

SECTION 7: WACE EXAMINATIONS

7.1 Principles

WACE examinations are conducted for 51 WACE courses. Separate examinations are conducted at Stage 2 (not compulsory) and Stage 3.

Principles of the WACE examinations

Examinations must be:	
Valid	The WACE examination is based on a representative sampling of the course syllabus. The distribution of examination marks provides a valid and reliable ranking of candidate achievement in the course, as well as a high degree of discrimination for the purpose of university admissions and selection of award winners.
Educative	WACE examinations provide information to students about their achievement in a course to assist them in making decisions about post-school pathways. They also provide information to teachers about course standards and assist them with curriculum planning.
Explicit	WACE examination items and marking keys are representative of course content and standards.
Fair	The number, length and complexity of WACE examination items are appropriate to the duration of the examination. The difficulty range of items is sufficiently large to enable fine discrimination among candidates. <i>The Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005</i> provides the same rights to candidates with disabilities as to other candidates. WACE examination items and the format and layout are designed to be accessible to all candidates.
Comprehensive	WACE examinations draw on a range and balance of item types suited to the course. Eighteen courses have practical components which are examined.

7.2 WACE examination framework

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority sets, administers and marks the WACE examinations.

Students who are in Year 12 and are enrolled in a pair of Stage 3 units of a course are required to sit an examination, unless exempt. In 2014 and 2015, students enrolled in a pair of Stage 2 units will be automatically enrolled in examinations for that pair of units but may opt out (see [sub-section 7.2.4](#)).

In addition to the 51 WACE courses that have compulsory WACE examinations, there are external examinations in Languages: Interstate including Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL). There are separate WACE examinations for Stage 2 and Stage 3 pairs of units except for Languages: Interstate (including CCAFL), which have Stage 3 examinations only.

For all courses except Mathematics and Mathematics: Specialist, there is one examination for Stage 2 and one for Stage 3 candidates. For Mathematics, there are two examinations at Stage 2 (2A/2B

and 2C/ 2D) and two examinations at Stage 3 (3A/3B and 3C/3D). For Mathematics: Specialist, there are two examinations at Stage 3 (3A/3B and 3C/3D). English has one examination at Stage 2 regardless of the pair of units studied (i.e. 2A/2B or 2C/2D). Each examination will assess the specific content, knowledge and skills described in the syllabus for the units studied.

There are both written and practical examinations for 18 courses.

7.2.1 The purpose of WACE examinations

Results from WACE examinations at Stage 2 and Stage 3 complement and support school assessment in the following ways:

- A student will receive a WACE course report for each Stage 2 (e.g. 2A/2B) or Stage 3 (e.g. 3A/3B) pair of units completed (provided they sit the exam and make a genuine attempt) This shows how well the student achieved in the course against the course standards and relative to other students in the pair of units studied
- Teachers will receive diagnostic feedback from the WACE examinations to help them review and refine their teaching.
- Employers and training organisations will have access to meaningful and comparable data to help them recruit young people. The examinations guide the development and refinement of course standards. This process determines the boundaries between the achievement bands allowing combined marks to be converted to WACE course scores (see [sub-section 4.6.2](#)).

WACE examination results:

- are used to statistically moderate school marks
- assist in the selection of students for Authority exhibitions and awards
- support public confidence in senior secondary schooling, and
- contribute to a score that is used to rank students for university entry – for school candidates this score is based on a 50:50 combination of the standardised examination mark and the standardised moderated school mark; for private candidates, this score is based solely on the examination mark (see [sub-section 4.6](#)).

7.2.2 Specifications

WACE examination specifications:

- A WACE examination may have written and practical components.
- A written examination comprises a range of item types, typically multiple-choice, short answer and extended answer (the written examination could also include an aural or video presentation).
- Practical examinations fall into four categories: an interview, a performance, a portfolio submission or a production.
- Written examinations will not exceed three hours working time (plus 10 minutes reading time).
- Each WACE examination is designed to ensure a high level of reliability and validity.
- The range of difficulties of the items used in a WACE examination is sufficiently large to enable fine discrimination of candidates.
- Each WACE examination has a suitable balance of content across all areas and across the pair of units.
- WACE examinations are constructed so that most candidates can complete all of the required items in the allocated time.
- WACE examinations use information and communications technology (ICT) where appropriate.



