Guide to Application for Schools

ACER Senior Years Learning Framework

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

ACER

Contents

SECTION 1   THE SCHOOL
APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process involves four main steps:

1.   Submission of *Expression of Interest* form
2.   School visit
3.   Submission of Application form
4.   Decision on application

1.   Submission of Expression of Interest Form

This form may be submitted to ACER at any time. The timeline for the application process is generally one to two months from submission of this form, dependent on the school's timely submission of subsequent documentation.

2.   School Visit

A school visit may be made by one or two ACER staff and will usually require two to three hours of consultation. The visit will be made within two weeks of the submission of an *Expression of Interest* and will involve discussions with the Principal and senior staff to clarify aspects of the Senior Years Learning Framework and the application process. The purpose is also to evaluate a school's preparedness to offer the program and implement the necessary processes. The school will benefit from feedback on its implementation plans.

The visiting ACER staff will make a recommendation to the application Committee on the decision to proceed to a full application.

3.   Submission of Application Form

Following the school visit this form can be submitted. ACER suggests schools submit this form within two to four weeks of the school visit.

4.   Decision on Application

The final decision regarding a school's application is made by ACER's SYLF Committee. The school will be notified of the outcome within two weeks of the submission of a complete Application form. If the application is incomplete, the school may be asked to submit additional documentation.

The Committee comprises the SYLF Project Director, the Director, Assessment Services, and the General Manager, School Programs at ACER.

Both the expression of interest and school application forms can be found at: www.acer.edu.au/sylf

Timetable for approval to offer the Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate

Week 1	Schools submission of *Expression of Interest* Form received by ACER
Weeks 2–3	ACER school visit and recommendation to the SYLF Certificate Committee
Weeks 5–7	Response communicated to school
Weeks 5–9	Submission of application form by school
Week 6	Request for additional information by ACER (if required)
Weeks 5–9	School notified of application decision by ACER

SECTION 2 THE SCHOOL APPLICATION

A separate application is required for each level of the course that the school will be offering.

The following self assessment questions are provided to assist with course selection and application decisions. Course-specific questions follow below.

☐ Are resources available both within the classroom and as part of regular community based or workplace based activities?

☐ Has a thorough review of the available resource materials and equipment been conducted?

☐ Are learning materials available in sufficient quality, quantity and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the course?

☐ Are the needs and projected costs of acquiring all necessary materials and equipment for each subject group clearly stated?

Standard Level Course

☐ What assessments will be administered to determine student capability prior to starting the course?

☐ Have the vocational areas in which students may be interested in undertaking Industry Learning been identified?

☐ Have the teachers located extended industry training opportunities for students?

☐ Has there been an assessment of the nominated industry training workplaces?

☐ Have the other VET providers that will be assisting with course delivery been identified?

☐ Does the school have specific approaches planned to integrate the Personal Development aspects of the course with the academic learning?

☐ Have teachers collaborated and planned for possible Personal Development learning activities?

☐ Have teachers collaborated and planned for Personal Development assessment activities?

☐ Does the school have sufficient hardware to allow for electronic course delivery where appropriate?

☐ Can the school guarantee that students have adequate internet access?

☐ Is there adequate instructional space for delivery of standard level courses?

Advanced Level Course

Knowledge of SYLF Certificate subject frameworks and assessment is required.

☐ How do you intend to integrate the Personal Development and Industry Learning into the proposed course?

☐ List the vocational areas in which the students may be undertaking Industry Learning.

☐ Have the teachers located extended industry training opportunities for students?

☐ Has there been an assessment of the nominated industry training workplaces?

☐ Do you have specific approaches planned to integrate the Personal Development aspects of the course with the Academic Learning?

☐ Have teachers collaborated and planned for possible Personal Development learning activities?

☐ Have teachers collaborated and planned for Personal Development assessment activities?

☐ Does the school have sufficient hardware to allow for electronic course delivery where appropriate?

☐ Can the school guarantee that students have adequate internet access?

☐ Is there adequate instructional space for delivery of advanced level courses?

☐ Does the course provide adequate training in analytical and critical thought?

☐ Are there adequate reference materials available to support the study of subjects at advanced level, as well as to provide sources for in-depth study?

SECTION 3   CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

1. Schools must demonstrate that they have the required resources to implement the SYLF Certificate including: teaching and administrative staff, physical facilities, infrastructure and industry partnerships to support the implementation of a vocational program and an extended work experience placement.

2. Schools must provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate their legal status.

3. Schools will sign a contract to accept and undertake all of ACER's requirements for the successful delivery of the SYLF Certificate.

