# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo

Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural

Knowledge and Learning

Student-led learning

Operational guidelines and framework

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# Introduction

*We would like to acknowledge this land is the traditional lands of the Kaurna people and we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today.*

The purpose of the *student-led learning — Operational guidelines and framework* is to provide students, schools, and community organisations with information about community-led, student-led and co-delivered learning, and how it can contribute towards the award of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

This document uses the terms ‘Aboriginal’, ‘Aboriginal people’ and ‘Aboriginal Communities’ to recognise the diversity within Aboriginal cultures and communities. This document uses a range of phrases used to represent Aboriginal people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Indigenous Australian people, and First Nations people.

# General information

Rationale

The Aboriginal Education Project explores approaches that will enable Aboriginal students to demonstrate and share their language and cultural learning skills and capabilities, and for that cultural knowledge and learning to be recognised and valued in the SACE. Key drivers are Aboriginal students’ agency and sense of belonging.

As highlighted in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration and the Shergold Review into senior secondary pathways (Recommendation 16); Aboriginal students should be able to draw on their cultural knowledge and competency to demonstrate their learning, in language, or on country. To support the SACE to become a culturally responsive qualification that provides opportunities for Aboriginal students to utilise their living history, languages, and cultures as an integral part of their SACE, the Aboriginal Education project commenced work to develop comparable recognition models for Aboriginal students’ knowledge and learning to be recognised as part of the SACE completion requirements.

Relevant legislation

This project has not been framed within the boundaries of existing legislation or policy, but with a co-design approach to acknowledge, respect and meet the needs and advice of Aboriginal communities and students.

However, the proposed recognition model for Aboriginal community-led cultural learning has been interpreted as within the remit 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.

To this end, the term ‘*authorities*’ in point (i) above, has been interpreted to extend to assessments of students made by Aboriginal cultural authorities.

Policy principles

The proposed approach to Aboriginal recognition aligns strongly with the following existing policy principles as stated in the *Recognition Arrangements for Courses in the SACE Policy and Procedures*:

* that the recognition of learning is consistent with the principles, requirements, and standards of the SACE *(consistency with SACE principles)*
* that the amount and level of recognition of learning maintains and enhances the integrity of the SACE *(integrity of the SACE)*
* 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)*
* that the recognition arrangements promote diverse pathways but do not duplicate the pathways provided by the SACE *(not duplicate identical pathways)*
* that the recognition process focuses on the learning achieved *(achievement-focused)*
* that the recognition process considers 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)*
* that the reporting of community learning is consistent with the valuing of other, accredited learning towards the SACE *(consistency in reporting learning)*
* that the quality assurance processes of learning providers in guaranteeing the integrity of student results are *respected (quality assurance)*
* that the integrity of cultural assessments is dependent on the interconnected responsibilities of the students, school leaders, SACE Board, families, and community *(interconnected responsibilities)*
* that the recognition process is based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the application of the procedures *(equitable process)*

# The three pathways of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and learning

To enable the greatest accessibility and opportunity for Aboriginal students to have their cultural knowledge recognised, three separate recognition pathways have been developed. One pathway recognises knowledge and learning developed from within a student’s community which is generally taught by Elders, leaders, or family members from that community (community-led). The second pathway recognises cultural learning that students drive themselves in an area of cultural interest or passion (student-led). The third pathway provides Aboriginal students with the opportunity to explore and develop an understanding of Aboriginal culture in a relevant and meaningful way while making community connections (co-delivered).

Community-led pathway

The community-led recognition pathway recognises significant knowledge and/or learning of Aboriginal cultures held by Aboriginal students which is being done in and by community for the purpose of students gaining SACE credits (Stage 2 20-credits). It is not a specifically curated learning experience for the purpose of students gaining SACE credits. It is the passing on of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and ways of knowing, doing and being over time.

Learning criteria

Aboriginal communities, through consultation, have confirmed that ongoing leadership, authority, and responsibility are valued as the highest levels of learning. When students are given ongoing leadership, ongoing responsibility, and ongoing authority, they have developed and demonstrated deep understanding of aspects of their culture.

Recognition

It is SACE’s position that neither SACE, nor the school, require tangible evidence or even direct knowledge of the activities undertaken, only the type of learning that has been undertaken (as outlined above).

