



# VCE Bulletin Supplement 1

## VCAA Principles, Guidelines and Procedures for Review of VCE Studies

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# Section 1: The Qualification

## Preamble

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is the qualification undertaken by most Years 11 and 12 students. It is an internationally recognised qualification that is accredited by the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA). The curriculum and assessment procedures for the VCE are developed, evaluated and approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

It is the responsibility of both Authorities to ensure that the VCE remains consistent with the VQA's Accreditation Guidelines and that it meets both current and future social and economic needs of the Victorian community. The VQA's responsibilities for quality assurance, include the design of the qualification and requirements for the award of the certificate. The following principles, procedures and guidelines for the development, review and approval of curriculum and assessment for VCE studies will direct the work of the VCAA and ensure that the VCE remains a high quality, standards based credential for Victoria's senior secondary students.

## The context for the VCE

The VCE is a post-compulsory credential for a Victoria that is forward looking, economically competitive, innovative and internationally focused. It is a senior secondary qualification for a multicultural, democratic and civil society.

The need for flexible, knowledge focused, highly skilled and participative members of the Victorian community, has never been greater.

The positive effects of high quality curriculum and assessment programs for senior students, and conversely the negative impacts on life chances for young people not completing post-compulsory schooling, is driving contemporary reform in Victoria.

In response, the VCE must be a broad, rigorous and attractive general education to maximise pathways from post-compulsory education to work, further training or higher education. The particular social and economic imperatives of the early twenty-first century indicate that the VCE must provide a senior secondary education that is flexible in provision, knowledge based, high-order skill focused and rigorous in its standards.

To support the continuous improvement of the VCE, the VCAA will:

- work within a framework of accreditation of post-compulsory qualifications developed by the VQA
- use a rigorous quality assurance process for the review and development of its curriculum components (including significant stakeholders feedback)
- promote the development of studies within a process informed by a clearly articulated and explicit set of curriculum standards and principles
- use a rigorous quality assurance approach to assessment to ensure the validity of practitioners' judgments and external assessments
- use a high quality administrative system to deliver and report on certification accurately, and on schedule.

These principles acknowledge the democratic and economic imperatives that drive curriculum reform in Victoria and within which all post-compulsory credentials must operate. They are designed also to realise a key goal identified in *The Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria* (August 2000), namely to develop:

'High quality programs and qualifications in the post-compulsory years, that allow for flexibility in teaching and learning approaches and contexts and that articulate with a broad range of tertiary education, training and employment destinations.'

(Kirby, August 2000, p. 5)

The VCE, as the final stage of formal schooling on a continuum of lifelong learning, must therefore provide for seamless articulation between the compulsory, post-compulsory and higher education years.

To achieve this and meet the community's standards a student's VCE program should promote:

- a high level of literacy
- democratic values
- recognition and respect for the diversity of the Australian society and the diverse backgrounds of students
- broad social values and community standards
- active participation in the broader community
- responsibility for shaping their own lives.

# Section 2: Requirements for the Award of the VCE

## 2.1 Minimum requirements

The minimum requirement for a student's program for the award of the VCE is satisfactory completion of 16 units which *must* include:

- three units from the English group
- three sequences of Units 3 and 4 studies other than English, of which two can be VCE VET sequences
- two units from Group A
- two units from Group B.

VCE VET units may contribute up to eight units including two unit 3/4 VCE VET sequences to the award of the VCE.

## 2.2 Standards and workload

To be awarded the VCE students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 16 units. This is the equivalent of 800 hours of scheduled classroom instruction or four units per semester over two years. Students at this level will also be expected to undertake study outside class time. Most students will complete their VCE program over two years; however, students may accumulate units over any number of years.

Units 1 to 4 are designed to a post-compulsory standard, equivalent to the final two years of senior secondary education. All VCE units are benchmarked against like national and international curriculum and assessments. At least half of the student's program must be undertaken at Year 12 standard, i.e. at least 4 sequences (8 units) at Unit 3 and 4 level.

## 2.3 Program breadth

### Literacy

All senior secondary students are expected to graduate with a high level of functional literacy and the ability to actively participate in the community around them. Literacy has a significant impact on the capacity of individuals to progress to further learning and employment and to maximise lifelong learning. To meet this expectation and standard, all VCE students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of three units of English, at least one of which must be a Unit 3 or Unit 4. Students may choose from a designated list of studies in the English group which includes:

- Units 1–4 of English
- Units 1 and 2 of Foundation English
- Units 3 and 4 of English as a Second Language
- Units 3 and 4 of English Language
- Units 3 and 4 of Literature.

