE at your fingertips

You can find all the information you need about the SACE at the click of a button: sace.sa.edu.au

There’s a lot available on the SACE website, so here’s a guide to the sections that are most relevant to students starting the SACE.

**Subject minisites**
Each SACE subject has its own ‘minisite’ with everything there is to know about the subject. For Stage 1 subjects you’ll find subject outlines which explain what you will learn, and information about how subjects are graded.

**Subjects**
Under the Subjects tab of the website you will find links to all SACE subjects, as well as courses and other study options.

**Recognised Learning**
This is where you can find information about Vocational Education and Training (VET) and community learning.

**Community Learning**
If you are doing a community program, such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award or SA Country Fire Service training, you could get SACE credits. You can also get SACE credits through self-directed learning – that is, activities you do within your community, such as caregiving or volunteering. On this web page you’ll find information about various community programs as well as what you need to do to apply for SACE credits.

**Vocational Education and Training (VET)**
If you are more of a hands-on person, or are interested in following a training pathway, this is where you can find information about the different VET courses you can do, and get SACE credits for.
Students and Families
This is where you will probably spend most of your time on the SACE website. The information in this section has been written to help you and your families understand the SACE.

About the SACE
This section provides all the general information you need to know about achieving the SACE. You will find information about the literacy and numeracy requirements, Vocational Education and Training and special provisions.

Stage 1
Here you will find information about studying Stage 1 of the SACE, including the Personal Learning Plan.

Aboriginal, interstate, overseas and adult students
The Students and Families section also contains information for Aboriginal, interstate, overseas and adult students. If you are one of these students, these sections can help you find out how the SACE can work for you.

Examination and study info
This section offers advice and guidelines on studying, including research advice, and tips on managing the workload.
Students Online

Students Online (sace.sa.edu.au/students-online) features an online tool that can help you track your SACE. You can:

• plan your SACE and look at different subject combinations
• check your progress towards completing the SACE
• access your results.

When you start your SACE, you will receive a SACE registration number. It is a six-digit number followed by a letter (e.g. 123456A).

You can use your SACE registration number to log onto Students Online. Your default PIN is your birthday, in the format DDMM. For example, if you were born on June 4, your default PIN would be 0406.

If you forget your password, there is a link underneath the login box to reset your PIN. You will need to fill in an online form, and the SACE Board will reset your PIN.
Plan your SACE

By using the SACE Planner in Students Online, you can try different subject combinations, Vocational Education and Training (VET), and community learning and see how it would affect your SACE requirements.

Experimenting with the planner will not enrol you in the subjects or courses you select, but it will give you an idea of how different combinations can count towards your SACE. As you design your SACE, subjects you choose in the planner will be displayed in italics under Potential SACE Completion (see the example on the opposite page).

Before using the SACE Planner, it is important to talk to your school’s SACE coordinator so you know what subjects and courses your school offers – not all schools offer the same subjects. You will also need to check that the subjects you choose will allow you entry into the tertiary course you may be interested in.

Work with your school’s SACE coordinator to plan and verify your choices. They will help you to enrol in your chosen subjects.

Check your progress

Once you have enrolled in your Stage 1 or Stage 2 subjects, you can monitor your progress towards completing the SACE using the SACE Progress Checker in Students Online.

The SACE Progress Checker will give you a breakdown of the SACE requirements, and shows you whether they are being met by your current enrolments.

The Checker lists how many credits you have been awarded for each subject or course. It also lists how many credits you still need – at each stage of the SACE or in the literacy and numeracy requirements – to achieve the 200 credits needed to get the SACE. (See the screenshot below).
There is a subject in the SACE that is dedicated to helping you discover your interests, strengths and ambitions, and to putting you on the path to success.
The Personal Learning Plan is a compulsory Stage 1 subject, usually studied in Year 10. It is worth 10 credits, and you need to achieve a C grade or better to get your SACE.

**What’s the plan?**

The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) gives you the chance to identify your plans and goals for the future, helping you make informed decisions about your personal development, education and training.

If you have a career already in mind, the PLP offers a chance for you to explore your options for university, TAFE, and apprenticeship or traineeship courses.

If you do not know what you want to do yet, you can explore the careers that might interest you. This is your opportunity to think about the kinds of subjects you can study to maximise your choices in the future.

**The capabilities**

The PLP is your introduction to the five SACE capabilities – Citizenship, Communication, Learning, Professional Development and Work. You will learn what capabilities you need for your future as well as how to develop and improve them. Find out more about capabilities on page 9.

