

Scored assessment: School-based Assessment

There are two forms of School-based Assessment for Units 3 and 4:

- School-assessed Coursework consists of a set of assessment tasks that assess each student's level of achievement in Unit 3 and 4 outcomes as specified in the study design. Schools provide a score for each component of coursework specified in the study design. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) aggregates these scores into a single total score for each student, which is then statistically moderated against the examination scores in the study. The General Achievement Test (GAT) may also be used in statistical moderation.
- School-assessed Tasks are set by the VCAA to assess specific sets of practical skills and knowledge. Teachers assess the student's level of achievement on the basis of a rating against criteria specified by the VCAA. Schools provide a score for each criterion. The VCAA aggregates these scores into a single total score for each student, which is then statistically moderated against the examination scores in the study. The GAT may also be used in statistical moderation.

School policies and procedures, including the conditions and rules under which School-based Assessment will take place, must be communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the academic year or when a student enrolls in any VCE unit at the school.

Each VCE unit result must be determined on the basis of evidence of achievement completed during the academic year in which the student is enrolled. The VCAA recognises that some schools will begin teaching programs in the year prior to enrolment. These programs are generally one to three weeks in length but must not include formal School-based Assessment.

1 Authentication

Principals are responsible for the administration of VCAA rules and instructions in their school. One of these rules is that students must ensure that all unacknowledged work submitted for assessment is genuinely their own.

Teachers may consider it appropriate to ask students to demonstrate their understanding of the task at, or about the time of, submission of the work. If any part or all of the work cannot be authenticated, the matter must be dealt with as a breach of rules.

1.1 School-assessed Coursework

Teachers must develop courses that include appropriate learning activities to enable students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. Undue assistance should not be provided to students while undertaking assessment tasks.

Students should be clearly informed of the timelines and the conditions under which assessment tasks are to be conducted, including whether any resources are permitted.

The VCAA does not take responsibility for teacher absence or a change of teacher within schools. These issues should be dealt with by the school principal as an internal staffing matter.

Work completed outside class

Most work for the assessment of unit outcomes and School-assessed Coursework will be completed in class; however, this does not preclude normal teacher expectations for students to complete research and learning activities that contribute to them gaining the key knowledge and key skills outside of class time. This will require additional work and study outside class as part of the students' regular learning program.

The setting and marking of work with a formative focus provides students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills, and for teachers to provide diagnostic feedback.

A task for the assessment of unit outcomes may require preliminary preparation and activities associated with the task, for example, gathering necessary research data. The amount of work to be completed as homework is decided by the study teacher, taking into account the nature, scope and purpose of the task. Students should be advised just prior to beginning the task that some information or data may be collected outside the classroom.

For School-assessed Coursework undertaken outside class time, teachers must monitor and record each student's progress through to completion. This requires regular sightings of the work by the teacher and the keeping of records in the **Authentication Record for School-based Assessment** form.

Drafting

Teachers are not required to formally sight drafts or to record their completion unless it is for authentication purposes. Drafting can remain a part of a teaching and learning strategy, and students may do preliminary drafting; however, drafts are not to be submitted to the teacher for the purpose of getting feedback on an incomplete task that will contribute to the total School-assessed Coursework score. Teachers must not mark or provide comments on any draft submitted for School-assessed Coursework.

1.2 School-assessed Tasks

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 study-specific **School-assessed Task Authentication Record** form. 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.

1.3 Strategies for avoiding authentication problems

To reduce the possibility of authentication problems occurring in VCE Units 1 to 4, or being difficult to resolve, the following strategies are useful:

- Teachers should ensure that tasks are kept secure prior to administration, to avoid unauthorised release to students and compromising the assessment. They should not be sent by mail or electronically without due care.
- A significant amount of class time should be spent on the task so that the teacher is familiar with each student's work in progress and can regularly monitor and discuss aspects of the work with each student.
- Students should document the specific stages of the development of work, starting with an early part of the task, such as the topic choice, list of resources and/or preliminary research.
- Copies of each student's written work should be filed at given stages in their development.
- Assessment tasks should not be recycled from one academic year to the next, to ensure that students are unable to use other students' work from a previous academic year.

