



SELECTIONS FROM VCE SEASON OF EXCELLENCE

Principal    Curriculum Coordinator    PD Coordinator    AIM Coordinator    P-10 Teacher

# P-10 Supplement

Information about Prep to Year 10 education in Victorian schools

## CONTENTS

Year 9 AIM testing 2006	2
Participation in state-wide 2005 AIM tests	2
Standard conditions for 2005 AIM tests	3
AIM Online 2005 update	3
AIM Student personal details data file transfer	4
AIM Data Service on VICONE	4
Formal testing	5
On Demand Testing update	6
Standards assessment tasks and work samples validation project	6
Victorian Essential Learning Standards Frequently asked questions	7
Victorian Essential Learning Standards – Online Survey	8
AIM Online timeline for 2005	8

## CEO's column



Welcome back. I hope you had an enjoyable break and are ready for new challenges in the second half of the school year. Included in this issue of the P-10 Supplement

is important information about the introduction of the AIM tests for students for Year 9.

Each school will have received its Achievement Improvement Monitor Test Package in preparation for the administration of the AIM tests this term. Procedures and processes have been organised to encourage an increase in the number of students in Years 3, 5 and 7 participating in the tests and I encourage every school to assist the VCAA to achieve this goal.

Also included in this edition of the Supplement is information about administering the 2005 AIM tests, AIM Online state-wide tests, student personal data files, the AIM Data

Service and On Demand Testing.

During Term 3, I encourage you to continue your familiarisation with the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*. By now, you should have received sets of the Standards by Level publications which will support staff through this process and will facilitate development of teaching and learning programs which address more than one domain. Additional copies are available to download from the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/links/downloads.html#5>

I also urge you to complete the online survey to validate the Standards, details of which are provided in this Supplement. This questionnaire is an avenue to provide structured feedback about the learning focus statements and standards. Data from this survey will be collated and used to inform any refinements to the current domain content.

*Michael White*

**Michael White**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Year 9 AIM testing 2006

In mid-June the Victorian Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Lynne Kosky MP, announced that, from 2006, AIM testing will be conducted at Year 9. Schools providing Year 9 programs will be invited to participate in the AIM tests at that level in 2006.

Year 9 AIM tests will be conducted in English and Mathematics, and will be based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. They will cover a broad range of achievement levels appropriate to Year 9 students, and will be designed to demonstrate a natural progression from the current Year 7 AIM tests.

For English there will be a 45-minute short-answer/multiple-choice test and a 40-minute writing task. For Mathematics there will be a 45-minute short-answer/multiple-choice test and an extended task.

The VCAA is currently finalising the dates of the tests in 2006.

Schools will be advised of the dates shortly.

Schools will be formally invited to participate in Year 9 AIM testing in 2006.

For enquiries about Year 9 AIM testing, please contact the VCAA on (03) 9651 4472, 1800 820 122 or 1800 648 637.

## Participation in state-wide 2005 AIM tests

In principle, the Victorian Government wishes to encourage all Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 students to participate in the state-wide AIM tests. In order to achieve this aim, schools may provide special arrangements for students experiencing learning difficulties or personal circumstances which might affect performance such as the provision of extra time, extra people, use of technology such as a computer, special test materials or a different testing environment.

Only in exceptional circumstances exemptions will be granted to students with learning disabilities, students who have been learning English in Australia for less than two years and students in other special circumstances. In these instances the principal of the school must contact parents requesting such exemptions and have them sign a *Register for Exemptions* form agreeing to the exemption. This form can be found on page 20 of the *Principal's Guide – Administration* or on the VCAA website at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/schooladmin/forms/aim/aim.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/schooladmin/forms/aim/aim.html)

Following the administration of the AIM tests in August, schools prepare the completed test booklets and the tally sheets ready for collection. The VCAA uses the tally sheet to collect information about students who have been exempted, withdrawn or absent from the AIM test. Schools are required to identify each student who

did not complete the AIM test and provide the following information:

- name
- date of birth
- gender
- Language Background other than English (LBOTE) status
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands (ATSI) status.

Information will also be collected about students who were exempted.

