



Stage I Handbook

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Preface

Welcome, and congratulations on joining us at SAE. We're in the business of helping you become a legend in the world of creative media. To help you achieve this, we do things a little differently. For a start you'll be learning by doing, you will be working with fellow students (peers) and faculty, and engaging in a range of activities and projects designed to develop your skills and knowledge and support your success.

At SAE we help you become job-ready by providing you with an opportunity to learn in an industry-style setting. This handbook will help explain how this works. We suggest you keep a copy of the handbook on file so you can come back to it at any stage throughout your course.

This handbook is part of a larger information pack which contains a number of resources. You should familiarise yourself with these resources as they give you the 'basics' of how to succeed in your course.

In addition to this handbook, you will need:

- Unit Guides (for the units enrolled in)
- SAE Transferable Skills Framework
- Guidelines for Holistic Assessment in Stage I
- Group Work Agreement

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Welcome to Stage I

All SAE courses are designed in stages. As you progress through these stages the levels of complexity and sophistication in your practical and scholarly work increases. This handbook is for students in Stage I. Stage I consists of 80 credit points of introductory units, designed to teach you the tools of your trade at a paraprofessional (someone who works under the guidance of more advanced practitioners) level.

SAE stages are:

- Stage I (introductory and Diploma level - building your paraprofessional skills)
- Stage II (intermediate and Associate Degree level)
- Stage III (advanced and Bachelor Degree level)

Units

Stage I units are designed to build foundational skill sets relevant to your discipline area. You will focus on developing wider scholarly skills and knowledge associated with working in a creative field. Each unit will be based on a set of projects, designed to simulate real-world scenarios.

Units in Stage 1 have a similar three-part format:

- 1 Pre-class** - activities help you seek and understand the concepts that you will apply in class. Pre-class activities are undertaken in Campus Online.
- 2 In-class** - you act upon the skills and knowledge you have prepared (pre-class) in class-based projects and activities. In class projects and activities are usually completed as a class, in small groups or as pairs. Feedback on your work will be given in class. This feedback is important for your post-class work.
- 3 Post-class** - activities help you evaluate and reflect, to synthesise learning, respond to feedback to improve your creative and scholarly practice.

This **seek, act, evaluate** model is common to the whole SAE Stage I curriculum.

While units in Stage I have a similar format, there are three different unit types which describe the kind of learning undertaken. These are:

- 1 Common units** – undertaken with other Stage I students across all disciplines. CIM151 Contemporary Industrial Practices is the common unit in Stage I. In this unit you will have the opportunity to network with students from other disciplines. This will be especially important for students continuing onto Stage II.
- 2 Discipline foundational units** – relevant to developing foundational skills, knowledge and behaviours specific to your discipline area.
- 3 Studio unit** – you will collaborate with your peers in the design and implementation of your first major project.

SAE Holistic Assessment Ethos

At SAE we don't do traditional assessments – the kind where you complete one task and get a final grade based on adding together a bunch of numbers. Work in the professional world is never assessed or measured using this type of approach. Additionally, in the creative industries, rarely will you encounter a problem that has one perfect solution. So in keeping with our aim to ensure our graduates are job-ready we use a methodology that better demonstrates your capabilities and how these will be considered in the workplace.

At SAE, you will participate in real-world projects and activities that holistically assess your individual performance and give you opportunities to demonstrate your ability to deal with the challenges that inevitably arise in creative practice. We have designed our curriculum to develop and assess your capabilities in three, interlinked domains:

- **Proficiency** – the intellectual, creative and technical tools of your trade and the tangible output of their use.
- **Process** – the ways in which you go about using and reflecting on these tools to create things of high quality which meet the needs of your target audience.
- **Person** – the transferable skills that make you better at working with other people in creative media.

We refer to this as the 3Ps. **Proficiency, process and person** each have their own set of skills, knowledge and behaviours and these form an integral part of our holistic assessment framework.

Your final grade is a holistic appraisal of your individual performance throughout the unit. Your individual performance will be assessed holistically by your facilitator for the duration of the unit in two ways:

- 1 **To gain a pass** – you must demonstrate that you have independently met the unit learning outcomes at a pass standard on multiple occasions, through participation in pre-class tasks, in-class projects and activities, and post-class reflection.
- 2 **To gain a grade higher than a pass** – you must demonstrate that you have addressed holistic assessment standards

In Stage I, the holistic assessment standards are written to reflect the qualities and characteristics of work and performance which is commensurate with that of a paraprofessional in your field.