4. Schools will appoint a SYLF Certificate Coordinator with a detailed position description and adequate time allocation to complete the necessary responsibilities. The SYLF Certificate Coordinator will liaise with ACER.

5. Schools must normally have been in operation for at least two full academic years to offer the SYLF Certificate.

6. The ACER visiting team will consider:
    - the school's plans and preparedness to successfully implement the SYLF Certificate;
    - the level of support from the Principal to ensure the success of the program; and
    - the school's relationship with its local community, and the support of local employers to provide work placement opportunities for students.

7. The SYLF Certificate subject teachers must have appropriate qualifications and experience.

8. The school must ensure there is adequate time allocation, coordination and a collaborative approach to curriculum and assessment planning.

9. The school undertakes to complete workplace visits for *each* student for *each* workplace.

10. An annual subscription fee is payable by all schools offering the SYLF Certificate **.

11. A timetable for the authorisation process is provided at the end of this document.

12. The school references a teaching and learning school improvement framework*.

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*   See the following: Key Features of a School Improvement Framework - for suggested Framework guidelines. Similar Frameworks will also be accepted.

** See SYLF Certificate – Schedule of Fees

SECTION 4   KEY FEATURES OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The following list includes the key practices that a school would be expected to feature as a SYLF Certificate School.

1. The school has an explicit improvement agenda;

   The school improvement agenda has been proven to be effective in focusing on narrowing and sharpening the whole school's attention on core learning priorities.

2. There is analysis and discussion of data;

   The school has established and is implementing a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of school achievement data.

3. The school culture promotes learning;

   There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive academic outcomes.

4. There is a targeted use of school resources;

   There are systematic strategies for identifying student needs including systematic testing to establish learning gaps and special needs.

5. There is an expert teaching team;

   The teaching staff of the school are experts in the subjects that they teach, have high levels of pedagogical knowledge and expert knowledge of evidence-based teaching strategies. School leaders participate in professional development activities alongside teachers.

6. Curriculum is delivered systematically;

   The school has a clearly documented whole school plan for curriculum delivery.

7. Classroom learning is differentiated;

   Regular data on the achievements, progress, strengths and weaknesses of the students are used in all classrooms.

and

8. There are effective teaching practices.

   School leaders spend time working with teachers to improve their teaching practices, including modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching.

SECTION 5   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate has been designed to provide an integrated approach to learning within an environment that is broad, flexible and national. It has been developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The structure of the program is based on the concept that student learning is socially and culturally mediated and the context in which the learning occurs directly influences the higher mental functions associated with the processing, understanding and application of knowledge.

The program is offered nationally for students in the final years of secondary school. It has been designed to provide broad learning experiences, by integrating personal development and academic skills with an extended practical work experience placement in order to develop those attributes necessary for effective workforce participation.

The SYLF Certificate Program encourages the development of intercultural competence and cross cultural learning for students and adults from different backgrounds.

The concept of students learning in an integrated manner within a less formal environment is designed to allow less capable students to benefit from interactions that might otherwise be beyond their competence when acting alone.

The importance placed on the areas of personal and cultural development is drawn from the views of educational and cultural theorists who propose that higher level learning does not take place entirely in the mind but is nested in culturally structured, social and natural environments of which the person is a part. The socio physical location is the cultural medium which provides an interpretive framework for the learner.

The SYLF Certificate recognises the views of cognitive science and the notion of distributed cognition and situated learning. These place value on external environmental structures in simplifying and transforming the nature of learning for the individual.

The structure of the SYLF Certificate encourages relevant and authentic educational experiences for students through the provision of workplace readiness and structured workplace learning programs.

There are two courses available: Standard Level and Advanced Level.

The *Standard Level* course aims to provide relevant and meaningful vocationally focussed learning experiences 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 aims to provide a relevant and purposefully integrated program of academic, vocational and personal development experiences 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 (inc. ESL) and languages;
- humanities/social sciences;
- mathematics /science/technology; and
- the creative arts.

The course may include a mixture of subjects from a current state or nationally accredited senior secondary qualification or an equivalent international qualification such as the International Baccalaureate.

