VCAA Statistical Report

Special Provision in VCE External Assessment

2011 and 2016 – 2020

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Introduction

This report provides statistical information on Special Provision related to VCE external assessments for 2011 and from 2016 to 2020. This includes information on applications for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) and Derived Examination Score (DES).

The statistics for SEA exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day.

The statistics for DES are based on individual applications and exclude cases where a DES was approved due to either three examinations timetabled on one day or irregularities[[1]](#footnote-1).

The statistical information presented in this report is based on snapshots taken from the VCAA Assessment Processing System (APS). Figures extracted from snapshots provide more comparable statistical information over time. The 2020 ﬁgures are based on a snapshot as at 4 January 2021.

Executive Summary

Overview of Special Provision related to VCE external assessments

* A high proportion of students who apply for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) have provisions approved.
* A high proportion of students who apply for a Derived Examination Score (DES) have their applications approved.

Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) student applications and approvals (see page 4)

* The overall number of students who applied for SEA has been increasing. In 2020, 6,477 students applied for SEA, an increase of 140.1% from 2,698 in 2011. Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 10.2%.
* The overall number of students with approved SEA has been steadily increasing. In 2020, there were 6,245 students with approved SEA, an increase of 149.3% from 2,505 in 2011. Between 2019 and 2020 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 10.7%.
* Overall a high proportion of the applications submitted by students have provisions approved. In 2020, 96.4% of applications were approved.

Breakdown of Special Provision categories for SEA applications   
(see page 7)

* The most common category of approved SEA in 2020 is Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment.
* Of the approved SEA, 38.8% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 23.7% by Health Impairment.

Derived Examination Score (DES) applications and approvals   
(see page 14)

* From 2011 to 2017, the proportion of applications approved for a DES has steadily increased from 74.5% to 82.1%. In 2018, however, the proportion of applications decreased by 4.0 percentage points to 77.1% compared to 2017.
* In 2020, there were 2,137 (88.8%) DES approvals.

Breakdown of Special Provision categories for DES applications   
(see page 17)

* The most common categories[[2]](#footnote-2) of applications for a DES are acute illness/circumstances and death, which combined, accounted for 61.5% of all applications in 2020.

1 Overview of Special Provision related to VCE external assessments

This section provides background information on Special Provision related specifically to VCE external assessments.

1.1 Background

The VCAA Special Provision policy aims to provide students in defined circumstances with the opportunity to participate in and complete their secondary level studies.

The underlying principle of the VCAA Special Provision Policy is to ensure that the most appropriate, fair and reasonable options are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities if their learning and assessment programs are affected by disability, illness, impairment or other circumstances. Special Provision should provide equivalent, alternative arrangements for students, but not confer an advantage to any student over other students.

Special Provision is available to students completing the VCE or VCAL for classroom learning, School-based Assessment and VCE external assessments.

There are two types of Special Provision available to students completing VCE external assessments:

* Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)
* Derived Examination Score (DES).

For VCE external assessments, which include all VCE examinations, the Extended Investigation Critical Thinking Test and oral presentation and the General Achievement Test (GAT), the VCAA is responsible for determining eligibility and for granting approval in the form of Special Examination Arrangements and the Derived Examination Score (DES).

This report provides statistical information on the SEA and DES application processes

2 Overview of the Special Examination Arrangements process

This section provides background information on the Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) application process.

2.1 Background

Special Examination Arrangements may be approved for students with disabilities, illnesses or other circumstances that affect their ability to access a VCE external assessment.

The VCAA recognises that some students with a disability, as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth), or illness, may require Special Examination Arrangements to enable them to access the examination/test questions and communicate their responses in a timed external assessment.

In designing and approving Special Examination Arrangements, the VCAA is mindful of the need to balance the competing demands of providing students with the opportunity to perform at their optimum and the academic integrity of the assessment process.

The VCAA considers a large number of applications for Special Examination Arrangements every year. As it is the school that makes the application on behalf of students, and will ultimately administer their VCE external assessments, the VCAA’s consultation with a student and/or their representative will usually take place through their school.

Schools must not permit a student to receive Special Examination Arrangements without the VCAA’s approval. Failure to comply with these instructions may constitute a breach of the rules governing the conduct of VCE external assessments.

The VCAA considers each application for Special Examination Arrangements on the basis of independent professional and/or educational and academic assessments, any school-based evidence and recommendations provided with the application, and the VCAA’s assessment.