### Numeracy

There is no compulsory numeracy requirement for the award of the VCE. It is expected that students who enrol in the VCE will enter their post-compulsory years with a strong foundation of numeracy established through the compulsory years curriculum.

### Study selection

Within the minimum graduation requirement of 16 units, all students are required to satisfactorily complete two units from Group A studies and two units from Group B studies. For this purpose, all 41 VCE studies and over 30 VCE VET programs are divided into two groups broadly described as Group A: Arts/Humanities and Group B: Mathematics/Science/Technology (Table 1 on page 10 lists the two groups of studies).

### Vocational Educational and Training

In keeping with national trends and policy developments, VET programs have been fully integrated into the VCE. VCE VET programs are packaged into units and provide students with dual qualifications, a nationally recognised training qualification and units in the VCE. All VCE VET programs contribute to the award of the VCE. Each program also either provides an increment for calculation in the student's Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER), or provides the student with a Study Score. Since 1995, a wide range of VCE VET programs, including part-time apprenticeships, have been added to the VCE curriculum (see Table 1, p. 10).

VCE VET units can contribute a maximum of 8 units for the award of the VCE, including two unit 3/4 sequences (equivalent Year 12 level).

## 2.4 Requirements for adult students/students returning to study

Adult students returning to study bring valuable life experiences and knowledge and skills with them to a formal learning environment. In recognition of this prior learning and the benefits of using the VCE as a pathway to further education and training, adult students have different satisfactory completion requirements.

An adult VCE student must be at least 18 years of age on 1 January in the year of enrolment in which they expect to complete their VCE **and** must have been absent from full-time secondary schooling for at least one full school year.

To satisfy requirements for the award of the VCE, adult students/students returning to study must satisfactorily complete at least:

- two units from the designated English group (from Units 1, 2, 3 or 4)
- three sequences of Units 3 and 4 in studies other than English, two of which may be VCE VET sequences.

## 2.5 Requirements for students with disabilities

Students with a disability or impairment including learning disabilities can apply for Special Provision. Special Provision is designed to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do within the framework of the VCE. The objective is, as far as possible, to remove the barriers to a student demonstrating his/her capabilities in a particular study.

It is designed to assist students who, under normal circumstances, would be able to cope with the standard of achievement required for VCE as it is specified in the study design. Special Provision therefore, does not allow for, nor encourage, the development of alternative courses of study with standards of achievement that are different from those specified in the VCE study designs.

Students can receive Special Provision in two ways: direct assistance for the student and through administrative arrangements with the VCAA.

The three forms of Special Provision for assessment available to students are:

- alternative arrangements or variations to school assessment requirements
- special arrangements for external examinations (see below)
- the calculation and use of a Derived Examination Score.

Schools may apply to the VCAA for special examination arrangements for students who have disabilities or illnesses that would affect their ability to complete an examination under the standard examination conditions.

## 2.6 Catering for very able students

### Extension studies

The VCE caters for very able students by recognising completion of the equivalent of first-year university studies which are commensurate in workload to an additional VCE study. Students are able on successful completion to proceed to second year study at the university in that discipline, if they are accepted by the university as an undergraduate. Extension studies do not contribute to satisfactory completion for the award of the VCE. The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) has advised that an approved extension study may count in the student's ENTER in lieu of a sixth study. A grade of PASS or above may equal 4, 5 or 5.5 points. A list of approved extension studies is published annually by the participating universities.

## 2.7 Flexibility in meeting the graduation requirements

### Interrupted studies

Students who experience serious illness or other adverse circumstances during the year which preclude them from completing the sequence in that year may apply for Interrupted Studies status. These students are able to complete Units 3 and 4 and have a Study Score calculated over two calendar years.

Students who take up full-time employment of full-time apprenticeships, are involved in recognised exchange programs or are members of the defence forces called to active duty may also be eligible.

## 2.8 Credit transfer arrangements

### Recognition of overseas equivalent qualifications/studies

Students can apply for credit towards the VCE with overseas or interstate qualifications and if transferring into the VCE from the International Baccalaureate (IB). Credit is only granted where students have completed a semester or a full year of study in one or more subjects. Students may transfer from the IB to the VCE but may not be enrolled in both in the same semester.

For Overseas Qualifications credit is only available at Units 1 and 2 level.