- If there is more than one class of a particular study in the school, the VCAA expects the school to apply internal moderation and/or cross-marking procedures to ensure consistency of assessments between teachers. Teachers are advised to apply the same approach to authentication and record-keeping, as cross-marking sometimes reveals possible breaches of authentication. The early liaison on topics, and sharing of draft student work between teachers, enables earlier identification of possible authentication problems and the implementation of appropriate action.
- Students should acknowledge tutors, if they have them, and discuss and show the work done with them. Ideally, liaison between class teachers and tutors can provide the maximum benefit for students and ensure that tutors are aware of the authentication requirements. Similar advice applies to students who receive regular help from a family member.

2 Scheduling assessment tasks

Teachers are advised to give students the dates for completion of assessment tasks in advance, taking into account the [Important Administrative Dates](#). The [Assessment Schedule](#) has the dates by which schools must submit results to the VCAA, and should be used in conjunction with the Important Administrative Dates.

Schools should take into account issues of authentication and student workload in deciding when specific details of tasks are given to students.

An extension may be needed to account for circumstances in which an individual student or group of students has not been given appropriate time to undertake or complete School-based Assessment.

2.1 Rescheduling assessment tasks for an entire class

If teachers wish to reschedule an assessment task because their students are not ready to be assessed, or due to other circumstances, they should provide adequate notification to all students in the class or classes.

An extension of time for all students in a class should be given only on the condition that they are all given adequate notice and that no student in the class or in another class is advantaged or disadvantaged.

2.2 Rescheduling an assessment task for an individual student

Extension of time for an individual student to complete a task should be granted only in special circumstances.

Schools are required to have a policy outlining conditions under which an extension of time for individuals may be granted. It should be common across all VCE units within a school and should contain details including:

- a formal process for applying for an extension of time
- the rules of eligibility
- the maximum period for an extension
- conditions under which the extension will be allowed.

An extension of time may be permitted, but not into the next academic year.

Note: Extensions for tasks related to units of competency contributing to scored VCE VET sequences cannot be permitted beyond the final date for results submission. Unit completion is essential for finalising study scores, which must be calculated at the same time for all VCE studies.

3 Determining initial School-based Assessments

Each school should have established procedures for determining School-based Assessments and should apply these procedures consistently. There should be consistency in the decisions made by teachers of individual studies and in the decisions made by multiple teachers of one study.

3.1 Determining initial School-based Assessments where there is more than one class in the school

If there is more than one class in a study, teachers should engage in consultation to arrive at School-based Assessments. Schools have considerable experience in assessment, but the following suggestions will help schools to review their arrangements or establish new practices.

Approach 1

- Teachers meet to discuss performance descriptors/assessment criteria, topics and the approaches used for the task.
- Teachers grade the task from their own classes.
- Teachers swap samples and carry out blind marking.
- If necessary, teachers mark further tasks or reassess tasks from their own class.
- Difficult cases are further discussed before results are entered.

Approach 2

- Teachers combine and distribute the student tasks among themselves for assessment.
- The results are returned to the class teacher, who reassesses all tasks or the tasks of students who have unexpected results.
- Unusual cases are considered by all teachers concerned.

Approach 3

- Samples from all classes are distributed.
- All teachers assess the same tasks.
- Differences in results are discussed to gain a clearer and more consistent understanding of the application of the performance descriptors/assessment criteria.
- When all teachers are confident they have a consistent understanding of the application of the performance descriptors/assessment criteria, each teacher assesses tasks from their own class.

3.2 Determining initial School-based Assessments in partnership with another school

Refer to the Administrative information: Schools and providers section for information about setting up partnerships specifically for School-based Assessment. It is recommended that initial discussion take place at the beginning of the academic year between teachers in different schools.

It is useful to swap some drafts of typical work early in the process of completing the School-based Assessment. The earlier a common understanding between teachers is established, the more smoothly the process will be completed.

