

YOU CAN ASK THAT



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SACE Board Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell and SATAC Chief Executive Officer Stuart Mossman answer your questions about the impacts of COVID-19 on SACE and SATAC processes

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Is there going to be a national approach to the way year twelve is generally going to be assessed this year or will it be state-by-state?

Across all the states and territories we've decided that we're going to have a common approach. We're all committed to doing exams this year. We're going to focus on the learning, to make sure that that's occurring throughout the year.

We're all thinking across the country that we're going to have to make some little changes to some of the curriculum and some of the assessment, and that really is going to depend on how things turn out, how long schools are affected for, but we are all working to make sure that we've got a consistent approach across the country.

Will the ATAR go ahead, and if not, how will we be able to apply to University?

The ATAR will go ahead - that's certainly the intention - and that will happen nationally not just locally. Obviously, we'll see how things unfold over the course of the year and we'll continue to work to make sure that things remain on track to enable the ATAR to be calculated and distributed.

We'll also be working with our interstate counterparts to make sure that the ATAR is done consistently as it is every year.

What is going to happen with tests and exams especially if there is an extended lockdown?

We are going to do the exams and we'll carry on with some of the tests. The challenge for us is how we're going to do it, how we're going to get you together to do those exams. This isn't a problem just for South Australia, we're dealing with this across the world and we're learning from each other.

We will find ways of supervising tests and of course we'll have to see where the exams might be. We might be back in school by the end of the year. We might have to add a little bit of time and push them back a bit, but we're still going to do the exams one way or another.

How will exams run and what will be the expectations on students if we can't all be in the same room to do it?

There's a challenge around how we do the exams but we're finding solutions. We know we can supervise tests and exams in other ways, we can use technology and we're exploring some of those solutions right now.

We want to really make sure that the learning occurs in Year 12 and that's why we're holding onto the exams, to make sure that whatever learning you're doing is not only valuable but is valued in the SACE as well.

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How would bonus points in compensation for ATAR work? Are some subjects going to be given more compensation because they require more teacher input?

The ATAR is calculated consistently across the whole country and it considers everybody together, studying at the same time. It's a selection rank used only for a very specific purpose which is University entry and it's not a score so it's not a grade as you will receive through the SACE.

We'll have a look at what unfolds over the course of the year and should any adjustments need to be considered we'll take those into account. We'll do those uniformly both here in South Australia and Northern Territory but also across the country. What we are anticipating though is that any adjustments that may need to be made in recognition of different circumstances for students studying through the SACE would be dealt with within the SACE before the certificate is awarded.

Will the SACE Board take into account that many of the primary sources organised for Research Project might be pulling out from communication?

We understand that it might be more difficult now, but we think there are enough primary sources available. It could be: speeches, interviews, documents that people have written, TED talks etc - as long as it's coming from the primary source, from what's actually going on at the time, the researcher, the thinker, the person that's had the experience that you want to draw on. You might have to pivot, you might have to shift a bit, and not use the person that you were thinking about, but there's plenty out there that you could use in your Research Project.

How would I complete a hundred and forty hours of work placement in an aged care facility as part of my course and still achieve my Cert 3 by the end of the year?

We know that students have been asked not to attend places like aged care facilities to do things like VET or other aspects of their work. We're going to have to get the balance right with this and of course, and as always, we want to focus on the learning. We want to make sure that you've been set up for your next steps - whatever that might be - in the workplace.

“WE’LL MAKE SURE THAT YOU’VE GOT A PATHWAY”

We're working with TAFE and the Universities to make sure that a pathway is going to be open to you.

For example, you might not get enough credits through your VET to get your SACE this year, but we'll make sure that you've got a pathway, that you've got a transition into going into the workplace, continuing your qualification and then when you've got that qualification you can provide the evidence of that to the SACE Board and we'll provide you with your SACE certificate.

We already do that for a lot of VET students who go on into the next year before they get the SACE.

If there are blanket special provisions applied for COVID-19 how does that affect some of us who already have special provisions for other reasons, such as mental health or family situations?

We recognise that students are probably feeling a bit unsure maybe even a little bit anxious as well about how the year's going to unfold. That's natural because of the uncertainty that we're feeling. What we don't want to do is to do special provisions school-by-school for different schools to be making different changes. The changes that we make to the curriculum or the assessment are kind of like a special provision over the whole system - across South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Focusing on the learning, making sure that you can access the learning and that you can access the assessment - really that's what special provisions are all about. We'll put that in place across the system. If you've got your own special provisions they'll still hold and of course it's not just about the SACE, we also think about that in university admissions as well. When you apply to go to university if there are special circumstances, considerations that need to be considered as part of the application process, we have that already and that will continue on.