Some students may be absent during the AIM assessment period. Where a student did not undertake one or more tests on 2 and/or 3 August 2005, the VCAA encourages schools to provide opportunities for the student to complete a 'catch-up' test. 'Catch-up' tests must be completed before **Friday 12 August 2005**. These should be sent to VCAA Assessment Centre, c/- Pearson Assessments and Testing, 100 Station Street, Nunawading, VIC 3131. The principal must ensure that the work is sent to the VCAA by secure mail at the school's expense, no later than **Friday 12 August 2005**.

## Standard conditions for 2005 AIM tests

AIM reports provide schools and parents with a range of valuable information showing how their children's achievements compare with a range of measures, including state-wide norms, year level expectations and national benchmarks. It is important that the tests are administered in a standard way.

By adhering to standard conditions, schools can ensure that the information that they use, and provide to parents, is accurate and valid.

The Centrally Assessed Tasks are to be administered under standard test conditions which include:

- strict adherence to times for each test
- private individual work
- calculators or dictionaries must not be used by students
- teacher assistance only within the guidelines provided in the *AIM 2005 Schools' Guide – Implementation*.

Standard conditions for the conduct of the tests, adherence to time limits and level of teacher assistance, will allow all students across the state an equal opportunity to demonstrate their individual level of achievement.

## AIM Online 2005 update

There are 127 schools participating in the 2005 AIM Online state-wide testing program – 85 at Year 7 and 42 at Years 3 and 5. The Years 3 and 5 schools are involved in an extended pilot of the program, which is being undertaken by the VCAA to collect data on online testing in primary schools.

Most schools participating in the AIM Online program completed a one-day professional development workshop in June 2005. The workshops included hands-on training in the use of the VCAA Assessment Online system, which is used to deliver the AIM Online testing program. At the sessions schools received documentation such as the updated AIM Online user manual, upgrade software and the Program Checklist, including logins for access to the online system. Participating schools that did not attend the professional development workshops have been sent packages containing the material.

Attendees were advised to use the Program Checklist on return to their schools as it outlines all tasks schools will be required to undertake to prepare their infrastructure and tests for delivery to the students in August 2005. It also covers tasks that are to be performed on completion of the testing period.

Schools will download the tests to dedicated servers at their schools where students are able to sit the tests. Teachers set up test sessions that enable students to log into tests in a secure manner. Students will sit three tests each – an English Writing Task followed by two adaptive tests of 60 questions each in English and Mathematics. The Writing Task allows students to complete an extended piece of writing on computer while the adaptive tests consist of closed response questions such as multiple choice.

The VCAA is continuing its research into the factors that affect student assessment and performance on computers. Schools were also invited to allow a sample of their students to sit an online Computer Competence Survey.

## AIM student personal data file transfer

The collection by the VCAA of student personal details for pre-printing onto AIM 2005 test booklets has been completed. Due to the cooperation of all AIM schools, this project has proven highly successful. It is anticipated that the administration of the AIM tests in schools will be significantly more efficient as a result. The VCAA greatly appreciates the work done by schools to make this project a successful one.

Schools that have had students enrol since the submission of their AIM student data should note that extra booklets, with no student details printed on them, will be sent to each school. These students should complete their test using one of these booklets, ensuring that their personal details are written onto the front page in the spaces provided.

### National reporting requirements

From 2005 onwards, schools across Australia will be required to collect background information for all

students participating in state-wide testing, namely the AIM in Victoria. This information will be used to monitor the effect student background has on student outcomes to ensure that the 'National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century' are met.

The VCAA is responsible, on behalf of the Department of Education and Training, for the collection of this information from schools and its transfer to the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

The information that will be required for each student is as follows:

- parental school education (mother and father as applicable)
- parental non-school education (mother and father as applicable)
- parental occupation (mother and father as applicable)
- main language spoken at home (student)
- main language spoken at home (mother and father as applicable)
- country of birth (student).

No individual student or school

will be identifiable in the information released to MCEETYA.

In order to achieve this, each AIM school within the Victorian Government and independent sectors will be required to:

- collect and enter the student background information into their school administration system
- resubmit their AIM pre-enrolment file.

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) will collect student data from all Catholic schools and forward the data to the VCAA on their behalf.

The VCAA has extended the time available to schools to meet this requirement. The date by which the student details file is required to be at the VCAA has been extended from **Friday 16 September to Friday 14 October 2005**.

For enquiries about AIM pre-enrolment and reporting student background characteristics, please contact the VCAA on (03) 9651 4472, 1800 820 122 or 1800 648 637.

