

Stage 6 Life Skills courses

ACE 7001

Last Updated: 18 December 2017

Stage 6 Life Skills courses provide options for students with disability who are unable to access regular course outcomes, particularly students with an intellectual disability

The Stage 6 Life Skills courses can be undertaken in combination with other Board Developed and/or Board Endorsed Courses to meet the requirements for the award of the Higher School Certificate.

Stage 6 Life Skills courses have Board Developed status. Each Stage 6 Life Skills course comprises a 2-unit 120-hour Preliminary course and a 2-unit 120-hour HSC course, with the exception of Studies of Religion I Life Skills, which is a 1-unit course (60 hours).

Schools may wish to design a Life Skills course as a School Developed Board Endorsed Course to meet the local needs of their students in areas where there is no Board Developed syllabus.

Exclusions

As with the study of all Board Developed Courses, exclusions apply to the study of Life Skills courses such that students may not study more than one 240-hour course in the same subject. For example, a student cannot include both English (Standard) and English Life Skills in the pattern of study for the award of the Higher School Certificate.

Accessing Stage 6 Life Skills courses

ACE 7002

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All students are entitled to participate in and progress through the curriculum. Life Skills courses provide course options for students with disability in Years 11–12 who cannot access the regular course outcomes, particularly students with an intellectual disability.

Before deciding that the student should access a Life Skills course, consideration should be given to other ways of helping the student to engage with regular course outcomes. This may include a range of adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment activities. If the adjustments do not provide a student with sufficient access to some or all outcomes in Years 11-12, one or more Life Skills courses might be appropriate.

Life Skills courses are not an appropriate option for students:

- performing below their cohort
- who could be helped with appropriate adjustments and support.

All decisions about curriculum options for students with disability should be made through the collaborative curriculum planning process.

A student studying any Stage 6 Life Skills course will usually have completed one or more courses based on Life Skills outcomes and content in Years 7–10.

In special circumstances a student who has not undertaken one or more courses based on Life Skills outcomes and content in Years 7-10 may wish to enrol in Life Skills courses for Stage 6. These special circumstances might include situations where:

- a student has attempted regular courses in Years 7-10 but has experienced significant difficulty
- a student transfers from interstate or overseas
- a student has a deteriorating condition.

Schools are not required to seek permission for students to access Life Skills courses or submit planning documentation to NESA.

Students undertaking only Stage 6 Life Skills courses are not required to complete the HSC: All My Own Work program or its equivalent.

Students undertaking Stage 6 Life Skills courses in Year 12 may be exempt from the HSC minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.

Higher School Certificate entry procedures for Stage 6 Life Skills courses

ACE 7003

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Entry procedures

Where a school has a student undertaking one or more Life Skills courses in Stage 6, the school must inform the NESA via the submission of Preliminary and HSC entries through Schools Online.

When entering students for Stage 6 Life Skills course(s), principals are certifying that the student is eligible and the decision is the result of a collaborative curriculum planning process.

Schools should not enrol students in Preliminary or HSC Life Skills courses after the school year has commenced unless special circumstances apply and these circumstances have been taken into account in the context of a collaborative planning process.

Exclusions apply to the study of Life Skills courses such that students may not study more than one 240-hour course in the same subject. For example, a student cannot include both English Standard and English Life Skills in the pattern of study for the award of the Higher School Certificate.

Students undertaking one or more Stage 6 Life Skills courses will enter for the award of the Higher School Certificate according to the procedures detailed in ACE 9001 Student entry procedures: Preliminary and HSC course entries, ACE 9002 Student entry procedures: confirmations of entry and ACE 9003 Student entry procedures: amendments to entry.

Supplementing courses from additional syllabuses

For students with particular needs, schools may need to draw on some of the Life Skills outcomes and content from additional syllabus(es) to supplement or replace those from the syllabus on which the course is predominantly based. In this situation, the student should be entered for the course from which the outcomes and content are predominantly drawn. The Life Skills outcomes achieved from additional syllabus(es) are reported through the Profile of Student Achievement.

