

Supplement 1

Principles and guidelines 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 school qualifications registered in Victoria. The VCE provides certification of a level of achievement, provides pathways from school to further study, training or employment [VRQA Standard 7] and contributes to building a multicultural, democratic and civil society. All VCE studies are benchmarked with respect to comparable national and international curriculum [VRQA Standard 4].

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 Qualifications Authority (VRQA) is the statutory authority responsible for the accreditation of the VCE and its studies, including their period of accreditation [VRQA Standard 6]. The VCAA and the VRQA work together to ensure that VCE and its studies are established in accordance with the *VCAA Principles and guidelines for the development and review of VCE studies* and the *VRQA standards for accreditation of senior secondary courses*.

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

- three units from the English group, with at least one unit at Units 3 or 4 level
- at least three sequences of Units 3 and 4 studies other than English, which may include any number of English sequences once the English requirement has been met.

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 [VRQA Standard 3].

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**), for the development or review of all VCE studies.

2.2 VCE curriculum principles

- Optimise curriculum connections and pathways [VRQA Standard 7].
- Support and promote democratic and community values and the national interest [VRQA Standard 1].
- Balance challenge and expectation with the needs of the individual [VRQA Standards 1, 4, 5].
- Express and reflect enduring and dynamic aspects of a field or fields [VRQA Standard 1].
- Identify specific knowledge, skills and understanding to be demonstrated by students [VRQA Standards 2, 3, 4].
- Incorporate use of technology, including information and communications technology (ICT), to enhance student learning wherever appropriate to teaching and learning [VRQA Standard 5].
- Draw on traditional and contemporary examples, contexts and settings, problems and issues [VRQA Standard 2].
- Require higher order thinking, critical reflection, analysis and synthesis [VRQA Standard 4].
- Promote investigation of the beliefs, values and inquiry associated with the fields underpinning a study [VRQA Standard 4].
- Be future oriented [VRQA Standards 2, 6, 7].

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 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 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 [VRQA Standards 2, 3].

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, presentation or observational schedule) 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 [VRQA Standard 2].

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 [VRQA Standards 2, 3].

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 [VRQA Standard 2].

Section 3 – Guidelines and processes for development and review 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 Post Compulsory Curriculum and Assessment Committee (PCCAC). The PCCAC endorses developed or revised studies with recommendation for Board approval.

The VCAA Board approves a VCE study for a set period and notifies the VRQA that the development or revisions to the study design have been completed in accordance with the processes set out in the VCAA *Principles and guidelines for the development and review of VCE studies*, and requests that the VRQA accredit the study.

3.2 Terms of reference for the development or review of a VCE study

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

The general terms of reference applicable to the review of all VCE studies are as follows:

The VCE <name of study> development or review panel will undertake development or evaluation of the VCE <name of study> study design as applicable, and will develop a draft study design proposal in accordance with the VCAA *Guidelines and processes for the development and review of VCE studies*. The role of the development or review panel is advisory and its proposed study design will be subject to endorsement by PCCAC and approval by the Board of the VCAA.

In developing recommendations for changes to a study, the panel must give consideration to:

- the relationship between VELs 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 coursework and examination assessment
- the effectiveness of the assessment program in measuring student performance against the learning outcomes
- the appropriateness of the weighting of examinations 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
- gender and/or cultural and/or socioeconomic bias
- credit matrix levels and points.

The *Terms of reference* will also identify key interest groups and stakeholders that are to be consulted on proposed revisions to the study (or group of studies) under review.

Where an existing VCE study is being reviewed, the review panel will provide evidence that the following data have been considered in the evaluation and review of the study:

- enrolments and enrolment trends by unit and year level (including gender, sector and location)
- satisfactory completion rates by unit
- grade distributions
- scaling reports and destination data from VTAC
- reports from State Reviewer/s and Chief Assessor
- audit of coursework and/or review of School-assessed Tasks as applicable.

3.3 Development of a new VCE study

3.3.1 Rationale for new study

Based on directives from the PCCAC, the VCAA 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.

The VCAA will notify the VRQA on an annual basis of the proposed list of VCE studies for development and the intended schedule for this work. The development of any new VCE study will involve consultation with key stakeholders and independent evaluation.

3.3.2 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 VELs curriculum 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 3.5.

3.3.3 Standards and benchmarking

VCE studies must be comparable with national and international studies of a like kind. This will involve comparisons of rationale and aims, breadth and depth of course content and corresponding assessment demands [VRQA Standards 1, 4].

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 [VRQA Standard 4].

3.3.4 Period of approval

The Board of the VCAA will approve a newly developed study, with recommendation for an initial 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 [VRQA Standard 6].

