

# Principles, guidelines and processes for the development and review of VCE studies

## Section 1 – The VCE qualification and requirements for its award

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is one of the senior secondary qualifications accredited in Victoria. The VCE provides certification of a level of achievement, pathways from school to further study, training or employment and contributes to building a multicultural, democratic and civil society. All VCE studies are benchmarked with respect to comparable national and international curriculum.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is the statutory authority responsible for the development, approval, monitoring, evaluation and review of curriculum and assessment for the VCE and its studies. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) is the statutory authority responsible for the accreditation of the VCE and its studies, including periods of accreditation.

To be awarded the VCE, the minimum requirement is satisfactory completion of 16 units which must include:

- three units from the English group, two of which must be a Unit 3–4 sequence.
- three Unit 3–4 sequences, which can include further sequences from the English studies group.

There are no prerequisites for entry into Units 1, 2 and 3 of a study. Units 3 and 4 of a study are designed to be taken as a sequence. Students must undertake Unit 3 of a study before commencing Unit 4 of that study. Where Units 1 and 2 or Units 3 and 4 of a study contain assumed knowledge and skills for Units 3 and 4 of a related study these relationships are indicated in the relevant study design.

Most students will undertake a total of between 18 and 24 units in their VCE program, over two or more years.

## Section 2 – Curriculum and assessment principles for VCE studies

### 2.1 Overview

To ensure that the VCE meets Victorian community expectations for high quality curriculum and assessment, the VCAA will ensure that individual VCE studies are developed in accordance with the following curriculum and assessment principles. These principles underpin the general *Terms of Reference* (see **Section 3.2**), used in the development and review of all VCE studies.

## 2.2 VCE curriculum principles

- Optimise curriculum connections and pathways.
- Support and promote democratic and community values.
- Balance challenge and expectation with the needs of the individual.
- Express and reflect enduring and dynamic aspects of a field or fields.
- Identify specific knowledge, skills and understanding to be demonstrated by students.
- Incorporate use of technology, including information and communications technology (ICT), to enhance student learning wherever appropriate to teaching and learning.
- Draw on traditional and contemporary examples, contexts and settings, problems and issues.
- Require higher order thinking, critical reflection, analysis and synthesis.
- Promote investigation of the beliefs, values and inquiry associated with the fields underpinning a study.
- Be future oriented.

## 2.3 VCE assessment principles

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning that at the senior secondary level:

- identifies opportunities for further learning
- describes student achievement
- articulates and maintains standards
- provides the basis for the award of a certificate.

As part of VCE studies, assessment tasks enable:

- the demonstration of the achievement of an outcome or set of outcomes
- judgment and reporting of a level of achievement on a task or collection of tasks for School-assessed Coursework, School-assessed Tasks, Externally-assessed Tasks or examinations.

Monitoring the results of VCE assessment also provides feedback, which informs curriculum implementation, assessment design and curriculum review.

In each VCE study, teachers and schools determine the assessment tasks to be used at Units 1 and 2. In Units 3 and 4, specified assessment tasks are set.

At the Units 3 and 4 level of a VCE study, School-assessed Coursework, School-assessed Tasks, Externally-assessed Tasks and examinations provide assessment results that are used in the calculation of a student's study score.

The following are the principles that underpin all VCE assessment practices.

### 2.3.1 VCE assessment will be valid

This means that it will enable judgments to be made about demonstration of the outcomes and levels of achievement on assessment tasks fairly, in a balanced way and without adverse effects on the curriculum or for the education system.

The overarching concept of validity is elaborated as follows:

*VCE assessment should be fair and reasonable*

Assessment should be acceptable to stakeholders – including students, schools, government and the community. The system for assessing the progress and achievement of students must be accessible, effective, equitable, reasonable and transparent.

The curriculum content to be assessed must be explicitly described to teachers in each study design and related VCAA documents. Assessment instruments should not assess learning that is outside the scope of a study design.

Each assessment instrument (for example, examination, assignment, test, project, practical, oral, performance, portfolio or presentation) should give students clear instructions. It should be administered under conditions (degree of supervision, access to resources, notice and duration) that are substantially the same for all students undertaking that assessment.