---

## AIM Data Service on VICONE

The AIM Data Service is the online reporting service for the AIM state-wide testing program.

For the first time in 2004 the AIM Data Reports were delivered to school via the Internet. Almost without exception, schools reported that the new delivery system was a vast improvement over the previous CD-ROM method of delivery. Schools were particularly impressed with the ease with which graphs and data could be easily exported to Microsoft Word documents for inclusion in annual reports, triennial reviews and/or school development plans. Schools have also been impressed with the way they can copy their students' results to Microsoft Excel for further analysis.

The AIM Data Service <aimds.vcaa.vic.edu.au> has now been placed on the VICONE network and is now available directly to Victorian Government schools within the Virtual Private Network (VPN).

It is anticipated that this change will improve speed and access to the AIM Data Service from Government schools with direct access to the site. The AIM Data Service will need to be added to your school's browser proxy exclusion settings as <vcaa.vic.edu.au> in Internet Explorer. See your school technical staff if you would like further clarification on connecting directly to a VICONE service and for implementing the change at your school.

Non-Government schools will still be able to access the AIM Data Service via the Internet as previously.

# Formal testing: Pencil and paper or the computer adaptive system

The VCAA has been responsible for delivering state-wide tests to Victorian schools through the medium of paper and pencil since 1995. Teachers have access to past tests which they can use to assist students to develop good test techniques, such as reading questions carefully, not wasting too much time on a puzzling question, going back to check answers and finish any incomplete questions, and filling in the answers in the correct way.

Many Year 7 students over the past five years have completed their state-wide tests on a computer using the AIM Online system. For the first time in 2004 the system was also available to Year 3 and Year 5 students within a pilot program. This pilot program is continuing into 2005 with an increasing number of schools participating.

Computer delivered tests have considerable advantages for both schools and the VCAA, as delivery is via the Internet, results are collected over the Internet, and the nature of the test means that schools can administer the tests over a time span of two or three weeks for all their students to complete the tests – no organisation for all students to sit the tests on the same day.

The computer delivered test is an 'adaptive' test, so teachers need to give students information about the test and explain how it is different from the pencil and paper test. These differences can be confusing if they are not fully conversant about the way the test operates.

## How is a computer adaptive test different to a pencil and paper test?

**With the computer adaptive test, students cannot go back to change or enter answers once they have moved to the next question.**

Because the test is adaptive, i.e. after every set of questions (5 at present) the computer must select the next set of questions to be presented to the student. The computer records if a question is correct or not as soon as the student moves to the next question. If a student got most of the questions in a set correct, the computer selects a more difficult level for the next set of questions. Where a student gets less than half of the questions correct, the next set will be made up of easier questions. This system would not operate if students were able to go back to change answers.

## Some students will be presented with questions that they find very difficult, especially the very able students.

If students continue to get most questions correct, they will be presented with more difficult questions. The computer is responding to the student so will present questions which suit each student. This can be a bit disconcerting to students who are used to scoring high results on tests. If they understand that everyone gets questions that are difficult, and that is how their level of achievement is established, they wouldn't worry if the computer eventually gives them questions on an area they have not yet been taught. They can feel quite satisfied with the fact that they have reached a challenging level.

The VCAA is placing a series of computer adaptive tests in the On Demand Testing program in July 2005. These will enable teachers to have one more tool to help in establishing the level of literacy and numeracy achieved by their students. It also helps students to be more comfortable with the online testing system especially the 'adaptive' tests. Adaptive tests target students so that they face questions close to their own achievement level, enabling all students to have some success with the questions for the full length of the test.

### Addition to the AIM website

From 17 July, the AIM section of the VCAA website will have an added feature.

In addition to the examples of students' marked Writing Tasks contained in the *Schools' Guide – Implementation*, further annotated examples of students' writing can be found on the website at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/publications.htm](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/publications.htm).

These samples can be used by Years 3 and 5 teachers to practise their marking of the Teacher Assessed Writing Task as part of the AIM testing program.

## On Demand Testing update

This online resource for teachers to use when, where and how they choose is optional, time-saving and able to be administered to a single student and/or a whole class.