Teachers in schools that are combining their individual assessments will find it useful to discuss, and come to an agreement on, student completion dates.

Producing a combined set of comparable scores for a School-based Assessment

The following steps are recommended:

1. Participating teachers should discuss the requirements of the study design, the chosen assessment tasks for each outcome, the performance descriptors/assessment criteria for each task or outcome, and the assessment program of each of the partnership schools. This communication should occur as early as possible, and no later than the expected date of completion of the first designated assessment task for the unit.
2. The teachers should establish agreement on the procedures to be followed to ensure comparability of assessments. This includes the scheduling and marking schemes of any tasks to be done in common.
3. Each school assesses the assessment tasks of its own students. It is expected that the schools with more than one class for the study will apply their own procedures to achieve comparability of assessments within their school.
4. Each school selects student tasks for cross-marking. For small-group partnerships, this should include all the tasks from the school with the small group, and at least an equivalent number from the partner schools. For other partnerships, teachers should agree on an appropriate number, preferably at least five pieces from each school. For each task, the second marking should be 'blind', that is, made without any knowledge of the assessment given by the student's own teacher.
5. Teachers then discuss both assessments for each task and agree on a final score. If the teachers cannot reach consensus, the two scores should be averaged or adjusted appropriately. As a result of the cross-marking exercise, it may be necessary to adjust the assessments of other tasks not included in the cross-marking.
6. When all assessments have been finalised, the scores for each student on each task should be collated in a single list for the partnership. Each school must keep a copy of this list, as the VCAA may request it for analysis purposes.

4 VCE School-assessed Coursework

School-assessed Coursework consists of a set of assessment tasks that assess each student's level of achievement in VCE Unit 3 and 4 outcomes as specified in the study design.

4.1 Preparation for School-assessed Coursework

Advice for Teachers

For each new or revised VCE study from 2015, information that was formerly contained in a separate Assessment Handbook, has been incorporated into a single Advice for Teachers publication. Studies accredited prior to 2015 have an Advice for Teachers publication and an Assessment Handbook.

VCE Assessment Handbooks contain assessment information about Units 3 and 4 School-assessed Coursework and administrative details of examinations for individual studies. Advice is provided on how to construct and incorporate assessment tasks and how to grade these tasks using performance descriptors. VCE Assessment Handbooks are not published annually.

Assessment Handbooks are available from the VCE study pages on the VCAA website. Notification of any changes to assessment advice during the course of study will be made available to teachers via the VCAA *Bulletin* and VCAA website.

4.2 Initial assessment

Schools are responsible for the initial assessment of School-assessed Coursework. The basis for this is the teacher's rating of the performance of each student on the tasks specified in the study design. The Advice for Teachers/Assessment Handbooks for each VCE study provides advice on the assessment of School-assessed Coursework tasks.

Schools should not attempt to apply an 'additional' ranking process after assessments have been completed. This approach is unnecessary and schools should not try to determine individual rankings for students as a separate part of the assessment process.

4.3 Feedback to students

After assessment tasks are submitted and marked, teachers should provide feedback to students. Appropriate feedback includes:

- advice on particular problem areas
- advice on where and how improvements can be made for further learning
- reporting S or N decisions and/or written comments on students' performances against each outcome.

Schools may choose this as a basis for reporting to parents. In providing this feedback, teachers may give students their marks on individual School-assessed Coursework tasks. If providing marks, teachers must advise students that their total School-assessed Coursework scores may change following statistical moderation.

Schools are strongly recommended to include the following in student VCE handbooks:

- advice about the 'conditional' nature of any School-assessed Coursework marks given to students
- that total scores for School-assessed Coursework may change as a result of statistical moderation.

Although schools may permit students to submit further evidence for satisfactory completion of a unit, students may not submit further tasks for the reconsideration of School-assessed Coursework scores awarded by the school.