To ensure ownership of cultural knowledge and assessment remains within the student’s Aboriginal community, a recognised ‘cultural authority’ from within the student’s community (nominated by the student and/or their family) will verify the learning.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance of this learning will be managed through a set of defined criteria and standards for recognition. The SACE Board will not be involved in the assessment or the verification of community-led learning, instead the quality assurance will come through a model of trusted partnerships between the SACE Board and the school (principal), the school and the student’s community and recognition criteria and standards. A formalised community/cultural authority—school partnership agreement will need to be signed by the school and the nominated cultural authority, prior to recognition being awarded.

Refer to the *Community-led — Operational guidelines and framework* for further details.

Student-led pathway

The student-led pathway recognises cultural learning undertaken by Aboriginal students in an area of personal cultural interest. This pathway has been specifically developed in response to concerns from stakeholders regarding the large number of Aboriginal young people who do not hold existing ties to their community/culture, and Aboriginal students wanting a pathway that supports them to explore their Aboriginality in ways that are meaningful to them.

The activities that the student undertakes will be of personal interest to them, and learning is driven by the student rather than community or the school.

Learning criteria

The student-led learning criteria have been developed using the model of Knowing, Doing, Being, which provides a framework for cultural learning. The framework highlights three domains of cultural capability, drawing upon the Knowing, Doing, and Being framework used by Snook et al (2012)[[1]](#footnote-2). In each domain there are core and functional areas of capabilities that can be applied.

* **Knowing:** Knowledge and understanding
* **Doing:** Impact and contribution
* **Being:** Personal Meaning

Learning indicators have been co-developed with community and school stakeholders and are informed by the Stronger Smarter Recommendation 16 consultation paper that articulates nationally defined Aboriginal cultural competencies.

Recognition

Student-led cultural learning is assessed by a SACE accredited school-based assessor. The recognition of learning can be through multiple discussions if required. This supports the assessment to be focussed on the learning and not the evidence produced, or the performative nature of a one-off interview.

Recognition will be available for Stage 1, 10 or 20 credits and Stage 2, 10 or 20-credits depending on the depth of learning demonstrated by the student through their discussions.

Quality assurance

Discussions are conducted with a SACE accredited school-based assessor.

At Stage 1, a criteria and indicator checklist is signed and stored in a central location at the school.

At Stage 2, a criteria and indicator checklist is signed and may need to be uploaded to schools online along with the recorded discussion, or other evidence of learning (can include teacher notes).

Refer to the *Student-led — Operational guidelines and framework* for further detail.

Co-delivered pathway

Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Leaning co-delivered program provides recognition of students cultural learning with communities and or cultural authorities towards the completion of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). The program celebrates and acknowledges Aboriginal students’ learning that is the result of Aboriginal communities and schools working together to develop and deliver programs for students that connect them to culture.

The program supports students to learn more about their culture, and themselves while deepening students’ sense of belonging, identity, and connections.

Learning criteria

Schools are required to co-develop a cultural learning plan with Aboriginal cultural authorities and or Aboriginal communities describing activities, tasks, and learning that students will participate in.

Students are assessed across three learning domains: Knowing, Doing, Being.

The evidence described in the three learning domains should be equivalent to a 60-hour, Stage 1, 10-credit course, and can be met by students participating in multiple tasks and activities.

The recognition model of Knowing, Doing, Being, provides a framework for cultural learning. The framework highlights three domains of cultural capability, drawing upon the Knowing, Doing, and Being framework used by Snook et al (2012)[[2]](#footnote-3). In each domain there are core and functional areas of capabilities that can be applied.

Recognition

Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Learning co-delivered program is a 10-credit option Stage 1. Students can only receive credits for one instance of Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Learning – Co-delivered program.

Quality assurance

Schools are required to co-develop with an Aboriginal cultural authority or community a ‘Co-delivered cultural learning plan’. Plans must be cosigned by a cultural authority or their delegate and should be kept in a central location by the school. A cultural authority may be different across communities.

For other information regarding SACE recognition policies please contact askSACE, telephone 1300 322 920, or visit the VET and recognised learning pages of the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au), which provides more information about community learning.

Refer to the *Co-delivered —Operational guidelines and framework* for further detail.