The unit guides contain more information, however it's important for you to understand that your participation in all pre-class, in-class and post-class activities is vital to you being able to develop your skills and pass the unit. If you have any issues that prevent you from fully participating, then please let us know. We're here to help.

3Ps

The elements that make up each of the 3Ps are outlined below:

Proficiency

- Creative concepts
- Creative skills
- Hardware skills
- Software skills
- Technical skills

Process

- Workflows
- Pipelines
- Task management
- Planning
- Efficiency of time, quality and quantity
- Applying hardware and software skills effectively
- Applying creative concepts and ideas effectively

Person

- Communication
- Interpersonal skills
- Time management
- Leadership
- Self-evaluation
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Giving and receiving creative direction

Unit Learning Outcomes and Achieving a Pass Grade

Each project that you undertake will be mapped to specific unit learning outcomes, the learning outcome standards and transferable skills. The unit guides you have been provided will show this. These mappings are important as they show you what unit learning outcomes and transferable skills each project is designed to achieve. To help you understand how to succeed in meeting the unit learning outcomes, it's important to understand what they are.

All unit learning outcomes use a common structure. At the start, they will have a verb which is known as the “cognitive dimension” – i.e. a different type of thinking. Following the verb will be a “knowledge dimension” – this is something that may relate to factual knowledge, procedural knowledge or even knowledge about yourself. At the end of the unit learning outcome will be a statement about how you need to contextualise your knowledge. There is an example below to demonstrate this.

The cognitive dimension of the unit learning outcome range can be seen below:

- Remember (least complex)
- Understand
- Apply
- Analyse
- Evaluate
- Create (most complex)

These cognitive dimensions are important as they tell you what you need to do with the knowledge dimension of the learning outcome in order to meet it and therefore work towards pass grade. Let's use an example from a common unit to better understand:

“Apply appropriate digital workflow process to manage assets”

In this learning outcome, the cognitive dimension is application – i.e. you need to be seen to be doing this in practice. The knowledge dimension relates to digital workflow and the contextualisation is managing assets.

So to meet this unit learning outcome, you will need to know what are digital workflow processes for your discipline group. The pre-class activities will be structured to provide you with this information so make sure that you complete these before class.

You will then need to show you have applied this knowledge to manage actual project assets effectively in order to meet this unit learning outcome. In-class activities will be designed to give you multiple opportunities to do this – so you don't need to worry if you don't get it right on your first attempt.

If you don't meet a unit learning outcome in a particular week, then go through the reflective practice questions outlined in this handbook. This will help you apply your learning to the next project iteration.

Learning Outcome Standards

You will need to demonstrate that you have acquired the unit learning outcomes for each unit of study in your course, in addition to developing attributes of the 3Ps. Unit learning outcomes and the 3Ps are accompanied by a set of learning outcome standards. The learning outcome standards set out the criteria for achieving a pass, credit, distinction or high distinction grade relevant to the unit learning outcomes and the 3Ps, and map these to the higher level course learning outcomes.

Transferable Skills

In collaboration with our industry partners, SAE has implemented a transferable skills framework to help guide your development as a professional practitioner. The framework sets out workplace behaviours to enhance professionalism and personal excellence and also those we all need to work to avoid. You'll be expected to practice specific elements of the transferable skills framework throughout Stage I.

At SAE we know that students who make a conscious effort to develop their transferable skills consistently produce outstanding work, are sought out by their peers for collaboration opportunities and receive praise from industry for their work habits and behaviours.

SAE Common Core

SAE has identified a range of core skills, knowledge and behaviour we believe are essential and common to scholarship and practice across all disciplines in the creative media industry. We enable our students to develop these core, common skills, knowledge and behaviours through the implementation of:

- **Common units** – as described in the 'Units' section above.
- **Common unit learning outcomes** – these are defined and assessed outcomes of your learning in a unit. Common unit learning outcomes are outcomes deemed to be essential to all creative media disciplines and may be assessed in both common units of study and also in your discipline specific units.

Holistic Assessment Beyond a Pass

As part of your welcome to SAE, you will have been given a Stage I Holistic Assessment Framework document. Although each unit has different unit learning outcomes the criteria to gain a higher grade are the same across each unit. This criteria is based on the 3Ps standards. Importantly, the way in which you need to address the standards is through the individual projects undertaken in each unit. For example, in a unit which focuses on audio mixing, higher grades will be awarded for demonstrating mixing **proficiency** skills above the pass standard. For a unit based on 3D level design, higher grades will be awarded for demonstrating 3D level design **proficiency** skills above the pass standard. Grades above a pass standard will likewise be awarded for unit based project work based on **process** and **person**.