7.2.3 Inclusivity standards for WACE examinations

Items are concise and written in Standard Australian English (excepting the non-English components of Language examinations). Complex terminology is not used unless it is relevant to the course. Language avoids stereotypes, and the context or content of items is not dependent on particular socio-economic situations, geographic locations or learning styles. Items are written in language that does not exclude certain groups of candidates and the terms used have no bias.

WACE examinations that provide candidates with a selection of alternative questions to answer are designed to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged. The questions are designed and responses assessed to accommodate study options within a stage or defined contexts in which a unit was studied.

Candidates with disabilities who cannot demonstrate achievement under standard examination conditions should be encouraged to apply for special arrangements to be made for them (see [subsection 7.4.1](#) and the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Senior_Secondary/WACE_Examinations/Special_Provisions). Special arrangements are available for written and practical examinations. The arrangements made are in accordance with the provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. Special examination arrangements are implemented by the Authority, using explicit criteria and procedures. All decisions are transparent and subject to appeal. Application forms can be downloaded from the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms.

7.2.4 Examination candidates

Each course has two separate written examinations – one for students enrolled in Stage 2 units and one for students enrolled in Stage 3 units (except Mathematics and Mathematics: Specialist, which have examinations for each pair of units e.g. Mathematics: Specialist 3A/3B and Mathematics: Specialist 3C/3D). Students can sit only one examination in a course because the Stage 2 and Stage 3 examinations for a course are held at the same time.

Year 12 students who are enrolled in a pair of Stage 3 units of a course in 2014 are required to sit a WACE examination in that course, unless exempt. If they do not sit, or do not make a genuine attempt in this WACE examination, the grades for the pair of units completed in that year will not contribute to the calculation of the C grade average requirement, but they will still count in the breadth-and-depth requirement.

At the time of enrolling in a pair of Stage 2 or Stage 3 course units, Year 12 students are automatically enrolled to sit the WACE examination in that stage of the course. In 2014 and 2015, examinations for Stage 2 unit pairs in Year 12 will be optional. Students who opt out of Stage 2 examinations will not be able to use the achievement in those courses in the calculation of an ATAR. If students do not opt out of a Stage 2 examination and do not sit, or do not make a genuine attempt in this WACE examination, the grades for the pair of units completed in that year will not contribute to the calculation of the C grade average requirement, but they will still count in the breadth-and-depth requirement.

Schools will need to indicate in their enrolment file (uploaded onto SIRS) if a student is opting out of sitting one or more Stage 2 examinations.

In the event that a student is enrolled in two pairs of units in the same course, they are automatically enrolled to sit the WACE examination for the higher stage. Students who intend to sit the Stage 2 WACE examination (instead of Stage 3) or in the case of Mathematics courses, intend to sit the examination of a 'lower' pair of course units (e.g. 3A/3B instead of 3C/3D), must contact the Authority in writing to request the change in examination enrolment.

WACE examinations are not held for Stage 1 units and/or Preliminary (P) Stage units. Any student may enrol to sit a Stage 2 or Stage 3 examination as a private candidate (see [sub-section 7.2.7](#)).

Each enrolled examination candidate receives a personalised WACE written examination timetable. This timetable provides information about the time, date and location of each written examination in which they are enrolled. The timetable is used by candidates as proof of identification when they sit examinations.

7.2.5 Students completing Year 12 over more than one year

Some students may require more than two years to achieve the WACE. Typically, these students, in effect, split a Year 12 program over two years. Any such students who are enrolled in a pair of Stage 3 course units must sit the WACE examination in that course in the year they are exiting the course, unless exempt. For example, a Year 12 student studying English Stage 3, Economics Stage 3 and Physical Education Studies Stage 2 in their first year of Year 12 and then Chemistry Stage 3, Mathematics 3A/3B and Physical Education Studies Stage 3 the following year, would sit the English and Economics examinations in the first year and the Chemistry, Mathematics and Physical Education Studies Stage 3 examinations in the second year. In the student's first year of Year 12, the school will need to indicate on this student's enrolment file (uploaded into SIRS) that this student is opting out of sitting the Physical Education Studies Stage 2 examination. This is because all Year 12 students enrolled in a pair of Stage 2 or Stage 3 course units are automatically enrolled into the WACE examination for that course/stage. In 2014 and 2015, sitting Stage 2 examinations is optional.

