

# SACE Modified Subjects Policy

(for use in 2019)

## Introduction

The SACE Board of South Australia is committed to providing all students with opportunities for success in completing the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

The SACE Board, as an education provider, and schools, as educational institutions, share responsibilities and obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Disability Standards for Education 2005* to make reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment to enable students eligible on the grounds of disability to access and participate in programs, and associated assessments, on the same basis as other students.

To meet the learning needs of individual students with significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours associated with their disability, the SACE Board makes available a set of highly individualised subjects, referred to as modified subjects. Students with disability who meet the eligibility criteria for enrolment in modified subjects engage in senior secondary curriculum and assessment based on personal learning goals that are challenging, achievable and meaningful for them as individuals. Eligible students can complete the certification requirements of the SACE using one or more modified subjects.

The Board's *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy* provides flexibility for schools and the SACE Board to make reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment to enable students with disability to access and participate in SACE programs, and associated assessments, on the same basis as other students. However, for a small number of students with disability, the learning requirements and performance standards in one or more SACE subjects are a barrier to achievement and SACE completion, even with the reasonable adjustments available under the *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy*. The disabilities of these students are highly complex and require substantial or extensive adjustments in curriculum and assessment.

Students with disability are entitled to the highest level of SACE achievement possible for them as individuals. Access to modified subjects is intended for the small number of students with significant disabilities whose learning needs cannot be met through differentiation and reasonable adjustments in curriculum and/or assessment in SACE subjects under the Board's *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy*.

## Purpose

The *SACE Modified Subjects Policy* supports the *SACE Policy Framework* by providing personalised learning and assessment for students with one or more disabilities that result in significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours. The policy supports inclusion by enabling eligible students to meet the certification requirements of the SACE. It is intended that the policy be applied flexibly for eligible students. For students with disability that result in significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours the policy seeks to ensure continuity and consistency of adjustments in the senior years of schooling.

## Policy principles

The principles that underpin this policy are that:

1. Students who, with the provision of reasonable adjustments, are unable to access, participate in, or comply with the requirements of SACE curriculum and assessment, on the same basis as other students, due to significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours associated with their disability, are eligible to enrol in modified subjects (*eligibility, reasonable adjustments*).
2. Decisions about eligibility for modified subjects are evidence based and considered on a case-by-case basis (*evidence based, case-by-case*).
3. Decisions about enrolment in modified subjects should give due regard to the student's ability to achieve learning outcomes and participate in assessment in other SACE subjects, courses and programs (*achievement; participation*).
4. Decisions about enrolment in modified subjects are based on consultation with the student (and/or an associate of the student, such as a parent or carer) and give regard to the effect of the enrolment on the student's independence and post-school aspirations (*consultation, effect on independence and pathways*).
5. Modified subjects are designed to provide challenging, achievable and meaningful personalised learning goals that meet the individual learning needs of each eligible student. (*personalised learning; meets learning needs*).
6. Enrolment in modified subjects is flexible; eligible students may enrol in one or more modified subjects according to the student's choice, learning needs and/or abilities (*flexibility, student choice*).
7. Modified subjects address educational disadvantage for eligible students (*address disadvantage*).
8. Decisions about enrolment in modified subjects are conducted ethically with integrity, accountability and transparency for students (*ethical, transparent*).
9. The SACE Board of South Australia and schools are mutually responsible for bringing the *Modified Subjects Policy* to the attention of students and families (*responsibility for dissemination of information*).

## Relevant legislation

The Board operates under the authority of the *SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983*. Section 15(1) of the Act sets out the functions of the Board. The Board is also subject to the following legislation in relation to this policy:

- the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth) as amended in 2015
- the associated Disability Standards for Education 2005
- the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 SA
- Australian Education Regulation 2013

## Policy statement

It is expected that, with the provision of reasonable adjustments under Board's *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, most students with disability will be able to access and participate in SACE curriculum and assessment and demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and standards of subjects at the 'C' (Stage 1) or 'C-' (Stage 2) level or higher. However, some students with disability will not be able to meet the performance standards of SACE subjects at C/C- level or higher due to

significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours associated with their disability.

The SACE Board and schools work in partnership to ensure modified subjects are available for the small number of students with disability whose learning needs cannot be sufficiently addressed through the flexibilities of other SACE subjects and/or with reasonable adjustments under the *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy*. Modified subjects positively enable eligible students to engage with a curriculum that meets their learning needs and demonstrate their knowledge and skills in ways that are personally challenging, achievable and meaningful.

The decision to enrol a student in modified subjects should be made collaboratively by the student (where appropriate) the teacher, parents/carers, and may be informed by other significant people in the student's life (e.g. school/sector personnel, community support networks). It is important to take into consideration that students with disability:

- are entitled to be supported to achieve at their highest possible level
- should not have their curriculum offerings and post school pathway options restricted by automatically being enrolled in modified subjects

Approval for enrolment in modified subjects is based on information from the eligible student (or an associate of the student, such as a parent or carer), teachers and other school staff, school sector personnel and independent evidence from professionals or community members, as appropriate.

*Once approved, students may enrol in one or more modified subjects. Approved students do not need to re-apply for approval to enrol in subsequent modified subjects.*

Students who fulfil the requirements of the SACE using one or more modified subjects are awarded a SACE certificate, which carries the following explanation: *'This student has fulfilled the requirements of this qualification using modified subjects'*.

