

SACE International Pre-university Program

Attention:
University Chancellors
University Admissions Officers

This is an open letter designed to inform universities about the SACE International Program, a high-quality pre-university program designed to ensure students have the best possible chance of success as they embark upon their university study pathways and future careers.

The SACE International Program, or SACEI, is a pre-university program delivered in China, Malaysia, Vanuatu and Vietnam. Previously known as the South Australian Matriculation, or SAM, program, it has been delivered successfully internationally since 1982. There are also a number of potential providers indicating their interest in delivering the program in India and Sri Lanka.

Students completing the SACEI are awarded the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), which is the senior secondary qualification undertaken by school students in South Australia. The program is delivered by colleges under the auspices of the SACE Board of South Australia, an independent statutory authority of the South Australian government responsible for curriculum development and accreditation, assessment, reporting and certification for the final years of upper secondary education in South Australia.

The following provides detailed information in relation to the SACEI to assist universities in assessing student applications for university admission.

SACE Board of South Australia

The SACE Board, formerly the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, is an independent statutory authority of the South Australian Government. Its enacting legislation, the SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983, provides the basis for the SACE Board's functions and responsibilities which include:

- establishing the SACE qualification and determining the requirements for the achievement of the qualification;
- commissioning the development and review of curriculum and accrediting the subjects and courses forming that curriculum;
- assessing and quality assuring student achievement in the SACE; and
- certifying students' successful completion of their senior secondary studies.

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)

In South Australia, the SACE is generally undertaken over two years (Stage 1 and Stage 2) and students are required to complete a total of 200 credits (10 credits is a semester of study), of which 110 credits comprise compulsory requirements, including compulsory English (literacy) and Mathematics (numeracy) requirements, a compulsory Stage 1 subject known as the Personal Learning Plan and a compulsory Stage 2 subject known as the Research Project. In addition, students are required to achieve a C grade or better in all compulsory requirements in order to gain the SACE.

The SACE is based on a set of principles that the South Australian Government believes are critical to the education of young people, and their successful transition to further study and employment. These principles, or values, are as follows:

- A young person graduating with the SACE will possess the capabilities to live, work, and participate successfully in a changing, globalised world, having developed critical thinking skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects, and qualities that will enhance their participation in the world: leadership, social engagement and responsibility. The capabilities are embedded into each subject outline.
- They will have built knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of contexts, such as school, the workplace or training and community organisations and have met high academic standards.
- They will be literate and numerate.
- They will be an empowered learner who can learn anything, anywhere, at any time.

Moreover, the Government of South Australia, and the SACE Board, believes that all young people undertaking the SACE should have the opportunity to successfully complete the SACE, which is why the SACE Board's underpinning legislation emphasises principles of equity and access in respect of educational opportunity for young people.

One of the key means by which young people develop the necessary skills and capabilities for university study, and eventually, to live and work in a fast-paced and evolving world is through the Research Project subject. Students are able to choose a topic that is important and meaningful to them, and undertake research, analysis and evaluation in relation to that topic. In so doing, they take responsibility for directing their own learning, planning and managing their research topic, and undertaking analysis and evaluation to confirm their research questions and findings. By so doing, they become an empowered learner, able to undertake university study with confidence and authority.

The SACE International Program

Students of the SACEI undertake the same curriculum offered to South Australian senior secondary students. The language of instruction for the SACEI is English, and students must demonstrate that they have a suitable level of English proficiency before they are accepted into the SACEI.

Each subject in the SACEI program has a school and external assessment component. School assessments make an important contribution to students' final results, and enable students to develop the independent learning and time management skills necessary for university study. In this component students learn to write and analyse critically in their chosen subjects. The school assessment results are quality-assured and moderated by the SACE Board.

The SACE Board also sets the final examination (the external assessment component) papers for each subject, and supervises these examinations either directly, or by using experienced, trained invigilators. Students sit the final examinations in either March or November of a given year.

The examinations are developed by examination setting panels, which include leading school and university representatives, appointed by the SACE Board.