# Cultural considerations for student-led recognition

When conducting interviews/conversations with students, advocates and communities, the following should be taken into consideration:

The school’s/teacher’s role is not to question if the learning activity has happened as described, their role is to facilitate and support the following:

* Provide opportunities for the student to demonstrate their knowledge/learning against the learning criteria.
* Share and discuss the framework with the students so they know what they need to demonstrate to the assessor or advocate as part of their assessment.
* Ensure the cultural safety for students, their families and cultural authorities involved by building a partnership that respects and honours participants’ expertise.
* Ensure that students, families, and cultural authorities understand that specific details about cultural activities or knowledge (sometimes referred to as secret business, closed business, lore) do not need to be shared with the school or SACE if it would be inappropriate to do so.
* Ensure students know they are entitled to have an advocate present during all discussions.
* Communicate outcome/decision to student and any other people involved in the process (i.e. student advocate). Provide an explanation of why.

Students should not feel pressured into pursuing or not pursuing these recognition pathways. However, teachers and support staff should feel comfortable to encourage students to consider it where appropriate.

The assessment discussion processes may take more than one meeting/conversation. Students can produce and bring any relevant artefacts and materials if they wish to.

# Guidelines for recognition of cultural knowledge and learning — student-led

Individual students are invited to have their student-led cultural learning considered for recognition as part of their SACE. To gain recognition towards their SACE, students mustapply for status on the appropriate form.

Trained assessors will evaluate the evidence provided by the student in meetings that are arranged specifically for this purpose. What is meant by the term ‘evidence’ in this context is how the student demonstrates the learning gained through student-led cultural learning. This learning can be demonstrated in the way the student feels most comfortable and can be shown in a variety of ways, for example, discussions, artefacts, witness statements, advocacy or portfolios. It is the student’s responsibility to demonstrate their learning. The student may obtain assistance in this task from an advocate nominated by themselves.

The evidence of the student-led cultural learning provided by the student should reflect learning that is appropriate for senior secondary level.

Students who are applying for recognition of student-led cultural learning must be enrolled in the SACE.

The school is required to keep records of the evidence provided at the interview. This can include an audio or video recording (where appropriate) or a written account from the trained assessor of the discussions and a copy of the appropriate completed criteria and indicator checklist. For Stage 2, 20-credits an audio or assessor notes must be provided for moderation purposes.

The review of student-led cultural learning involves the:

* application, by the student, for recognition of learning that is the result of student-led cultural learning
* collection, by the student, of relevant documentation to support the application
* discussions with the student, of the evidence of their learning at designated meetings with the SACE Board trained school-based assessors
* consideration, by SACE Board-trained school-based assessors, of the learning demonstrated against the specified assessment criteria
* reporting of the outcomes of the application to the student

Accredited school-based assessors will evaluate the cultural learning on the evidence presented by the student. The assessors will make their decisions about the value of the learning that has taken place in terms of the:

* number of credits (10 or 20) that will be awarded
* SACE level (Stage 1 or Stage 2) that was achieved.

# Framework for Aboriginal cultural knowledge and learning — student-led

Learning

Through a student-led activity, the student learns to:

* contribute individually and/or with other people towards common purposes
* communicate effectively using different mediums
* evaluate personal effectiveness or impact as a result of cultural learning
* use critical thinking skills to understand systems and networks and to participate in them effectively
* reflect on their own growth and development.

Assessment

The student is required to participate in discussions with SACE Board accredited school-based assessors and demonstrate their learning within these discussions. The student is to be assessed against the three assessment criteria: Knowing, Doing, Being.



The recognition model of Knowing, Doing, Being, provides a framework for cultural learning. The framework highlights three domains of cultural capability, drawing upon the Knowing, Doing, and Being framework used by Snook et al (2012). In each domain there are core and functional areas of capabilities that can be applied.

Satisfactory achievement is deemed to have been reached if the student has demonstrated the nature and scope of the learning, and the level of complexity of cultural learning required. If insufficient demonstration is provided, the student should be given the opportunity to provide more evidence in a subsequent discussion at a later date.