The benefit of this system is that you can take the feedback you receive in one unit and apply this to your learning in other units. We want you to be great, so we want you to get the benefit of having multiple opportunities to practice and enhance your skills, knowledge and behaviours.

The highest grades of distinction and high distinction are reserved for students who show a commitment to developing each aspect of the 3Ps. Take a look at the Stage I Holistic Assessment Framework as it describes everything you need to do excel in your units.

At the end of each teaching period, you will receive a holistic grade for each unit you are enrolled in.

SAE Learning Ethos

As we discussed in the SAE Assessment Ethos section – we do things a little differently at SAE to ensure you are job and workplace ready when you graduate. This ethos also underpins how we design the learning experience as a whole. Below you will find details of the kinds of innovative, industry relevant projects, activities and learning practices you will engage with in Stage I.

Projects

In each unit you will participate in multiple projects, linked to the unit learning outcomes. By iterating the learning requirements across a range of projects, you will have the opportunity to hone your skills, knowledge and behaviours while exploring different aspects of the production process. After all, practice makes perfect.

Stage I projects are designed to place you in the role of an industry paraprofessional – someone who works under the guidance of more advanced practitioners. In Stage I, these advanced practitioners will be your facilitators.

Giving Feedback

Collaboration forms a significant part of the work undertaken in the creative media industry. You will be required to collaborate with co-workers, employers, employees and clients. Giving feedback is something that you will need to do often and do well as part of the collaboration process. We have developed a few simple points to help with this:

- Be kind, helpful and specific
- Be hard on the content, soft on the people
- Share the air
- Step up or step back

When giving feedback, first try to describe what it is you are looking at and what it is designed to achieve. Ask questions if there are any gaps in your understanding of what it is you are providing feedback on before providing comment. Once you are satisfied you have a clear understanding of what it is you are providing feedback on, try using warm and cool feedback. For warm feedback, list the traits of the object which you feel are effective in meeting its intended use. For cool feedback, list the traits of the object which you feel may not be effective in meeting its intended use. Be as specific as possible. To summarise:

- Ask clarifying questions
- Ask probing questions
- Give warm feedback
- Give cool feedback

Remember, feedback is not personal criticism – it's a vital part of creative media practice. Feedback makes creative media projects better so treat it as a gift, both when giving it and receiving it.

Deliberate Practice

Deliberate practice is about identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you need to develop or further improve your creative media practice and then investing considerable, specific and sustained effort into this task.

Deliberate practice is part of the transferable skills framework and requires you to take responsibility for and focus on developing identified skills, knowledge and behaviours. What this looks like in practice (the seek, act and evaluate model) is outlined below:

- Undertake pre-class activities including finding resources to help you understand specific Transferable Skill/s – **seek**
- Use the pre-class activities to describe what masterful application of the transferable skill looks like in practice and apply these masterful characteristics to the transferable skill/s you are practicing in class – **act**
- Seek, receive and reflect on feedback – **evaluate**

Rituals

There are certain types of activities that you will do every week, in every class throughout the trimester. These activities are designed to reinforce what you are learning and help you become a great practitioner. At SAE, we refer to these activities as rituals and they are designed to mirror some of the best work practices from industry.

In Stage I, there are a few common rituals that you'll encounter:

Opening

Taken from Agile project management processes, the Opening is a ritual designed to get you in the right mindset for the in-class activities. During an opening, you will recall what happened in the previous week, consider what you achieved/learned in the preparatory pre-class activities and anticipate what will be achieved in class.

Reflective Practice & The Learning Journal

Also from Agile, this 'close-off' ritual is designed to help define your next steps and consolidate all of the feedback that you've been given so you can mentally close-off what has happened that week and feel refreshed. Each week you will be asked to reflect upon each of the 3Ps in relation to the project work undertaken in-class. This is an important aspect of the evaluate portion of the seek, act and evaluate model. Reflective practice helps to bring unconscious aspects of experience into conscious awareness. By bringing these aspects of experience to the conscious mind, we can begin to make choices about what attitudes, practices and values we should adopt. Professional creative media practitioners do

this frequently through a range of methods including keeping journals, creating blogs and discussing their practice with others. There are three simple questions that you can use to become a reflective practitioner:

- What feedback was I given this week?
- What did I learn from this week's class?
- What do I need to brush up on?
- What additional learning do I need?
- What are my next tasks?
- What is one thing I can do that is NOT related to my study that will refresh and nourish me?

