

Scored assessment: External assessment

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) external assessments are any centrally set tasks assessed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), including written, oral, electronic/digital, aural or performance tasks conducted according to the requirements of accredited study designs and VCE VET programs.

1 VCE examinations

VCE examinations are set by VCAA-appointed panels. The VCAA has examination specifications and sample material (by study) and an archive of past examinations and examination reports.

Throughout this section the term 'VCE examination' refers to any VCE examination, the General Achievement Test (GAT) and the Extended Investigation Critical Thinking Test. The home school is the school responsible for the administration of all student data and course enrolments through VASS, and responsible for ensuring that all their students have been allocated to an examination centre/room. A student can have only one home school at a time.

1.1 Integrity of VCE written examinations and VCE examination administration

VCE providers with students enrolled in one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequence must meet the VCAA requirements for the conduct and administration of the GAT and VCE examinations as outlined in the **2016 VCE External Assessment Agreement** form.

Principals must certify that they will comply with these requirements as outlined in the agreement, which will be sent to schools in early 2016 as a Notice to Schools. Principals are required to complete and sign-off on this agreement as part of the requirements of this notice.

Specific security and logistical requirements for schools approved to host VCE written examinations are outlined in this Notice to Schools and also in the *VCE Examination Manual 2016* (distributed to schools in Term 2).

Principals should ensure that all home school students are appropriately accommodated and correctly supervised for all their VCE written examinations, including those undertaken at other schools and providers.

Principals should appoint supervisors subject to the conditions set out by the VCAA and the procedures established by the school council or school board. VCE examinations must be conducted according to the guidelines provided by the VCAA in the current VCE Examination Manual.

2 Eligibility to undertake VCE examinations

Students who sit VCE examinations must be living in Victoria, except where one of the following special circumstances applies:

- the student is a bona fide resident of Victoria but is temporarily interstate or overseas
- the student has completed a substantial part of their course of study in Victoria and has moved temporarily or permanently interstate or overseas. These students must sit their examinations in the year of their departure from Victoria.

Students living outside Victoria who wish to sit VCE examinations must attend a school or institution that is recognised by the VCAA as a VCE provider (the Application to sit VCE external assessments interstate or overseas form is available on VASS).

2.1 Eligibility to sit VCE external assessments outside Victoria

A student is eligible to sit VCE external assessments interstate or overseas if:

- they are on an exchange program overseas
- they are a student on exchange in Australia and are returning home immediately before or during the examination period*
- they are representing Australia for an official duty, for example a sporting, academic, military or cultural event*
- they or their parent/guardian has been asked to work interstate or overseas.

* Events such as family holidays, birthdays and weddings are not considered valid grounds for an application to sit VCE external assessments interstate or overseas.

3 Examination periods and timetable

The VCAA determines the timing of VCE examinations. The major scheduled VCE written examination period is in October–November. Schools should issue each student with an individual Student Examination/Assessment Timetable after the release date for the October–November examination periods.

The dates for the [VCE examination periods in 2016](#) have been approved and are on the VCAA website.

Each year the VCAA develops the VCE examination timetable using actual, finalised enrolments to address the following priorities:

- minimising the number of students required to sit more than two examinations on a given day
- minimising the number of clashes of two examinations in the same session
- avoiding scheduling another examination on the same day as English and English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- creating a timetable that best accommodates the examination marking and processing requirements for each VCE examination and ensures the VCAA has sufficient time to guarantee students receive their final results by mid-December 2016.

The VCAA will publish the 2016 VCE examination timetable in May 2016.

The VCE examination timetable is also printed in the *VCE Exams Navigator – Student Information and Timetable*, which must be issued to all students by their home school. The examination timetable is also available on the VCAA website (at the same time it is published in May). In addition, VASS administrators must print Student Examination/Assessment Timetables from VASS and distribute them to individual students after the release date for the October–November examination period.

3.1 Students with three examinations timetabled on one day

All schools that have students with three examinations timetabled on any day during an examination period will be notified by the VCAA, which will update these students' timetables in VASS to reflect this policy and provide schools with advice slips about the special arrangements outlined here.

The VCAA will permit students who have three examinations timetabled on one day to have an additional 10 minutes per hour extra time for the final examination on that day. This may be taken as extra working time or as supervised rest breaks. Students are not obliged to utilise the extra time entitlement and are permitted to leave the examination prior to their revised finish time.