Disability and/or illness does not automatically entitle a student to Special Examination Arrangements. The prime consideration is the impact of a disability and/or illness on the student’s capacity to undertake their VCE external assessments and, if necessary, what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable the student to complete VCE external assessments on the same basis as students without a disability and/or illness.

The professional, educational and academic assessments, along with school-based evidence, will be considered by the VCAA on a case-by-case basis. The VCAA will make a decision based on all evidence received with an application.

2.2 Eligibility for SEA

Students are eligible for SEA if it can be demonstrated that their capacity to access a VCE external assessment is impaired due to:

* Mental Health condition (e.g. anxiety disorders, depression)
* Health Impairment (e.g. diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome)
* Physical Disability
* Speciﬁc Learning Disorder
* Language Disorder
* Deaf and hard of hearing
* Vision Impairment
* Motor Coordination Disorder.

2.3 Types of SEA

Special Examination Arrangements can include the following.

* **Rest breaks.** Rest breaks are typically approved at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’. Rest breaks are in addition to all reading or writing time. In specific circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘unlimited rest breaks’ to facilitate management of a significant medical or physical condition.
* **Extra working times.** Extra working time is typically approved at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’. In specific circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘extra working time’ in excess of 10 minutes per hour.
* **Separate rooms.** If the use of a scribe (or electronic scribe), reader (or electronic reader) or clarifier has been approved by the VCAA, a student must complete their external assessment in a separate examination room. Where a student is completing their external assessment in a separate room, a supervisor must be present.
* **Use of computers and/or assistive technology.**
* **Small group rooms.** Where a school has two or more students undertaking an examination in the same session, that have the same or similar approved Special Examination Arrangements, can at their discretion choose to seat these students in the same room with appropriate supervision.
* **Readers.** The function of a reader is to read the examination paper and/or the student’s responses as often as requested by the student.
* **Electronic scribes.** If a student is approved the use of an electronic reader or reader software, they must be supervised in a separate room.
* **Scribes.** The function of a scribe is to record, on the appropriate response material, the verbal responses and directions made by the student in the process of answering the question/s.
* **Electronic scribes.** If a student is approved the use of scribing software, they must be supervised in a separate room.
* **Clarifiers.** The function of a clarifier is to clarify words contained within examination/test questions. The appointed clarifier may work with the student during any practice examinations.
* **Auslan interpreters**
* **Alternative format examination papers**. Alternative format examination papers and materials can include enlarged print, electronic text and Braille.
* **Alternative examination venues**. Only in exceptional circumstances will the VCAA approve for a student to sit an external assessment at an alternative venue, for example, at home or in hospital. Such circumstances would include cases of infectious disease or serious physical or psychological incapacity.

3 Special Examination Arrangements statistics

This section provides information on the number of students who applied for SEA and the number that had provisions approved, as well as a breakdown on categories for SEA. The statistics for SEA exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day. Information on sector is based on the student’s home school or home provider.

3.1 Number of students with applications and approvals

The overall number of students who applied for SEA has been increasing (see Table 1).

In 2020, 6,477 students applied for SEA, an increase of 140.1% from 2,698 in 2011. Between 2019 and 2020, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 10.2%.

The increase in the number of students submitting applications over the past ten years may be attributed to one or more of the following reasons:

* greater awareness among schools, students and parents as to the provisions available to support students with special needs while they undertake their VCE
* improved support mechanisms within and outside schools
* greater numbers of students presenting with issues that potentially require special provision. This may be due to there being less stigma associated with students making their school, and potentially peers, aware of their specific health issues and/or personal circumstances.

The overall number of students with approved SEA has been steadily increasing (see Table 1).

In 2020, there were 6,245 students with approved SEA, an increase of 149.3% from 2,505 in 2011. Between 2019 and 2020 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 10.7%.

From 2011 to 2020, there have been large increases in the number of students with approved SEA across the three major sectors (that is, the Catholic, government and independent sectors).

The increase in the number of students with approved SEA over this period is most likely attributed to similar reasons to those outlined above in relation to the increasing number of applications. In essence, schools are more likely to be better informed and equipped to manage the application process for their students, ensuring applications are only submitted where appropriate and all required evidence is provided.