4.4 Lost, stolen or damaged School-assessed Coursework

If a teacher or student has lost a School-assessed Coursework task, or it has been stolen or damaged, they must complete a written statement explaining the circumstances. The statement must be signed, dated and filed at the school. The principal will determine an initial score for the assessment task, acting on advice from the teacher and on the basis of records kept.

5 VCE School-assessed Tasks

This section applies to the School-assessed Tasks for the following studies:

- Algorithmics (AL03)
- Art (AR03)
- Computing
 - Informatics (IT02)
 - Software Development (IT03)
- Media (ME03)
- Product Design and Technology (DT03)
- Studio Arts (SA03)
- Systems Engineering (SE03)
- Visual Communication Design (VC03).

School-assessed Tasks are used to measure, in accordance with published criteria, a student's level of achievement in completing a task.

5.1 Topic selection

The VCE study designs set out the details of the School-assessed Tasks to be completed for assessment purposes. Schools should select topics in accordance with these details. Any additional information on School-assessed Tasks will be published in the *VCAA Bulletin* and on the relevant VCE study pages. The responsibility for the selection of appropriate topics lies with the school.

Schools may share advice and information on the selection of topics. Teachers are encouraged to discuss the selection of topics among themselves, and obtain advice from the VCAA if there are any doubts.

6 Advice on developmental stages

Teachers are required to provide feedback to students on work in progress for a School-assessed Task.

All changes made in the various stages of development of a School-assessed Task must represent the student's own work. It is appropriate in the developmental stages of the work for the teacher to ask questions and to offer general advice (for example, about alternative strategies); however, the teacher must not dictate or make changes that might lead to uncertainty about the student's authorship or ownership of the work.

For VCE Visual Communication Design and VCE Media, the teacher's formal written comments should be made on only one draft of the written component of the School-assessed Task. If written comments are made, the draft containing the teacher's comments must be initialled and dated by the teacher, and made available to the VCAA if required. There is no drafting requirement for the other School-assessed Tasks.

The following forms of teacher assistance are not appropriate:

- providing detailed advice on, corrections to, or actual reworking of, a student's drafts, production or folio
- providing structured outlines with detailed suggestions or instructions for completing work; this may constitute undue assistance
- providing or interpreting data and providing content or concepts not already mentioned by the student in draft work or in their design briefs.

7 Assessment of School-assessed Tasks

Schools are responsible for the assessment of School-assessed Tasks. The sole basis for this assessment is the set of criteria for the award of scores, published each year by the VCAA on the VCE study pages of its website. The VCAA provides detailed descriptors of levels of performance for each criterion. These criteria are mandated and schools must use the descriptors when making assessment judgments.

Further advice may be provided from time to time for particular studies, details of which are announced in the *VCAA Bulletin* and published on the relevant study page of the VCAA website. Teachers should use this advice and attend any relevant professional development activities that may be available.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that teachers receive all relevant assessment material and that they use the current year's assessment criteria and advice published on the relevant VCE study page to accurately assess their students' work.

Assessment sheets for School-assessed Tasks

The VCAA provides assessment sheets, specifying the criteria for the awarding of grades, to all schools. Assessment sheets are published annually and made available on the relevant study page of the VCAA website. Schools must use the current year's assessment sheets.

Each criterion has a numerical scale of 0 to 10 and schools award a score for each criterion. Each criterion score is to be entered on VASS and must be submitted by the relevant date. Schools are advised to retain their copies of assessment sheets until the final results date at the end of the academic year.

Submitting results to the VCAA

The assessing school should enter School-assessed Task scores by the due date specified for each study in the [Assessment Schedule](#). If the assessments from a school are not received by the due date, all School-assessed Tasks from that school are likely to be reviewed.

7.1 Feedback to students

Schools may provide feedback to students on School-assessed Tasks. It must be made clear to students that initial school assessment may change as a result of the statistical moderation process.

