

Information for schools with students completing VCE performance and Languages oral examinations and Extended Investigation oral presentations in 2020

Overview

The safety of our students, staff and the community are at the forefront of decision-making for the delivery of VCE external assessments, including VCE performance, Languages oral examinations and Extended Investigation oral presentations. The VCAA has worked closely with the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to develop health and safety controls outlined in this document.

This document provides schools with information to support students completing VCE performance and/or Languages oral examinations and/or Extended Investigation oral presentations.

Detailed information about these assessments can be found in the [Performance and Languages oral examinations and the Extended Investigation oral presentation](#) publication.

VCAA contact details

For queries about student scheduling and assessment arrangements, contact Assessment Operations: (03) 9225 2212 (for VCE performance examinations), (03) 9225 2210 (for VCE Languages oral examinations and VCE Extended Investigation oral presentations) or email: vcaa.assessment.operations@education.vic.gov.au.

What will be different about the conduct and administration of these assessments in 2020?

This year, VCE performance, Languages oral examinations and Extended Investigation oral presentations will be conducted with extra safety measures in place to ensure the safety of students, assessors, examination venue staff and the community.

Safety measures include putting in place physical distancing and additional hygiene measures (e.g. hand sanitiser), ensuring a COVIDSafe venue set-up, overseeing robust cleaning measures, and closely managing onsite attendance.

What measures will the VCAA put in place at examination venues to ensure they are COVIDSafe?

The VCAA is responsible for administering VCE performance, Languages oral examinations and Extended Investigation oral presentations. The VCAA will have a COVIDSafe Plan in place at each examination venue. These plans are in line with Victoria's public health directions and advice. The VCAA will ensure venue coordinators, examination venue staff and assessors are up-to-date with COVIDSafe requirements that will be in place at each venue.

The VCAA will put in place a range of safety measures approved by the Victorian Chief Health Officer to ensure a COVIDSafe environment. Safety measures at examination venues include:

- Setting up safe examination venues that support physical distancing requirements, including ensuring physical distancing is maintained at entry and exit points.

- Ensuring hygiene measures are in place throughout the venue, including providing and promoting regular use of hand sanitiser and soap.
- Ensuring cleaning is conducted where practicable at least twice a day.
- Requiring students to wear a face mask in line with current guidance for Victorian schools. This includes:
 - requiring students wear a face mask while in the venue, except where preparing for or undertaking their assessment (unless they have an exemption due to a disability or medical condition)
 - advising students that during rehearsal for their assessment, face masks should be used as much as practicable
 - advising students that during their assessment, face masks can be removed where they will otherwise inhibit the student's assessment.
- Ensuring venue coordinators, examination venue staff and assessors wear a face mask at all times. Assessors can remove their masks when they are assessing students, but must ensure they maintain a distance between the other assessor and student(s) of at least 1.5 metres. However, where a singer is being assessed or part of a group being assessed, the singer/group should, where feasible, be 5 metres away from other performers, assessors and accompanists where feasible.
- Managing onsite attendance, including ensuring entry is only granted to permitted people (e.g. students, authorised support individuals, assessors). This also includes recording the attendance of students and examination venue staff, to assist with contact tracing should it be required.

Will students be temperature screened?

As per the DET *Term 4 Operations Guide: Victorian Government schools*, temperature checking in schools is not required.

Based on the advice of the acting Deputy Chief Health Officer, given the current levels of community transmission in Victoria, mandatory temperature testing of all students on arrival to examination venues will not be required in Term 4. However, should community transmission of COVID-19 areas increase, temperature checking may be reintroduced.

My school will be used as an examination venue for VCE performance and/or Languages oral examinations and/or Extended Investigation oral presentations. What do I need to know?

The VCAA will liaise with your school to ensure your school is up to date with the VCAA's COVIDSafe Plan and its obligations as the venue owner/operator.

How should the VCAA and schools respond to a notification of a suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case?

If the VCAA or a school is notified of a suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case, the VCAA will follow the advice of Victoria's health authorities, which may include:

- informing the venue owner/operator, examination venue staff, schools and students of the notification of the suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case
- closing one or more examination venues
- arranging cleaning and disinfection measures.

Mental health and wellbeing support for students

Feelings of general stress and anxiety can be a part of the VCE external assessments for students and their families. Some students may draw motivation from these feelings, but others may need additional support, from family, friends, a trusted teacher or a medical or mental health professional. If students have had a relationship with a medical or mental health provider in the past, now may be a good time for a 'check-in' to refresh strategies to actively manage any concerns that they, their family, friends or school may have.

Implications of COVID-19, such as illness or a requirement to quarantine may impact on a student's participation in VCE external assessments. There may also be situations where a student finds that they are unable to participate in an assessment at short notice. In these situations, VCE providers are required to ensure that students and their parents/carers are aware of the range of wellbeing and mental health supports that are available for students and how they can access these services.

Supports for students

There are range of supports available for all secondary school students, such as:

- a 6-part series of short videos focused on mindfulness called [Feeling It](#), which has been developed by Smiling Mind in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET).
- [Wellbeing with Melbourne Football Club](#) – DET has partnered with Melbourne Football Club on a series of videos to help support student wellbeing. Featuring both AFL and AFLW players, the videos provide students with tips on resilience, managing stress and anxiety, gratitude and staying active.
- [Accessing Support](#) – If things are getting too much, or a student is worried about someone at home, encourage them to talk to a trusted staff member or another trusted adult. If the staff member is worried about the student's safety, or the safety of someone else, they will have to talk to the principal. Students can also access external help through:
 - [eheadspace](#)
 - [Kids helpline](#)
 - [Lifeline](#)
 - [Beyond Blue](#)
 - [ReachOut – getting a mental health care plan](#).

Resources for parents/carers

It can be difficult at times for parents to know how best to support their children. DET have published [tips for parents to support their child's health and wellbeing](#). It covers a range of topics including:

- Looking after your child's wellbeing
- Looking after your child's mental health
- Physical activity and healthy eating
- Taking care of yourself
- Wellbeing activities for parents of secondary students.

[Raising Learners Podcast Series](#) – DET has partnered with the Raising Children Network on a series of podcasts providing expert advice and information to parents and carers on a range of health and wellbeing topics, including what to expect for VCE and VCAL students.

Where can I find further information?

For further health advice you can contact the 24-hour COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398, or visit the DHHS website: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#what-are-the-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19.