

# TASMANIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (TCEA)

## WRITING CONVENTIONS

The TCEA is an information-rich certificate that describes a student's participation and achievement in education. The statements describe 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 Descriptive Text.

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. Inclusive language must be used throughout the Descriptive Text, as well as consistent tense and a positive tone. Additional resources and sample Descriptive Texts are available on the TASC website to provide further guidance.

### FORMAT

The TCEA Descriptive Text must:

- be submitted through TRACS in the fields under the TCEA Submission tab
- be less than 600 words total
- have a balance of descriptors across each category (where possible)
- be in dot point format (apart from the Additional Comments, which is in sentence format).

### 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 categories.
- focus on achievement, what the student 'does', 'applies', or 'shows', rather than ability, i.e. not 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, consistent and provides information that may be meaningful within the community.
  - **do not** make value judgements or predictions, such as 'will do well' or 'will be suitable for'.
- be 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 i.e. 'completes information on forms, with support.'
- use 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%'.

## GOOD WRITING

To ensure that the TCEA statements are professionally and consistently written, please apply these writing conventions:

- begin with verbs in the present tense and maintain that tense throughout, such as 'completes set tasks'.
  - **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 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'.
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- 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'.