7.2 Lost, stolen or damaged School-assessed Tasks

If a teacher or student has lost a School-assessed Task, or the task has been stolen or damaged, they must complete a written statement of the circumstances. The statement must be signed and dated. The school must complete the **Report on Lost, Stolen or Damaged School-assessed Tasks and Externally-assessed Tasks** form, enter an estimated score on VASS, and send the form to the VCAA.

The principal, acting on advice from the teacher and on the basis of records kept, will determine an initial assessment. The initial assessment may be adjusted as a result of the review process.

If the School-assessed Task is required for audit, the **Study Record** form for that student must be annotated as Lost/Stolen/Damaged (LSD) by the school. This procedure does not apply to work lost or damaged due to computer misuse or malfunction (see the Assessment: Satisfactory completion of units section).

7.3 Student transfers after the due date

If a student transfers after the due date for the study in which the School-assessed Task is scheduled, the student's School-assessed Task must stay with the assessing school until after the return of student work.

8 VCE VET School-assessed Coursework

In order to be eligible for a study score, students must demonstrate competency in the units of competency that make up the Unit 3–4 sequence. Students must also satisfy all the requirements of scored assessment.

Each scored VCE VET program requires the satisfactory completion of three School-assessed Coursework tasks that are integrated into the delivery of the VET training program. An assessment plan is required for each VCE VET scored program. Full details of the assessment process for scored VCE VET programs are published in the [VCE VET Assessment Guide](#).

9 Managing score amendments

When the due date for assessments has passed, student results that have been entered on VASS for that cycle will be locked. Any administrative errors in entering the results must be amended using a **Score Amendment Sheet (SAS)**, which is generated through VASS. The completed SAS must be signed by the principal or their delegate, and forwarded to the Manager, Student Records and Results Unit, with:

- a written explanation of the reason for the alteration to the score, signed by the principal
- a copy of the original assessment sheet.

If the SAS is received after the final grade has been allocated, the VCAA will determine the final grade.

10 VCE School-based Assessment Audit

As part of the VCAA's ongoing monitoring and quality assurance program for the VCE, assessment tasks for School-based Assessment in each VCE study and scored VCE VET program can be requested for audit from schools.

The School-based Assessment Audit is in two stages for both Unit 3 and Unit 4.

The first stage in both Unit 3 and Unit 4 is the completion of a study-specific online questionnaire by all teachers of the relevant study on behalf of the school.

For the second stage schools may be asked to forward evidence of any aspect of the assessment, including assessment information provided to students, tasks, marking schemes or criteria, moderation processes, or samples of student work selected by the VCAA.

Schools should have a process for collecting and storing the required material for submission by the due date. Submission of any teacher- or student-generated material must be done electronically.

The audit will examine School-based Assessments for irregularities (for example, instances where the VCAA's requirements have not been followed). The audit process will be undertaken by the relevant VCE State Reviewer and VCAA Curriculum Manager. The outcomes of the audit will assist in planning the VCAA's assessment advice and professional development support for teachers. Schools will receive feedback on the outcomes of the audit.

A more detailed overview of this process is provided in the document [General administrative information for the audit and review of School-based Assessment for all VCE studies Units 3 and 4](#), on the VCAA website.

If a school is being audited for a VCE VET study, the supporting documentation from teachers of scored VCE VET programs should include:

- the three scored tasks set by the teacher or trainer
- a copy of the assessment plan for the identified VCE VET program.

11 School-based Assessment: Breaches of rules and investigations

Schools are responsible for ensuring that students comply with VCAA rules for School-based Assessment. For advice on School-based Assessment, refer to 'Work completed outside class' and 'Strategies for avoiding authentication problems' in the Assessment: School-based Assessment section, and the [VCAL Unit Assessment Planning Guide](#).

Schools should have their own policy and procedures for dealing with allegations that students have breached VCAA examination rules or School-based Assessment authentication rules. The policy and procedures should be clear about roles and responsibilities, and in particular, who the ultimate decision-maker is in relation to any alleged breaches. The school policy and procedures should set out the process that will be followed when an allegation is received, the communication that can be expected from the school during the process of investigation and decision-making, the opportunities that will be available for the student to respond to allegations, the possible penalties, and the avenues of appeal.