Authentication and school moderation of assessment and the processes of external review and statistical moderation are to ensure that assessment results are fair and comparable across the student cohort for that study.

#### *VCE assessment should be equitable*

Assessment instruments should neither privilege nor disadvantage certain groups of students or exclude others on the basis of gender, culture, linguistic background, physical disability, socioeconomic status and geographical location.

Assessment instruments should be designed so that, under the same or similar conditions, they provide consistent information about student performance. This may be the case when, for example, alternatives are offered at the same time for assessment of an outcome (which could be based on a choice of context) or at a different time due to a student's absence.

#### *VCE assessment will be balanced*

The set of assessment instruments used in a VCE study will be designed to provide a range of opportunities for a student to demonstrate in different contexts and modes the knowledge, skills, understanding and capacities set out in the curriculum. This assessment will also provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate different levels of achievement specified by suitable criteria, descriptors, rubrics or marking schemes.

Judgment about student level of achievement should be based on the results from a variety of practical and theoretical situations and contexts relevant to a study. Students may be required to respond in written, oral, performance, product, folio, multimedia or other suitable modes as applicable to the distinctive nature of a study or group of related studies.

#### *VCE assessment will be efficient*

The minimum number of assessments for teachers and assessors to make a robust judgment about each student's progress and learning will be set out in the study design. Each assessment instrument must balance the demands of precision with those of efficiency. Assessment should not generate workload and/or stress that unduly diminish the performance of students under fair and reasonable circumstances.

## **Section 3 – Guidelines for development, review and approval of VCE studies**

### **3.1 Overview**

The development of a new VCE study or the review of an established VCE study takes place under the guidance and direction of the VCAA Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment Committee (SSCAC). The SSCAC endorses new or revised studies for Board approval.

The VCAA Board approves a VCE study for a set period and notifies the VRQA that the development of or revisions to the study design have been completed in accordance with the processes set out in the *VCAA Principles, guidelines and processes for the development and review of VCE studies*, and meets the VRQA's *Standards for accreditation of senior secondary courses* (Appendix A). The VRQA has responsibility for accrediting a VCE study.

### **3.2 Defining a VCE study**

A VCE study must be constructed to reflect:

- the knowledge and skills that are distinctive and characteristic of the field on which the proposed study is based
- enduring and contemporary approaches to learning in the field
- the nature of discourse and activity in this field.

A VCE study must build on learning from the compulsory years of schooling and enable students to undertake further study in related fields. The details of a study are published in the corresponding VCE study design; see **Section 5** for these requirements.

### **3.3 Development of a new VCE study**

The VCAA Board will determine when a new study is to be developed and the process and schedule for development.

Proposals for a new study will be based on the demonstrated need to express new knowledge, new forms of knowledge or new perspectives within existing disciplines in ways that are not possible within existing studies.

### **3.4 Standards and benchmarking**

Units 1 and 2 of a VCE study are to be developed to a Year 11 standard, that is, the penultimate year of senior secondary schooling. Units 3 and 4 of a VCE study are to be developed to a Year 12 standard, that is, the final year of senior secondary schooling. To ensure this, all VCE studies will be benchmarked against national and international curricula and assessments of a like kind, and comprehensive consultation will be undertaken with experts and practitioners in relevant fields

Benchmarking will involve comparisons of rationale and aims, breadth and depth of course content and corresponding assessment demands.

### **3.5 Period of approval**

The Board of the VCAA will approve a study, with recommendation for a period of accreditation for up to five years, after which the accreditation period may be extended subject to approval by the VRQA, or the study reviewed. The period of accreditation (including any extension or shortening of this period) is entered on the State Register of Accredited Courses by the VRQA.

### **3.6 Overlap between studies**

There are close relationships between various VCE studies and VCE VET programs in many areas of the curriculum. The curriculum and assessment in VCE and VCE VET programs should be distinctive. Each VCE and/or VCE VET program must be able to be distinguished from all other VCE studies in terms of the outcomes to be achieved by students. Students must not be able to receive credit in more than one VCE study for achieving a particular outcome or submit work for assessment of an outcome in more than one VCE study or VCE VET program.

