VCE Global Politics 2016–2017

School-assessed Coursework report

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the coursework audit and VCAA statistical data

Units 3 and 4

Students were required to complete assessment tasks for School-assessed Coursework (SAC) tasks for both Unit 3 and Unit 4 from the following list and could use one or more assessment tasks from this list for each outcome:

* a multimedia presentation
* a case study
* an essay
* a report
* a test
* structured questions
* short-answer questions
* an extended response (see study design, page 8)

Most schools chose tasks from this list that modelled SACs on sample examination questions: a mixture of short and extended questions and essays. This continued the practice from the previous study design. While modelling SAC tasks on the examination questions is acceptable, teachers should remember that while the examinations test a sample of the key knowledge and skills, SACs tasks should be designed that are ‘representative of the content (key knowledge and key skills underpinning the outcome) and allow students to demonstrate the outcome. (See [Advice for Teachers](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/globalpolitics/globalpoliticsindex.aspx), VCE Global Politics: Units 3 and 4: 2016–2017)

The audit revealed that most schools have adjusted their coursework tasks to meet the demands of the new study design and tasks reflected the changes.

Most schools developed SACs consisting of short and extended answers and essays for all four outcomes. A choice of essay tasks was often given. Some schools set a case study task as part of the teaching and learning preparation for a particular SAC. Almost all teachers develop their own SACs.

The better SAC tasks:

* contained a cover sheet which clearly outlined for students:
* the outcome being assessed
* the type/s of assessment task/s
* instructions for students covering the conditions under which the task would be undertaken (e.g. dates, time, test, number of lessons)
* any materials allowed (such as notes)
* the assessment rubric or marking schemes
* the mark allocation
* used a range of instructional terms (define, explain, analyse, evaluate, assess the extent to which) to allow for discrimination in performance amongst students and allow students to demonstrate the highest level of performance. These are the terms used in the key skills in the study design. Students should be familiar with the demands of various instructional terms
* used questions which covered a representative range of content from the study design
* were explicit about the need for contemporary examples and evidence
* used a question and answer booklet which showed clearly for students the extent of the responses required.

Many schools use the performance descriptors provided in the Advice for Teachers to assess student work. These outline the qualities expected at various levels of performance. However, these need to be adjusted when setting particular tasks. Many schools successfully convert these into criteria or other rubrics, which apply to short answers and separate criteria for extended answers. Assessment schemes need not be lengthy and should be accessible for students. Students need to be provided with clear expectations regarding tasks and the qualities expected to be demonstrated in SAC tasks.

Most schools conduct SACs under test/examination conditions. For the first SAC at least, teachers might consider some scaffolding, such as allowing students to bring a page of notes into the ‘test’.

Most schools conduct SACs within a reasonable timeframe. More than 100 minutes for a SAC task is excessive.

Specific information

Unit 3 coursework

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate the power of key global actors in the 21st century and assess the extent to which they achieve their aims.

Tasks

The first outcome in Area of Study 1 lends itself to short answer and extended questions, since it provides foundational knowledge for Units 3 and 4 and covers a range of global actors.

Most SAC tasks require students to define and/or explain key terms using examples, answer short questions on the aims, role and power of a range of global actors, and then complete one or more extended responses or essays, which require students to analyse/evaluate a proposition about the power and challenges faced by global actors.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate types of power as used by a specific Asia-Pacific state in the region in pursuit of its national interests.

The second outcome requires a focus on one of the following Asia-Pacific states: Australia, China, Indonesia, China or the United States of America.

The most popular option within the sample of SAC tasks audited was China. This was followed by Australia and the USA.

Most schools used short and extended answers. Essay tasks were more common than for Outcome 2. The nature of the area of study with a specific state focus allows for more holistic tasks.

Most tasks used terms and concepts from the study design key knowledge and key skills. Questions focused on national interests, types of power, foreign policy instruments and the effectiveness of states in achieving national interests. The terms in the key skills were used as instructional terms in questions (define, analyse, evaluate, synthesise) and supported the discrimination of levels of abilities.

Unit 4 coursework

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate two global ethical issues from a range of perspectives, and analyse the effectiveness of global actors’ responses to these issues.

In Outcome 1, students are required to study two ethical issues. Four options are available: Human rights, people movement, development, arms control and disarmament.

In the school’s sampled during the audit, three of the options in this area of study were covered, with human rights being the most popular, followed by people movement and arms control and disarmament.

SAC questions focused on the nature of these issues and responses by global actors as well as both sides of a debate regarding the issues.

SACs for this area of study must cover two of the ethical issues for students to be able to demonstrate the outcome.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain two contemporary global crises and evaluate the effectiveness of responses to these.

In Outcome 2, students are required to study two global crises. Four options are available: climate change, armed conflict, terrorism and economic instability.

In the schools sampled during the audit, two of these options were overwhelmingly popular – armed conflict and terrorism – with very few schools choosing climate change or economic instability.

Questions covered a good range of the key knowledge and skills, and included questions on causes, responses and the effectiveness of global actors in responding to issues. Questions on key aspects allowed students to demonstrate contemporary evidence and examples.