The school policy and procedures should be made available and explained to students and others in the school community at the start of the academic year.

A student undertaking assessment under test conditions as part of School-based Assessment in Units 1 to 4 must comply with VCAA examination rules. The [VCAA examination rules](#) are published on the VCAA website and distributed to all VCE providers and students in both the GAT brochure and *VCE Exams Navigator* each year.

11.1 Rules for authentication of School-based Assessment

Students must observe and apply rules for the authentication of School-based Assessment. Students must sign an authentication record for work done outside class when they submit the completed task. These are the VCAA authentication rules:

- A student must ensure that all unacknowledged work submitted for assessment is genuinely their own.
- A student must acknowledge all resources used, including:
 - texts, websites and other source material
 - the name and status of any person who provided assistance and the type of assistance provided.
- A student must not receive undue assistance from another person in the preparation and submission of work.
- Acceptable levels of assistance include:
 - the incorporation of ideas or material derived from other sources (for example, by reading, viewing or note taking), but which have been transformed by the student and used in a new context
 - prompting and general advice from another person or source, which leads to refinements and/or self-correction.
- Unacceptable forms of assistance include:
 - use of, or copying, another person's work or other resources without acknowledgement
 - corrections or improvements made or dictated by another person.
- A student must not submit the same piece of work for assessment in more than one study, or more than once within a study.
- A student must not circulate or publish written work that is being submitted for assessment in a study in the academic year of enrolment.
- A student must not knowingly assist another student in a breach of rules.

In considering whether a student's work is genuinely their own, teachers should consider whether the work:

- is not typical of other work produced by the student
- is inconsistent with the teacher's knowledge of the student's ability
- contains unacknowledged material
- has not been sighted and monitored by the teacher during its development.

12 Investigation of breaches of School-based Assessment rules

Some guidance on process and procedures is provided in the following section, but this is not a substitute for schools developing their own policy and procedures and ensuring students are aware of them.

Reporting alleged breaches of rules in School-based Assessment

The school's policy and procedures should make clear who is responsible for receiving reports of allegations of breaches of rules in School-based Assessment. The principal or an authorised member of the principal class may wish to be the initial point of contact for reports, and may wish to delegate the conduct of investigations to a person of appropriate seniority and experience.

Allegations may be made by any person with information that suggests rules have been breached, for example, a teacher, a student, a parent or an external party such as a tutor.

Allegations should be handled sensitively and may need to be kept confidential.

On receipt of an allegation, the student work should not be accepted for assessment, pending the conduct of an investigation by the school. The original of the final version of the work is to be retained by the school. The student should be given a copy of the work.

Preliminary investigations

On receipt of an allegation, the person responsible for investigating alleged breaches of rules should assess the allegation, and conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if there is any substance to the allegation. Detailed records of the preliminary investigation should be kept and may be used in any later decision-making. The school may decide it is appropriate to appoint an external person to carry out the investigation and report back to the decision-maker.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether there is any substance to an allegation that a student has breached VCAA School-based Assessment rules – if so, the evidence should be put to a decision-maker for determination whether the allegations are proven, or not proven.

The investigator must approach the investigation with an open mind, and act fairly and without bias. They should consider any allegation against the student, the evidence of anyone who might have something relevant to say about an allegation, and any documents or information that may shed light on whether an allegation has substance or not. Some or all the information and evidence gathered during the investigation may show that the allegations against the student are unfounded – this evidence should not be discounted.

The investigation may include discussions with the study teacher supervising the assessment and any other witnesses, including other students.

Relevant evidence includes:

- any instructions given to students by the teacher about the conditions under which the School-based Assessment was to be undertaken (including the VCAA examination rules)
- the student's work
- if an allegation relates to use of unauthorised notes, or cheating or copying from other students, copies of those notes or another student's work, or any other evidence of copying or cheating such as unacknowledged source material
- samples of other work by the student for comparison, if relevant
- the teacher's record of authentication
- the teacher's opinion about the student's work
- accurate notes of conversations with witnesses, the teacher and the student.

