

Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy

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 Board recognises that some individual students, under circumstances outlined in this policy, will not be able to participate in SACE curriculum and assessment on the same basis as other students if all students are treated in the same way.

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 participate in programs, and associated assessments, on the same basis as other students. In addition, the Board recognises that students affected by misadventures or personal circumstances that are beyond their control, or the control of their schools, may also require reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment to participate in programs, and associated assessments, on the same basis as other students.

The reasonable adjustments available to students are collectively referred to as special provisions.

In making reasonable adjustments, the knowledge, skills and standards of subjects and certification requirements are entitled to be maintained.

1. Purpose

The Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy supports the SACE Policy Framework by providing for a diversity of students, in different places of learning, through the personalisation of learning and assessment, while maintaining rigorous and consistent standards of achievement and certification. The policy supports social inclusion by enabling eligible students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in relation to the learning and assessment requirements of SACE subjects. It is intended that the policy be applied flexibly for eligible students. For students with disability the policy seeks to ensure continuity and consistency of adjustments between school and external assessments.

2. Policy principles

The principles that underpin this policy are that:

1. Students who are unable to participate in, or comply with the requirements or conditions of the assessment on the same basis as other students, due to disability, misadventure, or personal circumstances, are eligible for reasonable adjustments (eligibility, reasonable adjustments).
2. All eligible students are supported by their schools to access special provisions in curriculum and assessment (equitable access).
3. The same knowledge and skill requirements and standards are applied to all students whether or not they are granted special provisions (identical standards).
4. Decisions about eligibility for special provisions are evidence based and considered on a case-by-case basis (evidence based, case-by-case).
5. Decisions about reasonable adjustments are based on consultation with the student (or an associate of the student, such as a relative or carer) and give regard to the effect of the adjustment on the student's ability to achieve learning outcomes and participate in assessment and the student's independence (consultation, effect of adjustment)

6. Reasonable adjustments should provide opportunities for eligible students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in SACE subjects (demonstrate achievement)
7. Reasonable adjustments may vary from subject to subject and assessment to assessment according to the eligible student's choice (flexibility, student choice)
8. Special provisions address disadvantage for eligible students (address disadvantage).
9. Decisions about special provisions are conducted ethically with integrity, accountability and transparency for students (ethical, transparent).
10. The SACE Board of South Australia and schools are mutually responsible for bringing the Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy to the attention of students and families (responsibility for dissemination of information).

3. 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

4. Policy statement

It is expected that students will enrol in a SACE subject with an expectation of being able to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and standards of the subject.

The SACE Board and schools work in partnership to ensure special provisions are available to eligible students for both school assessment (Stage 1 and Stage 2) and external assessment (Stage 2) of the SACE (see section 7. Responsibilities). Special provisions are reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment that positively enable eligible students to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and standards of Stage 1 and Stage 2 subjects.

Approval for special provisions is based on information from the eligible student, his/her teachers and other school staff, and independent evidence from professionals or community members, as appropriate. Special provisions may be granted on a short-term or long-term basis, depending on the grounds for eligibility and a student's particular circumstances. Long-term provisions should be monitored and reviewed regularly in collaboration with the student (or an associate of the student) to ensure that the reasonable adjustments provided continue to be the most appropriate adjustments for the student.

It is not expected that a student will apply for special provisions after the release of the results for a given semester or school year.

The Board does not report the granting of special provisions in a particular subject on the Record of Achievement, or the Certificate.

5. Grounds for eligibility

Students are eligible for special provisions on the following grounds:

- disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
- misadventure
- personal circumstances

5.1 Eligibility on the grounds of disability

Disabilities for which students are eligible for special provisions in accordance with the DDA include but are not limited to:

- physical disability (e.g. multiple sclerosis, paraplegia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy)
- vision impairment (e.g. cataracts, glaucoma, abnormal colour vision, double vision)
- hearing impairment (e.g. deafness)
- medical condition (e.g. illness, chronic fatigue syndrome, glandular fever, diabetes, Crohn's disease, epilepsy, wrist injury)
- psychological disorder (e.g. depression, anxiety disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anorexia nervosa)
- specific learning disorder (a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction)

5.2 Eligibility on other grounds

Other grounds for which students may also be eligible for special provisions are:

- misadventure (an incident beyond the student's control, e.g. a death in the family, a car accident, artwork that is stolen or damaged before final moderation, or a fire alarm during an examination)
- personal circumstances (e.g. interrupted schooling because of family responsibilities or cultural obligations).

