

It's pens down and laptops open as the SACE pioneers Australia's first Year 12 electronic examination

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Around 2,000 South Australian students have become the first in Australia to sit a Year 12 end-of-year electronic exam when the new computerised format was today used for SACE Stage 2 English Literary Studies.

The South Australia Certificate of Education (SACE) is the first curriculum to introduce an exam that matches how students have worked in the classroom throughout the year, where they have used their school-issued computers or their own devices to research, write and submit their work.

SACE Board of SA Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell said the introduction of electronic examinations matches not only how students are learning in the classroom but better reflects the world outside of school.

"South Australian English Literary Studies students have made history today and I congratulate the 115 schools that, over the course of the year, prepared, tested, and successfully delivered the exam," Professor Westwell said.

"Together we have embarked on a ground-breaking new era of student assessment.

"The traditional pen and paper examination is increasingly becoming an outdated method of assessing students. The electronic examination offers students the chance to demonstrate their learning using the skills and capabilities they have developed throughout their school career.

"The new format also opens up new ways for us to assess students' learning, using video and other more interactive elements in the exam questions.

"This is the direction of travel for education in Australia and I am so proud the SACE is the first senior secondary certificate to be doing this. I know the other curriculum authorities across the country are keenly watching us to learn from our program."

Professor Westwell said the SACE Board worked in partnership with schools to prepare for the changes and technical requirements required to deliver the exam.

"Schools have done a fantastic job getting their students ready to successfully participate in the exam and students have really embraced the new format, to the point where I have heard them say they think they will perform better because of the electronic format," he said.

The SACE Board entered into a partnership with third party vendor SONET Systems to deliver electronic examinations.

Students logged on to a locked down examination browser where they were unable to access the internet. They were able to read the text and type in their responses to the questions in the relevant box, and cut and paste text, highlight text and navigate on the screen. Spellchecker was not enabled.

If there was a prolonged period of connection outage, students would be able to complete the examination using a like-for-like paper version.

The English Literary Studies electronic and paper version examination will be marked online. The 100-minute exam is worth 15% of a student's overall mark.

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