7.2.6 Year 11 students sitting WACE examinations

WACE examinations are designed for Year 12 students. Year 11 students can apply to the Authority to sit a WACE examination in a course when they are exiting a course (i.e. do not intend to study that course when in Year 12). Students who are permitted to sit the WACE examination in Year 11 cannot sit the WACE examination in the same course when they are in Year 12. If a student is in Year 12 and wishes to re-sit the examination due to special circumstances, then the student may apply in writing to the chief executive officer of the Authority. Applicants should outline their reasons for the application.

If a school is unable to assess and rank a Year 11 student in a group of six or more WACE examination candidates, then the student must sit the examination as a 'private candidate' (no fee is applicable).

Applications for students not in Year 12 to sit WACE examinations must be made using the form available on the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms. Applications must be received at the Authority by the date shown in the *WACE Activities Schedule*.



Year 11 students can enrol to sit a WACE examination as private candidates provided they will not qualify to be awarded a school mark out of 100 for a pair of Stage 2 or Stage 3 units in that course by the time they sit the examination.

7.2.7 Private candidates

An individual may enrol to sit a WACE examination for a course/stage as a private candidate in the event that the:

- school does not offer the course at the required stage, **or**
- individual is unable to study the pair of course units at a school because of timetabling clashes/restrictions, **or**
- individual is seeking entry to university as a mature-age applicant, **or**
- individual has been unable to complete the full study load of the pair of course units (this could be due to their transferring after Term 1 from another school where the course units were not offered), **or**
- individual has enrolled in a course only at Stage 1, **or**
- individual, for health reasons, has not participated in an education program for at least one term during the year.

A candidate enrolled to sit at least three WACE courses may also enrol as a private candidate to sit the external examination in an Interstate Languages course (see [Appendix 2](#)).

A student cannot enrol as private candidate if they have attended a school (or another WACE provider) **and** have been eligible to be awarded a mark out of 100 in the year of enrolment in the examination for a pair of units in that stage of the course.

A student may not enrol in an external examination for Languages: Interstate (including CCAFL) as a private candidate at the same time as being enrolled in that course with the State that hosts the language.

A private candidate is responsible for all costs associated with them sitting the practical component of the examination and sickness and misadventure provisions available to other candidates (see [sub-section 7.4.2](#)) do not apply.

7.2.8 Mature-age candidates

Candidates who are seeking mature-age entry into university may repeat a WACE examination in a course.

7.2.9 Exemptions from sitting WACE examinations

Year 12 students studying vocational education and training (VET)

Year 12 students who are enrolled to complete, in the current year, at least 220 nominal hours of VET (from related industry areas) **and** are enrolled in three or fewer examinable Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 pairs of units are eligible to apply for an exemption from sitting the Stage 3 WACE examinations. In 2014 and 2015, Stage 2 examinations are optional (see [sub-section 7.2.4](#)).

Students are eligible to apply for an exemption from sitting Stage 3 WACE examinations if they are enrolled in a Pre-Apprenticeship in School (PAiS), Aboriginal School Based

Traineeship/Apprenticeship or School Based Traineeship/Apprenticeship in Year 12 **and** are enrolled in three or fewer examinable Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 pairs of units.

Nominal hours successfully completed in previous years do not contribute to the 220 nominal hours required for an exemption in Year 12 in the current year.

Students may sit a WACE examination even though they qualify for an exemption or have the option to opt out.

An application for exemption from sitting WACE examinations must be submitted to the Authority for approval.

Schools seeking an exemption for their students are required to apply in SIRS. Schools will be required to enter details relating to authorisation from the student and parent/guardian to not sit the examinations and whether the student is undertaking a school-based apprenticeship/traineeship.

