

New WACE requirements - FAQs for public schools

Why are the WACE requirements changing?

Reports by the Office of the Auditor General and the Education and Health Standing Committee made a number of recommendations to strengthen the current system, particularly regarding the sustainability of VET in the current WACE system. Subsequently, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) undertook a comprehensive review aimed at broadening the scope for students to achieve a WACE and improve outcomes for students not on an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) pathway. This resulted in recommendations for change to the WACE requirements, which have received strong support from school leaders, teachers, parents, industry groups and employers.

How will the requirements be different?

There will be an additional pathway to achieve the WACE - students will be provided with the opportunity to complete five Year 12 General courses or a combination of General and ATAR courses if they choose not to undertake four or more ATAR courses or a VET certificate II or higher.

How will these changes benefit students?

We want all students to be enrolled in challenging courses that align with their career aspirations and provide them with the best foundation for the opportunities beyond school. The additional pathway means students will have the option to study an extra course in an area of passion, interest or career development.

Which cohort of students does the change apply to?

The WACE changes apply for students commencing Year 11 from 2020 and completing Year 12 from 2021, including mature age or repeat students.

Does this apply to current Year 11 or 12 students?

No. These students made their course and program selections on the basis of the WACE requirements prior to the change.

How do we advise current Year 10 students about their options for next year?

It remains critically important that you support students to make selections that align to their aspirations and strengths, which maximise their options post-school. More information will be available in the upcoming forums for school leaders and course counsellors.

How will standards be maintained for students completing general courses?

General Courses have rigorous content and concepts. In addition to ongoing assessments set by schools, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) sets an external common assessment that all students sit in Year 12. Students who choose General Courses can enter employment, vocational education and training or choose a university pathway.

What will the change mean for delivery of VET programs in schools?

VET delivery can be more directly focused on real industry pathways into areas of future workforce opportunity and need. No student undertaking General or ATAR courses will be required to complete a Certificate II or higher to achieve their WACE. This means, for example, that students who start on an ATAR pathway but change out of their ATAR courses at the end of or during Year 11, don't have to pick up a VET qualification in Year 12 to achieve their WACE.

If not all non-ATAR students have to complete a Certificate II or higher to achieve the WACE, will funding for VET be reduced?

No – there will no reduction in funding for VET delivered to school-aged students.

How will my school know if my student's senior secondary education program meets the WACE requirements?

Schools can use the WACE Tracker in Reporting to Parents or the [WACE Checker](#) on the SCSA website provides the opportunity to enter all of the courses, qualifications and expected grades for a student to get an indication of whether they are on track. These will be updated to reflect the changes.

The reports by the Office of the Auditor General and the Education and Health Standing Committee raised concerns about the sustainability of VET as currently delivered in schools. What is being done to address this?

The Department is establishing a panel of quality assured RTO providers for delivery in public schools. This will be supported with standardised contracts that clearly establish the respective obligations of the schools and the RTO. The panel will be in place for the start of Semester 2, 2019. TAFEs will automatically be on the panel.

What support is there for schools to implement the new requirements?

In Term 2 2019, Statewide Services will be conducting workshops for school leaders and course counsellors in all education regions and online. The workshops will focus on how the changed requirements can be implemented to maximise opportunities and outcomes for students.