For Interstate Qualifications credit is available at Units 1 and 2 and Units 3 and 4 level.

Students may receive credit for a unit once only in the VCE.

### Block credit

In 2002, the VQA and VCAA approved the introduction of arrangements to provide credit in the VCE for VET/Further Education certificates, including the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA), that are not currently included in the suite of approved VCE VET programs and approved part-time apprenticeships and traineeships. This arrangement also applies to the new senior secondary qualification introduced in 2002, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Credit towards the VCE will be available for full or partial completion of any nationally recognised qualification at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level II and above. The student applying for credit must be enrolled in the VCE.

## 2.9 Changes to the requirements for the award of the VCE

The VQA is the regulatory authority with statutory responsibility for accreditation of the VCE including the stipulated graduation requirements. In exercising related statutory functions with respect to overseeing and delivering of the curriculum and assessment procedures for the VCE, the VCAA will notify and provide advice to the VQA on any matters pertaining to the qualification requirements for the award of the VCE.

# Section 3: Curriculum and Assessment Principles for VCE Studies

## 3.1 Curriculum principles and standards

To ensure that the VCE meets the VQA's accreditation guidelines and the Victorian community's expectations for high standards and high quality curriculum in the post-compulsory years, the VCAA will ensure that individual VCE studies and VCE VET programs are developed in accordance with the following principles, standards and guidelines.

In the articulation and pursuit of these principles, the VCAA acknowledges the range of post-compulsory options and pathways available to senior students in Victoria.

### Maximising curriculum connections and pathways

VCE studies must have clear and recognised connections with, and build on, curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling as reflected in the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF).

VCE studies should be non-discriminatory in nature and be accessible to all students through clear connections to knowledge and skills normally available to all students in typical P-12 educational settings.

VCE studies must be designed to consolidate prior learning through a focus on developing higher order understandings and processes, as well as generic and specific skill development.

VCE studies must articulate with appropriate degree, diploma and advanced diploma courses in universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions, and with post-school traineeship and apprenticeship programs and other employment and training options.

VCE studies must provide clear, recognised and valued pathways to the range of post-school destinations: further study, further training and work.

### Promoting democratic and community values

VCE studies will be consistent with social values, community standards, government policies and legislation.

VCE studies will be free from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, belief, ethnicity, age, sexual preference or physical activity, and reject such discrimination explicitly and implicitly.

VCE studies will be consistent with, and aim to realise the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century and the Key Competencies. They will provide opportunity for further development of fundamental underlying skills, such as literacy, numeracy and generic employability competencies.

### Balancing standards with individual needs

VCE studies will:

- be challenging and rigorous and comparable to national and international standards for senior secondary education
- meet the challenges of assessment and selection in the high stakes environment confronting senior secondary students
- meet the broader educational needs of the cohort and the particular needs of employers, and the higher education and training and further education sectors.

Against these demands VCE studies will balance:

- the need to provide time and space for students to enjoy learning and to promote their personal and social development in the final years of secondary education
- the need to provide reasonable and manageable workloads for students and teachers.

Each VCE study will express these standards through an explicit statement of expectations expressed as outcomes. These standards based outcomes will apply to all students in the study. Successful completion of a VCE study in all cases will depend on demonstration of the outcomes of the study. Every effort will be made to provide students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate these outcomes and recognise that there are a diversity of learning styles. Overall standards, however, will not be lowered in order to accommodate this flexibility.

### **Combining contemporary understanding and skills with enduring knowledge**

VCE studies must be relevant and challenging for the whole student cohort including those who require a strengthening of foundation knowledge and skills, and those who require the challenge of performing at the highest possible standard.

VCE studies will draw on historically valued disciplines and domains of knowledge to assist students to develop contemporary understanding and skills. Each VCE study will do this by:

- identifying the key knowledge, skills and processes to be understood and demonstrated
- incorporating the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance student learning wherever appropriate to teaching and learning
- promoting contemporary examples, contexts and settings
- requiring higher order thinking, a critical perspective and analysis
- promoting a consideration of the ethics and values associated with the particular study.