To assist schools to collect this information, the *Exemption from sitting the 2014 WACE examinations – VET* form is available on the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms. This form does not need to be submitted to the Authority but must be kept by the school. The Authority may conduct checks on the evidence of parent/guardian authorisation or other details indicated on the form. The form should be retained by the school until all data have been accepted and verified for printing of the statement of results issued by the Authority.

Schools will be notified, via an email in SIRS, of the student exemption application outcome immediately after the information is entered into SIRS.

If a student has been granted an exemption but wishes to sit one or more of his/her examinations, then a copy of the form will need to be provided to the Authority. This will enable the specific courses for which the student wishes to sit the examination to be entered into SIRS.

Applications must be completed by the date shown in the *WACE Activities Schedule*. After this date, the database will be locked and late applications and amendments will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Year 12 students enrolled in six or more WACE examinations

Year 12 students typically sit five WACE examinations. Year 12 school students who are enrolled in six or more pairs of Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 course units as a school candidate and who do not wish to sit the WACE examination in their sixth and, where applicable, seventh examination can apply for an exemption.

This exemption does not enable students to randomly select, at the time of sitting the examination, which one/s they will attend.

In 2014 and 2015, Stage 2 WACE examinations are optional and students can elect to not sit one or more Stage 2 examinations (see [sub-section 7.2.4](#)).

Students enrolled in a combination of six or more Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 WACE examinations can apply for an exemption from sitting the additional Stage 3 examination/s provided that, if the



exemption was accepted, the total number of their Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 WACE examinations is still at least five. Should students subsequently opt out of their Stage 2 examination(s), and this reduces the total number of exams to be sat to four or fewer, students will be automatically re-enrolled in the Stage 3 examination(s).

Students can apply for an examination exemption by completing the *Exemption from sitting for 2015 (2015) WACE examinations – six or more examinations* application form. A copy of the form can be downloaded from the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms.

The school, the parent/guardian and the student must all sign the application form.

The Authority must receive the application form by the date shown in the *WACE Activities Schedule*.

A candidate is not exempt until the application has been approved by the Authority.

7.2.10 Genuine attempt in a WACE examination

Students who are enrolled to sit a WACE examination must make a genuine attempt.

A student is deemed to have not made a genuine attempt at an examination if he or she:

- has not had a sickness/misadventure claim for the examination approved, **and**
- is identified as an anomalous performer, **and**
- is identified, by the examination markers, as having not made a genuine attempt or not attempted each component of the examination.

A student who should sit a WACE examination and chooses to not do so, or chooses to not make a genuine attempt in the examination, will not get a WACE course report or a WACE course score recorded on the statement of results. Nor will the grades for those units be counted in the determination of the C grade average for the WACE.

A student who has been identified as having not made a genuine attempt in an examination will receive a letter providing them with the opportunity to appeal the decision.

7.3 WACE examination development

The relevant course advisory committee develops an examination design brief in accordance with the framework (see [sub-section 7.2](#)) for WACE examinations. The design brief for each examination is published in the syllabus for the course.

In this context, 'WACE examination' refers to the examination paper, stimulus materials, practical examination materials, portfolio specifications, grid of content and marking keys.

Design briefs include the:

- length of the examination
- examination structure
- permitted materials.

When a new course is introduced, or if there is major change to an existing course, a sample examination paper (or part of it) and marking key are produced and circulated to schools approximately 18 months before the first examination of that course.

WACE examination groups

A WACE examination group will be appointed to take responsibility for setting the WACE examinations for a course, in accordance with the examination design brief for that course. This involves the construction of a fair examination that tests what is learned in the course and which discriminates effectively amongst candidates.

The examining group for a course develops all necessary examination materials including the written papers, and, where applicable, marking keys, grids of content that map the examinations to the syllabus, audio-visual and audio recordings, recording scripts, translations of reading and listening passages and acknowledgements.

Each examining group typically consists of two panels (one panel for each stage). The examining group responds to advice from the Authority's curriculum specialist on the examination material during the development process.

The composition of the examining group takes into account any contexts specified in a course, the size of the candidature, the pool of expertise and whether one or both stages are being examined. Where possible, the group includes representatives from the school sector/systems, the university sector and, where appropriate, the training sector.

