

Assigning SACE Levels to a Community-developed Program – Guidelines

Introduction

The Recognition of Community Learning Policy and Procedures document outlines the principles, purposes, and key features of the recognition arrangements of successfully completed community programs that have been devised and accredited by community organisations, and also to recognise that learning that does not follow an organised program of instruction which may also be worthy of recognition.

Policy statement

The SACE Board of South Australia recognises towards the award of the SACE community learning that is gained through either:

- a learning program that follows a formally documented curriculum
- experience(s) or a learning program that does not follow a formally documented or accredited curriculum.

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

- level that is equivalent to SACE Stage 1 or Stage 2 in nature and scope
- standard of complexity that is equivalent to 'satisfactory achievement' at Stage 1 or Stage 2.

The SACE Board will base its decisions on a set of criteria, and follow established procedures, when assigning a level of SACE to a Community-developed Program.

Students who include in their SACE any courses that are accredited, assessed, and quality assured by providers other than the SACE Board must meet the assessment and quality assurance requirements of those courses. The Board determines which of these courses are recognised towards completion of the SACE.

Assigning SACE levels to a community-developed program

When making decisions about assigning SACE levels to a Community-developed Program, the SACE Board will be guided by the following principles:

- that the amount and level of recognition of learning maintains and enhances the integrity of the SACE (integrity of the SACE)
- that the recognition arrangements balance the opportunity for students to personalise the components of the SACE and at the same time maintain coherence in the SACE (coherence in the SACE)
- that the recognition process focuses on the learning achieved (achievement-focused)
- that the recognition process takes into account the nature and scope of the learning and the complexity of the learning, and that judgments about the complexity of learning are made against evidence of learning (*evidence-based*)

- that the recognition process is based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the application of the procedures (*fair, transparent, and equitable processes*).

When making decisions about assigning SACE levels to a Community-developed Program, the SACE Board will be guided by the following criterion:

- that the recognition of learning is consistent with the principles, requirements, and standards of the SACE (*consistency with SACE principles*)
- that the certification of student achievement in Board-recognised courses is conducted on the basis of satisfactory completion and achievement of the relevant course standards and competencies, that is, that the certification aligns to the use of the C grade for Board-accredited subjects (*satisfactory completion and achievement of course standards*)
- that the recognition arrangements promote diverse pathways but do not duplicate the pathways provided by the SACE (*not duplicate identical pathways*)
- that the quality assurance processes of learning providers in guaranteeing the integrity of student results are respected (*quality assurance*)
- that the reporting of community learning is consistent with the valuing of other, accredited learning towards the SACE (*consistency in reporting learning*).

Procedures for assigning SACE levels to a community-developed program

Community learning gained through a learning program that follows the formally documented curriculum of a community organisation. The procedure to determine the level is through a panel process. The membership of the panel will vary, but where appropriate will comprise at least one curriculum officer with appropriate or relevant subject expertise. The recognition panels are formed and chaired by the SACE Board. The panel will:

- appraise the nature and scope, and the level of complexity of community learning that is a result of a program of instruction that follows a formally documented curriculum of a community organisation or youth development program
- base its appraisal on the evaluation of various pieces of information provided by the community organisation or youth development program (e.g. curriculum documents, assessment prescriptions or guidelines, evidence of performance at various documented levels, quality assurance mechanisms, discussions, scripts) against the learning to be gained through Board-accredited subjects
- take into account precedents in the recognition of similar programs
- consider the recognition arrangements for Community-developed programs towards other senior secondary certificates in other states and territories
- make recommendations about the value of the learning that has taken place in terms of the:
 - number of credits
 - SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2)
 - standard achieved (satisfactory completion or achievement of the relevant course standards and competencies, equivalent to a C grade).

Approval process

The application is considered at two stages in the following order:

1. Recognition Panel
2. Director, Education Services

An internal SACE Recognition Panel (comprising the Recognition function lead, SACE Curriculum Officers, and Lead Practitioner if required) undertakes research about the organisation and the proposed program and assess the application using the above processes and considerations. The Recognition Panel provides a report to the Director, Education Services. The report details the panel's recommendations, and if approved, recommends the proposed category of the learning, and the level of SACE at which the program is to be recognised.

The Director, Education Services, reviews the Recognition Panel report, and considers the advice and recommendations provided to determine if the program is approvable.

Community-developed programs table

Once a program is approved, recognition arrangements are published by the SACE Board on the Community-developed Programs table. This table shows for each program

- maximum and minimum number of SACE credits that students could expect to earn by completing the program;
- SACE level (Stage 1 and/or Stage 2) at which credits earned for the program will be recognised for SACE purposes
- Reported against one of the following eight categories:
 - Community Development
 - Independent Living
 - Performance
 - Recreation Skills and Management
 - Self-development
 - Sports Skills and Management
 - Volunteering
 - Work Skills and Career Development.

For recognised community-developed programs, the name of the program is also reported.

1. Evidence of community learning can be retrospective. The SACE Board makes judgments on the currency of evidence that is retrospective.
2. For each of the eight categories, a template of learning is used as the point of comparison with the learning outlined in Board-accredited subjects.
3. Recognition is granted for up to 90 credits at Stage 1 or Stage 2.
4. Recognition is not granted against Exploring Identities and Futures± (at Stage 1), the literacy or numeracy requirements, Activating Identities and Futures (at Stage 2) or the requirement for 60 credits at C grade or better at Stage 2.

Community learning credits that have been successfully completed are granted a level equivalent to 'satisfactory achievement' and are reported as a number of credits 'Granted' on the SACE Record of Achievement.