Higher School Certificate requirements for students undertaking Life Skills courses

ACE 7005

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To qualify for the award of a Higher School Certificate (HSC) all students must fulfil the requirements detailed in ACE 8004 Eligibility requirements for the Higher School Certificate.

Students are able to satisfy the requirements for the HSC by completing Life Skills courses.

Students with disability can also meet requirements for the HSC using a combination of Board Developed Courses (including Life Skills courses) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Industry Curriculum Framework courses/options or a combination of Board Developed Courses and Board Endorsed Courses (including Content Endorsed Courses).

Stage 6 Life Skills courses have no HSC examinations and results cannot be used in the calculation of a student's ATAR.

Time allocation for courses

When programming Life Skills courses all indicative hour requirements should be met. This will ensure the courses are credentialled on the HSC. Each Stage 6 Life Skills course has an indicative hour requirement of 120 hours in Year 11 and 120 hours in Year 12 with the exception of the Studies of Religion I Life Skills course which requires 60 indicative hours in both Year 11 and Year 12.

In some cases it may be necessary to vary the time allocated by increasing the number of hours of study for a course. When considering whether an increase in time is necessary, schools should ensure that indicative hour requirements for each enrolled course are met.

Satisfactory completion of a Stage 6 Life Skills course

ACE 7007

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The course completion criteria for the Stage 6 Life Skills courses are the same as those for all Board Developed and Board Endorsed Courses.

A student will be considered to have satisfactorily completed a course if, in the principal's view, there is sufficient evidence that the student has:

- followed the course developed by NESA; and
- applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school; and
- achieved some or all of the course outcomes.

It is not necessary for students to address or achieve all the Life Skills outcomes in order to satisfactorily complete the course. The number of outcomes addressed and/or achieved will vary for individual students.

Assessment of Stage 6 Life Skills outcomes

ACE 7008

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Each student accessing a Life Skills course in Years 11-12 will be assessed on their achievement of the outcomes selected through the collaborative curriculum planning process. The syllabus outcomes and content form the basis of learning opportunities for students.

Assessment should provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement in relation to the selected outcomes. Assessment can occur in a range of situations or environments such as the school and wider community.

There is no requirement for formal assessment of Life Skills outcomes.

Students entered for Life Skills courses may achieve the designated outcomes independently or with support.

An outcome should be considered as 'achieved independently' if there is evidence that a student can demonstrate the achievement of an outcome either:

- without adjustments, or
- with adjustments that enable the student to access course work and/or demonstrate achievement during assessment opportunities. These adjustments should have been determined through the collaborative curriculum planning process.

Schools are not required to use the Common Grade Scale for Preliminary courses or performance bands to report achievement for students undertaking Life Skills courses.

Credentialling of Stage 6 Life Skills courses

ACE 7010

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Students who satisfactorily complete a Stage 6 Life Skills course will have the course reported on their Higher School Certificate (HSC) credentials, or, if students leave before completing their HSC on the Record of School Achievement credentials. Stage 6 Life Skills courses are reported with the notation 'Refer to Profile of Student Achievement'. The Profile of Student Achievement is a cumulative record of the student's achievement of Life Skills outcomes for any course satisfactorily completed in Stage 5, Year 11 or Year 12.

Schools submit information on *Schools Online* regarding outcomes that have been achieved, either independently or with support, for all students undertaking Stage 6 Life Skills courses at the time of collection of Preliminary grades or HSC assessment marks.

Outcomes achieved in School Developed Board Endorsed Life Skills courses will not be reported on the Profile of Student Achievement.

Students will receive the HSC Profile of Student Achievement together with any other HSC credentials being awarded.

Students who leave school prior to gaining the HSC will receive the Profile of Student Achievement in conjunction with the award of the RoSA or Transcript of Study. Students not eligible to be awarded a RoSA can access a Transcript of Study through *Schools Online*.