



# TASMANIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

## WRITING CONVENTIONS

The TCEA is an information-rich certificate that describes a student's participation and achievement in education. The statement describes the student's highest achievements against their individual learning goals in a meaningful way to employers, trainers and others in the community. It only identifies illness, impairment, or disability where this directly impacts their learning. The students' teachers prepare the statement or descriptive text.

Ideally, the TCEA is limited to four pages, so in addition to conforming to specific writing conventions, statements must be brief and focus on the most relevant achievements in their senior secondary studies. It is also essential that inclusive language is used in the descriptive text. To maintain a consistent tone and community statements of achievement against the categories must adhere to these guidelines. TCEA sample certificates are available on the TASC website to provide further guidance.

### FORMAT

The TCEA statement must:

- be submitted on the TASC template
- be less than 600 words
- have a balance of descriptors across each category (where possible)

### CONTENT OF THE DESCRIPTORS

Descriptors of a student's achievement should:

- include a clear and specific description of demonstrated knowledge and skills, and achievement against their Individual Education Plan | Individual Learning Program
  - **do not** repeat the same knowledge or skill across category organisers
- focus on achievement, what the student 'does', 'applies', or 'shows', rather than ability, what the student 'can do', 'may be able to do', 'is able to' or 'has the ability to'
  - **do not** describe attitudes or behaviour, such as 'behaves well' or 'displays appropriate behaviour'
  - **do not** use 'participates' or 'attends' unless participating or attending is the achievement, such as 'participation in extra-curricular activities'
- be a coherent statement that is fair, equitable, supportive and consistent and provides information that may be meaningful within the community
  - **do not** make value judgments or predictions, such as 'will do well' or 'will be suitable for'.
- is expressed positively with qualifiers placed at the end of the statement, as in 'completes information on forms with support'
  - **do not** place a comma before the qualifier

- uses generic descriptive terms rather than specific brand names: such as fast-food outlet **not** McDonalds; smartphone **not** iPhone; word processor **not** Word.
  - **do not** include headings from school-based programs or subjects, technical or specialist terms or colloquial language
  - **do not** use comparative language, such as 'good', 'high', 'advanced', 'effectively' or '80%'

## CONTROL OF LANGUAGE

To ensure that the TCEA statements are professionally written, they should adhere to spelling and grammatical conventions, including:

- begin with verbs in the present tense and maintain that tense throughout
  - **do not** start statements with an adverb, such as 'effectively communicates with peers'.
- use the appropriate article — 'the' or 'a/an':
  - the definite article 'the' refers to a specific noun, such as 'applies the principles', which has already been specified
  - the indefinite article 'a' refers to an unknown or unspecified noun, such as 'uses a calculator' referring to any calculator
  - 'a' becomes 'an' before a noun starting with a vowel, such as 'shows an awareness'
- reduce visual clutter
  - use words, not numerals for numbers under ten, such as 'three'
  - **do not** use quotation marks to highlight individual words, such as 'responds to familiar adults with "yes" or "no"'
  - **do not** put lists of words in brackets
- use a comma to separate items in the statement
- use hyphens:
  - to clarify the meanings of words, such as 'heavy-metal instrument' for an electric guitar rather than 'heavy metal instrument' for a tuba
  - when terms are used as adjectives, such as 'one-step instructions', 'full-time job', 'word-processing skills', 'post-school options'
  - to clarify the meaning of new words that might otherwise be confused with established words, such as 're-cover' (cover again) but 'recover' (get better or retrieve)
  - **do not** use hyphens for 'cooperate', 'coordinate' and their derivatives, or for 'email', 'nonfiction', 'wellbeing' or 'artwork'
- use capitals when appropriate for proper nouns, such as 'Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples' or 'Auslan'
- use Australian spelling of words such as 's' not 'z' in words such as 'analyses', 'organises', 'recognises', 'utilises' and their derivatives
- use correct spelling to distinguish nouns from their verb forms, such as 'practice' (noun), 'practise/practising' (verb); 'advice' (noun), 'advise' (verb)
- ensure words such as 'aware' or 'awareness', if used to show a demonstrated skill or knowledge, are preceded by an auxiliary verb for clarity, such as 'is aware' or 'shows awareness'.