If this investigation suggests there is any substance to any allegation, the student should be informed in writing of the nature of the allegation, and be invited to attend an interview to respond to the allegation. Adequate notice of the interview should be given to the student, who should be given the opportunity to bring a support person to the interview. The support person is there not to represent the student or to speak on their behalf, but to provide moral support.

If a student elects not to attend an interview, they should be given an opportunity to respond in writing to any allegation against them.

The student's parents or guardians may be advised of the nature of the allegations, depending on the school's policy in relation to reporting discipline matters.

If the allegation raises the suggestion that a student has submitted work that is not their own, as part of seeking a response from the student, the investigator should ask the student to provide evidence that demonstrates that the work submitted is their own and/or was completed in accordance with VCAA requirements.

Students may be asked to:

- provide evidence of the development of the work
- discuss the content of the work with the teacher and answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the work
- provide samples of other work
- complete, under supervision, a supplementary assessment task related to the original task.

Decision-making

The school's policy and procedures should make clear who in the school has the authority to decide whether a student has breached examination or authentication rules. The principal may wish to make the decision following receipt of a report from a staff member or other person appointed to carry out the investigation.

Alternatively, the principal may wish to delegate their authority to make decisions about alleged breaches of VCAA examination and authentication rules to a hearing panel formed of members appointed by the principal.

It is important that any decision-maker is not the same as the person who investigated the allegations. The material gathered during the investigation should be provided to the decision-maker, along with any responses the student provided during the course of the investigation.

If the decision-maker forms an independent view that the evidence against the student is insufficient to justify a meeting or hearing, then the decision-maker should confirm in writing to the student that no further action will be taken.

If the decision-maker considers that there is sufficient evidence to justify a meeting or hearing to decide whether or not the allegations are proven, then a hearing or meeting should be convened. The decision-maker should reserve their judgment until they have heard from the student at the meeting or hearing.

Whoever is given the authority to make the decision regarding alleged breaches of rules, the principles to be applied are the same:

- The decision-maker must act fairly and without bias.
- The student must receive adequate written notice of the meeting or hearing conducted by the decision-maker/s. At least 24 hours' notice is necessary. The notice should include:
 - the date, time, place and likely duration of the meeting or hearing
 - the allegation or allegations against the student
 - the name/s of all decision-makers
 - that the student may bring a support person to the meeting or hearing (see below)
 - the name of a contact person if the student has queries about the meeting or hearing
 - a copy of any evidence that the decision maker/s will consider at the meeting or hearing, including whether any witnesses will be present at the meeting or hearing
 - the possible outcomes, including penalties.
- It is generally appropriate, depending on the age and circumstances of the student, to allow a parent, guardian or other support person to be present at any interview, meeting or hearing.
- The meeting or hearing should be conducted at the school, in an environment that is not intimidating for the student, but that is appropriate given the nature of the allegations.
- At the meeting or hearing, the decision-maker must explain the purpose of the meeting/hearing to the student, and confirm the allegation or allegations against the student and the possible outcomes.
- The decision-maker may ask questions of the student.
- The student must be given the opportunity at the meeting or hearing to respond to the evidence against them and to ask questions of any witnesses present at the meeting or hearing.
- The decision-maker must consider all evidence and submissions carefully, including the student's response, and whether the allegations (and the student's defence) are supported by evidence that is relevant and credible.
- The decision-maker must take into account all relevant factors and no irrelevant factors.
- The decision-maker must decide on the balance of probabilities whether any allegation is proven – the allegation does not have to be proven beyond reasonable doubt.
- The decision-maker must decide, in relation to any allegations against a student found to be proven, whether a penalty should be imposed, and, if so, what penalty is appropriate. Possible penalties include:
 - a verbal or written warning
 - detention or suspension
 - refusal to consider the student's work, but giving the student the opportunity to re-submit the work, if there is sufficient time before the due date for submission of results according to the VCAA schedule
 - refusal to accept part of the student's work found to have been completed in contravention of VCAA rules and determination of the appropriate result for the relevant outcome forming part of the VCE unit
 - refusal to accept any part of the work, awarding an N for the outcome.

