



# ACER Senior Years Learning Framework

Australian Council for Educational Research



## What is the ACER Senior Years Learning Framework?

The ACER Senior Years Learning Framework (SYLF) is a new national program for students in the final years of secondary school.

It has been designed to provide learning experiences that integrate personal development and academic skills with an extended practical work placement in order to develop those attributes necessary for effective workforce participation.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is the national body that has designed and offers the program throughout Australia.

There are two courses available:

- › Standard Level
- › Advanced Level

The *Standard Level* course is designed for students who are interested in moving directly into employment or in undertaking further vocational education studies after completing secondary school. This stream includes an emphasis on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT literacy skills. Completion of the course also includes an accredited VET Certificate II qualification.

The *Advanced Level* course is designed for students who may want to undertake university studies. This stream includes the study of academic 'units of learning' or subjects from the domains of English and languages; humanities/social sciences; mathematics/science/technology and the creative arts.

The course could include a mixture of subjects from a current senior secondary qualification or the International Baccalaureate.

## What are the features of the ACER Senior Years Learning Framework?

The SYLF supports schools and teachers to draw on local resources (including the community, local businesses and vocational education providers) in order to develop a curriculum with an applied learning orientation and a streamlined transition from school to work.

There are three distinctive features of the SYLF Program.

### 1 National

The SYLF is available to students throughout Australia. Unlike most senior certificates, this qualification is not developed or provided within a single state or territory.

### 2 Broad

The SYLF requires study to be integrated across three broad areas of learning: 'Vocational', 'Academic' and 'Personal'. In this sense, also, it is different from most other senior secondary qualifications. It is 'Vocational' because of its strong emphasis on preparation for work. The industry training component and the focus on development of general skills required for work is central to the program. But the program also requires study and evidence in relation to the 'Academic' and 'Personal' domains. The 'Academic' focus in the SYLF, *Standard Level*, is on literacy, numeracy and ICT Literacy. The 'Academic' focus in the SYLF, *Advanced Level*, is on the study of senior secondary subjects (eg VCE, WACE, IBDP, etc).