**Assessment**

As part of the PLP, you will identify your strengths and areas for development, investigate potential pathways and figure out how you are going to get there. You will need to present your research as a folio with a reflection on your learning.

**Choosing your subjects**

The PLP is particularly useful when it comes to subject selection for Years 11 and 12. Some university courses require you to study prerequisite subjects, so it is helpful to know which Year 11 subjects lead into those subjects in Year 12.

You can also look at the benefits of including Vocational Education and Training (VET) in your SACE. More about VET can be found on page 22.

As a result of the PLP, many students have a road map to their study, training or career destination.
As early as primary school Sarah knew she wanted two things: to work in a medical field, and to help children.

So when she started working on her Personal Learning Plan (PLP) in Year 10, she looked at how she could put those two goals together.

The aim of the PLP is to help students plan for the future. Students consider their strengths, interests and goals, and make plans about how to use their education and training in Years 11 and 12 to reach those goals.

As part of her PLP, Sarah had a week of work experience in a primary school dental clinic while she was in Year 10.

“That was great experience. I was able to watch what the staff were doing and I got a good idea of what it would be like to work in a hospital or a clinic setting,” she said.

During her PLP, Sarah worked out she would need to study the sciences and English to study in a medical field at university. Once she knew what she needed to do, Sarah mapped out her subject choices for Years 11 and 12.
Once she got to Year 12, Sarah also chose her Research Project topic with her end goal of a medical career in mind, combining it with her interests of helping children and film-making. She decided to make an advertisement for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), which is an international humanitarian medical organisation.

“I researched the organisation through their website, and then researched the essential elements of a successful commercial. I analysed several advertisements and their impact on audiences,” Sarah said.

The end result is a 30-second television commercial using black and white images of children, with minimal text and just the sound of breathing.

Sarah’s Research Project teacher, Jakub Tengdahl, said Sarah justified all of the decisions she made in making her advertisement through her research. She even considered the ethics of film-making as well as the psychology of audiences.

“Sarah’s project shows that students can use the flexibility of the Research Project to follow their passions in a very personal way,” said Jakub.

Through Sarah’s planning for her PLP, she has been able to structure her path through the SACE and move closer towards achieving her personal and career goals.

If Sarah is accepted to study medicine she would eventually like to specialise in paediatrics. She would also like to volunteer with Médecins Sans Frontières someday.
Sixteen-year-old Luke has always been interested in a practical career where he can be active and use his hands.

He attended an open day at a technical college and straight away he knew it was the right place for him.

“I really wanted to gain more practical skills to help me move towards a trade career – possibly plumbing or electrical,” said Luke.

Luke put these ideas about his skills and interests into his Personal Learning Plan, which he completed at the beginning of Year 11.

The planning Luke did as part of his PLP helped him to realise that a plumbing course was the ideal choice for him.

The course at the technical school offered theory, knowledge of workplace practices, and practical skills – a strong foundation for a career in a trade.

“I’m nearing the end of my first year here, and I’m loving it,” said Luke.

“We’ve learnt about different types of pipe and how to connect them; I’ve learnt different types of welding; I’ve also studied metal fabrication and made a tool box and a folding shovel.

“We’ve had seven blocks of work experience this year and it’s through work experience that students could be offered an apprenticeship.

“I’ve actually had an offer from a family friend who’s a sparky. So at the end of next year I might decide to go into a plumbing or electrical apprenticeship or even think about doing a trade in the army.”
Year 11 student Madeline found the Personal Learning Plan a great way to start exploring her future career options.

As part of her PLP studies, Madeline researched possible career options using a range of websites and online tools. She used a tool on the UniSA website which analysed her personality type and the sort of jobs she might be interested in.

Madeline discovered that law was a career suited to her personality, and it is an option she finds very interesting.

“The personality testing gave me more of an idea of what area of law I might specialise in,” she said. “I like interacting with people, so family law could be a possibility.”

Madeline also had a week’s work experience at a family law firm which gave her further insight into a legal career.

“I got to go to court and sit in on trials. I also met lawyers, barristers and solicitors – so that was really helpful.”

As part of her PLP, Madeline also spent a day at a local university with a group of 20 high school students. They took part in mock trials and introductory lectures, learning more about the ins and outs of studying law.

“I’ve discovered that I can study law at all three local universities, but I would need an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) of around 95 per cent to be accepted.

“There are no prerequisites in law, so next year I’m planning to study the subjects that I’m good at,” Madeline said.
Whether you want to go to university, study a trade or go straight into the workforce, the SACE can be tailored to suit your needs.