## **3.2 VCE Assessment Principles and Standards**

The primary focus of assessment is to identify students' achievement, maintain standards, provide certification and identify directions for further learning. In doing this, the following principles apply:

- The goals and purposes of assessment must reflect and reinforce the goals and purposes of the curriculum. In doing so, the assessment must be a representative test of the knowledge, understanding and skills to be achieved by successful completion of the curriculum.
- Assessment should be fair, valid, reliable and transparent for all students.
- The assessment system has to be acceptable to stakeholders – students, schools, government and community. It is designed to provide information to students about individual progress and to teachers and other professionals to aid in development of appropriate learning programs and development and modification of curriculum.
- Assessment methods must include procedures designed to monitor and promote consistent, reliable interpretation, assessment and grading.

- The system for assessing the progress and achievement of students must be effective and efficient.
- The scope and nature of the assessment for each unit of study is explicitly stated at the beginning of delivery of the unit. The length of each assessment instrument used balances the demands of validity and reliability on the one hand, as well as efficiency on the other hand.
- The minimum number of assessments needed to make judgements about students' progression and learning should be used. The assessment system should not generate levels of stress which are so high that they continually interfere with performance.
- Grading is based on performance in a variety of contexts. A range of valid assessment strategies should be employed, including both school-based assessment and external examination.
- Assessment should be sensitive to gender, culture, linguistic background, physical disability, socioeconomic status and geographical location.

## **Section 4: Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies**

VCE studies are of two types: those that are developed and approved by the VCAA; and VCE VET units which are developed by industry and are accredited courses deemed appropriate by the VCAA to meet the broad purposes of the VCE. VCE VET units are based on the Authority's endorsement of broad, industry-related programs, rather than narrow, occupationally specific programs. VCE studies and VCE VET programs must meet the VCAA's *Curriculum and Assessment Principles* as well as the *Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies*.

All VCE studies and VCE VET programs must be approved by the Authority of the VCAA and accredited by the VQA. The following guidelines apply to individual studies and are designed to ensure that the approved study is consistent with the VQA's criteria for accreditation.

### **1. Minimum enrolment**

A VCE study will not be developed or approved unless it can be demonstrated that it has maintained an enrolment of 1 per cent of the year cohort, or in the case of a new study will do so within three years of its implementation. This requirement may only be waived in cases where government priorities and policies exist to support particular groups or initiatives; for example, community languages and specialist vocational areas. This may necessitate the approval of small candidature studies in Languages Other Than English (LOTE) or specific vocational programs. In approving such exemptions the capacity to meet the requirements outlined below need to be fully demonstrated.

## 2. Resourcing the study

The VCAA will consider the resource implications of proposals for VCE and VCE VET studies. This includes the requirements of VCE providers for equipment, qualified staff and resources to deliver the curriculum and assessment for all students.

## 3. Assessment expertise

The VCAA requires that suitably qualified people with study specific and assessment expertise are available to administer the setting, vetting and marking procedures for the external assessment program at Units 3 and 4. A VCE and VCE VET study must be developed in accordance with the VCAA's Assessment Principles and Standards outlined in Section 3.2.

## 4. Defining a VCE study

A VCE and VCE VET study must be consistent with the VCAA's *VCE Curriculum Principles and Standards*. A VCE study must be able to be defined in terms of a clear body of valued knowledge and skills which builds on work done in Years P–10 and prepares students for any further study they may wish to undertake in the area.

## 5. Standards and Benchmarking

VCE studies must be comparable with national and international studies leading to similar post-school pathways and outcomes. This will involve comparisons of breadth and depth of course content and the assessment demands. The content of studies will have an international orientation appropriate to the study.

Units 1 and 2 must be developed to a Year 11 standard. Units 3 and 4 must be developed to a Year 12 standard. To assist with this judgment all VCE studies will be benchmarked against like national and international curriculum and assessments.

## 6. Period of approval

The VCAA will approve studies for accreditation by the VQA for a maximum of four years. The accreditation period upon review may be extended. The VCE will undertake on-going processes to monitor for quality of provision during accreditation including audit and regular consultation with key stakeholders.

## 7. Overlap

There are close relationships among many VCE and VCE VET studies in all areas of the curriculum. A study, for example, may include the underpinning key knowledge and skills covered by an outcome and area of study in another VCE study or VCE VET program. Such cases are legitimate; however, each study should extend the student's understanding and abilities in distinct ways. The curriculum and assessments in VCE studies and/or VCE VET programs should not coincide to the point of duplication whereby any two elements in the studies are exactly alike.

## 8. Duplication

For the purposes of VCE certification, it is crucial that duplication of content and student learning does not occur. Duplication exists when the key knowledge and skills or outcomes in studies are exactly alike, or could contribute to satisfactory completion of an outcome or outcomes in more than one VCE study. Each VCE and VCE VET study 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.