### **3.7 Use of technology**

VCE study designs will incorporate the active use of technology, including ICT, to enhance student learning within the study, to develop genuine understanding and application of technology, including ICT, and to provide efficient delivery of the curriculum and assessment programs. In study areas where the use of technology is central to the nature of learning and the capacity for students to engage in key activities of the study, VCE studies will incorporate such use.

### **3.8 Minimum enrolment**

In general, a VCE study will not be developed or approved unless it can be demonstrated that it is likely to achieve an enrolment of at least one per cent of the VCE cohort, or do so within the first three years of its initial implementation, and subsequently maintain or exceed this level of enrolment. Exceptions may occur where there is a clear rationale based on government priorities, and policies exist to support particular groups or initiatives (for example, community languages and specialist vocational areas). This may involve the approval of small candidature studies in Languages or specific vocational programs. In approving such exceptions the capacity to meet the requirements for resources including assessment expertise (outlined below) will need to be fully demonstrated.

### **3.9 Resources for a study**

The VCAA will consider the resource implications of proposals for new VCE studies and changes to established VCE studies. This includes the requirements of VCE providers for equipment, qualified staff and resources to deliver the curriculum and assessment for all students, and the likelihood of timely availability of suitable resources and professional learning opportunities for prospective teachers of the study.

### **3.10 Assessment expertise**

The VCAA requires that sufficient suitably qualified people with study specific and assessment expertise are available to undertake examination development and administer assessment procedures for the VCE Units 3 and 4 external assessment program. This is a key consideration when approving development of a new study and in assessing the sustainability or suitability of an existing study.

### **3.11 Monitoring**

The VCAA monitors the implementation of all VCE studies during their accreditation period. As a result the VCAA may identify necessary changes to aspects of a study from time to time. It will also make timely decisions with respect to bringing forward a review process or recommending extension of an accreditation period, and manage procedures for the review and approval of VCE studies to ensure that transparency of process, quality assurance and accountability requirements are met.

Based on VCAA monitoring of the implementation of a study during its accreditation period, supplementary advice, changes and updates to information contained in a study design and/or the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook (published annually) may occur throughout the year. These will be communicated to providers via the VCAA Bulletin.

### **3.12 Evaluation**

Curriculum and assessment evaluation is central to the development and renewal process. It commences with the systematic collection of data to inform decisions about what should be retained, modified, extended or removed in and from a VCE study and involves as many stakeholders and interested parties as possible from a variety of sources. The evaluation process is designed to maintain the highest quality curriculum and assessment in VCE studies.

### 3.13 Consultation

Consultation is an important part of the curriculum and assessment evaluation, development and review process. The VCAA will seek to actively engage as many groups that have an interest in the study as possible in the process of consultation. A draft study design will be made available for consultation on the website and to all persons who express interest and others as identified by the terms of reference.

## Section 4 – Processes for review of VCE studies

The VCAA manages procedures for the review and approval of VCE studies to ensure that transparency of process, quality assurance and accountability requirements are met.

### 4.1 Monitoring

The VCAA monitors the implementation of all VCE studies during their accreditation period.

For each VCE study, monitoring occurs on an annual basis through:

- analysis of enrolment and completions data
- identification of issues arising in the school-assessed coursework audit
- analysis of external assessment results
- teacher surveys
- interaction with teachers and liaison with subject associations that contribute practitioner views.

### 4.2 The review process

The review of an existing study involves two stages:

1. Preliminary Research
2. Review and preparation of study design

Stage 2 is undertaken as a major or minor review process. A major review requires the establishment of a Study Review Panel. A minor review requires a Study Writing Team.

#### 4.2.1 Stage 1: Preliminary research

Each review commences with preliminary research involving:

- consideration of issues identified in monitoring
- systematic review and analysis of data from implementation of the study
- identification and conduct of further research (where relevant)
- development of study-specific terms of reference

This research informs a recommendation about the extent of review (minor or major), or to extend the accreditation period of the study.

This stage is managed by a VCAA officer, who will consult with key stakeholders and experts before making a recommendation.

