

Retention and SACE completion factsheet

Purpose

To provide an update on SACE results with the inclusion of 2021 data

Background

Our education system aims to ensure that all young people are on a pathway towards continued success in further education, training or employment (The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration 2019).

Given this goal, it is important to describe the learning and earning pathways taken by senior school students, including the completion of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and vocational education and training (VET).

The information presented in this factsheet uses longitudinal enrolment records held by the department, combined with SACE Board data to calculate student retention and transition rates, as well as SACE completion rates.

Terms used

The terms and definitions used in this factsheet are:

- **Student enrolments**
- **Students in Flexible Learning Options (FLO)**

FLO supports young people to re-engage with learning and successfully return to school, or move to further education, training or employment

- **Year level exits**

The count of students from a year level who were not enrolled in the sequential year level in the following calendar year

- **Retention rates**

For year 8 to year 12, and for year 10 to year 12

- **Transition rates**

A measure of the customary rate of progression, that is, one year level per year (e.g. year 8 to year 9, year 9 to year 10, year 10 to year 11 and year 11 to year 12)

- **SACE completion**

For year 8 to SACE completion, and year 12 and year 13 to SACE completion

- **Administrative year level**

A code indicating the mainstream year level of the student for school administrative purposes

- **Census year level**

A code indicating the year level of the student for Census reporting purposes

- **Compulsory school age**

Children and teenagers must be in school from 6 to 16 years old. They must attend a government or non-government school

- **Compulsory education age**

Teenagers must go to school or an approved learning program until they either turn 17, or achieve their SACE or other qualification

- **Approved learning programs**

Approved learning programs are run by:

- Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- TAFE
- Registered training organisations (RTOs)

An approved learning program could be:

- Accredited courses
- Apprenticeships or traineeships
- University
- Other programs authorised by the Minister for Education (or delegate)

Notes

1. The student populations used in this factsheet are calculated using different methodologies than those used to calculate data published on data.sa.gov.au and the SACE website. As such, student numbers may not reconcile with those released publicly.
2. Student year levels in this factsheet are using the administrative year level, unless otherwise stated.
3. Measures include all students irrespective of whether they are full time or part time.
4. Enrolments reported in this factsheet include all students irrespective of age, unless otherwise stated.
5. Year 13 (year 12 plus) is for students who have already spent a year at year 12 and have chosen to undertake further study at year 12.

Findings

Student enrolments and exits

Table 1: Student enrolments (Term 1 census)

	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
2021	12 944	12 864	12 697	13 350	12 055	416

Note: Higher numbers of student enrolments are typically observed in year 11 due to year-level repeaters, part-time students, and students having moved into the department's school system from interstate, overseas or a non-government school.

Table 2: Students with a Flexible Learning Option (FLO) enrolment (Term 1 census) *

	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
2021	37	227	721	1 533	1 115	228

*Figures exclude adult re-entry students from FLO counts. Data has been sourced from the FLO enrolment census 2021. Year level is the census year level.

Table 3: Student year-level exits – The count of students without an active enrolment in the consecutive year level (Term 1 census)

	Year 8 to 9	Year 9 to 10	Year 10 to 11	Year 11 to 12
2020 to 2021	567	946	1 065	3 614

Note: Student exits may include students who have left the school system to either gain employment or further study, or students who have moved interstate, overseas or to a non-government school.

Note: The compulsory school age is typically reached in Year 10 or 11, and compulsory education age is typically reached in Year 11 or 12.

Retention rates

Table 4a: Year 8 to 12 retention (Term 1 census)

Year 8	Year 8 enrolments	Year 12	Year 12 retention count	Year 8 to 12 retention rate
2013	11 551	2017	8 821	76%
2014	11 229	2018	8 424	75%
2015	11 373	2019	8 383	74%
2016	11 286	2020	8 400	74%
2017	11 863	2021	8 922	75%

Table 4b: Year 10 to 12 retention (Term 1 census)

Year 10	Year 10 enrolments	Year 12	Year 12 retention count	Year 10 to 12 retention rate
2015	12 131	2017	9 563	79%
2016	11 967	2018	9 340	78%
2017	12 135	2019	9 294	77%
2018	11 997	2020	9 208	77%
2019	12 537	2021	9 776	78%

Note: Student exits may include students who have left the school system to either gain employment or for further study, or have left to an interstate, overseas or a non-government school.

Transition rates

Table 5: Transition rates – Student retention for consecutive years and year levels (Term 1 census)

	Year 8 to 9	Year 9 to 10	Year 10 to 11	Year 11 to 12
2016-17	95%	94%	92%	75%
2017-18	95%	93%	92%	74%
2018-19	95%	94%	91%	73%
2019-20	95%	93%	92%	72%
2020-21	96%	93%	91%	74%

SACE completion

Table 6a: Year 12 and 13 to SACE completion (Term 1 and term 3 census – distinct student count)

	Year 12 and 13 enrolments ¹	SACE completion - in same year	SACE completion rate - in same year	SACE completion - to 2021	SACE completion rate - to 2021
2017	13 774	7 722	56%	8 315	60%
2018	12 975	7 510	58%	8 036	62%
2019	12 470	7 778	62%	8 231	66%
2020	12 260	7 782	63% ³	8 112	66% ²
2021	12 430	7 999	64% ³	7 999	64% ²

Table 6b: SACE completion for year 12 and 13 students aged 17 and 18 as at 30 June in reporting year (Term 1 and term 3 census – distinct student count)

	Year 12 and 13 enrolments ¹	SACE completion count - in same year	SACE completion rate - in same year	SACE completion - to 2021	SACE completion rate - to 2021
2017	11 663	7 166	61%	7 547	65%
2018	11 109	7 008	63%	7 364	66%
2019	10 871	7 261	67%	7 574	70%
2020	10 784	7 300	68%	7 524	70% ²
2021	11 065	7 527	68%	7 527	68% ²

Table 7: Year 8 to SACE completion (Term 1 census)

Year 8	Year 8 enrolments	Reporting year	SACE completion count	Year 8 to SACE completion rate
2013	11 551	2017	6 112	53%
2014	11 229	2018	5 967	53%
2015	11 373	2019	6 298	55%
2016	11 286	2020	6 403	57%
2017	11 863	2021	6 723	57%

Note: Between 10% and 15% of the year 8 cohort will exit the government education system to enrol in an interstate, overseas or a non-government school by the start of year 12. Exit reasons for these students include gaining employment, participating in an approved learning program, participating in FLO, and unknown.

Source for all tables and figures: Department for Education Enrolment Census 2009–2021, SACE Board Enrolment Data 2014–2021, Department for Education FLO Enrolment Census 2021.

¹ Excludes students who achieved SACE in a previous year and returned (e.g. to improve their grade for tertiary admission requirements).

² Rates may increase as more students from these cohorts achieve SACE post-2021.

³ From 2020 the SACE board have provided additional data on completions for private school students who attended a government school for at least one subject. If these student completions are included, the year 12 and 13 to SACE completion rate for 2020 is 65% and 66% for 2021.