In late July 2005, a set of 16 computer adaptive English and Mathematics assessment tools suitable for students from Year 3 to Year 10 will be made available to schools for the first time. In addition, 52 linear Mathematics tests on Number, Measurement, Space, and Chance and Data, will be accessible to registered schools.

Schools that have accessed On Demand assessments report:

- pre-testing students prior to beginning a topic
- applying the same test to post-test a topic

- testing new intake or late arrival students
- identifying strengths or weaknesses of individual students
- corroborating teacher judgments
- assisting in forward planning of teaching programs
- using the assessment tasks that can be marked by the computer to provide immediate results
- positive feedback on the computer generated class and individual student reports.

**Reminder:** Victorian Government schools can access On Demand tests through the CASES server. Non-Government schools require a dedicated server.

Information on registering for the On Demand Testing program and details about the technical requirements for the use of the system are available at the VCAA website [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/ondemand/index.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/ondemand/index.html)

**Note:** The system is only available for use on Microsoft Windows platforms.

The VCAA provides a package to all interested schools explaining installation and use of the On Demand Testing program.

A Helpdesk is available for queries and assistance with the use and set up of the On Demand program in schools. Call 1800 623 681 or email [aim.support@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:aim.support@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## Victorian Essential Learning Standards - assessment tasks and work samples validation project

In May 2005, schools were asked to express their interest to participate in trialing assessment tasks as part of the validation of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*. The VCAA has now contacted schools selected to participate in the development and trial of assessment tasks within each standard in the Interdisciplinary and Physical, Personal and Social learning domains of Communication; Thinking; Information and Communications Technology; Design, Creativity and Technology; Personal Learning; and Interpersonal Development. The VCAA would again like to thank the more than 200 schools that expressed interest in being involved in this project.

During Term 3 2005, in consultation with selected schools, writers commissioned by the VCAA will develop two to four assessment tasks and assessment criteria drawn from the standards at each of the six levels in the Standards. Assessment tasks will focus on domains in the Interdisciplinary and Physical, Personal and Social learning strands using a range of disciplines as the teaching context. Some of these tasks will be based on the sample units developed in 2004 and existing assessment tasks.

Schools will trial the tasks with students across more than one year level, assess the work against the criteria and participate in a structured

moderation exercise with other schools trialing the same tasks. Teacher feedback and data collected from the assessment process will contribute to the validation of the standards.

Following the assessment process and teacher feedback, the tasks will be modified as necessary and published on the VCAA website as exemplary tasks with associated teaching and learning sequences for teachers to use as models. Student work samples will be collected and annotated to highlight elements of the work that demonstrate achievement of the standards. It is anticipated that two to three tasks and work samples will be published at each level in Term 4 2005.

# Victorian Essential Learning Standards

## Frequently asked questions

**This section focuses on different areas of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* and answers some frequently asked questions.**

In using the Standards, schools will develop appropriate curriculum programs which provide opportunities for students to achieve the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours across all the domains. These programs should reflect the resources and expertise available, the needs of students and the interests of the school community.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) is a domain in the Discipline-based Learning strand of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*. This month this section answers questions relating to LOTE progression measures and standards.

### **Why do LOTE standards begin at Level 4?**

LOTE standards begin at Level 4 in order to promote flexibility in the organisation of school programs in Prep to Year 4. However, there is provision in the LOTE standards for assessment and reporting in Prep to Year 4 and schools are strongly encouraged to offer LOTE prior to Level 4. All schools are required to report on students' achievement in a LOTE at Level 4 at the end of Year 6.

Students gain most benefit from the study of a LOTE if they begin in the early years, but it is acknowledged that some schools introduce LOTE programs at different year levels. Three sets of progression measures have been devised for Prep to Year 4. These measures provide a typical sequence of second language development leading to completion of Level 4 at the end of Year 6.

To support schools that provide LOTE programs prior to Level 4 and

to assist them to report effectively on student achievement, the LOTE domain includes three sets of progression measures (Parts A, B and C).

### **Why are four categories of languages identified in LOTE?**

In the study of LOTE four categories of languages have been identified. These are Roman alphabetical languages, non-Roman alphabetical languages, character languages and sign language. These four categories provide standards which acknowledge that students require different amounts of time to achieve literacy depending on which language they are studying. These categories are not referred to for the skills of listening and speaking.