### 3 Flexible

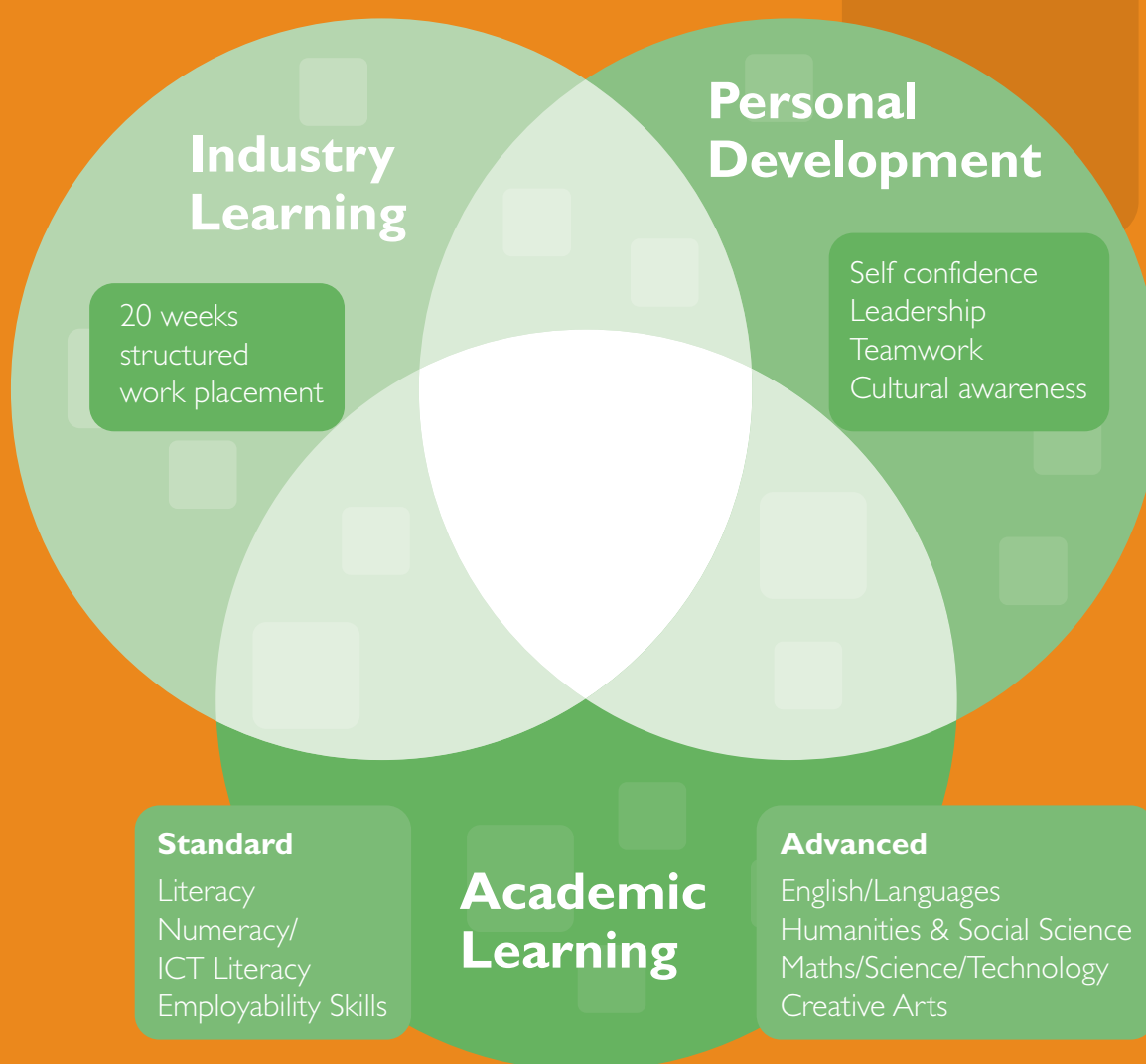
A distinctive feature of the SYLF is the Vocational-Academic-Personal framework on which it is built. Within this framework, the program accommodates courses developed for other certificates. It is possible for a student to receive the SYLF in addition to other certificates if they meet the requirements for those certificates (e.g. VCAL, VCE, WACE, IBDP).



## What is the structure of the ACER Senior Years Learning Framework?

Students undertaking the SYLF at *Standard Level* and *Advanced Level* will complete five Units of Learning, each taken over a minimum of two years (see diagram). In addition, students who intend to go on to university will take uniTEST, an aptitude test developed for the purpose of university entrance.

The two different course streams have three broad areas of learning in common: 'Industry Learning' and 'Personal Learning' and 'Academic Learning'.



# ACER Senior Year Learning Framework

## Standard Level Course

### 1 Industry Learning

'Industry Learning' is a structured work placement, part time apprenticeship, traineeship or part time job.

The aims of Industry Learning are to:

- › develop students' understanding of workplace values and practices to facilitate school to work transition;
- › develop students' industry specific knowledge and skills in context;
- › provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills that they have learned (eg adaptability, teamwork, reliability, time management) in the workplace; and investigate career possibilities.

### 2 Personal Development

'Personal Development' is participation in a community based project, voluntary work or negotiated structured activities such as taking care of a family member or supporting a refugee family.

The aims of Personal Development are to develop in students:

- › self confidence through undertaking new challenges;
- › teamwork skills; and
- › a sense of social awareness.

### 3 Employability Skills

'Employability Skills' are industry specific and general work related skills developed through the completion of units selected from registered national or State / Territory Vocational Education and Training packages.