SECTION 6   THE SCHOOL HEAD AND ADMINISTRATION

The head of the school and school administrators must ensure that:

- the school fully endorses the philosophy of the SYLF Certificate Program and that the philosophy of the school is compatible with that of the SYLF Certificate Program aims and objectives;

- a formal decision with regard to the adoption of the SYLF Certificate Program has been taken by the school's governing body;

- the head of the school is actively supportive of the program and is involved at an appropriate level to ensure its success;

- the adoption of the SYLF Certificate Program is generally welcomed by the teaching staff of the school;

- there is a plan for the implementation of the program, identifying responsibilities for the head of the school and the Program Coordinator who are familiar with the philosophy and structure of the SYLF Certificate Program;

- a professional development plan is in place to support the implementation of the SYLF Certificate Program;

- there is a uniform approach to curriculum planning, including a commitment to collaborative planning;

- a Work Placement Coordinator is selected and provided with sufficient time and resources to oversee the establishment of industry partnerships and work placement arrangements;

- the qualifications and experience of SYLF Certificate Program subject teachers are appropriate for the successful teaching of the program; and

- sufficient funds are available for the purchase of all necessary resources to teach the SYLF Certificate Program as effectively as possible and for staff to receive appropriate ACER approved professional development.

SECTION 7   STUDENTS

The Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate will require students to:

- participate in a structured and extended work placement, a part time apprenticeship, a traineeship or a part time job for the purposes of vocational learning;
- participate in a community based project, voluntary work or negotiated structured activity such as taking care of a family member or supporting a refugee family for the purposes of personal development;
- undertake academic learning within the nominated streams and within the curriculum and contexts designed and structured by the school;
- submit separate pieces of work in order to fulfil the requirements of the Academic, Personal Development and Industry Learning assessment components;
- comply with all subject-specific regulations and internal and external school deadlines;
- complete the SYLF Certificate Program over a period of two years although exceptions to this may occur;
- recognise the SYLF Certificate Program Coordinator as the intermediary for all communication with ACER;
- show intellectual honesty in the completion and submission of all work; and
- acknowledge fully, and in detail, the work, thoughts or ideas of another person if incorporated in work submitted for assessment.

Students and parents will be expected to endorse and commit to the above requirement.

SECTION 8   THE Certificate PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate Program Coordinator is the key contact person for this program in any school.

The Coordinator should:

- have knowledge of and commitment to integrated learning approaches*;
- understand the benefits and challenges associated with workplace learning;
- have a strong sense of responsibility for the academic needs and welfare of students;
- possess excellent interpersonal, communication and administrative skills; and
- be literate in information technologies.

A fundamental understanding of the requirements of the SYLF Certificate is essential. It is recommended that the Coordinator will act as the pedagogical leader of the teachers involved and will be a member of the senior management team. The Coordinator's job is demanding and complex; for it to be done well, sufficient release time, dedicated office space, secretarial support and photocopying facilities must be available. New Coordinators should receive ACER approved professional development at an early stage to equip them with a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

In general, the demands on the Coordinator are proportionate to the number of SYLF Certificate students and staff, the number of subjects offered by the school and the full range of work placement arrangements. Fundamentally, the Coordinator is responsible for providing information, guidance and administrative support to students (before and during their participation in the program), colleagues, the head of school, the local community and the relevant employers. He or she is also responsible for the coordination of all activities related to the SYLF Certificate Program.

The Coordinator will normally be responsible for advising students on subject choices.

Information meetings for parents are a useful means of assisting students in this matter.

Once the school year begins, the Coordinator's administrative tasks include:

- ensuring that students and teachers meet the program requirements and comply with the general regulations; (see Standard Level Course Manual/ Advanced Level Course Manual)
- locating and overseeing appropriate industry learning work placements;
- ensuring that teachers are equipped with the relevant course frameworks, and other appropriate ACER publications;
- ensuring that personal development undertakings are carried out properly;
- maintaining complete and accurate records;
- ensuring that all assessments are carried out properly; and
- informing students of ACER services, for example: enquiry upon results, university recognition, university transcripts and legalisation of Certificates.

* vocational, academic, personal

SECTION 9   SUBJECT TEACHERS

Subject teachers must be familiar with:

1.   the Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate philosophy;

2.   the Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate framework standards and practices.