A student whose first language is English will generally progress more rapidly in reading and writing skills in languages which use the same alphabet as English as compared with languages which do not share the Roman alphabet. This does not mean students complete less work in any LOTE class, it simply means that more practice is required to reach comparable levels in reading and writing. Character-based languages require more hours of study to reach a similar level of written fluency, simply because the concept of characters is new and time is required to learn stroke order, memorise characters and so on. Auslan is the language of the Deaf Community and, being a sign language, is not spoken at all.

Of course many students also bring an in-depth knowledge of a LOTE to school with them. They may have a LOTE as their first language or have lived in a country where the LOTE is spoken.

### **Why is there a new dimension called *Intercultural knowledge and language awareness* in LOTE?**

The Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) II focused on the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (which are of course essential to the study of any language). It placed less emphasis on intercultural learning although it included many references to the cultural contexts in which LOTE is used. Through the new dimension of *Intercultural knowledge and language awareness* in the LOTE domain the Standards aim to measure students' achievement in developing knowledge about and openness to diverse cultural traditions. This dimension also seeks to promote students' awareness of language as a system and their capacity to reflect on the structure of their own first language and the LOTE they are studying. Progress on this dimension is demonstrated through performance in the LOTE being studied.

### **How much time is needed to implement the LOTE standards effectively in schools?**

The recommendations of 'Languages for Victoria's Future' which can be found at the following web address <[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lote/lreport.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lote/lreport.htm)> are consistent with the requirements to deliver a program that meets the standards.

It is not possible to demonstrate the achievement of the Level 4 standards at the end of Grade 6 with a limited time allocation such as 30-minutes a week. Teachers are advised to refer to the recommendations mentioned above when planning LOTE programs.

**Further frequently asked questions about the Standards are located at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/about/faq.html>**

## Victorian Essential Learning Standards - Online Survey

The VCAA released the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* in two stages in December 2004 and March 2005. The Standards provide a new curriculum approach in Victorian schools for students in Prep to Year 10. As part of the validation year, schools are working with the Standards, becoming familiar with them, conducting audits of current curriculum and developing a whole-school curriculum plan for implementation from 2006.

The VCAA is conducting a number of projects to validate the learning focus statements and standards. The VCAA is capturing feedback about the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* in a structured way. As part of this feedback an online survey is being conducted during July and August to evaluate the Standards. Data from this survey will be collated and used to inform any refinements to the current domain content.

Schools and other members of the community are encouraged to comment on the clarity and usability of learning focus statements and standards and provide feedback via the online questionnaire accessible at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/onlinesurvey/>. Schools will be able to complete the questionnaire from **Monday 11 July until Friday 5 August 2005**. Schools can select to respond to all or only specific sections of the questionnaire. The VCAA has received feedback on specific aspects of the Standards throughout the validation year. This information will also be collated with the feedback response.

More details of other validation projects occurring throughout Term 3 will be provided progressively on the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/standardsvalidation.html>

## AIM Online timeline for 2005

	Year 7 Dates	Years 3 and 5 Dates
Prepare school server and students PCs	to 26 July 2005	to 26 July 2005
Download State-wide Tests	26 July onwards	26 July onwards
Formal Testing Period	1–19 August 2005	1–26 August 2005
English Writing Task Test	1–5 August 2005	1–12 August 2005
English and Mathematics Adaptive Tests	1–19 August 2005	1–26 August 2005
Last day to Upload Writing Task	12 August 2005	12 August 2005
Last day to Upload Adaptive Tests	26 August	26 August

At the start of Term 4, a further package will be sent to participating schools containing the *Schools' Guide – Implementation*, Tally Sheets, hardcopies of the online tutorials and surveys forms for teachers.

This P-10 Supplement is an adjunct of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Bulletin. The VCAA BULLETIN is a monthly publication (excluding January) carrying information and administrative advice about the Victorian Certificate of Education and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning.

For subscriptions to the VCAA BULLETIN go to: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/bullsubscription.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/bullsubscription.html)

The VCAA BULLETIN and Supplements are also available online at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

Victorian schools only may photocopy this publication for use by teachers and students.

**The VCAA does not endorse the products or services of any notices published in the VCAA BULLETIN.**

**EDITOR** Scott Robinson **DESKTOP PUBLISHING** Robyn Scott **EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES:** tel: (03) 9651 4621, fax: (03) 9651 4354, email: [vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au)