Students who complete three examinations in a single day are entitled to receive a Derived Examination Score (DES) for the third examination. These students will not be required to apply for a DES.

To be eligible for the DES, students must attend all three examinations on the day and attempt the questions on the paper to the best of their ability. The DES should be seen as a safety net, not a substitute examination score. Many students will, if they apply themselves diligently, exceed or equal their predicted DES in their third examination completed on that day. At the end of the year the VCAA will compare each student's actual examination score and their calculated DES and award the student the higher of the two.

Note: Students need to have completed the course of study leading to the examination and have a result for at least one other graded assessment in the same study to be eligible for the calculation of a DES.

3.2 Timetable clashes

If a student has two examinations timetabled for the same session, one of the examinations will be moved to another session on the same day. Principals may consult the student and, on behalf of the student, request which examination is to be moved to a different session.

Note: VCE Languages and Music written examinations cannot be moved to a different session.

3.3 Early starts

Principals can apply to the VCAA (with supporting evidence) for permission to begin examinations up to 30 minutes earlier than stated in the official timetable. Approval to begin examinations at the earlier times will be confirmed by the VCAA in writing to the principal. The principal must notify students and parents in writing of the new times.

3.4 Late arrivals

Each written examination commences with a reading period that is included in the times shown in the VCE examination timetable. Students must check the starting time of each examination and arrive before the commencement time, and must familiarise themselves with the rules about late admission to VCE examinations. If a student is late, the VCAA reserves the right to determine whether or not a student's response materials/script books will be accepted.

The rules for late admission to VCE examinations are outlined on the VCAA website (www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/examsrules.aspx) and are also published in the *VCE Examination Manual 2016* and *VCE Exams Navigator 2016*.

3.5 Absence from examinations

All absences should be noted on the attendance rolls at the examination. If a student has been prevented from undertaking an examination due to circumstances that warrant Special Provision, the student can apply to the VCAA for a DES.

3.6 VCAA examination rules

Students are required to observe the VCAA rules for the conduct of VCE external assessments, conducted by or on behalf of the VCAA as well as the day-to-day rules of the institution hosting the external assessment. VCAA rules shall apply with appropriate and reasonable modifications to students who have disabilities or other impairments. The rules are available on the [VCAA website](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) and are included in the *VCE Examinations Manual 2016* and relevant publications for students, such as the 2016 GAT brochure (distributed in Term 2) and *VCE Exams Navigator 2016* (distributed in Term 3).

3.7 Student numbers and identification requirements for VCE external assessments

Students must identify themselves by writing their VCAA student number on the response materials used for VCE written examinations. Student numbers are provided to students by the VCAA through their home school's access to VASS. Students undertaking the oral component of the VCE Languages examination will be required to identify themselves by stating their student number in English.

All students undertaking a performance or Languages oral examination or the Extended Investigation oral presentation will be required to provide personal identification at the registration point for their assessment. The personal identification must consist of a clear photograph of the student and their full name. Most existing student identification cards or personal documents (for example a school ID card, a public transport ID card, a passport or a driver's licence) are sufficient.

Students completing a VCE written examination at a location other than their home school may also be required to provide personal identification prior to entering their examination.

3.8 Materials and equipment authorised for use in GAT and VCE written examinations

Materials authorised by the VCAA for use in the GAT and VCE examinations are listed on the [VCAA website](#) and are included in the *VCE Examinations Manual 2016*, the 2016 GAT brochure and *VCE Exams Navigator 2016*.

4 Marking external assessments

Examinations will be subject to independent marking by assessing panels appointed by the VCAA. If necessary, there will be discrepancy marking by an additional assessor, who will assess the task without knowledge of the previous assessments.

4.1 Indicative grades and the anomalous grades check

Indicative grades for all VCE external assessments, apart from the Music Style and Composition Externally-assessed Tasks, are to be submitted prior to the relevant examination period. The primary purpose of these indicative grades is in the quality assurance procedures for marking the external assessments. They assist in identifying possible anomalous marking of individual scripts. Indicative grades will also be used in the calculation of the DES.

The indicative grade is the prediction of a student's actual level of achievement on the examination. Indicative grades are a letter grade from A+ to E/UG (ungraded) or NA (not assessed); note that plus (+) can be used, but minus (-) is not available for input. Class teachers of the same study at the school should confer on the comparability of the indicative grades given to the individual students in their classes.