Most examinations use a variety of modes of assessment including multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and extended responses or essay questions. Examinations are marked by assessors who are appointed and supervised by the SACE Board.

Both the school assessment and the examination count towards the student's final score for the subject.

Quality Assurance of the SACE International Program

A rigorous accreditation process applies when educational institutions apply to offer the SACE International Program. This process allows the SACE Board to determine the suitability and viability of each request. In granting a license for an institution to deliver the SACEI, the SACE Board:

1. Determines the standards of the college including its reputation as an educational institution, number of students, curriculum and assessment methodology, academic results over a period of time, and geographic location.
2. Inspects the college in respect to its resources, facilities, and whether it is able to provide secure environments for the purposes of conducting examinations.
3. Undertakes a risk analysis associated with conducting the program at the college.
4. Examines the teachers' qualifications.
5. Assesses the college's business plan to introduce the SACEI.
6. Ensures that the college has approval from local education authorities to conduct an international educational program.

Following accreditation to deliver the SACEI, the SACE Board:

1. Ensures that the curriculum and assessment requirements of the subjects are followed.
2. Ensures that the procedures for the authentication and verification of student work are followed.
3. Applies identical assessment standards to SACEI students' work that are applied to South Australian students.
4. Ensures that the processing of students' results are followed according to established policies.
5. Provides teacher training and professional development for SACEI teachers on an annual basis.
6. Issues to successful SACEI students, the same qualification – the SACE – that is awarded to South Australian students.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

Students who successfully complete the SACE International Program are eligible to receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which can be used for university admission in any state in Australia, and towards university entry at many universities world-wide.

The process for converting a student's SACEI results to an ATAR is a sophisticated and rigorous statistical process undertaken by the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC), on behalf of the three South Australian Universities.

The process is as follows:

1. The numerical equivalents (1.0 – 15.0) for each student's final subject grades are scaled by SATAC and reported as a number, 0.0 – 20.0.
2. The scaled scores from a student's subjects are combined to give a university aggregate, which is a score out of 90.0, with intervals of 0.1.
3. This aggregate is converted to an ATAR, which is a ranking that ranges from 0 to 99.95, with intervals of 0.05. The ATAR indicates how well a student has performed compared to other students. For example, a student who achieves an ATAR of 95.9 is in the top 4.1 per cent of the total school leaving population that is the student performed better than 95.9 per cent of the total cohort.

Student destinations

The SACE International Program is highly regarded as a pre-university course that thoroughly prepares students for tertiary study. The majority of students obtain excellent results in their final examinations and assessments and as such apply to, and are accepted by many tertiary institutions. The following is just a selection of the universities that have accepted graduates of the program in recent years:

Australian Universities		
Griffith University	University of Adelaide	University of Tasmania
Deakin University	University of Sydney	University of Melbourne
Monash University	University of New South Wales	RMIT University
Curtin University	University of Western Australia	Australian National University
University of South Australia	University of Queensland	
International Universities		
University of Auckland (New Zealand)	London School of Economics (UK)	University of Sheffield (UK)
University of Otago (New Zealand)	Queen Mary University of London (UK)	University of Cardiff (UK)
University of Canterbury (New Zealand)	University of Southampton (UK)	University of Edinburgh (UK)
Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)	University of Bradford (UK)	Cornell University (US)
Massey University (New Zealand)	University of Swansea (UK)	Yale University (US)
Lincoln University (New Zealand)	University of Warwick (UK)	University of California-Berkley (US)
Middlesex University (UK)	Imperial College, London	New York University
Singapore Management University	University of Leicester (UK)	University of Washington (Seattle – US)
Cambridge University (UK)	University of Birmingham (UK)	Syracuse University (US)
Oxford University (UK)	University of East Anglia (UK)	Ohio State University (US)
		University of Bristol (UK)

Further information

The SACE Board website provides further information on the SACE, and the SACE International Program. Go to www.sace.sa.edu.au for extensive information on the SACE, including subject outlines, learning and assessment information and exemplars, and other resources about the SACE. On the home page you will find a link to the SACE International Program, which provides specific information relating to SACEI.

You may also like to speak directly to SACE Board staff:

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