All SACE students need to complete the compulsory requirements, but your other subject choices are up to you.

It is important to check the subjects your school offers with your school’s SACE coordinator – not every subject is offered at every school.

SACE subjects that are worth 10 credits are one-semester subjects, while 20-credit subjects require a full year of study.

A complete list of SACE subjects at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 can be found on the SACE website, under the Subjects tab.

When deciding on your subjects for Years 11 and 12, remember to consider any prerequisite subjects for university courses you may be interested in. You may need to study the Stage 1 subject to be able to enrol in the Stage 2 subject the year after.

Apart from studying SACE subjects, you can also get credits towards the SACE by studying in other areas, such as Vocational Education and Training (VET), or community learning.

For more about VET and community learning, see pages 22 and 23.

Learning areas

Subjects are divided into nine learning areas:

- Arts
- Business, Enterprise and Technology
- Cross-disciplinary
- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Sciences.
**Arts** includes subjects such as Creative Arts, Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.

**Business, Enterprise and Technology** includes subjects such as Accounting, Information Processing and Publishing, and Design and Technology – Material Products.

**Cross-disciplinary** includes subjects such as Community Studies, Integrated Learning, as well as the Personal Learning Plan and the Research Project.

**English** includes subjects such as English, English Communications, English Pathways, English Studies, English as a Second Language and Literacy for Work and Community Life.

**Health and Physical Education** includes subjects such as Child Studies, Food and Hospitality and Physical Education.

**Humanities and Social Sciences** includes subjects such as Aboriginal Studies, Australian History, Australian and International Politics, Economics, Geography, Legal Studies and Tourism.

**Languages** can be studied at different levels. Languages offered include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, Modern Greek and Spanish, to name just a few. For a full list of language subjects, see the Subjects page of the SACE website.

**Mathematics** includes subjects such as Mathematics, Mathematical Applications, Mathematical Studies, Mathematical Pathways, and Numeracy for Work and Community Life.

**Sciences** includes subjects such as Agriculture and Horticulture, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Nutrition, Physics and Psychology.
Why should I study VET?
Studying VET as part of your SACE can give you a head start in your career and earn you SACE credits. You can develop hands-on skills in areas of work and industry that interest you, and complete your SACE at the same time.

What is the VET Recognition Register?
The VET Recognition Register is a useful tool on the SACE website that lists more than 200 of the most popular VET qualifications. The register can tell you the SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2), and the maximum and minimum SACE credits you could earn.

It also outlines which courses can be taken in conjunction with apprenticeships and traineeships, and lists each course by industry area.

You should discuss your VET options with your school’s VET coordinator before making any decisions to make sure you choose the course that is right for you.

How do I get SACE credits for my VET?
Once you have chosen your VET options, the VET coordinator at your school can help you work out how many credits you could possibly achieve at Stage 1 or Stage 2, and how to claim them when you complete your VET course.

Each qualification is different and has compulsory and elective options, so the SACE credits you end up getting may vary depending on the VET qualification you are working towards.

You can earn up to 180 out of 200 SACE credits using VET. You can even focus your Personal Learning Plan and Year 12 Research Project on your chosen industry area.

Want more information?
Find everything you need on the SACE website by clicking on the VET box on the homepage.
Other courses

There are a number of other ways to get SACE credits. Most students earn them by studying subjects at school; however you can also get SACE credits through recognition arrangements – such as community learning.

Community learning can be divided into two categories:
- Community-developed programs
- Self-directed community learning.

Community-developed programs
Many community organisations develop their own learning programs that students can count towards their SACE such as:
- Duke of Edinburgh’s Award – Bronze, Silver or Gold Award
- Royal Life Saving Society – Bronze Medallion and Senior First Aid
- SA Country Fire Service – Basic Firefighting 1
- Scouts SA – Queen’s Scout Award
- Australian Music Examinations Board – Practical Music (Grades 5 – 8)
- Australian Army Cadets – Junior Leaders Course (Corporal).

You can find a full list of SACE-recognised community-developed programs on the SACE website under Subjects > Recognised Learning.

Self-directed community learning
You might be part of a program or course outside school that is not formally accredited, but you could still be eligible to receive SACE credits for it.

This could include:
- participating in a sport at an elite level
- acting as a carer for an elderly or invalid person
- teaching others a specialised skill (such as dance)
- volunteering.

You have to show evidence of your learning when applying for SACE credits for self-directed community learning. To check if you can apply for SACE credits for learning you are doing outside school, talk to your school’s SACE coordinator.
FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE

www.sace.sa.edu.au