Subject teachers:

- should be prepared to assist students to relate their industry learning and personal development experiences to assignments in their subject;
- should emphasise the links between vocational and personal learning and their subject(s);
- must have read the relevant SYLF guide for their subject(s) at the Standard or Advanced Level and must endorse the stated outcomes and performance objectives for the subject(s);
- must keep up-to-date with developments in curriculum and teaching methodology relevant to the needs of their students and the nature of their subject(s);
- must attend appropriate professional development and support in the teaching and assessment of their subject(s);
- should meet regularly to work collaboratively and coordinate approaches to the program;
- must ensure that good quality materials and equipment such as computer hardware and software, audio-visual equipment and apparatus and books are available in sufficient quantities to facilitate the implementation of the SYLF Certificate Program; and
- must ensure that the SYLF's aims, objectives and conceptual framework (see Standard Level Course Manual/ Advanced Level Course Manual) are clearly addressed in those classes where the program may be taught simultaneously with other programs, for example, national programs; and must ensure that all SYLF courses permit and encourage the acquisition and refinement of oral, written and numeracy skills, and the development of analytical and thinking skills.

SECTION 10   FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The management of the school must ensure that appropriate and safe facilities, equipment and materials are readily available to support the SYLF Certificate Program and the practical work involved in all subject groups, according to their individual requirements.

Resources necessary for delivery of the Standard and Advanced Level courses include:

- an environment conducive to learning;
- access to library facilities;
- computer facilities with Internet access;
- normal business computer software; and
- arrangements for exposure to the real work environment.

Schools and other training providers should ensure that the unit *TLIPC107A Demonstrate care and apply safe practices at work* is delivered early in the program and that students are assessed as competent prior to being involved in an industry or work placement.

This unit is mandatory for both levels of the program prior to undertaking work placements.

Access to resources

Advanced and Standard Level Courses

The management of the school or training provider must ensure that:

- audio-visual equipment is sufficient in quantity, appropriate in type, in good repair, and readily available so as to be of effective use;
- students and staff have access to documentation available through information technology;
- Internet access is available for all students; and
- access to reference materials meets all the subjects needs of the SYLF Certificate Program.
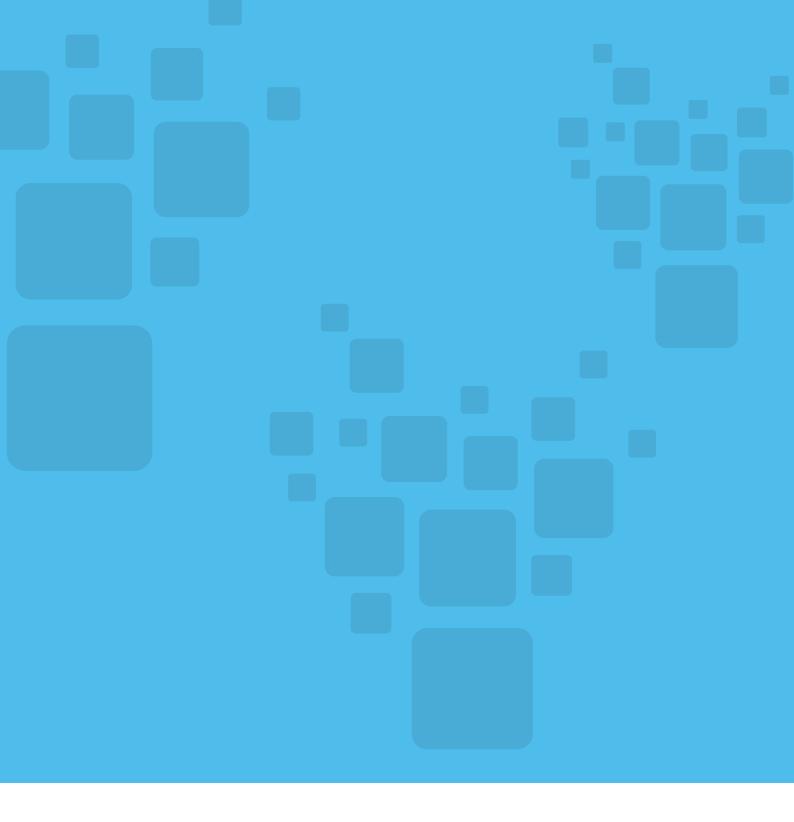
Standard Level Course

Elective units of competency can be chosen from nominated industry areas. Schools must ensure that appropriate resources are provided for each unit of competency offered as an elective, in line with the requirements outlined in the Training Package or accredited course from which the unit is imported.

For the SYLF Certificate Program, Standard Level, access to language, literacy and numeracy support is required.

SECTION 11 PROPOSED SENIOR YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK Certificate SUBJECTS TO BE OFFERED

Subject(s) chosen	Estimated number of candidates at Advanced level	Estimated number of candidates at Standard level

Further information

To find out more about the new
Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate
phone ACER on 03 9277 5555 or
visit the Senior Years Learning Framework Certificate website www.acer.edu.au/sylf