Examining group members are offered a contract for one year. To ensure continuity and consistency, examining group members with previous successful tenure may be offered a contract in a subsequent year. The Authority recognises the changing demands within educational institutions and the need for flexibility.

The following positions are advertised and filled through a merit-based selection process.

Chief examiner

The role of the chief examiner is to lead the development of the examination materials and to chair the examining panel for either the Stage 2 or Stage 3 WACE examination in a particular course. The chief examiner is responsible for writing a report on the examination after all student work has been marked.

Examiner

Typically, there are at least two examiners who work with the chief examiner to develop the examination materials for each of the Stage 2 and Stage 3 WACE examinations.

Independent reviewer

The role of the independent reviewer is to review the examination materials for a particular course after they have been drafted by the examining group and before they are submitted to the Authority.

Final checker

The role of the final checker is to check the complete set of examination materials for a particular course, act as a trial candidate for the examination and provide feedback to the Authority. The work



of the examining group is supported by the Authority through its quality-assurance procedures (see [sub-section 7.3.2](#) for details).

7.3.1 Selection criteria for members of an examination group

Applications are invited by email and in the eCircular for membership of an examination group. To be successful, an applicant is expected to demonstrate:

- appropriate qualifications and experience as teachers of senior secondary students or first-year tertiary students in the relevant course (in general, a minimum of five years of recent teaching experience is considered necessary)
- high-level professional standing within the teaching community demonstrated, for example, through scholarship in the area to be examined, outstanding teaching or notable contribution to the relevant professional association
- a detailed knowledge of the relevant syllabus
- high-level written and oral communication skills
- the capacity to apply the Authority's principles for the development of standards-referenced examinations and marking keys
- the capacity to work in a team to deliver examination materials to specified deadlines.

In any given year, a person is not eligible for membership of an examining group if they:

- are teaching, coaching or tutoring (or become involved in teaching, coaching, or tutoring) in the stage of the course for which the panel has responsibility, **or**
- have an immediate family member who is a candidate or who is teaching, coaching or tutoring in the stage of the course for which the panel has responsibility ('immediate family' includes grandparents, siblings, children, grandchildren, spouses, former spouses and any person living with the examination group member), **or**
- have a commercial interest which relates to the course.

7.3.2 Quality assurance and security of WACE examinations

The Authority implements procedures for assuring the quality and security of WACE examinations. The annual process for assuring the quality of examinations involves a range of experts checking different aspects of the examination materials. The Authority retains the right to make the final editorial changes.

The Authority's allocated principal consultant is responsible for managing the development of examination materials and works closely with all involved parties throughout the development and production of the examination materials.

All persons involved in writing, reviewing, editing and checking of examination materials must maintain absolute confidentiality. They must not discuss the proposed or actual content of the examination paper with anyone other than examination panel members and appropriate officers of the Authority.

Authority officers are ineligible to be involved in this process if they are teaching, coaching or tutoring candidates in the course, or have an immediate family member who is a candidate or have a commercial interest related to the course being examined.

7.4 Conduct and administration of WACE examinations

Practical examinations begin during the first week of the Term 3 holidays and continue into the beginning of Term 4 (including weekends and public holidays). Written examinations are conducted over a period of 20 working days and start on the first working day in November. The dates for the 2014 and 2015 written examinations are available on the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Senior_Secondary/WACE_Examinations/Examination_Timetables.

The WACE examination timetable will include two sessions per day. It is published before the end of July after enrolments are finalised. The timetable is circulated to candidates. When it is absolutely necessary, a third examination session in a day will be set for low candidature examinations.

The Authority establishes examination centres state-wide and overseas. Each course examination will be conducted by trained supervisors at the same time and under uniform conditions regardless of the geographic location of the examination centre. If a school elects to be an examination centre, it selects the room in which the examination will be held. The Authority prefers these rooms to be air-conditioned and surrounded by an area which can be kept quiet. This will provide students with the most suitable conditions to enable their best performance.