## 9. Information and Communications Technology

VCE and VCE VET studies will incorporate the use of ICT into the study design to enhance student learning within the study, to develop genuine understanding and application of ICT and to provide efficient delivery of the curriculum and assessment programs. In study areas where the development of technology is central to the nature of learning, VCE studies will incorporate these developments.

## 10. Study Design

### 10.1 Structural requirements

VCE study designs will have a set of common characteristics as follows:

- a rationale which meets the *Curriculum Principles and Standards for VCE studies*
- appropriate title/s for the study and each unit
- four units, or an equivalent structure, representing a minimum of 50 hours of scheduled class time for each of four units with Units 3 and 4 as a sequence and Units 1 and 2 representing development of the CSF and a preparation for Units 3 and 4
- general rules and any rules applying to relationships between units
- areas of study and two to four outcomes appropriate to each unit
- details of the scope and nature of assessment for each of Units 1–4
- for each of Units 3 and 4 and for the pair of units, details of examination and school assessments
- support material including advice on course delivery and assessment, references and other resources.

### 10.2 Areas of study

The areas of study to be covered within each unit must be clearly described in terms that relate to the rationale of the study. They must provide an indication of the expected breadth and depth of the content to be studied.

### 10.3 Knowledge and skills

VCE outcomes are comprised of a summary statement and the key knowledge and skills which underpin the expected learning. The outcome statement must encapsulate the area of study. As a set the outcomes for each unit must embody the skills and competencies required by students to demonstrate an appropriate level of achievement of the knowledge and understanding described in the unit.

## 10.4 Assessment

### *Satisfactory completion of units*

For each unit of study a set (2–4) of explicit, standards-based outcomes will be developed. Outcomes will encompass, as a set, the areas of study and include for each outcome:

- a brief description of what the student must know and be able to do in demonstrating achievement of each outcome and an indication of the level of achievement
- key knowledge and skills covered in each outcome.

Outcomes will be designed so that teachers can readily identify the expected standard and, while not being overly burdensome, will provide the basis for assessing satisfactory completion of the unit. They will be amenable to a range of assessment techniques appropriate to the study. With the exception of LOTE studies, VCE study at Units 3 and 4 will be undertaken and assessed in the English language.

### *Graded assessment of Units 3 and 4*

Each Unit 3 and 4 sequence will incorporate a combination of examination and school assessment. The contribution of graded assessments to the Study Score in each Unit 3 and 4 sequence will be as follows:

- for Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Science, Psychology, Accounting and Performing Arts studies – two-thirds examination, one-third school assessment
- for English, Humanities, Business, Health and Physical Education and LOTE studies – half examination, half school assessment
- for Technology and Visual Arts studies – one-third examination, two-thirds school assessment.

Units 3 and 4 of each study will be subject to examination assessment and at least one examination assessment 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 and outcomes, and the conditions under which the examination is completed.

School assessment will consist of:

- School-assessed Coursework, based on the student's overall performance on Units 3 and 4, and moderated using the examination/s and GAT scores to ensure statewide consistency
- School-assessed Tasks set by the VCAA and designed to assess specific sets of skills within units. To ensure statewide consistency, school assessments will be monitored using the GAT and, if necessary, will be reviewed by expert panels.

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.

There will be no School-assessed Tasks that involve:

- large 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.

School-assessed Tasks will be designed to assess specific knowledge and skills within a unit or units. The details of each School-assessed Task will include a description of the task, the conditions under which it will be completed, advice on topic selection and authentication, and detailed criteria for the allocation of grades from A+ to E and UG.

For studies or units of studies that use School-assessed Coursework, the study design will include a list of appropriate assessment instruments such as practical tests, extended written tasks and oral presentations, and advice on the minimum and maximum number of assessment tasks appropriate for the study.

The VCAA will also publish for Units 3 and 4 a set of performance descriptors to assist the teacher to make an overall assessment of the performance of the student on the set coursework.

## Section 5: Procedures for the Review and Approval of VCE Studies

### Introduction

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

The VCAA will notify the VQA on an annual basis of the proposed list of VCE studies for review and development, and accreditation or extension.