The aims of Employability Skills are to develop students' skills and understanding in:

- › communication;
- › teamwork;
- › problem solving;
- › enterprise and initiative;
- › planning and organising;
- › self management;
- › learning; and
- › technology.

### 4 Literacy

'Literacy' is the everyday adult reading, writing and speaking skills that allow students to participate productively and adaptively in their life beyond school education.

Literacy can include relevant subjects from state and territory senior secondary certificates or other accredited studies such as from the *Certificate of General Education for Adults*.

The aims of Literacy are to develop students' reading, writing and speaking skills and understanding in a range of contexts including:

- › workplace settings;
- › education and training contexts;
- › civic life; and
- › personal and social life.

### 5 Numeracy and ICT Literacy

'Numeracy' is the everyday adult number, measurement, space, chance and data knowledge and skills that allow students to participate productively and adaptively in their life beyond school education.

'ICT Literacy' is the everyday adult use of computers and the internet to access, manage, integrate and evaluate information, develop new understandings, and communicate with others in order to participate effectively in society.

Numeracy and ICT Literacy can include relevant subjects from state and territory senior secondary certificates or other accredited studies such as from the *Certificate of General Education for Adults*.

The aims of Numeracy and ICT Literacy are to develop students' numeracy and ICT skills and understanding in a range of contexts including:

- › workplace settings;
- › education and training contexts;
- › civic life; and
- › personal and social life.



## Advanced Level Course

### 1 Industry Learning

'Industry Learning' can be a structured work placement, a part time apprenticeship, a traineeship or part time job.

The aims of Industry Learning are to:

- › develop students' understanding of workplace values and practices to facilitate school to work transition;
- › develop students' industry specific knowledge and skills in context;
- › provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills that they have learned (e.g. adaptability, teamwork, reliability, time management) in the workplace; and investigate career possibilities.
- › develop students' knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes in relation to:
  - › business communication;
  - › financial plans and budgets;
  - › workplace safety;
  - › customer service;
  - › recruitment and selection; and
  - › innovation and change.

### 2 Personal Development

'Personal Development' is participation in a community based project, voluntary work or negotiated structured activities such as taking care of a family member or supporting a refugee family.

The aims of Personal Development are to develop in students:

- › self confidence through undertaking new challenges;
- › teamwork skills; and
- › a sense of social awareness.

### 3 Academic Learning

Students are required to complete English and **three** other Units of Learning/subjects across a minimum of two domains in the area of Academic Learning.

#### – *English and Languages*

The study of English is compulsory in the SYLF and includes the study of English subjects drawn from state and territory Senior Secondary Certificates or the IB.

#### – *Humanities and Social Sciences*

'Humanities, Social Sciences' includes the study of Arts subjects drawn from state and territory Senior Secondary Certificates or the IB.

The aims of the Humanities and Social Sciences, are to develop students' abilities to:

- › research an issue;
- › think critically, analyse and interpret information;
- › present an argument; and
- › work with a constructive openness and flexibility of mind.

#### – *Mathematics, Science or Technology*

'Mathematics, Science or Technology' is the study of Mathematics, Science or Technology subjects drawn from State and Territory Senior Secondary Certificates.

The aims of Mathematics, Science or Technology are to develop students' abilities to:

- › apply knowledge and skills for various purposes in real life contexts;
- › plan, design and budget for a project; and
- › apply problem solving strategies.

#### – *Creative Arts*

'The Arts' is the study of selected art forms and media.

The aims of the Creative Arts are to develop students' abilities to:

- › explore ideas, imagery, characteristics and various working methods associated with that media;
- › create visual solutions;
- › investigate, interpret and analyse artworks, and
- › understand the social dimensions of art.





## What are the entry requirements for the SYLF?

Students need to have completed Year 10 or an equivalent. There are no other entry requirements.

## How long does the SYLF take to complete?

Students who undertake a full-time SYLF course after completing Year 10 usually complete the course at the end of Year 12. Students can take longer than two years if they are studying part time, or if they need an extended period to meet the required standard for any particular subject.

