

Comparison Guide SACE v Other Australian programs



About SACE

SACE has been developed and certified by the SACE Board – a South Australian government agency.

The SACE curriculum meets Australia’s extremely high academic standards, which have been recognised internationally for decades. The SACE is part of a teaching heritage stretching back to 1874. SACE has also been taught with great success across the Asia Pacific region for more than 40 years.

SACE is a pathway to universities globally, with graduates accepted into top-tier universities across the world. There are no limits on where SACE can take you! The following information will help you assess your options and make an informed decision about which program suits you best.

SACE is an Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

In Australia, each state is responsible for administering its own Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. Despite the different names, each program is recognised officially and equally across Australia and by universities globally.

SACE is the official Senior Secondary Certificate of Education of the state of South Australia.

Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

State	Certificate name
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (ACT SSC)
New South Wales (NSW)	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Northern Territory (NT)	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
Queensland (QLD)	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
South Australia (SA)	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
Tasmania (TAS)	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
Western Australia (WA)	West Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Victoria (VIC)	Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE)



Did you know?

The SACE program is also delivered in the Northern Territory but is called the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET).

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

After completing an Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, students become eligible to obtain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The ATAR is a ranking between zero and 99.95 that reflects a student’s position compared to others completing an Australian senior secondary program each year.

Australian universities use the ATAR to select students for undergraduate programs. The ATAR system is used across Australia and enables a fair comparison of students regardless of the program they complete.

ATAR is also accepted for entry to universities around the world. A high ATAR enhances a student’s chance for admission to their desired university and course.

How is SACE similar to other Australian senior secondary programs?

Quality and accreditation	Other Australian programs	SACE
Government accredited curriculum	✓	✓
Schools accredited through a rigorous process	✓	✓
Develops critical thinking, research and problem-solving skills	✓	✓
Prepares students to succeed at university	✓	✓
Recognised and accepted by universities worldwide	✓	✓
Proven history of graduate success	✓	✓
ATAR certificate upon completion	✓	✓
Two years’ duration*	✓	✓

*SACE and WACE can be shortened to 1 year with recognition of prior studies

What is unique about SACE?

Key points	Other Australian programs	SACE advantages
<p>International delivery</p>	<p>Each state has a different approach to senior secondary program delivery outside Australia.</p> <p>Some states license Australian schools to develop partnerships in other countries. Others manage their own network of international schools.</p>	<p>The SACE program is long-established, respected and proven. SACE has been taught successfully for more than 40 years across the Asia Pacific region. More than 40,000 SACE students have successfully graduated since 1982.</p> <p>SACE is offered at 360+ schools across Australia and the Asia Pacific. Each school is accredited and supported directly by the SACE Board, a South Australian Government agency.</p> <p>SACE's rigorous accreditation process ensures each school's mission, education philosophy and values align with the SACE Board's approach to fostering thriving learners.</p>
<p>Flexibility</p>	<p>Across Australian senior secondary programs, students generally study four, five or six subjects. Students choose from a wide range of subjects.</p> <p>Each state has different rules and requirements that need to be met. Some programs are more flexible than others.</p>	<p>SACE is designed to harness every student's potential and help them be the best they can be. Students are encouraged to follow their passions and build on their individual strengths.</p> <p>SACE students take a minimum of five subjects totaling 200 credits.</p> <p>Students must study at least 10 credits of mathematics and 20 credits of English.</p> <p>The remaining credits can be any combination from 100+ subjects, allowing students to follow their interests and goals.</p> <p>The SACE curriculum allows teachers to tailor content to their student context. Content is not rigorously prescribed, meaning that schools can build a curriculum that will suit the strengths of their students.</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>All Australian programs involve a mix of assessment types. It's common for students to have 50% school-based assessment and 50% external exams.</p> <p>In most states, school-based results are moderated after review of their external exam results and comparison to results from students and schools.</p>	<p>SACE assesses the application of knowledge and soft skills, ensuring students know what to do with what they have learnt.</p> <p>Students are mostly assessed by their teachers, who design assessments to suit their context.</p> <p>Stage 1: 100% school-based Stage 2: 70% school-based, 30% external</p> <p>There are multiple assessment opportunities at school, including presentations, essays, hands-on projects and coursework. Ongoing feedback means that students can improve their grades while they learn.</p> <p>SACE was the first in the world to implement online electronic examinations. Along with exams, external assessments also include investigations, which students complete during the school year and submit to the SACE Board for marking.</p> <p>School-based assessment results are never adjusted after external exams, meaning students can be confident about their performance.</p>