Table 1: Number of students with SEA applications and approvals by sector, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with applications | | | | | | | | Number of students with approvals | | | | | | | Percentage of students approved | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | |
| Adult | | 57 | 74 | 71 | 56 | 50 | 59 | 56 | | 73 | 71 | 56 | 49 | 59 | 98.2 | | 98.6 | 100 | 100 | 98.0 | 100 | |
| Catholic | | 636 | 1,094 | 1,209 | 1,396 | 1,499 | 1,512 | 598 | | 1,062 | 1,168 | 1,357 | 1,452 | 1,470 | 94.0 | | 97.1 | 96.6 | 97.2 | 96.9 | 97.2 | |
| Government | | 1,054 | 1,927 | 2,085 | 2,154 | 2,347 | 2,747 | 984 | | 1,851 | 2,030 | 2,070 | 2,277 | 2,661 | 93.4 | | 96.1 | 97.4 | 96.1 | 97.0 | 96.9 | |
| Independent | | 951 | 1,543 | 1,676 | 1,878 | 1,979 | 2,158 | 867 | | 1,452 | 1,589 | 1,772 | 1,864 | 2,054 | 91.2 | | 94.1 | 94.8 | 94.4 | 94.2 | 95.2 | |
| Other Providers | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | N/A | | 100 | 100 | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| **Total** | | **2,698** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** | **6,477** | **2,505** | | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | **6,245** | **92.8** | | **95.7** | **96.4** | **95.8** | **96.0** | **96.4** | |

Figure 1: Number of students with approved SEA by sector, 2011   
and 2016 – 2020

Note: Adult and Other Providers not included.

3.2 Percentage of students with approvals

A high proportion of the applications submitted by students had provisions approved (see Table 1). The percentage of approvals had been relatively stable from 2016 to 2020.

In 2020, the overall proportion of applications with provisions approved was 96.4%, an increase of 3.6 percentage points from 2011. The proportion of approvals is similar in the Catholic and government sectors and slightly lower in the independent sector. Although the adult sector has a high proportion of approvals, the number of students applying is much smaller than the other sectors.

Figure 2: Percentage of students with approved SEA by sector, 2011   
and 2016 – 2020

Note: Other Providers not included.

3.3 Breakdown of Special Provision categories for SEA applications

The most common categories with approved SEA in 2020 were Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment (see Table 2). Of the approved SEA, 38.8% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 23.7% by Health Impairment.

Up until 2018, SEA applications submitted on the basis of a Motor Coordination Disorder were included under the category of Learning Disability. From 2019, statistics on Motor Coordination Disorder conditions are reported as a separate category. As a result, the number of students in 2019 with an approved SEA for Learning Disability is lower when compared to previous years.

Similarly up until 2017, SEA applications submitted on the basis of a Mental Health Condition were included under the category of Health Impairment. Since 2018 statistics on Mental Health conditions are reported as a separate category. As a result, the number of student after 2018 with an approved SEA for Health Impairment are signiﬁcantly lower when compared to previous years.

Emergency applications relate to SEA applications that are submitted on the basis of students experiencing a sudden illness, accident or personal trauma immediately before or during an assessment period.

Table 2: Number of students with approved SEA by category and percentage distribution across categories, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of approvals | | | | | | Percentage approved | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Emergency Application | 826 | 757 | 799 | 896 | 903 | 1,240 | 33.0 | 17.1 | 16.4 | 17.1 | 16.0 | 17.5 |
| Health Impairment | 1,238 | 2,915 | 3,172 | 1,532 | 1,560 | 1,683 | 49.4 | 65.7 | 65.3 | 29.2 | 27.6 | 23.7 |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 67 | 46 | 67 | 63 | 87 | 89 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.3 |
| Language Disorder | 6 | 23 | 26 | 50 | 51 | 81 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Mental Health Condition | - | - | - | 1,778 | 2,063 | 2,750 | - | - | - | 33.8 | 36.6 | 38.8 |
| Motor Coordination Disorder | - | - | - | - | 148 | 225 | - | - | - | - | 2.6 | 3.2 |
| Physical Disability | 53 | 55 | 55 | 63 | 77 | 213 | 2.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 3.0 |
| Learning Disability | 263 | 574 | 667 | 786 | 668 | 726 | 10.5 | 12.9 | 13.7 | 15.0 | 11.8 | 10.2 |
| Vision Impaired | 52 | 69 | 73 | 87 | 85 | 82 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **2,505** | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | **7,089** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 3 presents the number of SEA applications, the number and percentages approved within each SEA category for 2011 and 2016 to 2020. Overall, 96.7% SEA applications were approved in 2020. The category with the highest proportion of approvals in 2020 was Vision Impaired (100%) followed by Emergency Application (99.9%) and Motor Coordination Disorder (99.6%). The category with the lowest proportion of approvals in 2020 was Learning Disability (82.8%) followed by Language Disorder (86.2%).