The SYLF can be studied by adults and completed in one year.

## What value is the SYLF?

The SYLF, Standard and Advanced, tell people, including employers and tertiary institutions, that a student:

- › has everyday adult reading, writing and speaking skills;
- › has everyday adult mathematics skills;
- › can make everyday adult use of computers and the internet;
- › has completed a full program as part of senior secondary education; and
- › has undertaken workplace training.

## How do students decide whether to study the SYLF at Standard or Advanced Level?

When making a choice students need to consider:

- › what they are good at, what they enjoy studying and what interests them;
- › the kind of career or job they find appealing;
- › whether they are planning to move into tertiary study, to seek an apprenticeship, or to move directly from school into employment.

## What are the requirements for the SYLF at Standard Level?

The course involves a nominal 2000 hours of study; that is 400 hours for each of the five areas: or its equivalent.

- › Industry Learning
- › Personal Development
- › Employability Skills
- › Literacy
- › Numeracy and ICT Literacy

## What are the requirements for the SYLF at Advanced Level?

The course involves the study of six units of learning involving 400 hours or its equivalent, for each of the areas undertaken.

- › Industry Learning
- › Personal Development
- › English(compulsory) and Languages
- › Humanities, Social Sciences
- › Mathematics, Science or Technology
- › Creative Arts.

Students completing the SYLF who want to be considered for University Entrance need to complete an additional assessment: uniTEST.

This test assesses the kinds of generic reasoning and thinking skills that underpin studies at higher education including reasoning and thinking across the two broad domains of mathematics and science and humanities and social sciences.

## What if a student does not meet all the requirements?

Students who do not meet all the requirements are issued an Award showing each subject that has been completed and the standard achieved and information about the student's industry training, if they completed the training.



## How do students select their units of learning in each course?

Each school decides which SYLF Units of Learning it is able to offer.

When selecting between Units of Learning students need to consider:

- › their interests and abilities (e.g. whether they are being realistic in their subject choices, what they are good at, and whether they need to be challenged);
- › pre-requisites for tertiary courses they might want to study;
- › units of learning related to their particular industry training; and
- › units of learning that employers might prefer.

## How is the SYLF assessed?

Evidence may be drawn from a range of sources, for example:

- › reflective work journals, diaries or logbooks;
- › oral presentations, research assignments, job application letters, videos, photographic records, power point presentations, radio broadcasts and websites;
- › written reports on industry visits or work placements;
- › mock interviews/simulation exercises; and
- › examinations and written tests.

Assessments may be made by teachers, students or peers (verified by teacher/supervisor).

Students completing the SYLF who want to be considered for university entrance need to complete an additional assessment, uniTEST.

## What do students receive if they successfully meet the standards?

The front page of the SYLF Award will show that a student has been awarded the SYLF at Standard Level or the SYLF at Advanced Level.

The Award will also include:

- › all the student's qualifications in approved courses, (e.g.VET or other studies); and the standard at which the student achieved each course; and
- › information about the student's industry training.



## Where can a student study the SYLF?

The SYLF is available to be offered in 'SYLF Accredited' schools and TAFE Colleges around Australia.

## What does it cost to study the SYLF?

Schools and TAFE Colleges offering the SYLF will set their own fees.

## Case study

Wesley College Melbourne offers the SYLF to students attending the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School on Leopold Downs Cattle Station, via Fitzroy Crossing, in the Kimberley.

Students from both the Kimberley region and from Wesley College Melbourne have had the opportunity to undertake intensive learning in the pastoral, eco tourism and mining industries, and in personal intercultural development, as part of the SYLF.





## Further information

To find out more about the new  
ACER Senior Years Learning Framework  
phone ACER on 03 9277 5555 or  
visit the SYLF website [www.acer.edu.au/sylf](http://www.acer.edu.au/sylf)