| Criteria | Stage 1 | Stage 2 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Knowing  (Knowledge and Understanding) | Describes understanding of cultural knowledge/skills/practice | Demonstrates deep understanding of cultural knowledge/skills/practice |
| Identifies and shows understanding of the relevant individuals, groups and communities’ impact on cultural knowledge and learning | Reflects on the impact of the relevant individuals, groups and communities’ impact on cultural knowledge and learning |
| Identifies and can describe the diversity of perspectives within and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Australia, highlighting the richness of their cultural contexts. | Compares and contrasts the diverse perspectives within and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Australia, highlighting the richness of their cultural contexts. |
| Shows awareness of the (ongoing) impact of historical events on Aboriginal people and/or communities | Demonstrates a significant understanding of the (ongoing) impact of historical events on Aboriginal people and/or communities |
| Shows an awareness of current affairs and emerging themes on Aboriginal people and/or communities | Demonstrates knowledge and relevance of current affairs and current and emerging themes relevant to Aboriginal people |
| Describes the application of cultural knowledge, skills and/or practices | Demonstrates understanding of the application of cultural knowledge, skills and/or practices in different contexts |
| Reflects on individual progress towards development of cultural knowledge and learning with some evidence (as appropriate) | Evaluates the process of development of cultural knowledge and learning using a range of evidence to support understanding (as appropriate) |
| Doing  (Impact and Contribution) | Provides at least one example of a meaningful interaction with Aboriginal Communities (Elders, Leaders, and community members) | Provides examples of a range of meaningful interactions with Aboriginal Communities (Elders, Leaders, and community members) |
| Demonstrates ability to start applying knowledge and learning in a practical manner for self | Demonstrates ability to successfully apply knowledge and learning in a practical manner for both self and others |
| Develops learning/skills/practices to contribute to community | Develops learning/skills/practices to contribute to the wider Aboriginal community |
| Engages with others/communities to develop skills/knowledge and practices to contribute to cultural events/activities | Engages with others/communities to apply skills/knowledge and practices to contribute to cultural events/activities |
| Can incorporate some Aboriginal language of their choice to demonstrate aspects of their learning | Can confidently incorporate Aboriginal language of their choice to demonstrate aspects of their learning. |
| Shares cultural learning with others | Confidently shares cultural learning with others |
| Being  (Personal Meaning) | Describes the impact/benefits of cultural knowledge and/or learning activity to self | Reflects on the value of cultural knowledge and/or learning/activity for self and others |

# Examples of student-led Aboriginal cultural learning

Examples of student-led cultural learning that illustrates the breadth of what can be included:

* Researching their family tree and skin system.
* Exploring how colonialism has impacted their family group (or the wider population of Aboriginal people).
* Demonstrating their advocacy for modern trends affecting Aboriginal people today.
* Developing their personal interests by including Aboriginal knowledge into it, such as artwork, cooking, baking. For this they will need to show the depth of research and understanding that impacts their work / interest.
* Connecting to culture through learning language, dance, or art.

Students can have their student-led cultural learning considered for recognition as part of their SACE. This process involves the student notifying the school that they would like to have their learning recognised. It could also be recommended by the school as a result of conversations that have occurred with the student. It is advised that the criteria for achieving student-led cultural learning is discussed with the student, so they are aware of the requirements.

Through discussion (can be multiple), the student will need to demonstrate their learning. This could be through the student talking about the learning, while the assessor writes notes, portfolio style evidence such as photos, videos, artefacts, or mentor/advocate voice.

At least one discussion is required to be recorded for Stage 2, 20-credit assessment only, when culturally appropriate. If agreement is provided by the student, recordings / audio could be undertaken to support the assessors’ notes. If a student declines to be recorded, the assessor is required to provide their notes as evidence.

If a student wishes to go through this recognition pathway and does not feel comfortable talking with a school-based assessor, even with an advocate, then a request can be made to the SACE Board to consider exceptional circumstances to organise an alternative assessor.

# Applying for recognition of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and learning — Student-led Stage 1 and Stage 2

1. Student informs school of intent to have learning recognised

School arranges assessor

(must have attended SACE training)

An additional assessor/ student advocate is arranged if requested by the student.

(no training required)

**2.** Assessor & student arrange convenient time

**3.** Assessor sources criteria and indicator checklist and talks it through with the student.

**4.** Assessment discussion/s held

Assessment made using criteria and indicator checklist, and record of evidence is completed by the assessor.  
(NB. If a 2nd assessor is present then it is good practice to get them to verify the assessment by signing the documents as well)

Assessment entered on Schools Online.

Retain records.

For Stage 2

Submit criteria and indicator checklist and record of evidence for moderation.

The key steps in the process are:

1. Student and teacher discuss applying for recognition

The student and teacher should have a preliminary conversation to see if an application for recognition of the student’s student-led cultural learning is the optimal way of gaining credit for the learning, or whether the needs of the student might be more appropriately met by using another option in the SACE curriculum, such as Community Studies or Workplace Practices.

