

Understanding the WACE and choices for Year 11 and 12

Information for parents and carers

Students come from diverse backgrounds and have different needs and aspirations. They may be interested in university study, have a specific vocation in mind that will involve further education and training, or intend to enter the workforce after leaving school. For this reason, Western Australia offers a wide range of options for students in Years 11 and 12 with courses that provide multiple pathways to university, training and employment.

The WASSA

All students receive a Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA) when they complete Year 12. The WASSA formally records a student's achievement in every course, qualification and program completed in senior secondary schooling.

The WACE

The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) is a senior school certificate recognised nationally in the Australian Qualifications Framework. The WACE is awarded to students who have successfully completed 2 years of senior secondary schooling and have achieved the required standards. The WACE is recognised by universities, other tertiary training providers and industry.

To achieve a WACE, students must:

- complete a minimum of 20 units, or equivalent including:
 - ten Year 12 units, or the equivalent
 - four units from an English learning area
 - one pair of Year 12 units from each of Lisa A (arts/languages/social sciences) and List B (mathematics/science/technology).
- achieve at least 14 C grades or higher in Years 11 and 12, including at least 6 C grades (or equivalent) in Year 12.
- Completion of:
 - at least four Year 12 ATAR courses, or
 - at least five Year 12 General courses (or a combination of General and up to three Year 12 ATAR courses) or equivalent, or
 - a Certificate II (or higher) VET qualification in combination with ATAR, General or Foundation courses.
- Demonstration of the minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.

Understanding Year 11 and 12 courses

In Year 11 and 12, students can choose from a range of course and program types, including ATAR, General, Foundation, Preliminary, Endorsed Programs and VET qualifications, which can lead to the WACE.

ATAR

ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) courses are:

- designed for students who are aiming to go to university, which is why they have a final externally set examination at the end of Year 12.

General

General courses are:

- designed for students who are typically aiming to enter further vocational training or to enter the workforce after they leave school. Students may be able to use some General courses as part of an alternative pathway entry to some university courses.
- not examined; however, in Year 12 students sit an assessment worth 15%, known as externally set tasks (ESTs) to ensure marking by teachers is fair across the state.

Foundation

Foundation courses are:

- designed for students who have not demonstrated the minimum standard for literacy and/or numeracy before Year 11 and are likely to need significant support to do so before the end of Year 12.
- not examined; however, in Year 12 students sit an assessment, known as externally set tasks (ESTs) to ensure marking by teachers is fair across the state.

Preliminary

Preliminary courses are:

- designed for students who have been identified as having a learning difficulty and/or an intellectual disability who are unable to progress directly to training from school and:
 - cannot access the ATAR, General or Foundation course content with adjustment and/or disability provisions
 - require modified and/or independent education plans
 - have been identified as having a recognised disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and meet the above criteria.

Endorsed Programs

- Offer learning through activities not covered by WACE courses
- Can be delivered as part of the school curriculum, as extra-curricular activities, or offered by community organisation or private providers.
- Examples include community service, cadets and workplace learning.

VET qualifications

- Allow students to access nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) to build skills and knowledge for the workplace.
- Students may use VET qualifications to count towards the WACE as unit equivalents.

Find out more

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is responsible for Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum, assessment, standards and reporting for all Western Australian schools.

Access their website:

- <https://parent.scsa.wa.edu.au/what-will-my-child-learn>
- <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/certification/wace>