3.3.5 Minimum enrolment

In general, a new 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 to this may occur in cases 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 Other Than English (LOTE) or specific vocational programs. In approving such exceptions the capacity to meet the requirements outlined below will need to be fully demonstrated [VRQA Standard 1].

3.3.6 Resources for a study

The VCAA will consider the resource implications of proposals for new 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 [VRQA Standard 5].

3.3.7 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.

3.3.8 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 [VRQA Standard 1]. 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 [VRQA Standard 3].

3.3.9 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 [VRQA Standard 5].

3.3.10 Supplementary advice, changes to VCE studies and updates to information

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 email or memorandum and in the monthly VCAA Bulletin VCE, VET and VCAL. The online version of the VCAA Bulletin <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/index.html> will also include these amendments.

Advice and regulations concerning the following matters are provided in the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook [VRQA Standard 3; VRQA Standard 6]:

- student workload
- vocational education and training
- requirements for adult students/students returning to study
- requirements for students with disabilities
- catering for very able students
- flexibility in meeting the graduation requirements
- credit transfer arrangements
- changes to the requirements for the award of the VCE.

3.4 Review of an existing VCE study

3.4.1 Monitoring implementation and evaluation of a VCE study

The VCAA monitors and evaluates the progress and implementation of all approved VCE studies during their accreditation period, and may make necessary changes to aspects of a study as it deems appropriate from time to time. It will also make timely decisions with respect to fore-shortening, extension or review of studies with respect to the duration of their 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 [VRQA Standard 6].

3.4.2 The review process

Based on the directions of the PCCAC, the VCAA will decide which studies are to proceed into review, the extent of the review (minor or major), and the process and schedule for review. This will include timelines for progress, consultation and final reports. The final report will indicate how the VRQA accreditation standards have been addressed.

The review process for a study involves two stages:

- Stage 1 review enables a period of preliminary research to take place to inform subsequent recommendation for the extent of review, the process to be used to conduct the review, and schedule for the review, and considerations to be addressed by the study specific terms of reference
- Stage 2 review involves the review of the study by study review panel (Process 1) or by study writing team (Process 2).

The VCAA will determine which process is appropriate based on monitoring and evaluation undertaken during the accreditation period, consultation with key stakeholders, and the extent of change proposed. The VCAA will notify

the VRQA on an annual basis of the proposed list of VCE studies for review and the intended schedule for this work. The review of all VCE studies will involve consultation with key stakeholders, independent review and will be in accordance with quality assurance processes endorsed by the Board of the VCAA.

The VCAA may also propose extension of the period of accreditation of a study (or group of studies) if, after suitable consideration, it decides that there is no need for review of that study (or group of studies), or to accommodate other priorities such as developments in the area of national curriculum, as applicable.

3.4.3 Process 1: VCE study review panel (major review)

Review panels will generally consist of eight to twelve members appointed from schools, universities, the training sector and employers/industry. All review panels will be chaired by a VCAA Officer, include a representative of the VCAA Assessment branch; and examination panel chairs and/or state reviewers for School-assessed Coursework or School-assessed Tasks as appropriate. Panels should be balanced in their representation of gender, sector, region and experience.

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. Members will agree to abide by decisions of the VCAA and observe all conditions of confidentiality required by the VCAA in the course of their membership. 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.

The work of review panels will take place with respect to the *Terms of reference* endorsed by the VCAA, which will be a public document published on the VCAA website. The *Terms of reference* will comprise *general* terms of reference applicable to all VCE studies under review and also *study specific* terms of reference.

Expert study panels and reference groups

From time to time, the VCAA may decide to convene an expert study panel, or reference group established by the VCAA under similar arrangements to study review panels, to consider particular issues in relation to a study. 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 recommendation 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 and/or matters where there are clear and substantive differences in points of view to the General Manager Curriculum Branch for reporting to the PCCAC 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 commission work on particular aspects of the review pertaining to a study and will need to consider all matters in the *Terms of reference* in the preparation of a proposal for PCCAC endorsement with a view to Board approval.

Task definition

During the review process and the development of a proposal for approval of a revised VCE study, a review panel will ensure that the proposal is developed in accordance with the *Curriculum and assessment principles for VCE studies* 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 revised study meets the requirements of Section 3.5, has been approved by the VCAA Board, and addresses the VRQA standards for accreditation of senior secondary courses.

Approval and period of accreditation

The VCAA Board will approve VCE studies and make recommendation to the VRQA for the period of accreditation, to a maximum of five years. It will give all VCE providers a minimum of twelve months notice of implementation.

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.

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.

In the development of the proposal the review panel will ensure that it consults at least at the draft proposal stage, with key stakeholders and interest groups including, but not restricted to:

- parties on of the VCAA consultation register
- the relevant teacher/subject professional association/s
- teachers and others on the VCAA's VCE study register, interested in being consulted on VCE <name of study>
- the state reviewer and chairperson of the examination panel and/or chief assessor

- industry, university and TAFE department representatives.