The VCAA Board approves recommendations about the extent of review and terms of reference.

#### 4.2.2 Stage 2: Major review

A major review is conducted in cases where redevelopment of the study design, or parts of the study design, is proposed. A major review requires the formation of a Study Review panel to advise on a proposal.

### **Study review panel**

Study review panels are chaired by a VCAA officer and generally consist of eight to twelve members appointed from schools, universities, the training sector and/or industry.

The role of study review panels is advisory and the proposed study design will be subject to endorsement by SSCAC and approval by the Board of the VCAA.

Teachers and other qualified individuals will be given an opportunity to submit an expression of interest in participation on a study review panel.

Review panel members will be appointed by the VCAA in their capacity as individuals to make expert contributions to the work of the panel for its duration, and to assist with consultation as appropriate.

State reviewers, examination panel representatives and chief assessors may be nominated as members of the VCE study review panel. Representatives from VCE examinations and assessment operations, together with other areas of the VCAA, will contribute their expertise on relevant aspects of the review.

Members will agree to abide by decisions of the VCAA and observe all conditions of appointment including confidentiality. Non-attendance for two consecutive meetings or for more than two meetings of the panel without good reason will be grounds for discontinuing membership in favour of a replacement member who can attend regularly. Technology is available to facilitate attendance at meetings when necessary.

### **Terms of reference**

The *Terms of reference* for the review of a VCE study are underpinned by the *Curriculum and assessment principles* for VCE studies articulated in Section 2.

All VCE study review panels are required to consider:

- the relationship between Victorian Curriculum F–10 and the study and the relationship between the study and post-schooling pathways
- the existence of overlap and/or duplication both within the study and between other VCE studies and/or VCE VET programs
- the extent to which the study reflects contemporary research and developments that are appropriate to the senior secondary level of schooling
- benchmarking against similar subject curriculum as set out in the International Baccalaureate (if appropriate) and at least one other Australian state or territory and one high performing international jurisdiction
- the appropriateness and coherence of the structure and areas of study in relation to the aims of the study
- the capacity of the study to enable both broad participation and the achievement of excellence
- the areas of study and outcomes and their relationship to the school-based assessment and external assessment
- the effectiveness of the assessment program in measuring student performance against the learning outcomes
- the appropriateness of the weighting of examinations and other external assessments and School-based Assessment
- the use of technology, including ICT, in the study
- the contribution of the study to the development of employability skills
- the appropriateness of the structure of the study
- student workload
- sources of gender and/or cultural and/or socio-economic bias
- any specific minimum facilities and resources required to deliver the study.

- enrolments and enrolment trends by unit and year level (including gender, sector and location)
- satisfactory completion rates by unit
- reports from the state reviewer, examination panel chair and chief assessor
- data from the assessment program such as school-based assessment audit, grade distributions and VTAC scaling reports

Study specific issues should also be included for consideration by the study review panel.

The *Terms of Reference* will also identify key interest groups and stakeholders that are to be consulted on the proposal.

The *Terms of Reference* will be a public document published on the relevant study page of the VCAA website.

### **Study design writer**

The VCAA will contract a writer to produce the revised study design. The writer will attend all meetings of the study review panel. They will prepare a draft proposal for consultation and a post consultation version of the study design based on the deliberations of panel and directions given by the VCAA.

### **Expert study panels and reference groups**

From time to time the VCAA may decide to convene an expert study panel, or reference group, to consider particular issues in relation to a study or group of related studies. These groups will be established by the VCAA under similar arrangements to study review panels.

Expert study panels or reference groups may be convened prior to, or work in conjunction with, review panels, and will likely have some overlapping membership. Where an expert study panel is convened prior to the establishment of a review panel, it may make recommendations through its chair with respect to the establishment of review panels, or otherwise, for each study.

The size and composition of an expert study panel or reference group will be in relation to the number of VCE studies involved, the nature and significance of the issues and considerations to be addressed, and the breadth or scope of its *Terms of Reference*.