Figure 3 presents the proportion of approvals within each category. There has been an overall increase in the proportion of approvals over the last 10 years. In 2020, the overall proportion of approvals was 96.7%, an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 2011. The proportion of students approved has remained fairly stable over all categories except for Language Disorder and Learning Disability.

Table 3: Number of SEA applications, approvals and percentage distribution of approved by category, 2011 and 2016 –2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of applications | | | | | | Number of approvals | | | | | | Percentage approved | | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | |
| Emergency Application | 828 | 757 | 799 | 897 | 904 | 1,241 | 826 | 757 | 799 | 896 | 903 | 1,240 | | 99.8 | 100 | 100 | 99.9 | 99.9 | 99.9 | |
| Health Impairment | 1,255 | 2,931 | 3,192 | 1,542 | 1,578 | 1,730 | 1,238 | 2,915 | 3,172 | 1,532 | 1,560 | 1,683 | | 98.6 | 99.5 | 99.4 | 99.4 | 98.9 | 97.3 | |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 69 | 47 | 70 | 66 | 88 | 92 | 67 | 46 | 67 | 63 | 87 | 89 | | 97.1 | 97.9 | 95.7 | 95.5 | 98.9 | 96.7 | |
| Language Disorder | 18 | 31 | 27 | 61 | 61 | 94 | 6 | 23 | 26 | 50 | 51 | 81 | | 33.3 | 74.2 | 96.3 | 82.0 | 83.6 | 86.2 | |
| Mental Health Condition | - | - | - | 1,786 | 2,084 | 2,774 | - | - | - | 1,778 | 2,063 | 2,750 | | - | - | - | 99.6 | 99.0 | 99.1 | |
| Motor Coordination Disorder | - | - | - | - | 152 | 226 | - | - | - | - | 148 | 225 | | - | - | - | - | 97.4 | 99.6 | |
| Physical Disability | 54 | 55 | 55 | 64 | 77 | 217 | 53 | 55 | 55 | 63 | 77 | 213 | | 98.1 | 100 | 100 | 98.4 | 100 | 98.2 | |
| Learning Disability | 421 | 746 | 825 | 981 | 845 | 877 | 263 | 574 | 667 | 786 | 668 | 726 | | 62.5 | 76.9 | 80.8 | 80.1 | 79.1 | 82.8 | |
| Vision Impaired | 53 | 72 | 74 | 87 | 86 | 82 | 52 | 69 | 73 | 87 | 85 | 82 | | 98.1 | 95.8 | 98.6 | 100 | 98.8 | 100 | |
| **Total** | **2,698** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** | **7,333** | **2,505** | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | **7,089** | | **92.8** | **95.7** | **96.4** | **95.8** | **96.0** | **96.7** | |

Figure 3: Percentage of approved SEA’s by category, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

Note: Mental Health Condition and Motor Coordination Disorder not included.

3.4 Breakdown of Special Provision Applications by Category and Sector

The largest growth in the number of applications from 2011 to 2020 has been in the Learning Disability category with applications from the independent sector accounting for most of the increase followed by the government sector (see Table 4).

Mental Health conditions category, although only reported as a separate category from 2018, is expected to represent the largest growth category in the coming years.