The consultation draft and questionnaire will be made available on the VCAA website during the consultation period.

Critical friend

During the review process a critical friend will be appointed by the VCAA to provide an independent critique of the key directions and changes to the study being proposed. Nominees for this position will be those with an established reputation in fields relevant to the study drawn from either interstate or overseas.

Independent review

The draft proposal from the study review panel will be independently reviewed by a teacher and an academic selected by the VCAA on the basis of their respective expertise and experience of the study area and/or related fields. The reviewer's reports will be provided to the Authority. Reviewers will be reporting on the fidelity of the draft to the VCAA Curriculum and assessment principles for VCE studies, the Guidelines and processes for the development and review of VCE studies and the *Terms of reference* for the review of the study.

3.4.4 Process 2: VCE study writing team (minor review)

A minor review will be conducted in cases where only minor revision to a study design is recommended; for example, to refine aspects of an area of study or outcome identified in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of a study, or to incorporate content, skills and contexts arising from contemporary developments in the field, for example with respect to new knowledge, techniques or approaches. The VCAA will establish a study writing team and provide *study specific* terms of reference related to those aspects of the study recommended for minor revision.

The study writing team, to be chaired by a VCAA officer, will involve a small number of members appointed 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 of the VCAA study writing team.

VCE studies under minor review by this process will involve consultation with key stakeholders and interest groups and require approval by the VCAA Board, following endorsement by the PCCAC.

3.5 VCE study design

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.

3.5.1 Structural requirements for a study design

VCE study designs will incorporate the following components:

- a suitable title for the study and its units, and the accreditation period
- a rationale and aims for the study which meets 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 VELS 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 small set of areas of study and outcomes (see 3.4.2) for each unit
- details on the use of technology, including ICT, and advice on the development of employability skills, for each unit as applicable
- details of the nature, purpose and scope of assessment for each of unit in relation to its areas of study and outcomes
- details of assessment and examination assessment and assessment for Units 3 and 4
- advice for teachers on course delivery and assessment, references and other resources.

Units 3 and 4 of a study include end-of-year examination assessment based on the areas of study of Units 3 and 4 and provide details of:

- the examination, including the relationship between the examination and the areas of study, and the conditions under which the examination is completed
- other assessments including mid-year examinations
- school assessment including: for School-assessed Tasks, a description of the task and percentage contribution to the study score and for School-assessed Coursework, a range of appropriate assessment instruments and tasks percentage contribution to the study score and weighting of tasks.

[VRQA Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

3.5.2 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.

3.5.3 Outcomes

For each unit of study there are generally several outcome statements which 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 skill statements and as a set describe the standards required for satisfactory completion of the unit.

3.6 Assessment

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

3.6.1 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) [VRQA Standard 3].

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' section of the study design. The decision for award of satisfactory completion for a unit will be based on the teacher's assessment of the student's performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit. The VCAA will publish an assessment handbook that includes advice on assessment for Units 3 and 4.

3.6.2 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 two or three graded assessments in each VCE study. A student's level of achievement will be reported as grades for each graded assessment and as a study score for the entire study.

Graded assessments

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

The VCAA will report levels of achievement on graded assessments as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). No comparability is intended between grades in different studies.

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 7. Study scores provide a measure of how well the student performed relative to all others who took the study. No comparability is intended between study scores in different studies.

Study scores are scaled and the student's Equivalent Notional Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) is calculated by VTAC based on the student's study scores. The ENTER is a ranking process upon which entry to university is commonly based.

School-assessed Coursework

For studies that use School-assessed Coursework, the study design will include a list of appropriate assessment tasks with

weightings, and advice on the number, nature, purpose and scope of assessment tasks. 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. Teachers may choose to use the VCAA *advisory* criteria and/or performance descriptors or develop their own rubrics, heuristics or marking schemes provided that coursework is assessed with respect to the weightings for the outcomes specified in the relevant study design.

Graded assessments from School-assessed Coursework are subject to statistical moderation. This is necessary to make the results from different schools comparable so that they can eventually be used to rank students fairly for competitive selection.

School-assessed Tasks

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.

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
- detailed mandatory criteria for the allocation of grades from A+ to E and UG.

School-assessed Tasks will be subject to external review by the VCAA [VRQA Standards 2, 6].

VCE Examinations

Units 3 and 4 of each study will be subject to assessment by VCE examination. At least one examination 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 outcomes or performance standards.

VCE examinations are set and assessed by panels appointed by the VCAA. The study design specifies the duration of the examinations and the conditions under which they are to be completed. More details will be published under 'Examination Details' on the VCAA website.

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. The Credit Matrix level and points are 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.



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