### The Review Process

VCE studies will be reviewed and developed by either a Study Review Committee or a Study Writing Team. The VCAA will determine which process is appropriate based on monitoring activities undertaken during the accreditation period, consultation with key stakeholders and the extent of change proposed. The VCAA will request endorsement from the VQA to proceed with the review of an individual study or group of studies. The review and development of all VCE studies will involve consultation with key stakeholders, independent review and will be in accordance with quality assurance processes endorsed by the Authority of the VCAA.

### Process 1: Establishing a VCE Study Review Committee

Review Committees will consist of eight to ten members appointed from schools, universities, the training sector and employers. Committees should be balanced in their representation of gender, rural and regional, practitioners and sectors.

Members will be appointed by the Authority in their capacity as individuals to make expert contributions to the work of the Committee for its duration. Members will agree to abide by decisions of the Authority and observe all

conditions of confidentiality required by the Authority in the course of their membership. Non-attendance for two consecutive meetings or for more than two meetings of the Committee without good reason will be grounds for discontinuing membership in favour of a new member who can attend regularly.

### Terms of Reference

Review committees will be guided by Terms of Reference endorsed by the VCAA. The Terms of Reference will be published on the VCAA website and be available to all key stakeholders.

All VCE Review Committees will be required to consider:

- the appropriateness of the assessment program; relative weightings and nature of school assessment
- the appropriateness of the outcomes and their relationship to School-assessed Coursework
- the use of technology in the study and the opportunity to extend the use of technology appropriate to the study
- the relationship between the study and other VCE VET studies
- the relevance of the content in terms of recent developments in the field of study
- the distinctive characteristics of the VCE study
- the relationship between the study and like curriculum available nationally and internationally
- comparable interstate and international curriculum and assessments
- enrolments and enrolment trends by unit, year level, gender and geography
- reports from State Reviewer/s and Chairpersons of Examination Panels
- data from the Authority's assessment program including
  - audit of coursework
  - frequency rates for examination questions
  - distribution of grades for examination assessment
  - scaled Study Scores and destination data from VTAC
  - statistical moderation of coursework.

Study specific issues may also be included for consideration.

The Terms of Reference will also identify key interest groups which must be consulted on the proposal.

### Meeting procedures

Review Committees will be chaired by Officers of the Authority or their nominees. The Committee is expected to strive to reach consensus decisions and where this is not possible to refer matters of contention to the Assistant General Manager Curriculum Branch for reporting to the VCAA Post-compulsory Committee.

The Committee will meet at a set time and place established by mutual agreement and accommodating the majority interest of the Committee.

The Committee may request to commission work and will need to consider all matters in the Terms of Reference in the preparation of a proposal for approval.

### Timeline and stages in the review and approval of existing VCE studies\*

<b>Term 4, 2002</b>	VQA notified of studies requiring reaccreditation during the following year
<b>Term 4, 2002</b>	Review Committee convenes and provides preliminary advice requested by the Authority or proceeds to prepare an interim report
<b>Term 1, 2003</b>	Interim report completed
<b>Term 2, 2003</b>	Draft proposal completed
<b>Term 2–3, 2003</b>	Consultation with relevant interest groups and groups of teachers on draft proposal
<b>Term 3, 2003</b>	Proposal approved by the VCAA
<b>Term 4, 2003</b>	Proposal accredited by the VQA
<b>Term 1, 2004</b>	Study design distributed by VCAA
<b>Term 1, 2005</b>	Study available to schools for teaching

\*New studies will require a longer timeline.

For a number of groups of VCE studies the Authority will direct Expert Studies Panels, constituted by the Authority under the same arrangements as Study Review Committees, to consider particular questions. Expert Studies Committees or Reference Groups will be constituted of a membership commensurate to the number of VCE studies and breadth or scope of the Terms of Reference. In their response to these questions the Expert Studies Panels will recommend the establishment of Review Committees, or otherwise, for each study and may need to consult with key stakeholders.

### Task definition

The Committee in the review and development of a proposal for approval will ensure that the proposal is in accord with the *Curriculum and Assessment Principles for VCE studies* and *Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies* or any interpretation of these principles and guidelines by the Authority or any decision that the Authority may make in the process of review.

The Authority will provide each committee with study-specific terms of reference and a timeline.

The following checklist should be used in preparing the proposal:

Is the proposal in accord with the Curriculum and Assessment Principles for VCE Studies and *Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies*?