The Authority also implements procedures to assure the quality of the conduct of the examinations at each centre. The rules for the conduct of examinations are detailed below and published in the *Year 12 Information Handbook*, which is available to all students and teachers in May as an ebook at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Publications/year12_information_handbook. See also [subsection 7.3.2](#).

Supervisors are selected by the Authority and conduct the examinations in accordance with instructions provided by the Authority in the *Chief Supervisor's Handbook*. The instructions relate to examination centre preparation, procedures and rules, approved equipment, examination administration and the conduct of sound recordings. If a candidate does not follow the examination rules, the behaviour is treated as a breach of the rules, and appropriate sanctions are determined by a specially appointed committee.

Candidates are permitted to bring into the examination stationery items such as pens, pencils, erasers, correction fluid/tape, rulers and sharpeners. Candidates are advised to not use Frixion (erasable) pens because the ink disappears when exposed to high temperatures. In certain examinations, candidates are permitted to use special materials such as dictionaries or calculators. Items such as electronic dictionaries are not allowed in examinations. Details are set out in the *Year 12 Information Handbook*.

Unacceptable behaviour

Any activity that allows one candidate to have an unfair advantage over other candidates is deemed to be unacceptable.

All work submitted for assessment (including practical examinations) must be the student's own work. If it incorporates material that is not your own work, this material must be acknowledged appropriately. Plagiarism could lead to an examination paper or practical mark being cancelled or having an examination mark significantly lowered.



Candidates should obey any instructions regarding dress, conduct, smoking etc. that apply in the school or centre to which they have been allocated for the examination. School authorities have the right to ask any candidate who does not abide by these rules to leave the premises.

Breach of examination (malpractice)

It is the responsibility of all candidates to ensure that they understand all instructions relating to the examinations. Breaches of examination rules and maximum penalties that might apply include but are not limited to:

- (i) **Impersonation of a candidate:** cancellation of all the candidate's practical and/or written raw examination marks, exclusion from remaining examinations in that year, and the matter reported to the police.
- (ii) **Collusion between candidates:** cancellation of that practical and/or written raw examination marks of each of those candidates involved, together with an inspection of prior papers/recordings in any common examination for evidence of collusion.
- (iii) **Possession or knowledge of examination questions before an examination:** cancellation of all the candidate's practical and/or written raw examination marks. The matter will be reported to the police.
- (iv) **Possession of unauthorised materials during the examination:** cancellation of part or all of the practical and/or written raw examination marks where unauthorised materials are considered to be relevant to the course being examined (whether or not actual use is established). Possession of mobile technologies (e.g. mobile phone, iPod) and/or calculator in an examination for which it is not approved will result in the cancellation of all or part of the candidate's practical and/or written raw examination marks.
- (v) **Markings on authorised materials in the examination room:** cancellation of part or all of the practical and/or written raw examination mark where markings in tables, data books or dictionaries etc. are considered to be relevant to the course being examined (whether or not actual use is established).
- (vi) **Removal of examination materials:** unauthorised removal of examination materials from the examination room will result in cancellation of the part(s) of the candidate's practical and/or written raw examination mark being removed and the matter will be reported to the police.
- (vii) **Examination room misbehaviour:** blatant disregard of examination rules or instructions will result in removal of the candidate from the examination room.
- (viii) **Failure to follow examination instructions:** cancellation of part or all of the candidate's practical and/or written raw examination mark where the candidate's failure to follow the instructions is considered to have given the candidate an advantage over the other candidates.
- (ix) **False declarations:** Cancellation of part or all of the practical and/or written examination mark where the candidate falsely declares that the work presented for external assessment is their own and/or that it conforms to the specifications of the course.

The examination centre chief supervisor will report breaches of examination rules to the Manager, Examinations Logistics at the Authority.

Candidates have the right of appeal against a penalty being imposed on the following grounds:

- that a breach of examination rules did not occur, or
- that the Authority procedures used to determine if a breach occurred were inappropriate.

Such an appeal must be lodged at the Authority within eight (8) calendar days of the despatch date of the penalty notification.

7.4.1 Special provisions

The Authority recognises that individual students, under circumstances outlined in the special provisions policy, may need special external assessment arrangements to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings within certain courses. The underlying principle of special provisions is to ensure that the most appropriate, fair and reasonable arrangements and options are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities where their external assessment is affected by illness, impairment or personal circumstances. Special provisions are available for practical and written examinations.