## Eligibility

Decisions about a student's eligibility to enrol in modified subjects must be based on evidence of the student's inability to access or participate in the curriculum and/or demonstrate evidence against the performance standards of other SACE subjects a C/C- result or higher because of the extent of their functional impairment and significance of their support needs.

It is most likely that students who are eligible to enrol in modified subjects will be included in the Extensive Adjustments category of the school's Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) records. Occasionally a student in the Substantial Adjustments category may be eligible for enrolment in modified subjects. Such students will experience significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours associated with their disability that impacts on their ability to provide evidence against the performance standards of other SACE subjects.

Students who are eligible on the grounds of disability (see p4, eligibility on the grounds of disability) are highly likely to have a record of studies previously undertaken as part of an individual learning program (e.g. an Individual or Negotiated Education Plan or equivalent). However, not all students on an individual learning program (e.g. an Individual or Negotiated Education Plan or equivalent) are eligible for modified subjects (see p.4, eligibility on the grounds of disability, and ineligible grounds).

Evidence on which decisions about eligibility for enrolment in modified subjects are based may include, but are not limited to:

- results and interpretations of standardised and/or norm-referenced assessments, or other evidence of significantly delayed intellectual functioning should the student's disability prevent standardised assessment

- interpretations of observations and assessment of adaptive skills and behaviour using standardised assessment measures and including information about age appropriateness
- student work samples
- school observations and records of adjustments undertaken over time
- assessments of adaptive skills, attainment, and developmental progress
- schools observations and notes about adjustments required by the student, which exceed those that can be provided by the *Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy*

The signed agreement of the student's parents/carers to the proposed enrolment in the student in modified subject(s) must be obtained before eligibility is confirmed.

### **Eligibility on the grounds of disability**

Students are eligible to enrol in modified subjects on the grounds of documented or imputed disability that results in significant impairment in intellectual functioning and/or adaptive behaviours, which

1. cannot be addressed through reasonable adjustments under the Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy
2. mean the student cannot meet, and/or provide evidence against, the performance standards of subjects at C/C- level or higher because of their disability

and

3. are, or will be, recorded on the NCCD database as requiring extensive or substantial adjustments.

### **Ineligible grounds**

Students are not eligible to enrol in modified subjects:

1. if they have documented or imputed disability but can be supported to meet, and/or provide evidence against, the performance standards of subjects at C/C- level or higher through:
  - quality differentiated teaching practice
  - supplementary adjustments
  - special provisions
  - flexible learning options within the SACE
2. because of limited educational achievement primarily due to social, environmental or economic factors, limited English language skills or excessive absences from school.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The SACE Board makes reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment by providing eligible students with the opportunity to complete the requirements of the SACE through the study of modified subjects. The following modified subjects enable students to complete the compulsory elements of the SACE:

- Personal Learning Plan: Modified
- English: Modified (literacy requirement)
- Mathematics: Modified (numeracy requirement)
- Research Project: Modified

- other Stage 2 modified subjects (remaining 60 credits at Stage 2).

The set of [modified subjects](#) also provides opportunities for eligible students to complete all the non-compulsory elements of the SACE.

Teachers make reasonable adjustments for students in modified subjects by developing individualised learning and assessment programs designed to develop one or more of the capabilities and to meet the student's personal learning goals for the subject.

A student cannot be granted exemption from any of the SACE certification requirements, through enrolment in modified subjects.

## Responsibilities

The *SACE Assessment Responsibilities: Code of Practice* is based upon the recognition that the quality of student assessment in the SACE, together with the integrity of students' results, is dependent on a partnership between the SACE Board and schools. Decisions about eligibility, enrolment and the management of modified subjects reflect this commitment to assessment integrity through partnership.

### School responsibilities

Schools know their students best and, as such, are best placed to identify and implement reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

Principals or their delegates are responsible for determining students' eligibility for modified subjects in accordance with the *SACE Modified Subjects Policy*. Schools are responsible for recording decisions about eligibility for modified subjects in Schools Online.

Schools can refer to SACE modified subjects resources on the SACE website and seek advice from the SACE Board to support the fair and equitable management of modified subjects' eligibility.

#### Record keeping

Schools are responsible for maintaining records about eligibility for modified subjects at Stage 1 and Stage 2. Records should include evidence used to determine eligibility and the level of adjustment provided for each student. The records should enable schools to meet any reporting obligations to sectors and for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability for the purposes of sections 4, 52(3A) and 58A of the Australian Education Regulation 2013. In relation to NCCD reporting requirements this means that schools must have sufficient and adequate documented written evidence of adjustment(s) having been provided over the minimum period of 10 consecutive or non-consecutive weeks in the preceding 12 months. The records should also enable the SACE Board to monitor the effectiveness of its *SACE Modified Subjects Policy*.

### SACE Board responsibilities

The SACE Board is responsible for reporting completion of modified subjects on the SACE certificate and Statement of Results.

### Student responsibilities

Students (and/or an associate, such as a parent or carer) are responsible for providing true and accurate information regarding eligibility for modified subjects. They are also responsible for working with their school to determine the challenging, achievable and meaningful personal learning goals and capabilities that will be the focus of each modified subject.

## **Grievances, appeals and investigations**

A grievance, appeal and investigation process is available when a student (or an associate of the student) believes that decisions or other actions taken in relation to modified subjects have not been carried out in accordance with the SACE Modified Subjects Policy and its procedures. The SACE Board's Protocols and Procedures for Assessment-related Grievances, Appeals and Investigations outlines the processes to be followed.