1. Is there evidence that the study has and will maintain an enrolment of 1 per cent of the year cohort or in the case of new studies will do so within three years of its implementation?
2. Is the proposed study defined in terms of a clear body of knowledge and skill such that:
  - the content of the study builds on and progresses from work done in the P–10 Years?
  - at Units 3 and 4 level it clearly prepares students for further study they may wish to undertake in the area?
  - there is a clear progression in the sophistication and level between Units 1 and 2, and Units 3 and 4?
  - Units 3 and 4 would be equivalent to a Year 12 standard?
  - Units 1 and 2 would be equivalent to a Year 11 standard?
  - at Units 1, 2, 3 and 4, VCE study, with the exception of LOTE studies, will be undertaken and assessed in the English language?

- it is comparable in rigour and challenge to studies of corresponding national and international certificates?
  - it has an appropriate international orientation?
3. Is the proposed study clearly distinguishable from all other VCE studies, including VCE VET studies, and does not duplicate content or student learning such that students are able to receive credit in both this study and any other study for achieving a particular outcome?
  4. Does the proposed study incorporate ICT where appropriate to enhance student learning?
  5. Does the proposed study incorporate the key competencies and relevant employability skills?
  6. Is there evidence that the proposed study can be resourced by schools and providers and that there is sufficient expertise available to administer the assessment program?
  7. Does the proposed study include the following structural requirements:
    - a rationale which meets the Curriculum and Assessment Principles for VCE studies and Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies
    - four units, or an equivalent structure, representing a minimum of 50 hours class time for each of four units with Units 3 and 4 as a sequence, and Units 1 and 2 representing development of the CSF and a preparation for Units 3 and 4
    - appropriate title/s for the study and each unit
    - general rules and any rules applying to relationships between units
    - for each unit; areas of study and outcomes (2–4)
    - for each of Units 3 and 4 and for the pair of units details of examination and school assessments
    - support material including advice on course delivery and assessment, references and other resources?
  8. Does the proposed study include the following assessment requirements:
    - for each unit of study
      - a set (2–4) of outcomes which encompasses, as a set, all of the areas of study
      - a brief description of what the students know and can do in demonstrating achievement of each outcome and an indication of the level of achievement
      - key knowledge and skills covered in each outcome.
    - for Units 3 and 4 of the study, an end-of-year examination assessment based on the areas of study of Units 3 and 4 and providing details of the examination, including the relationship between the examination and the areas of study, and the conditions under which the examination is completed
    - details of other assessments including mid-year examinations (detailed as above)
    - details of school assessment including:
      - for School-assessed Tasks (SATs), a description of the task, the conditions under which it will be completed, advice on topic/product/folio selection, advice on authentication and criteria for the school allocation of grades from A+ to E and UG

- for School-assessed Coursework, a range of appropriate assessment instruments and tasks, advice on the selection of assessment instruments and tasks, weighting of tasks and performance descriptors that can be used to make a judgment on the performance of students on the set of unit outcomes?

### **Period of approval**

The VCAA will approve VCE studies for accreditation by the VQA and provide all VCE schools with a minimum of 12 months notice of implementation. Studies will be accredited for four years, with provision to make necessary changes during accreditation; to commence the review and redevelopment of the study as soon as necessary, or extend the accreditation period. The VCAA will monitor the implementation of all VCE studies and advise the Authority and VQA when a study needs to commence the review and approval process.

### **Evaluation**

Curriculum evaluation is central to curriculum development and renewal. It commences with the systematic collection of data to inform decisions about what should be changed in a VCE study and involves as many interested parties as possible and a variety of sources. Guidelines will be developed to assist the evaluation process and maintain the highest quality curriculum and assessment in VCE studies.

### **Consultation**

Consultation is an important part of the curriculum review and development 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 those who are identified in the Terms of Reference.

### **Independent review**

The draft proposal from the Review Committee will be independently reviewed by a teacher and an academic selected by the Authority on the basis respectively of their exemplary teaching practice and their depth of knowledge of the study area. The reviewer's reports will be provided to the Authority. Reviewers will be reporting on the fidelity of the draft to the Authority's *Curriculum and Assessment Principles for VCE Studies* and *Guidelines for the Development, Review and Approval of VCE Studies*.

### **Process 2: Establishing a Study Writing Team**

In cases where only minor revision is warranted to a study design, the VCAA will establish a study writing team. To this end the VCAA will maintain a register of study writers with appropriate qualifications and experience to participate as a member of a VCE study writing team. Study writing teams will consist of the Key Learning Area Manager and two or three members appointed for their expertise in the study and their capacity to make a contribution to the work of the writing team.

