

Scored assessment: General Achievement Test

All students enrolled in one or more Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Unit 3–4 sequences or VCE VET scored Unit 3–4 sequences, including Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students, are required to sit the General Achievement Test (GAT).

1 Purpose of the GAT

The GAT is an essential part of the VCE assessment procedure. Although GAT results do not count directly towards VCE results, they do play an important role in checking that School-based Assessments and external assessments have been accurately assessed. GAT results are used in the calculation of the Derived Examination Score (DES). The VCAA will use GAT scores in:

- the statistical moderation of School-based Assessments
- checking the accuracy of student scores in external assessments
- the calculation of a DES.

1.1 School-based Assessment and the GAT

The VCAA will apply statistical moderation procedures to School-based Assessment scores to ensure that they are comparable across the state and fair to all students. The statistical moderation process compares the level and spread of each school's assessments of its students in each study with the level and spread of the same students' scores in the external assessment, and adjusts the school scores if necessary.

In some studies, statistical moderation will also use GAT scores. This will only be done if it provides a better match with schools' School-based Assessments throughout the state. The external assessment scores will always have the major influence in the statistical moderation calculations.

1.2 External assessments and the GAT

The GAT is used as part of a final check on external assessment scores. If the final score for an external assessment is significantly different from the score predicted by the GAT, school indicative grades and any other external assessment final scores for the study, the external assessment will be assessed again by the chief assessor. Scores may go up or stay the same, but will not go down as a result of this final check.

1.3 DES and the GAT

The calculation for the DES uses all available scores for the student in the affected study and the indicative grade for any external assessments provided by the school and the GAT component scores. For each approved application for a specific external assessment, the VCAA will calculate a range of possible DES scores, which will be calculated statistically from the student's other assessments, including:

- moderated School-based Assessments
- GAT component scores
- other external assessment scores if applicable
- indicative grades provided by the school.

The contribution made by the graded assessments, the indicative grade and the GAT component scores is determined by analysis of the comparison data with the final score for the specific external assessments for all students who have not applied for a DES. For all external assessments, the two graded internal assessment scores provide the greatest contribution to all the predictors.

If a student is eligible for a DES and the highest of the predictors is greater than the achieved external assessment score, the highest predictor is chosen as the final score for the student in the relevant external assessment.

1.4 Exemption from the GAT

It is important for all students with an enrolment in one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences to attempt the GAT. The VCAA may use a student's GAT scores to:

- contribute to the statistical moderation of School-based Assessments
- calculate a DES.
- check the accuracy of external assessment marking.

Eligibility for exemption from the GAT

A student may be deemed eligible for an exemption from the GAT if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- They have a vision or other impairment for which arrangements cannot reasonably be made, given the format of the GAT (Special Examination Arrangements for the GAT can be provided for students with a hearing impairment).
- They are prevented from sitting the GAT by injury, illness, personal trauma or a serious intervening event.
- They are employed and cannot be absent from work (evidence from the employer is required).

A personal trauma may include, but is not limited to, the death or serious illness of, or an accident involving, a family member.

A serious intervening event may include, but is not limited to:

- an accident before or on the day of the GAT
- attendance at a funeral of a family member or other person of close relationship
- the required attendance at a legal proceeding.

Applications on the basis of an injury, an illness, a personal trauma or a serious intervening event require an appropriate independent professional to complete Section B or C of the application form.

Note: An application for an exemption from the GAT cannot be submitted solely on the basis of:

- a student requiring Special Examination Arrangements
- a student not completing any graded assessment
- Interrupted Studies status or Compassionate Late Withdrawal
- a student being interstate or overseas at the time of the GAT.

Special Examination Arrangements

A request for an exemption from the GAT on the grounds of requiring Special Examination Arrangements will be refused unless the necessary arrangements exceed those that would normally be offered for the GAT.

Students who experience the onset of an illness, the exacerbation of an existing condition or the occurrence of an injury or personal trauma in the period before the GAT should discuss, with their VCE coordinator, a school application for Emergency Special Examination Arrangements, which may assist them to sit the GAT.

Students not completing any graded assessment

Students not completing any graded assessments associated with VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences will not be granted an exemption on those grounds.

Interrupted Studies status and Compassionate Late Withdrawal

It is important for a student who has been granted Interrupted Studies status to attempt the GAT in both years, but particularly in the year they return to complete the study.

If a student has been withdrawn from all VCE or scored VCE VET units at Unit 3–4 level before the GAT, there is no need to apply for an exemption from the GAT. A student who has been withdrawn after the GAT is not eligible to apply for an exemption from the GAT.

Interstate and overseas arrangements

Students may be eligible to sit the GAT interstate or overseas if:

- they are on an exchange program overseas
- they are representing Australia for an official duty (for example a sporting, academic, military or cultural event)
- they or their parent or guardian have 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.

The Application to sit VCE external assessments interstate or overseas form is available on VASS.

How to apply for exemption from the GAT

If a student's circumstances are deemed to meet the eligibility requirements for an exemption from the GAT, their school may apply to the VCAA using the **Application for Authorised Absence from the General Achievement Test (GAT)** form, which is available on VASS.

Applications on the grounds of accident, illness or injury must be substantiated with evidence from an independent health professional, who will need to complete Section B of the application form.

Applications on the grounds of a personal trauma or serious intervening event must be substantiated with evidence from an appropriate independent professional. This independent professional will need to complete Section C of the application form.

1.5 VCAL and/or VCE VET and the GAT

Students who are enrolled in a VCAL certificate in 2016, but are not enrolled in any VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences, are not required to sit the GAT.

Students who are enrolled in a VCAL certificate in 2016 that includes any VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences are required to sit the GAT.

2 GAT results

A statement of GAT results is mailed to each student with all other VCE and VCAL results. This statement indicates each student's raw score and their relative score calculated in the same way as a study score, with descriptive comments about their performance on each component. The components are:

- written communication
- mathematics, science and technology
- humanities, the arts and social sciences.

The Statement of Results indicates whether a student obtained results in the GAT or had an authorised or unauthorised absence. Schools can access their students' GAT results on VASS at the end of the year when results are released. Students cannot apply for a DES for the GAT.