### **Meeting procedures**

Review panels will be chaired by officers of the VCAA or their nominees. The panel is expected to work on a general consensus model of consideration and decision making. Where this is not possible the panel will, through its chair, note and refer significant issues where there are clear and substantive differences in points of view to the Executive Director, Curriculum Division for reporting to the SSCAC and to receive further advice and/or direction from the committee as appropriate. The work of review panels is advisory and not deliberative.

The panel will meet at a set time and place according to a schedule established by mutual agreement, accommodating the majority interest of the panel, and appropriate for the scope of the review work. The panel may request the VCAA to commission work on particular aspects of the review.

The study review panel will consider all matters in the *Terms of Reference* in providing advice and preparing a proposal for a revised study design for VCAA Board approval.

### **Task definition**

The outcomes of Stage 1 are presented to and considered by the study review panel and used to inform decisions about which aspects of the study design should be retained, modified, extended or removed from a VCE study.

The study review panel will ensure that the proposal is consistent with the *Curriculum and assessment principles* outlined in **Section 1** and the *Guidelines and processes for the*

*development and review of VCE studies* and any interpretation of these principles and guidelines by the VCAA or decisions that the VCAA may make in the process of review.

The VCAA will ensure that any proposal for the accreditation of a new or revised study meets the requirements of **Section 5**, has been approved by the VCAA Board, and addresses the VRQA standards for accreditation of senior secondary courses (**Appendix A**).

### ***Critical friend***

During the review process a critical friend will be appointed by the VCAA to provide independent advice to the Curriculum Manager on the key directions and changes to the study being proposed. Nominees for this position will have an established reputation in fields relevant to the study, and may be located in Victoria, interstate or overseas.

### ***Consultation***

A consultation draft study design, summary of changes and questionnaire will be made available on the VCAA website during the consultation period. This consultation stage will run for at least four weeks.

This material will be available to persons who express interest and others as identified by the *Terms of Reference*. This includes, but is not restricted to

- teachers and organisations on the VCAA consultation register
- the relevant teacher/subject professional association/s
- the state reviewer, examination panel chair and chief assessor (where they are not on the review panel)
- university, and industry and TAFE representatives where appropriate.

All VCE providers will be notified of the consultation period in the *VCAA Bulletin*.

### ***Independent review***

The consultation draft study design will be independently reviewed by both a practising teacher and an academic who are selected by the VCAA on the basis of their respective expertise and experience in the study or related fields. Academic reviewers may be from Victoria, interstate or overseas.

Reviewers will be provided with standard reporting templates, which direct them to comments on the adherence of the proposed study design to the curriculum principles, assessment principles and specified study design requirements and the *Terms of Reference* for the review of the study. Reviewers also advise on the content of the study design in terms of accuracy, clarity and coherence.

Independent reviewer reports will be provided to the SSCAC when the final proposal for the study design is considered for endorsement.

## **4.3.2 Stage 2: Minor review**

A minor review will be conducted in cases where revision of aspects of a study design is recommended. Typically a minor review may involve:

- refinement and/or clarification of aspects of an area of study or outcome including key knowledge and key skills
- reorganisation of key knowledge and key skills between units, areas of study or outcomes
- introduction of some new content as key knowledge and key skills.
- removal of some content to manage workload issues identified in monitoring.

A minor review requires the formation of a study writing team. Study specific terms of reference indicating the scope of the minor review will be provided to the writing team. These will incorporate relevant aspects of the terms of reference used for a major review.

### **Study writing team**

The VCAA will establish a study writing team to conduct a minor review. The team will be chaired by a VCAA officer, usually the Curriculum Manager, and will comprise 2–3 other members. Writing team members will be selected for their high level of expertise and experience in the study or related fields, and their capacity to make timely and effective contribution to the work.

Members are nominated by the Curriculum Manager and approved by the SSCAC.

### **Consultation**

Minor review will involve consultation with key stakeholders and interest groups as identified in the terms of reference. The state reviewer, examination panel chair and/or chief assessor will be included in the consultation. Representatives from the VCE examinations, assessment operations and other relevant units will also provide advice about any proposals.

A consultation draft study design, summary of changes and questionnaire will be made available on the VCAA website during a consultation period. This consultation stage will run for at least four weeks.

