

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)

The Western Australian Certificate of Education is awarded to secondary school students who satisfy its requirements. Generally, students will complete two years of senior secondary study, although the Council's provisions enable students to meet the WACE requirements over a lifetime. The WACE is recognised by universities, industry, TAFEWA and other training providers.

The school is the main WACE provider for students up to the age of 17 years. Schools may work in partnership with other providers to deliver courses, vocational education and training (VET) or other programs, but retain the responsibility for managing programs, reporting achievement to the Curriculum Council and maintaining a record of learning for all students.

An overview of the WACE requirements is provided at the end of this section. For a comprehensive list of requirements see page 43.

Planning curriculum pathways for all students

Schools are catering for students who are university-bound, those who have a specific vocation in mind involving further education and training, those who are planning to enter the workforce on leaving school and those who have special requirements or disabilities.

The State Government has increased the school leaving age to 17 from 2008. As a result, the number of students staying on to complete Year 12 will increase. Education and training courses and programs are available to provide all young people with the opportunity to develop knowledge, understanding and skills about themselves, their community and the broader world in which they live. All contribute to the Western Australian Certificate of Education with all students receiving a statement of results at the end of Year 12.

When planning pathways in senior secondary school, schools can consider a mixture of courses, subjects, vocational education and training and endorsed programs to cater for students' interests and different rates of learning and motivation.

Courses

All courses are divided into stage units, each having a syllabus. Students start with units appropriate to their stage of development.

Typically:

- university-bound students would study a program of stage 2 and stage 3 units over their senior secondary years. In their final year, most of the units would be at stage 3.
- students who may be headed to TAFE and further education and training or the workforce would take stage 1 units or a mixture of stage 1 and 2 units in Year 11 and 12.
- students with special needs study preliminary stage units and possibly some stage 1 units. See section 2 for details.

See pages 5 and Appendix 1 for more details about the course implementation timeline.

Subjects

As the Western Australian senior school reform is implemented, courses will replace existing TEE and wholly school assessed subjects. See section 2 for details.

Endorsed programs

Endorsed programs provide areas of learning not covered by the courses and can contribute up to 50 percent of a student's WACE requirements. Programs can be delivered in a variety of settings by community organisations, schools, universities, training organisations and workplaces.

There are five categories of endorsed programs.

Workplace learning	Work-based learning, in a real or simulated workplace, resulting in students working towards achievement of a Curriculum Council employability skills list and/or VET units of competency.
VET stand alone	Non-integrated vocational education and training resulting in the achievement of a full or partial qualification from Australian Qualifications Framework.
University	Successful completion of a university unit for which students receive an academic transcript.
Community organisation	A structured program resulting in the achievement of a quality-assured award or certificate.
Personal development	A program to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes for the achievement of personal goals, civic responsibility and/or improved health and fitness, which requires students to draw together a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate learning.

Vocational education and training (VET)

Vocational education and training in schools engages students in work-related learning built on strategic partnerships between schools, business, industry and the wider community. VET should be undertaken as part of the WACE and its completion by the student provides credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework, providing a broad range of post-school options and pathways. See section 4 for details.

Community service

To be awarded a WACE from 2009, all students will need to have completed 20 hours of community service. Community service supports the development of leadership skills, social responsibility and citizenship. This requirement can be completed over more than one year.

Guidelines for community service are available at

http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/Policy/WACE_Requirements/Community_Service_Program/

Learning and teaching

The following principles provide guidance for teachers in developing learning and teaching programs.

Opportunity to learn

Learning experiences should enable students to observe and practise the expectations of the relevant subject, course or program.

Connection and challenge

Students should be provided with opportunities to connect their existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and challenging their current ways of thinking with their new experiences.

Action and reflection

Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own thinking processes, development of ideas, evaluation and problem-solving.

Motivation and purpose

Learning contexts should be meaningful and relate to issues that are relevant to students' lives and cultures. They should be encouraged to develop their creativity and be provided with opportunities to set their own goals and negotiate the nature of their learning activities.

Inclusivity and difference

There should be provision of flexible learning contexts through which course and unit content can be taught and learnt, along with a diversity of learning experiences which recognise that students learn in different ways.