2. The school schedules a meeting for the student to present evidence / discuss learning (or multiple meetings)

The assessor coordinates a meeting time and place at the school. The number of discussions is not limited to one. If the student needs multiple discussion points to show depth of learning, then this can be organised internally between the student and assessor.

3. Teacher assists student to prepare for the interview

Teacher(s) meets with the student to consider what is needed to demonstrate their learning and can be used in the discussions to show they have met the assessment criteria. This meeting may consider:

* learning and assessment framework, assessment criteria, and learning requirements for the nominated area of learning.
* the type of evidence appropriate for the learning undertaken. Students should think carefully about organising their evidence in a particular way to make a point to the assessor(s), or to draw the attention of the assessor(s) to a particular aspect of their learning that shows depth and breadth.
* the preparation to collate what is needed to demonstrate to the assessor the learning that has been undertaken. Students can demonstrate learning in a variety of ways, for example, through the discussion itself, written work, referee statements, PowerPoint presentations, video clips, and community awards and certificates, artefacts.

4. Student participates in discussions

Considerations for the discussion:

* The assessor will inform the student at the beginning of the discussion that the student is in control of how they want to demonstrate their learning.
* It should be as comfortable and as natural as possible, so the student feels at ease demonstrating their learning.
* All information that is presented at the interview is treated confidentially.
* The assessor will need to make notes of any evidence used and confirm this in the ‘record of evidence’ section as part of the criteria and indicator checklist. The assessor may record the interview electronically if culturally appropriate and agreed with the student (this is a requirement for stage 2, 20-credits). The assessor will consider the nature and scope, and level of complexity of the learning indicated by the information that the student provides. As a guide, the maximum number of credits that can be granted in a single interview are 20 credits at Stage 2.

The assessor will fill in and sign the student-led criteria and indicator checklist to confirm assessment.

The additional person in the discussion (additional assessor / advocate) is encouraged to sign the checklist as well to verify the discussion(s) has occurred and acknowledging the assessment. This is not a mandatory requirement but is considered best practice.

5. The school records the result

The assessor or school delegate will complete the recognition application form and email this to AskSACE ([askSACE@sa.gov.au](mailto:askSACE@sa.gov.au)). AskSACE will enter the result into [Schools Online](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/connect/schools-online) for accreditation for the student.

At Stage 2, the school will be asked to submit the criteria and indicator checklist and record of evidence**.** Teachers will be required to submit samples as requested by the SACE Board for final moderation.

Moderation occurs at the end of semester 2 for all Stage 2 subjects.

6. Selecting moderation samples

Teachers select Stage 2 moderation samples using Schools Online.

7. Retention of evidence

The school is required to retain the records of the discussions (notes, recordings, and completed criteria and indicator checklist, and record of evidence) until the end of the following year’s clerical check period in March.

# Student-led Aboriginal cultural recognition requirements

* 1. In the assessment discussions with the student, the assessor(s) may use the criteria and indicator checklist(s) as a reference point when constructing questions to elicit the evidence of learning from the student.
  2. After the interview, the assessor(s) uses the form to assess the level (Stage 1 and/or 2) at which the evidence is provided, and the number of credits to be awarded.
  3. Students can gain a maximum of 20 credits at Stage 1 or Stage 2 for each learning event. They can submit multiple learning events throughout their SACE journey, as long as the learning assessed is different.
  4. Students may gain Stage 2 credits without gaining Stage 1 credits in the same area of learning.
  5. Recognition is not granted against the Exploring Identities and Futures (EIF) (at Stage 1), the literacy and numeracy requirements, the Activating Identities and Futures (AIF), Research Project (at Stage 2), or the requirement for 60 credits at a ‘C’ grade or better at Stage 2.

Summary of learning criteria in student-led cultural learning

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Stage 1  10-credits | Stage 1  20-credits | Stage 2  10-credits | Stage 2  20-credits |
| Knowing  (Knowledge and understanding) | 3/7 | 5/7 | 3/7 | 5/7 |
| Doing  (Impact and Contribution) | 3/6 | 5/6 | 3/6 | 5/6 |
| Being  (Personal Meaning) | 1/1  This is an essential criterion for achievement at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 | | | |

1. Snook, Scott, Nitin Nohria, and Rakesh Kurana (2012, XV) *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership; Knowing, Doing and Being*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Snook, Scott, Nitin Nohria, and Rakesh Kurana (2012, XV) *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership; Knowing, Doing and Being*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)