

Recognition of Community Learning Policy and Procedures

Recognition practices are well established in a number of education and training contexts. Mostly, recognition is achieved through the completion of an accredited, organised program of instruction that is supported by a curriculum with a description of the learning and assessment scope and requirements. This policy aims to recognise towards the award of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) learning that is the result of 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 may also be worthy of recognition.

Policy principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

1. That the recognition of learning is consistent with the principles, requirements, and standards of the SACE (*consistency with SACE principles*)
2. That the amount and level of recognition of learning maintains and enhances the integrity of the SACE (*integrity of the SACE*)
3. 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*)
4. That the recognition arrangements promote diverse pathways but do not duplicate the pathways provided by the SACE (*not duplicate identical pathways*)
5. That the recognition process focuses on the learning achieved (*achievement-focused*)
6. 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*)
7. 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*)
8. That the reporting of community learning is consistent with the valuing of other, accredited learning towards the SACE (*consistency in reporting learning*)
9. That the quality assurance processes of learning providers in guaranteeing the integrity of student results are respected (*quality assurance*)
10. That the integrity of assessments of Board-recognised courses is dependent on the interconnected responsibilities of the students, school leaders, SACE Board, and other educational providers with an accreditation function with the relevant course (*interconnected responsibilities*)
11. That the recognition process is based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the application of the procedures (*equitable process*).

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 functions that relate to this policy are:

- (g) to recognise, in such manner and to such extent as the Board thinks fit—
 - (i) assessments of students made by schools, institutions or other authorities or organisations;
 - (ii) the achievements of a student in or towards completion of any activities or requirements recognised by the Board for the purposes of the SACE;

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.

Policy procedures

Community learning gained through a learning program that follows the formally documented curriculum of a community organisation

1. The SACE Board appraises 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.
2. The SACE Board bases 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.
3. The SACE Board makes decisions 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).
4. Documentation of the evidence of the satisfactory completion of community learning that is the result of a program of instruction that follows a formally documented curriculum will be provided by the student and the school, in collaboration with the relevant learning provider (e.g. community organisation). Evidence of community learning presented for recognition (i.e. the award, certificate, or other evidence of learning) must be verified by the relevant provider as current.

Community learning gained through self-directed learning experience(s) or a learning program that does not follow a formally documented curriculum

1. The SACE Board is responsible for appraising the nature and scope, and the level of complexity of community learning that is gained through learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formally documented curriculum.
2. The SACE Board bases its appraisal on the evaluation of the evidence provided by the student. School assessors, who have been trained for the purpose, evaluate the evidence on behalf of the Board. The student can provide evidence of community learning gained through self-directed learning experiences or a learning program that does not follow a formally documented curriculum in a variety of ways (e.g. interviews, portfolios, witness statements). The responsibility for documenting the evidence of a student's learning rests with the student. A teacher or school assessor(s) may help the student in this task. The SACE Board may also assist in this process.
3. The assessor(s) evaluate the community learning on the evidence presented by the student. Using SACE Board guidelines and forms, the assessor(s) make decisions 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 (equivalent to a C grade in a Board-approved subject).
4. The SACE Board ensures that decisions made by school assessors follow established processes and applies a range of quality assurances processes to ensure valid, reliable, and fair judgments.

Reporting

1. When reporting, the evidence of community learning is mapped against the following eight categories:
 - (i) Community Development
 - (ii) Independent Living
 - (iii) Performance
 - (iv) Recreation Skills and Management
 - (v) Self-development
 - (vi) Sports Skills and Management
 - (vii) Volunteering
 - (viii) Work Skills and Career Development.

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

2. Evidence of community learning can be retrospective. The SACE Board makes judgments on the currency of evidence that is retrospective.
3. 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.
4. Recognition is granted for up to 90 credits at Stage 1 or Stage 2.
5. Recognition is not granted against the Personal Learning Plan (at Stage 1), the literacy or numeracy requirements, the Research Project (at Stage 2), or the requirement for 60 credits at C grade or better at Stage 2.
6. 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.