To the point about having a system-wide provision to the extent that if events unfold in a way that none of us can probably predict right now, if there needs to be something taken into account on a system-wide basis for admissions processes as well, we'll do that so we'll work closely with the SACE Board. We'll work with the universities - we'll put something in place to make sure that nobody's - not so much disadvantaged - but everyone's treated equally and fairly.

What about the UCAT?

The UCAT isn't run by SATAC, it is a separate test and it's really only used for those highly competitive courses like medicine and dentistry. All the information we have is that the UCAT will proceed as planned. There is a separate website that you can go to and there's a lot of FAQs there and it talks about what their plans are for the UCAT this year.

We will however still marry-up any information that comes from the UCAT. The results that come from there, together with our ATAR and the interview process which is also used for our entry to medicine and dentistry.

What happens if, for some reason, there aren't any SACE results and we can't calculate an ATAR?

We're working very hard to make sure that the SACE can be completed, so the intent will be, of course, that the SACE is completed and an ATAR and university entry is not challenged. Having said that if it is a worst case scenario, as has been described, we will work - and are already working - with the universities to look at potential scenarios that might eventuate that might mean that we change the date of applications, it might mean that we need to come together and do some shared learning - bridging learning - in-between completing the year and commencing university studies.

We'll look at what that means for results when they might be available, how they might be determined or assessed in order to make offers to places in university. We don't know what it's going to look like at the moment, but rest assured we're all working very closely to look at potential scenarios and as soon as the picture starts to become a bit clearer over the course of the year, we'll put some of those things in place and communicate those out, so that everybody knows where they stand.

No matter what happens we'll be ready to support you to make an effective transition into universities or TAFE.

How will practicals be graded if we cannot do them at school but we can do them at home?

In lots of the subjects there's a practical or there's something that you're expected to do outside of school. We recognise that some students might have facilities and equipment that makes that easy, and for some students they're just not going to be able to get hold of that. It's something that we're really thinking about and dealing with and it's quite a complex problem.

What we don't want to do is just come up with a simple answer. What we're doing is we're working with your teachers. We're getting all the teachers of particular subjects together and having a conversation about: well, what should we do about this? One of the reasons is that we want to make sure that it's doable, it's pragmatic, it's achievable in the way that your teachers are teaching you. The other thing is that we really want to hold tight onto the learning - that promise that we made to you that you were going to learn in these subjects.

The practicals might be a bit different and they might not be so much hands-on - it might be something online. If you're asked to collaborate that might be using technology to do that in some way. We're mindful of this issue but what we're really focused on, of course, is the learning and the fairness and we'll have some advice for your teachers, soon.

If VET is shut down will we still get SACE points for this VET

People are doing VET in different ways and if people are doing VET towards carrying on to TAFE, or apprenticeship or something like that, they might finish that VET off next year, and when you do that, you can give us that evidence of your learning and we'll put that in the SACE, and you can get your SACE.

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**IT'S EXCEPTIONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES
THAT WE'RE IN”**

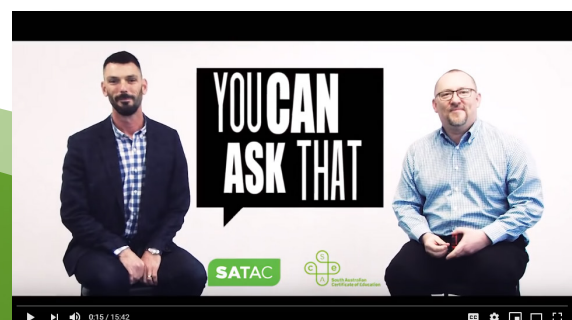
You might not get SACE this year, but we'll value all the learning you've done this year and all the learning you do next year and in some subsequent years, to be able to provide you with the SACE. It might not be quite as planned but you'll get there. For other students they might be doing VET just as part of the learning and using that to go on to university maybe, and they're looking for an ATAR.

We recognize that you might not finish your qualification before you finish Year 12. What we're trying to do, what we're looking at, is how we can recognise some of the units that you have completed, even though you might not finish the whole qualification. If you get 20 credits of VET in that way, we'll make sure that we can - one way or another - recognise that. This applies to the ATAR as well.

It's exceptional circumstances that we're in - but I think if that scenario were to unfold, then clearly we'd be comfortable looking at that and saying: well, how can we still provide students with an ATAR so that they can apply for courses and obviously go on for further study? We don't know what it looks like yet, nobody does, but I think we've got to be pragmatic and it's in everybody's best interests to enable that learning journey to continue as seamlessly as possible.

The important thing is that SATAC and The SACE Board are working together to get the maximum flexibility to make sure that the learning that you've already done is valued in the SACE and valued in the ATAR for the university admissions as well.

**Watch the video here:
[SACE.SA.EDU.AU/COVID19-READINESS](https://sace.sa.edu.au/covid19-readiness)**



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