Table 4: Number of applications by Special Provision category and sector, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | SECTOR | 2011 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|  | **Adult** | 5 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Catholic** | 226 | 214 | 235 | 238 | 275 | 322 |
| **Emergency Application** | **Government** | 319 | 298 | 298 | 346 | 354 | 577 |
|  | **Independent** | 278 | 241 | 264 | 308 | 271 | 337 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 828 | 757 | 799 | 897 | 904 | 1,241 |
|  | **Adult** | 43 | 61 | 57 | 18 | 14 | 11 |
|  | **Catholic** | 281 | 710 | 778 | 455 | 441 | 419 |
| **Health Impairment** | **Government** | 499 | 1,258 | 1,409 | 602 | 662 | 781 |
|  | **Independent** | 432 | 902 | 947 | 467 | 461 | 519 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 1,255 | 2,931 | 3,192 | 1,542 | 1,578 | 1,730 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 15 | 11 | 17 | 20 | 11 | 20 |
| **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** | **Government** | 40 | 27 | 32 | 29 | 54 | 49 |
|  | **Independent** | 14 | 9 | 20 | 17 | 23 | 22 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Total** | 69 | 47 | 70 | 66 | 88 | 92 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 11 | 13 | 7 | 21 | 22 | 30 |
| **Language Disorder** | **Government** | 1 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 18 | 33 |
|  | **Independent** | 6 | 7 | 7 | 26 | 21 | 31 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 18 | 31 | 27 | 61 | 61 | 94 |
|  | **Adult** | - | - | - | 27 | 25 | 41 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | - | - | 431 | 522 | 648 |
| **Mental Health Condition** | **Government** | - | - | - | 759 | 901 | 1,152 |
|  | **Independent** | - | - | - | 569 | 636 | 933 |
|  | **Other Providers** | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | - | - | - | 1,786 | 2,084 | 2,774 |
|  | **Adult** | - | - | - | - | 3 | 2 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | - | - | - | 45 | 58 |
| **Motor Coordination Disorder** | **Government** | - | - | - | - | 43 | 72 |
|  | **Independent** | - | - | - | - | 61 | 94 |
|  | **Other Providers** | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | - | - | - | - | 152 | 226 |
|  | **Adult** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
|  | **Catholic** | 13 | 14 | 14 | 22 | 23 | 47 |
| **Physical Disability** | **Government** | 29 | 26 | 23 | 26 | 26 | 90 |
|  | **Independent** | 11 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 27 | 77 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 54 | 55 | 55 | 64 | 77 | 217 |
|  | **Adult** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
|  | **Catholic** | 80 | 121 | 145 | 181 | 141 | 136 |
| **Learning Disability** | **Government** | 139 | 268 | 273 | 339 | 248 | 284 |
|  | **Independent** | 195 | 349 | 398 | 455 | 453 | 454 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 421 | 746 | 825 | 981 | 845 | 877 |
|  | **Adult** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Catholic** | 10 | 11 | 13 | 28 | 19 | 20 |
| **Vision Impaired** | **Government** | 27 | 39 | 37 | 39 | 41 | 34 |
|  | **Independent** | 15 | 21 | 23 | 20 | 26 | 27 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 53 | 72 | 74 | 87 | 86 | 82 |
| **Grand Total** |  | **2,698** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** | **7,333** |

4 Overview of the Derived Examination Score (DES) application process

This section provides background information on the Derived Examination Score (DES) application process.

4.1 Background

Students who are ill or affected by other personal circumstances at the time of a VCE external assessment and whose result is unlikely to be a fair or accurate indication of their learning or achievement in the study may apply for a DES. If their application is approved, a Derived Examination Score (DES) will be calculated by the VCAA.

The purpose of a DES is to ensure that a student’s final result for an external assessment reflects as accurately as possible the level of achievement that would be expected based on the learning and achievement the student has demonstrated in the study over the year.

A DES is not available for the GAT, Music Style and Composition Externally-assessed Task or Extended Investigation Externally-assessed Task written report.

4.2 Eligibility for a DES

Students are eligible for a DES if they meet all of the following criteria:

* They have completed the course of study leading to the external assessment, and have a result for at least one other graded assessment in the same study.
* They experience the onset of an illness or the occurrence of an injury, personal trauma or serious intervening event in the period before or during a VCE external assessment, that has either prevented them from attending the external assessment or significantly affected their performance during the external assessment.
* They provide independent professional written evidence that demonstrates the illness, injury, personal trauma or serious intervening event has affected their performance in the external assessment or has prevented them from attending the external assessment.

A ‘personal trauma’ may include, but is not limited to, the death or serious illness or an accident involving a family member, or family break-up.

A ‘serious intervening event’ may include, but is not limited to, an accident on the way to or at an examination, attendance at a funeral of a family member or other person of close relationship, or the required attendance at a court proceeding.