5.3 Ineligible grounds

Students are not eligible for special provisions on the following grounds:

- unfamiliarity with the English language
- teacher absence or other teacher-related difficulties;
- matters that the student could have avoided (e.g. misreading an examination timetable, misreading instructions in examinations)
- matters of the student's own choosing (e.g. family holidays)
- matters that the school could have avoided (e.g. incorrect enrolment in a subject).
- they are private candidates.

6. Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are many and varied and should be determined on a case by case basis, according to the needs of the student and the nature of the assessment. An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- additional writing time in timed assessments and examinations
- additional reading time in timed assessments and examinations
- invigilation in a separate room (this may require additional materials such as CDs in some subjects)
- extensions to due dates
- provision of tests and examinations electronically
- provision of tests and examinations in a paper format
- reduction to the length of a test or examination paper of more than 130 minutes in length
- rest breaks
- special printing requirements for tests and examinations (e.g. enlarged print, special font, coloured paper, Braille paper, printing with/ without particular colours)
- time to attend to medical needs without loss of test or examination time
- use of a reader, clarifier, voice assisted technology or visual aids
- use of a word processor or scribe
- variations to the form of assessment (e.g. a written task presented orally if learning requirements can still be met)

In determining reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment the SACE Board and schools understand that special provisions cannot be used to compensate for learning that has not occurred. A student cannot be granted exemption from the learning requirements or the knowledge and skill requirements of a subject outline, or be granted exemption from any of the SACE certification requirements, through the application of special provisions.

7. 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, reasonable adjustments and the administration of special provisions reflect this commitment to assessment integrity through partnership.

7.1 School responsibilities

Schools are responsible for identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments that can be managed within the school context. For example, decisions about adjustments to school set assessment deadlines, adjustments to the number or format of tasks in a school assessment type or the granting of extra time, rest breaks or word processors in tests and examinations can be determined and managed by schools. Schools can refer to SACE Special Provisions resources on the SACE website and seek advice from the SACE Board to support the fair and equitable management of special provisions at the school level.

7.2 SACE Board responsibilities

The SACE Board is responsible for considering and approving requests for reasonable adjustments for eligible students in external assessments at Stage 2 that affect SACE Board processes. For example, adjustments to the font size, length, format or colour of a SACE Board examination, extensions to the submission of results or collection of materials for external investigations, or requests for the use of a derived result would all require action on the part of the SACE Board to be implemented. The SACE Board is also responsible for considering requests for special provisions in examinations on the grounds of misadventure and personal circumstances.

All requests for special provisions submitted to the SACE Board must include a clear recommendation from the student's principal (or delegate) regarding the eligibility of the student for special provisions and the appropriateness of the adjustment(s) requested. If necessary, the SACE Board will consult with the school and/or the student regarding proposed adjustments to ensure the special provisions granted constitute reasonable adjustments for the student and are manageable for the school and the SACE Board.

7.3 Student responsibilities

Students (or their associates) are responsible for providing true and accurate information regarding eligibility for special provisions and for working with their school to determine the most appropriate reasonable adjustments in curriculum and assessment.

7.4 Record keeping

Schools and the SACE Board are responsible for maintaining records of the reasonable adjustments provided respectively to students for school and/or external assessments at Stage 1 and Stage 2. Records should include grounds for eligibility and the reasonable 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. The records should also enable the SACE Board to monitor the effectiveness of its Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy.

8. 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 special provisions in curriculum and assessment, for either school or external assessments, have not been carried out in accordance with the SACE Board's Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy and its procedures. The SACE Board's Protocols and Procedures for Assessment Related Grievances, Appeals and Investigations outlines the processes to be followed.

9. Monitoring

Special Provisions Advisory Panel

A Special Provisions Advisory Panel is appointed by the Chief Executive to monitor, evaluate, and conduct research into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Special Provisions in Curriculum and Assessment Policy and its procedures. The composition of this panel is as follows (where possible):

- Chair, to be nominated by the Board
- three representatives of the schooling sectors
- three principals representing the schooling sectors
- three SACE coordinators representing the schooling sectors

- a nominee from the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity
- a nominee of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disabilities
- a nominee of the Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia Inc.
- staff of the Office of the SACE Board.

The Chief Executive liaises with the schooling sectors to ensure that the panel is balanced with respect to gender, geographic location of schools, and socio-economic profile of schools.

The Special Provisions Advisory Panel has the authority to co-opt or seek independent professional advice as needed.