The decision-maker should inform the student of the decision and any penalty to be imposed at the meeting or hearing, and of the student's capacity to appeal the decision to the VCAA. The decision-maker should keep accurate records of their decision, the reasons for their decision and the penalty imposed, to enable the school to write to the student to confirm these matters in writing.

After the meeting or hearing, the school must write to the student to confirm:

- the findings of the decision-maker in relation to any allegation against the student (setting out each allegation, and whether the allegation was found proven or not proven)
- the reasons for the decision on each allegation, and the supporting evidence
- the penalty that will be imposed
- information about the student's right to appeal to the VCAA, including that the appeal must be lodged not later than 14 days after the student receives written notice of the decision from the school.

The school should retain all material related to any allegation, in case the student wishes to appeal a decision.

If the student's work was accepted for assessment, and a breach of VCAA rules was discovered after the work had been assessed, the penalty should be applied and, if necessary, the student's records adjusted. For example, the original outcome result may change from an S to an N. If an N is awarded for an outcome, an N will be awarded for the unit concerned.

Similarly, the detected breach of VCAA rules may result in a score change. This score change should be communicated to the VCAA through the completion of the **Score Amendment Sheet (SAS)**.

Other outcomes may be appropriate if, for example, the breach of VCAA rules relates to the student's conduct in disrupting a School-based Assessment task conducted under test conditions.

13 Student appeals against school decisions about breaches of VCAA rules

The school's policy and procedures should include information about the student's statutory right of appeal against the school's decision in relation to breach of VCAA examination and School-based Assessment authentication rules.

Section 2.5.21 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* ('the Act') provides that a student may appeal to the VCAA against a decision by the school, and any penalty imposed by the school, in respect of a contravention of the assessment rules of the VCAA relating to School-based Assessments (including the authentication rules referred to earlier). This right of appeal does not apply to decisions about the satisfactory completion of a course arising from a student's attendance, or other disciplinary decisions of a school not arising from a contravention of VCAA assessment rules.

An appeal against a school decision must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the VCAA not later than 14 days after the student receives written notice of the decision from the school. On receipt of a notice of appeal from a student, the Chief Executive Officer of the VCAA must nominate an employee of the Secretary to interview the parties to the appeal and attempt to resolve the matter.

Notice of school decision following interviews

Not later than seven days after the interview conducted by the VCAA, the school must, by notice in writing, advise the student and the VCAA that in relation to the student, one of the following decisions has been made by the school:

- It has rescinded its decision and any penalty imposed.
- It has rescinded the penalty imposed.
- It has reduced the penalty imposed.
- It confirms both the decision and the penalty imposed.

Student appeal

If the school rescinds its decision and any penalty imposed in relation to the student, the student's appeal to the VCAA is taken to have been withdrawn.

On receipt of a notice from the school that contains one of the following decisions, the VCAA must ask the student to either withdraw the appeal or confirm that the appeal is to proceed:

- The school has rescinded the penalty imposed.
- The school has reduced the penalty imposed.
- The school confirms both the decision and the penalty imposed.

Appeal Hearing

If a student elects to proceed with an appeal, the Chief Executive Officer of the VCAA must refer the appeal to a Review Committee for hearing and determination. An appeal of this nature is conducted as a re-hearing (that is, hearing the evidence from both the student and the school, from the beginning – it is not a review of the school's procedures and handling of the allegation/s against the student).

If the Review Committee is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the student has breached the VCAA rules relating to School-based Assessment, it may do one of the following:

- reprimand the student
- if practicable, permit the student to resubmit to the school work required for either of the following:
 - assessment in the study or the course
 - satisfactory completion of the study or the course
- refuse to accept part of the work and request the school to assess the student on the remainder of the work submitted
- amend the student's School-based Assessment results.