Students who are eligible for special provisions are not exempt from meeting the requirements for a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), or from being assessed in a course.

In considering the eligibility for special provisions, the Authority is mindful of the need to balance the competing demands of allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings with the need to preserve the academic integrity of the assessment process.

There are two types of special provisions for the WACE examinations:

- Special examination arrangements – Candidates who have a temporary or permanent disability, illness and/or specific learning disability that could disadvantage them in timed assessments may apply to sit an examination under special conditions. Application is made prior to the examinations.
- Special provisions for sickness and misadventure – Candidates who suffer from a temporary sickness, non-permanent disability or an unforeseen event close to or during the examinations which they believe may have resulted in performance below expectations or non-attendance in particular examinations are given the opportunity to apply for assessment consideration. Application is made immediately after the examinations.

Specific eligibility criteria apply for each form of special provision.

For more details see [sub-section 7.4.2](#) and the Authority website at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Senior_Secondary/WACE_Examinations/Special_Provisions.

7.4.2 Special provisions for sickness and misadventure

The Authority implements procedures to compensate for adverse circumstances which are not the fault of candidates when those circumstances can be shown to have affected their WACE examination achievements.

If, at the start of Term 3, an examination candidate has an injury or illness that will affect participation in the standard practical examination of any course, the candidate may ask the school to apply for special arrangements that will allow the examination to be undertaken in an alternative format. The application form is available on the Authority website at

http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms.

In the event of temporary sickness, non-permanent disability, or an unforeseen event occurring during or just before an examination, students may apply for special consideration to be given to their examination marks if they believe their performances may have been affected. In such cases, the sickness/misadventure form must be completed and submitted to the Authority by the date



specified in the *WACE Activities Schedule*. This form will be available at the examination centre and on the Authority website at

http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms.

The Sickness/Misadventure Committee, which includes a medical practitioner, assesses each claim. For claims that are approved, candidates are awarded either a derived or actual examination mark, whichever is the higher. These provisions are designed to apply to candidates who perform below expectations because of sickness or misadventure. All sickness/misadventure decisions are transparent and open to appeal by the candidate.

These provisions do not apply to private candidates.

7.4.3 Conduct of practical examinations

Several courses that contain a significant performance or production component have a practical examination specified in the examination details section of the syllabus. Practical examinations can take the form of an interview, a performance, a portfolio or a production. Oral and performance examinations may be recorded.

The following principles apply in the conduct of practical examinations:

- Candidates and/or their portfolios are identified only by their randomly allocated student number (ensure all other identifying references are removed/masked)
- The authenticity of candidates' work must be guaranteed. In the case of the submission of work such as a portfolio, that guarantee will include verification that:
 - the main development of the work has taken place in school time
 - work completed away from the school was regularly monitored by the teacher
 - each student has signed a statement, witnessed by the supervising teacher and the principal, that the work is their own work
 - under no circumstances has any other person worked directly on any part of a student's work that is submitted.
- For courses with practical components where students are required to submit work, records of the thinking and working practices that led to the development of a candidate's submitted work have been kept by the school, (the Authority may, during or after the examination, examine the documentation to substantiate the authenticity of a candidate's submitted work)
- Markers participate in trial marking to ensure a consistent understanding of the standards
- The chief marker ensures marking consistency through the regular checking of marks
- Marking of practical examinations occurs in central locations which are convenient for candidates and markers but enable the anonymity of the candidate and the candidate's school to be preserved.

7.4.4 Marking of written and practical examinations

Marking keys contain explicit statements about what the examining group expects of candidates when they respond to particular examination items. They are provided by the examining group as provisional documents, to be refined or modified as necessary in the light of sample marking and discussion between the chief examiner and the chief marker.

Double-marking of each examination answer/response (written, oral, performance, portfolio or production) is carried out independently. Statistical analysis is used to monitor the standards and consistency of marking and to provide chief examiners with feedback. When differences between the marks of the first and second markers, either for an item, section or the whole paper, are outside an acceptable range (as determined by the chief examiner), then a reconciliation of marks is undertaken.