Independence and collaboration

Students should experience opportunities for both individual and collaborative learning.

Supportive environment

Classroom policies and practices should be designed to foster students' belief that they can be successful learners and to support the development of a confident approach to learning and a desire to do well.

School assessment

Student achievement is recorded in grades A–E for each subject/course unit completed. Marks out of 100 will also be awarded to exam candidates who complete a TEE subject or stage 2 and/or stage 3 units in their final year of school. For preliminary units, student progress will be recorded as having completed or not completed the unit requirements.

VET assessment is competency-based and specific requirements are outlined in industry training packages.

Assessment of endorsed programs is based on the requirements of each program.

Examinations

New courses

For 2008 only, most examinations will assess stage 2 and 3 units in a single combined examination. Engineering Studies will have separate examinations for stage 2 and stage 3 units in 2008, but the student results from these will be placed on a single scale (mark out of 100) based on common questions in these different examinations. The main purpose of examinations is for university selection. The examinations are not compulsory.

From 2009, there will be separate examinations for stage 2 and stage 3 units. Some VET course examinations will be introduced and be available for students to take in 2010. Examinations for students enrolled in stage 2 or 3 units will be compulsory, unless exempt.

See Appendix 1 for the examination timeline.

E code subjects

Tertiary entrance examinations in E code subjects will continue until replaced by a corresponding course.

See Section 7 for full examination details.

Table 1: Overview of WACE requirements 2008-2015

	2008	2009	2010-2015
Subject/ course/ endorsed program completion	Complete at least 10 full-year (or equivalent) subjects Up to 50 per cent can be endorsed programs A single course unit equivalent will count as a half-subject equivalent	Complete at least 10 full-year (or equivalent) subjects Up to 50 per cent can be endorsed programs A single course unit equivalent will count as a half-subject equivalent. For every six course units at least one two-unit combination must be included	Complete at least 20 units, including at least three two-unit combinations Up to 50 per cent can be endorsed programs Completion of a full-year D or E code subject will equate to two course units
Subject/ course/ endorsed program achievement	Achieve an average of C grade or better in at least eight full-year (or equivalent) subjects At least four of these subjects must be at Year 12 level (E code). Course units completed during the final year of senior secondary schooling can be counted towards the four subjects at Year 12 level (E code) Up to three subject equivalents can be endorsed programs	Achieve an average of C grade or better in at least eight full-year (or equivalent) subjects At least four of these subjects must be at Year 12 level (E code). Course units completed during the final year of senior secondary schooling can be counted towards the four subjects at Year 12 level (E code) Up to three subject equivalents can be endorsed programs Achievement of an industry specific VET course unit equates to a C grade	Achieve an average of a C grade or better across 10 course units from at least five courses/subject equivalents (at least three two-unit combinations must be included) Achievement of an industry specific VET course unit equates to a C grade Up to 10 unit equivalents of endorsed programs can be included to reduce this load to six course units from three courses (endorsed programs do not count toward the C grade average)
English language competence	Complete two units, studied in the final year of schooling, from an English course (or E code subject equivalent) Meet the language competence standard*, as defined by work samples or pass the English language competency test	Complete four units from an English course (two units must be studied in the final year of schooling). Meet the language competence standard*, as defined by work samples or pass the English language competency test	Complete four units from an English course (two units must be studied in the final year of schooling) Meet the language competence standard*, as defined by work samples or pass the English language competency test
Breadth of study	None	Under review**	Under review**
Community service	Not applicable	Complete 20 hours of community service	Complete 20 hours of community service
Examination	<i>WACE courses</i> : optional exam covering units 2A-3B. <i>TEE subjects</i> : optional exam	<i>WACE courses</i> : all students in their final year who are enrolled in stage 2 or 3 units sit the exam (unless exempt). <i>TEE subjects</i> : optional exam	<i>WACE courses</i> : All students in their final year who are enrolled in stage 2 or 3 units sit the exam (unless exempt)

*For advice about the English language competence standard, please refer to the section 'WACE points of clarification'.

**Schools will be notified in March.

More detailed information about the requirements is available in Section 8.