All VCE providers will be notified of the consultation period in the *VCAA Bulletin*.

### **Independent review**

The draft proposal for the VCE study design will be independently reviewed by a practising teacher selected by the VCAA on the basis of their experience of the study area.

Reviewers will be provided with standard reporting templates, which direct them to comments on the adherence of the proposed study design to the curriculum principles, assessment principles and specified study design requirements and the *Terms of Reference* for the review of the study. Reviewers also advise on the content of the study design in terms of accuracy, clarity and coherence.

The Independent reviewer reports will be provided to the SSCAC when the final proposal for the study design is considered for endorsement.

## **4.3 Development of a new study**

Proposals for a new study commence with a period of investigation, research and consultation. After approval by the VCAA Board, development of a new study design follows a similar process to a major review, including formation of a VCE study development panel.

## **4.4 Approval and period of accreditation**

The VCAA Board will approve VCE studies and make a recommendation to the VRQA for the period of accreditation, to a maximum of five years. The accredited study design will be available to VCE providers the year prior to implementation in schools.

## Section 5 – VCE study design requirements

Each VCE study, or group of related VCE studies, is detailed in its study design. The study design is a public document. All VCE studies are to be implemented during their period of accreditation in accordance with the requirements of the study design.

### 5.1 Structure of a study design

VCE study designs will incorporate the following components:

- a suitable title for the study and its units where appropriate, and the accreditation period
- a rationale and aims for the study that meet the curriculum and assessment principles for VCE studies
- a four-unit or equivalent structure, representing a minimum of 50 hours of scheduled class time for each unit. Units 1 and 2 and Units 3 and 4 should be prepared as a sequence with Units 1 and 2 providing progression from the Victorian Curriculum F–10 to Units 3 and 4
- general rules and any rules applying to relationships between units, for example, in terms of assumed knowledge and skills for related units or sequences of units
- a set of areas of study and outcomes for each unit
- details of any specific facilities and equipment required
- details of the nature, purpose and scope of assessment for each of unit in relation to its areas of study and outcomes
- details of school-based and external assessment for Units 3 and 4

Advice on course delivery and assessment, references and other resources is published in a separate *Advice for teachers* document.

### 5.2 Areas of study

For each unit of a study, there are generally several areas of study, the titles of which summarise key components of that study. The areas of study describe the expected breadth and depth of content to be covered in teaching and learning. The areas of study for each unit within a study must be clearly described in terms of the rationale and aims of the study.

### 5.3 Outcomes

For each unit of study there are generally several outcome statements that describe student knowledge, capacity and understanding developed as a consequence of expected learning in relation to the areas of study. The outcome statements for each unit are elaborated by key knowledge and key skill statements, and as a set describe the standards required for satisfactory completion of the unit.

### 5.4 Assessment

There are two kinds of assessment decision for VCE studies: satisfactory completion of units and levels of achievement.

#### 5.4.1 Satisfactory completion

Schools will report a result for each unit to the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory). Completion of a unit will be reported on the Statement of Results issued by the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory)

The award of satisfactory completion of a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes for the unit. Teachers must develop courses and use assessments that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of

outcomes. Examples of learning activities and assessment tasks are provided in the *Advice for teachers* companion to the study design.

## **Levels of achievement**

### ***Units 1 and 2***

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

### ***Units 3 and 4***

The VCAA will supervise the assessment of all students undertaking Units 3 and 4. There are three graded assessments in each VCE study and two graded assessments in VCE VET programs. A student's level of achievement will be reported as a grade for each graded assessment and as a study score for the entire study.

### ***Graded assessments***

Graded assessments consist of School-assessed Coursework and/or School-assessed Tasks, VCE examinations and/or Externally-assessed Tasks as specified by the study design.

The VCAA will report levels of achievement on graded assessments as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded).

### ***School-assessed Coursework***

For studies that use School-assessed Coursework the study design will list appropriate assessment tasks (or a specified assessment task) for each outcome, and provide advice on the number, nature, purpose and scope of assessment tasks for each outcome. The scoring scale (i.e. total marks available) to be used by teachers and the contribution of coursework toward the study score will be clearly specified.