4.3 How is a DES calculated?

The calculation for the DES uses all other 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 of this data with the final score for external assessment for all students who have not applied for a DES. For all external assessment this analysis indicates that the two graded 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.

5 Derived Examination Score statistics

This section provides information on student applications and applications approved for a Derived Examination Score (DES). The DES statistics are based on individual applications and exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day and irregularities. Information on sector is based on the student’s home school or home provider.

5.1 Number of examinations where a DES was requested and number of approvals

The number of examinations where a DES was requested has overall been steadily decreasing from 2011 to 2020 (see Table 5). In 2020, there were 2,407 examinations where a DES was requested, a decrease of 49.0% from 4,716 in 2011. In 2020, there was a 15.9% decrease on the 2019 ﬁgure (2,861 examinations).

Similarly, the number of applications approved for a DES has overall been steadily decreasing from 2011 to 2020.

5.2 Percentage of approvals

From 2011 to 2017, the proportion of applications approved for a DES has steadily increased from 74.5% to 82.1%. In 2018, however, the proportion of applications decreased by 4.0 percentage points to 77.1% compared to 2017.

In 2020, there were 2,137 (88.8%) DES approvals.

Table 5: Number of examinations where a DES was requested, number of approvals and percentage of DES approvals by sector, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of examinations where a DES was requested | | | | | | Number of examinations where a DES request was approved | | | | | | | Percentage of DES approved | | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | |
| Adult | 69 | 19 | 32 | 40 | 44 | 33 | | 48 | 8 | 19 | 26 | 31 | 31 | | 69.6 | 42.1 | 59.4 | 65.0 | 70.5 | 93.9 | |
| Catholic | 1,171 | 839 | 875 | 742 | 888 | 571 | | 941 | 725 | 749 | 583 | 750 | 504 | | 80.4 | 86.4 | 85.6 | 78.6 | 84.5 | 88.3 | |
| Government | 2,192 | 1,472 | 1,469 | 1,239 | 1,084 | 1,120 | | 1,591 | 1,159 | 1,165 | 971 | 875 | 998 | | 72.6 | 78.7 | 79.3 | 78.4 | 80.7 | 89.1 | |
| Independent | 1,275 | 884 | 990 | 863 | 838 | 683 | | 924 | 706 | 796 | 643 | 686 | 604 | | 72.5 | 79.9 | 80.4 | 74.5 | 81.9 | 88.4 | |
| Other Providers | 9 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 0 | | 9 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 0 | | 100 | 100 | 50.0 | 100 | 100 | N/A | |
| **Total** | **4,716** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | **2,407** | | **3,513** | **2,599** | **2,730** | **2,231** | **2,349** | **2,137** | | **74.5** | **80.8** | **81.1** | **77.1** | **82.1** | **88.8** | |

Figure 4: Percentage of approvals by sector, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

Note: Adult and Other Providers not included.

5.3 Number of students with DES applications and approvals

The number of students with one or more DES applications has overall been steadily decreasing (see Table 6).

Some students are applying for a DES for more than one examination, however, they may not have all of these approved.

Table 6: Number of students with DES applications and approvals by sector, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with DES application | | | | | | Number of students with approval | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Adult | 33 | 9 | 15 | 13 | 16 | 16 | 23 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 14 | 15 |
| Catholic | 436 | 306 | 363 | 281 | 325 | 264 | 366 | 285 | 320 | 241 | 297 | 232 |
| Government | 849 | 574 | 604 | 535 | 431 | 569 | 673 | 484 | 508 | 441 | 366 | 506 |
| Independent | 515 | 362 | 398 | 348 | 317 | 308 | 407 | 312 | 351 | 285 | 283 | 265 |
| Other Providers | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| **Total** | **1,835** | **1,252** | **1,382** | **1,180** | **1,091** | **1,157** | **1,471** | **1,088** | **1,191** | **977** | **962** | **1,018** |

5.4 Breakdown of DES categories

The most common categories of applications for a DES are acute illness/circumstances and death, which combined, accounted for 61.5% of all applications in 2020 (see Table 8).

All applications specifically related to the illness/trauma of family/close friend that met the eligibility criteria were approved.

In 2020, for approved applications, the highest proportion of approvals where the DES was used was in the COVID-19 and family categories (see Table 9).