The rank order and the level of spread of the indicative grades for the school cohort in the study are of prime importance. The indicative grades for the school cohort are moderated by the VCAA to ensure that they are statistically reliable. If they are not statistically reliable, they will not be used.

Strategies for arriving at an indicative grade

The VCAA has no preferred position on how a school arrives at a set of indicative grades except to advise that there should be coherence in the process. All teachers at the school should be provided with advice by the principal on the definition and purpose of the indicative grade, and a suitable means of arriving at a set of indicative grades for the school cohort.

Some strategies used by schools are:

- setting practice examinations, which must be held at a time that allows entry of the indicative grade on VASS by the due date
- ranking the students by performance in School-based Assessment and then applying an appropriate grade
- basing the grade on prior knowledge of the relative ability of the student in the study.

The VCAA recommends that schools use the indicative grades feedback report on VASS to assist with determining indicative grades. This report shows whether the school's indicative grades for the previous year were generally aligned with the final grades. The indicative grades feedback report is on VASS at: School Admin > School Statistics > Indicative Grades Feedback.

Anomalous grades check process

For all written examinations, VCE Languages examinations (both oral and written), performance-based Music examinations and the Extended Investigation Externally-assessed Task (written report and oral presentation), an anomalous grade check is undertaken prior to issuing final results. Indicative grades provided by the school, on the condition that they are statistically reliable, are used to identify students with anomalous scores. These students' scripts are identified and reconsidered by the relevant chief assessor's panel.

The scripts include those where the student's examination assessment is substantially different from that predicted from one of the following:

- the school's indicative grade
- the student's GAT component scores
- for studies with more than one external assessment, the other examination assessment in the study.

In each case, the differences must be statistically significant.

In the interests of the students, teachers should be as accurate as possible in their estimation of an indicative grade. If the teacher is accurate, that is, allocates indicative grades with a similar order and spread to external assessment performance of their students, any possible anomalous marking will be detected, and the assessment referred to the chief assessor for checking. If the teacher allocates indicative grades that are different in order and spread to the external assessment performance of their students, some anomalous assessments may not be detected. If the teacher consistently under- or over-assesses indicative grades for all students, anomalous performance from the pattern given by the school can still be detected. Thus, within the constraints of the grade structure, a school need not be overly concerned about submitting indicative grades with exactly the correct level, but teachers should try to order and spread students' grades as accurately as possible.

Schools may run a report through VASS that lists those students whose scripts/recordings were forwarded to the chief assessor's panel for final determination. The principal may make a written request to the VCAA for confirmation that anomalous examination grades procedures have been correctly applied to a student's external assessments.

The anomalous grades check is not applied for Dance Performance Examination, Drama Solo Performance Examination, Further Mathematics Examination 1, Theatre Studies Stagecraft Examination and VCE VET Dance Performance Examination.

5 Critical Thinking Test

The Critical Thinking Test is an external assessment for VCE Extended Investigation. It is undertaken on computer and is based on the key knowledge and skills that underpin the Outcome 3 in Unit 3.

Students will complete the test at a time and date to be scheduled by the VCAA. VCAA rules will apply.

6 Externally-assessed Tasks

The Externally-assessed Task, which is specific to Music Style and Composition and Extended Investigation, assesses a student's level of achievement in accordance with the study design and published assessment criteria. In relation to Extended Investigation, an initial assessment of the written report component of the Externally-assessed Task is provided by the school. Both the written and oral components of the Externally-assessed Task are then assessed by panels appointed by the VCAA.

For more detailed information about the Music Style and Composition Externally-assessed Task, refer to the *VCE Music Assessment Handbook 2011–2016* and the VCAA website.

For more detailed information about the Extended Investigation Externally-assessed Task, refer to the Extended Investigation study page on the VCAA website.

Teachers must ensure that there is a sufficient range of topics within their class to enable them to distinguish an individual student's work and therefore to assist in the authentication process.

Teachers must monitor and record each student's development of work, from planning and drafting through to completion, in the **Authentication Record for Externally-assessed Task** form (on VASS). This requires regular sightings of the work by the teacher.

Observations of individual work done in class should be recorded. The teacher and student must sign each recorded observation. If the school is being reviewed, this sheet should be included with the work.