The VCAA will also publish for Units 3 and 4 a set of advisory criteria and/or performance descriptors to assist the teacher to make an overall assessment of the performance of the student on School-assessed Coursework. Use of the VCAA criteria and/or performance descriptors is not mandated. Teachers may develop their own criteria, descriptors, rubrics or marking schemes provided that coursework is assessed according to the weightings for the outcomes specified in the relevant study design.

Graded assessments from School-assessed Coursework are subject to statistical moderation.

### ***School-assessed Tasks***

School-assessed Tasks are developed to assess specified sets of practical skills and knowledge.

Where used, the study design will provide an outline of the School-assessed Task, the relationship of the task to specified units and outcomes, and its percentage contribution to the study score.

Graded assessments from School-assessed Tasks are subject to statistical moderation.

Detailed requirements for each School-assessed Task will be published separately on the VCAA website and include:

- a description of the task
- the conditions under which it will be completed
- advice on topic selection and authentication
- detailed mandatory criteria for the allocation of grades from A+ to E and UG.

School-assessed Tasks will be developed only if they:

- are an integral part of the study
- are typical classroom activities or structured field activities that are normally supervised and monitored by the teacher
- involve school level decisions on the particular topic or activity to be undertaken by each student.

School-assessed Tasks will not involve:

- substantial amounts of unsupervised work undertaken outside the classroom
- heavy dependence on resources that may not be readily accessible to all students
- considerable drafting and redrafting
- identical, similar or predictable topics/themes/set-tasks from year to year, which can be anticipated and planned for in advance by publishers and other commercial enterprises, or can be readily obtained from previous students.

### ***Externally-assessed Tasks***

In designated studies, an Externally-assessed Task will form part of the assessment structure of the study. The requirements and conditions for this assessment method are as for School-assessed Tasks except that the task is assessed by an external panel appointed by the VCAA.

### ***VCE Examinations***

Units 3 and 4 of each study will be subject to an external assessment, usually by VCE examination. Examinations will occur in the end-of-year examination period.

The study design will provide details of examinations including:

- the relationship between the examination and the areas of study/outcomes
- examination type, duration and the conditions under which they are to be completed.

Detailed examination specifications and sample materials will be published on the VCAA website.

### ***Study scores***

Study scores are determined from graded assessments aggregated according to the weightings specified in the study design. To receive a study score, students must receive S for both Units 3 and 4 and achieve two or more graded assessments.

Study scores are distributed on a truncated normal scale of 0–50 with a mean score of 30 and a standard deviation of seven. Study scores provide a measure of how well the student performed relative to all others who took the study.

Study scores are scaled and the student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is calculated by VTAC based on the student's study scores.

## Appendix A

# VRQA standards for accreditation of senior secondary courses

### **Standard 1 There is a demonstrated need and purpose for the course**

The course is based on an established community, educational, or vocational need. Any duplication with an accredited course on the State Register is identified and justified. The rationale, aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the purpose of the course, and with the qualification/s the course is designed to contribute towards.

### **Standard 2 The specific knowledge or skills that must be demonstrated by students are clearly articulated**

Student learning outcomes are clearly articulated and the assessment requirements for the course are fair, valid and reliable. The assessment program provides for the collection of sufficient and valid evidence.

### **Standard 3 The course structure and requirements are clearly specified**

The rules for the structure and successful completion of the course are specified as well as any entry requirements and prerequisites. Any limitations to access are made explicit and justified.

### **Standard 4 The level of complexity of learning and the volume of learning required are appropriate for a senior secondary course**

The contribution a successful completion of the course provides towards an accredited qualification is specified.

### **Standard 5 The requirements for delivery of the course are specified**

Delivery modes and any requirements for specialist facilities, teacher qualifications and resources are specified.

### **Standard 6 The accreditation period is specified**

The accreditation dates including arrangements for phased implementation of parts of the course are explicit. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are identified.

### **Standard 7 There are educational and vocational pathways from the course**

Information on educational and vocational pathways and employability skills is provided.