

Retention and SACE completion factsheet

Introduction

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* makes the commitment that all young people will be on a pathway towards success in further education, training or employment.

This fact sheet presents data about the learning and earning pathways taken by South Australians in government secondary schools, including how many continued their studies at school to study Year 12 and how many students completed the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Sources for all tables and figures are the Department for Education's School Enrolment Census and the SACE Board's enrolment and completions data.

Terms and definitions used in this factsheet

- **Student enrolments**

Students actively studying an approved program of studies at a government school, as at a set school census period.

- **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 enrolled in a given year level who were not enrolled in the sequential year level in the following calendar year.

- **Actual retention rates**

Actual retention tracks records for the same individual students between two points in time. The actual retention rates is calculated by taking the count of students enrolled in the public education system at one point in time and finding the proportion of these same students still enrolled at a later point in time.

Note: Actual retention rates are different from 'apparent retention rates'. Apparent retention rates do not track the same individuals over time, and instead show the net change in enrolments between two points in time.

- **Transition rates**

The proportion of students who were enrolled in a school year level in a calendar year and the next sequential school year level in the next calendar year (progressed 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**

Meeting the requirements of the SACE and being issued with a SACE completion certificate.

- **Compulsory school age**

Children and teenagers must be enrolled in school from 6 to 16 years old.

- **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 differently to those 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.

Statistics

Student enrolments and exits

Table 1: Student enrolments (Term 1 census)

	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
2023	12 644	12 963	13 313	13 974	11 207	304
2022	12 890	13 073	12 903	13 775	11 226	347
2021	12 944	12 864	12 697	13 350	12 055	416
2020	12 750	12 885	12 282	14 113	11 498	528
2019	12 537	11 914	12 537	13 885	11 855	644
2018	11 641	12 024	11 997	13 763	12 132	830
2017	11 863	11 631	12 135	13 945	12 676	847

Note: More students are often enrolled in year 11 compared to year 10 the previous year due to students repeating year 11, part-time students, and students moving 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
2023	88	270	850	1769	862	148
2022	35	249	752	1639	921	207
2021	37	227	721	1533	1115	228
2020	41	300	639	1665	1173	289
2019	55	263	709	1692	1139	342
2018	48	288	695	1535	1224	450
2017	72	312	687	1569	1442	487

*Figures exclude adult re-entry students from FLO counts. Data has been sourced from the FLO enrolment census. 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
2022 to 2023	784	1 036	1 159	3 735
2021 to 2022	594	790	908	3 385
2020 to 2021	567	946	1 065	3 614
2019 to 2020	576	794	1 065	3 903
2018 to 2019	597	730	1 072	3 676
2017 to 2018	651	811	1 005	3 672
2016 to 2017	619	751	1 016	3 611

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: Students typically reach the compulsory school age in Year 10 or 11, and compulsory education age 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%
2018	11 641	2022	8 559	74%
2019	12 537	2023	8 829	70%

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%
2020	12 282	2022	9 412	77%
2021	12 697	2023	9 441	74%

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%
2021-22	95%	94%	93%	75%
2022-23	94%	92%	91%	73%

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 2023	SACE completion rate - to 2023
2017	13 774	7 722	56%	8 329	60%
2018	12 975	7 510	58%	8 066	62%
2019	12 470	7 778	62%	8 273	66%
2020	12 260	7 782	63%	8 211	66%
2021	12 430	7 998	64%	8 403	67%
2022	11 507	7 381	64%	7 680	66%
2023	11 532	7 853	68%	7 853	68%

Note: Some students may take several years to complete SACE. As a result, SACE completion up to 2023 may not be consistent with previously reported figures.

Table 6b: SACE completion for year 12 and 13 students aged 17 and 18 as of 30 June in each 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 2023	SACE completion rate - to 2023
2017	11 662	7 167	61%	7 557	64%
2018	11 108	7 008	63%	7 385	66%
2019	10 870	7 260	67%	7 603	69%
2020	10 781	7 297	68%	7 586	70%
2021	11 062	7 522	68%	7 789	70%
2022	10 470	6 995	67%	7 209	68%
2023	10 681	7 480	70%	7 480	70%

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%
2018	11 641	2022	6 323	54%
2019	12 537	2023	6 741	54%

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.

¹ Excludes students who achieved SACE in a previous year and returned (e.g., to improve grades for higher education admission purposes).