You'll use these three questions every week to reflect on each of the **3Ps** in your after class activities. The final, and most vital parts of reflective practice include making adjustments to improve your practice and the maintenance of the reflection process as an ongoing activity.

Groupwork

All of the projects in Stage I are undertaken in small groups. In your information pack you will find the Groupwork Agreement. This agreement outlines the individual team roles, responsibilities and risk mitigation strategies for students working in a group. It is essential that all group members read and understand this before undertaking group work. These guidelines look at four key responsibilities for team members:

- 1 **Equity**
- 2 **Communication**
- 3 **Deliverables**
- 4 **Learning**

Group work and collaboration is an essential part of the creative industries and therefore what we do at SAE. We'll do our best to support you in perfecting your collaboration skills, but remember to always think about how your actions and behaviours impact both the work itself and those you work with – this is an essential part of the assessment framework at SAE.

Although you'll be working in groups, your final grade will be based on your individual performance against the 3Ps.

Collaborative Learning

Learning at SAE is essentially collaborative rather than competitive. We use a range of techniques in the classroom that encourage this. Some examples that you will encounter often are:

- Think, pair, share
- Jigsaw and placemat
- Brainstorming
- Micro-teaching
- Gallery walks

You will quickly become familiar with these, and other techniques, and even be able to suggest when they should be used.

Deadlines

In industry, your ability to meet deadlines will be one of the key factors in determining how people consider you and your work. Likewise, at SAE, we take deadlines seriously. All in-class projects and pre-class and post-class activities are expected to be completed on time and to specification. In accordance with the SAE assessment policy, failure to meet a deadline will impact your final grade. The good news is that we have structured the curriculum in such a way as to help manage and balance the project deadlines. If for whatever reason you cannot make a deadline, let us know. If there are mitigating circumstances then we can assist.

Workload

Each 10 credit points of study equates to approximately 9 hours of work per week. This will include around 3-4 hours of pre-class activities, 2-3 hours of in-class work and around 3 hours of post-class work. The unit guides provide details about how much work is involved and what you'll be doing each week.

Remember that in order to pass the unit, you must be participating in the pre-class, in-class and post-class activities.

How am I going?

As you progress through the trimester, you will receive ongoing feedback about how you are performing. You will be presented with this information in a number of ways – through structured feedback sessions in class, formative feedback provided by your facilitator and peers and summative feedback which usually comes in written form and is provided upon completion of a task or set of milestones. These milestones will be outlined in each of your unit guides. You'll be expected to contribute to these sessions so make sure you don't miss them as they are a valuable piece of evidence in the holistic assessment process. Finally, never be afraid to ask for more feedback. We're here to support you.

SAE Graduate Attributes & Course Learning Outcomes

All of the projects and tasks you undertake throughout your course are designed to help you achieve the SAE Graduate Attributes and your course learning outcomes. Course Learning Outcomes can be found in your Course Statement and Unit Guides. By successfully completing all of the tasks assigned to you are working towards these outcomes and attributes. The SAE Stage I Graduate Attributes are:

Graduate Attributes	The SAE HE course produces practitioners with:
GA1 Critical Thinking and Effective Communication	cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources and communication skills to transfer knowledge and specialised skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge.
GA2 Technical Proficiency	proficiently integrate and apply production skills and information for creative media enterprises and practical applications. Specialist technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives.
GA3 Creative and Innovative Practice	develop innovative and creative solutions in a variety of professional settings and transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical and/or creative skills in a range of situations.

GA4 Independent Problem Solving and Team Collaboration

solve complex problems, demonstrating autonomy and work productively within a team. Cognitive, technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and evaluate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements. Initiative and judgement to organise the work of self and others and plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters.

GA5 Scholarship and Project Management

plan and complete projects in a timely manner, incorporating scholarly practice and critically evaluating and reporting outcomes. Personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad parameters for quantity and quality.

GA6 Professional and Ethical Standards

demonstrate understanding of professional and ethical standards within the context of the creative industry. Maintain current and ongoing gaming and gaming development, adhering to appropriate professional and ethical standards.

Look after Yourself

Your wellbeing is a vital component of success. At SAE there are a range of support services available ranging from academic support, employability services, counselling and disability services. The units that you study are just one part of preparing you for the creative industries. Your facilitator or any other member of SAE's staff will be able to direct you to a range of additional services should you need them.

Ready to Roll?

This handbook is just the beginning. Each unit will have its own orientation in week 1 of the trimester. You can come back to this handbook at any time or ask any SAE staff member any questions you might have.



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