In 2020, a DES was approved for individual students where they were unable to complete one or more VCE examinations because of coronavirus (COVID-19) health and safety requirements approved by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. Students unwell or experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or identified as close contacts, at the time of their examination, were not allowed to complete examinations

There were 97.7% approved applications where the DES was used in the COVID-19 category and 95.2% in the family category.

Table 7: Description of DES Categories

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | DESCRIPTION |
| Acute illness/circumstances | First onset or ﬂare-up of illness, ﬂus, colds, headaches, migraines, hospitalisation during exams |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | Illness diagnosed longer than a month, family breakdown, homeless |
| COVID-19 | student unable to sit exam because of coronavirus (COVID-19) |
| Death**1** | Family member/close friend before or during exams |
| Family | Illness/trauma of family/close friend |
| Psychological | Newly diagnosed psychological illnesses |
| Other | Exam irregularities, ﬁre, ﬂood, etc |

1 Each case is assessed individually.

Table 8: Number and percentage of examinations where DES was requested by category, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of examinations where DES was requested | | | | | | Percentage of examinations where DES was requested | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Acute illness/circumstances | 2,279 | 1,654 | 1,763 | 1,554 | 1,771 | 1,063 | 48.3 | 51.4 | 52.3 | 53.7 | 61.9 | 44.2 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | 691 | 531 | 607 | 555 | 217 | 345 | 14.7 | 16.5 | 18.0 | 19.2 | 7.6 | 14.3 |
| COVID-19 | - | - | - | - | - | 173 | - | - | - | - | - | 7.2 |
| Death | 1,149 | 600 | 482 | 454 | 414 | 416 | 24.4 | 18.7 | 14.3 | 15.7 | 14.5 | 17.3 |
| Family | 437 | 324 | 444 | 255 | 267 | 249 | 9.3 | 10.1 | 13.2 | 8.8 | 9.3 | 10.3 |
| Psychological | 126 | 70 | 51 | 49 | 177 | 147 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 6.2 | 6.1 |
| Other | 34 | 36 | 21 | 25 | 15 | 14 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| **Total** | **4,716** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | **2,407** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 9: Number of examinations where DES was requested and number of examinations where DES was approved by category, 2011 and 2016 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of examinations where a DES was requested | | | | | | Number of examinations where DES requested was approved | | | | | | Percentage of examinations where DES requested was approved | | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2011** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Acute illness/circumstances | 2,279 | 1,654 | 1,763 | 1,554 | 1,771 | 1,063 | | 1,612 | 1,301 | 1,412 | 1,206 | 1,462 | 919 | 70.7 | 78.7 | 80.1 | 77.6 | 82.6 | 86.5 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | 691 | 531 | 607 | 555 | 217 | 345 | | 386 | 378 | 399 | 342 | 165 | 286 | 55.9 | 71.2 | 65.7 | 61.6 | 76.0 | 82.9 |
| COVID-19 | - | - | - | - | - | 173 | | - | - | - | - | - | 169 | - | - | - | - | - | 97.7 |
| Death | 1,149 | 600 | 482 | 454 | 414 | 416 | | 1,059 | 533 | 461 | 410 | 368 | 395 | 92.2 | 88.8 | 95.6 | 90.3 | 88.9 | 95.0 |
| Family | 437 | 324 | 444 | 255 | 267 | 249 | | 346 | 303 | 400 | 226 | 235 | 237 | 79.2 | 93.5 | 90.1 | 88.6 | 88.0 | 95.2 |
| Psychological | 126 | 70 | 51 | 49 | 177 | 147 | | 85 | 56 | 39 | 27 | 110 | 119 | 67.5 | 80.0 | 76.5 | 55.1 | 62.1 | 81.0 |
| Other | 34 | 36 | 21 | 25 | 15 | 14 | | 25 | 28 | 19 | 20 | 9 | 12 | 73.5 | 77.8 | 90.5 | 80.0 | 60.0 | 85.7 |
| **Total** | **4,716** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | **2,407** | | **3,513** | **2,599** | **2,730** | **2,231** | **2,349** | **2,137** | **74.5** | **80.8** | **81.1** | **77.1** | **82.1** | **88.8** |

1. Irregularities are events which materially interrupt and adversely impact a student’s performance in an examination and which are outside the student’s control. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please refer to Section 5, Table 8 for further details on the specific DES categories (for example, acute illness/circumstances). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)