VCE studies reviewed and redeveloped by writing teams will involve consultation with key interest groups, final approval by the Authority and accreditation by the VQA.

## The Accredited VCE Curriculum 2002

**Table 1**

### VCE Units

#### GROUP A

(ARTS/HUMANITIES)

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Accounting  
Art  
Business Management  
Contemporary Australian Society  
Classical Societies and Cultures  
Dance  
Drama  
Economics  
English/English (ESL)  
English Language  
Foundation English (Units 1 and 2 only)  
Geography  
Health and Human Development  
History

- Asian History (Units 1 and 2)
- Koorie History (Units 1 and 2)
- Liberty and Authority (Units 1 and 2)
- Twentieth-century History (Units 1 and 2)
- Australian History (Units 3 and 4)
- Renaissance Italy (Units 3 and 4)
- Revolutions (Units 3 and 4)

Industry and Enterprise Studies  
International Studies  
Languages Other Than English  
Legal Studies  
Literature  
Media  
Music Performance (Units 1 and 2)  
Music Performance: Solo (Units 3 and 4)  
Music Performance: Group (Units 3 and 4)  
Music Styles  
Outdoor and Environmental Studies  
Philosophy  
Physical Education  
Political Studies  
Religion and Society  
Studio Arts  
Texts and Traditions  
Theatre Studies  
Visual Communication and Design

#### GROUP B

(MATHS/SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY)

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Agricultural and Horticultural Studies  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Design and Technology  
Environmental Science  
Food and Technology  
Information Technology (Units 1 and 2)  
Information Processing and Management (Units 3 and 4)  
Information Systems (Units 3 and 4)  
Mathematics

- Foundation Mathematics (Units 1 and 2)
- General Mathematics (Units 1 and 2)
- Mathematical Methods (Units 1 and 2)
- Mathematical Methods (Units 3 and 4)
- Further Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)
- Specialist Mathematics (Units 3 and 4)

Physics  
Psychology  
Systems and Technology

**VCE VET Studies 2003**

**GROUP A**  
(ARTS/HUMANITIES)

---

Arts (Interactive Multimedia)  
Business (Office Administration)  
Community Services  
Dance  
Financial Services  
Food Retail (McDonald's)  
Music Industry Skills  
Retail Operations  
Small Business Practice  
Sport and Recreation

**GROUP B**  
(MATHS/SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY)

---

Agriculture  
Automotive (Technology Studies)  
CISCO Networking Academy Program  
Clothing Design and Production  
Desktop Publishing  
Electronics  
Engineering Technology  
Food Processing (Wine)  
Food Technology  
Furnishing  
Horse Studies  
Horticulture  
Hospitality  
Information Technology  
Laboratory Skills  
Seafood Industry

**GROUP A**  
PART-TIME APPRENTICESHIPS

---

Business (Office Administration)  
Community Services  
Retail Operations  
Sport and Recreation

**GROUP B**

---

Agriculture  
Automotive  
Food Processing (4 sectors)  
Food Processing (Retail Baking)  
Food Processing (Wine)  
Engineering (Production)  
Hospitality (Operations)  
Information Technology  
Seafood Industry

## Attachment 1

VCAA quality assurance procedures for the review, development and approval of VCE studies.

Principles and Procedures	Approval process	Implementation
<i>Curriculum and assessment principles and standards for VCE studies.</i>	Approved by the Authority, November 2002 and VQA in December 2002	Implemented by officers of the VCAA and Study Review Committee. Published on VCAA website.
<i>Guidelines for the development, review and approval of VCE studies.</i>	Approved by the Authority, November 2002 and VQA in December 2002	Implemented by officers of the VCAA and Study Review Committee. Published on the VCAA website.
<i>Procedures for the review and approval of VCE studies including:</i> – standard Terms of Reference – composition of study review committees	Approved by the Authority, November 2002 and VQA in December 2002	Implemented by officers of the VCAA and VCAA Executive.
Appointment of VCE Study Review Committees, Expert Studies Committees, Independent Reviewers.	Expression of Interest advertised by VCAA Approved by VCAA Executive in accordance with <i>Procedures for the Review and Approval of VCE Studies</i> on the recommendation of the Senior Secondary Management Team.	
Establishment of individual VCE Study Terms of Reference.	Approved by the VCAA Executive Committee on the recommendation of the VCAA Senior Secondary Management Team in accordance with <i>VCAA Procedures for the Review and Approval of VCE Studies.</i>	



Published by

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