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 activities 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 key principles underpinning all VCE assessment practice ensure that the assessment instruments enable judgments to be made about demonstration of the outcomes and levels of achievement fairly, in a balanced way and without adverse effects on the curriculum or for the education system.

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.

***VCE assessment should be valid and reasonable***

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, 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, 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 should be balanced***

The set of assessment instruments used in a VCE study should 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 should 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 should be efficient***

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