Before the finalisation of examination marks, chief examiners and chief markers are provided with reports for them to confirm the integrity of the marks. Reports include:

- multiple-choice analysis
- item analysis (giving statistics on the functioning of each item in the examination)
- marking statistics (showing atypical marking).

Once all scripts have been marked, a standard-setting exercise is undertaken for Stage 2 and Stage 3 of each WACE course. This process determines the boundaries between the achievement bands allowing combined marks to be converted to WACE course scores (see [sub-section 4.6.2](#)).

Candidates are able to request a results check (see [sub-section 7.4.8](#)) after the results have been published, and before the second round of university offers.

7.4.5 Plagiarism

Markers who suspect plagiarism must alert the chief marker. The chief marker will investigate the allegation. If the chief marker confirms the allegation, the marker and/or chief marker must then complete a breach of examination rules form. This completed form, together with the associated research, must be submitted to the Manager, Examination Logistics.

Markers will **not** adjust marks according to alleged plagiarism. Markers are required to assess candidate's work in light of the marking key. The breach of the examination rules committee will determine if the work has been plagiarised and the penalty. The penalty could be cancellation of part or all of the practical examination marks.

The rules for the conduct of examinations are published in [sub-section 7.4](#).

7.4.6 Examination feedback and evaluation

WACE examinations are evaluated through a variety of statistical reports and through teacher feedback. The evaluation reports are made available on the Authority website. The feedback may indicate to the Authority the need to convene a teacher/examiner forum. Teacher/examiner forums, chaired by Authority officers, are held in February of the year following the examinations. They are held only for those examinations that require discussion with teachers. These forums provide the opportunity for teachers to seek explanations from the examination group about specific issues.



Teachers can provide feedback on a WACE examination to Authority officers once examinations have begun. Feedback is provided to the examination group developing the materials for examinations in the following year.

7.4.7 Examination reports

The chief examiner compiles a report on the examination items. The report includes feedback from markers and comments about examination performance. These reports provide valuable information to teachers, students, course working groups and examination group members, Board members, the Authority sub-committees and staff, and new chief examiners. Reports are presented to groups, committees and schools early in Term 1 of the year following the examinations and are made available to teachers on the relevant course page on the Authority extranet.

A variety of statistical analyses is applied to assess the functioning of individual items, sections of examinations and each examination as a whole. These statistics are reported to Authority committees and are used to support the construction of the next year's examination.

7.4.8 After the examinations

Results checks

Examination results can be checked if a candidate doubts the accuracy of any result. A check is made to confirm that each question attempted has been awarded a mark and that it has been recorded correctly. This often requires the chief marker to review the marking of the script. **Neither the written script nor the practical (oral, performance, portfolio or production) will be re-marked.**

A fee of \$30 is payable for each course checked. If an error is detected, the fee will be refunded and the higher of the two marks awarded. This application form is available at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms. The last date on which applications for results checks will be accepted is Monday, 12 January 2015. If any errors are detected, the Authority will notify the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre.

Statement of raw WACE marks

To assist with analysis of examination results, the Authority will issue candidates with a statement of raw WACE marks on application. The statement will provide the marks awarded for each question or section (some questions may need to be combined) of a course. A fee per course is payable at the time of making the application. The fee is stated in the application form, which is available at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms. The form must be submitted to the Authority by the date stipulated on the form, usually in early March.

Accessing examination scripts

Candidates who sit the WACE examinations may apply for a copy of their written examination scripts. A fee per course is payable at the time of making the application. The fee is stated in the application form, which is available at http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Events_and_Forms/Application_Order_Forms. The form must be submitted before the date specified on the form.

Copies of scripts will be provided in mid-February when all of the processes connected with WACE examinations have been completed.

Examination scripts contain only the text produced by candidates during the examination (they do not show any marks). Applications received after the date specified on the form cannot be considered.

In accordance with the Authority's agreed retention and disposal schedule lodged with the State Records Office, examination materials, including scripts and recordings, are destroyed at the end of March once all processes connected with WACE examinations have been completed.

