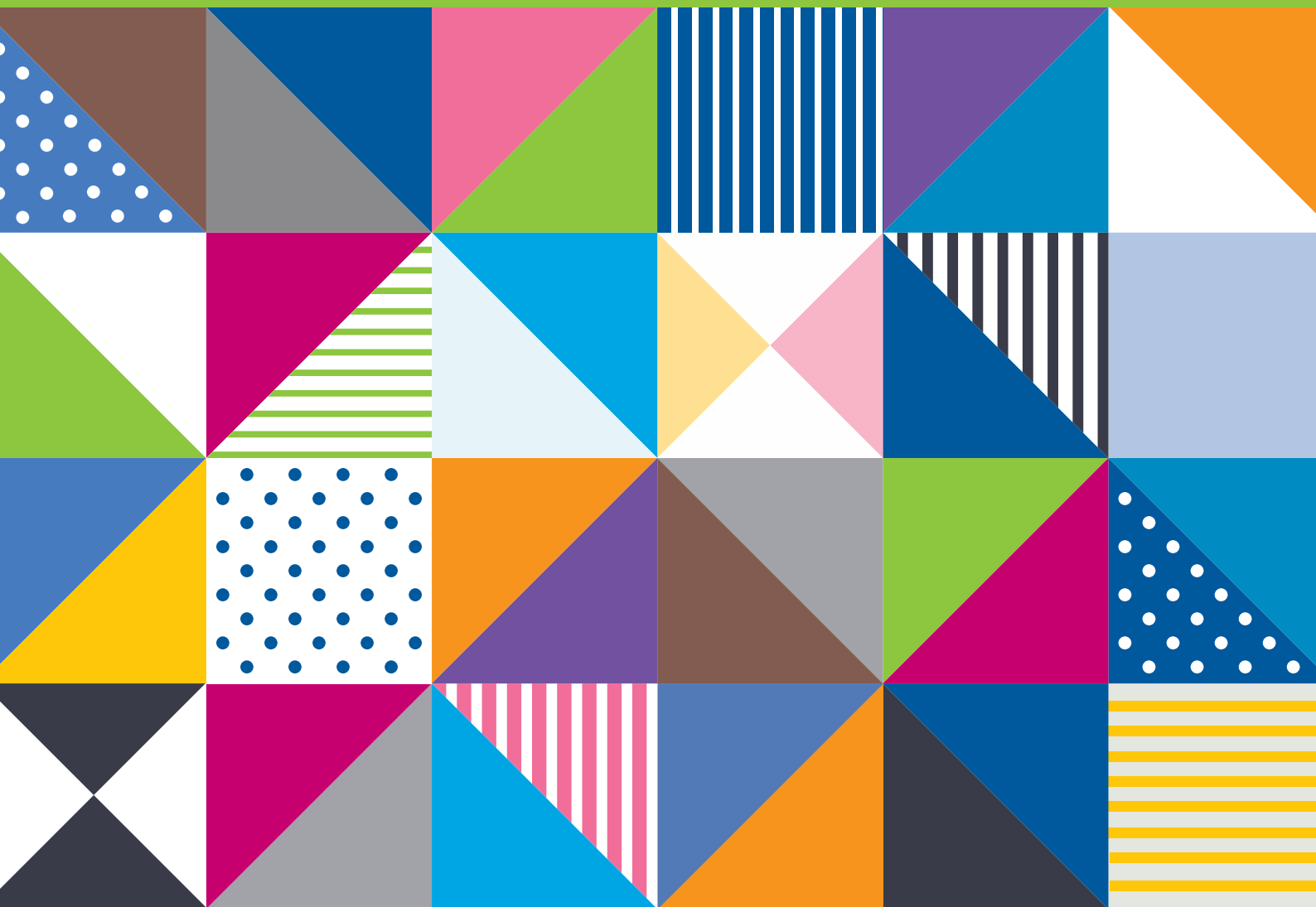


Schools' Guide to Special Examination Arrangements

Advice for VCE Coordinators and school staff responsible
for coordinating and submitting Special Examination
Arrangement applications



SPECIAL EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

Special Examination Arrangements may be approved to meet the needs of students who have disabilities, illnesses or other circumstances that would affect their ability to access VCE examinations.

Examples of Special Examination Arrangements include: rest breaks, extra working time, use of computers and assistive technology, use of scribes and readers, permission to take medication into examination room.

Schools are encouraged to contact the VCAA Special Provision team to discuss the most appropriate Special Examination Arrangements for individual student circumstances.

Schools' responsibilities

Education and training providers have a responsibility to assist students with a disability or illness to access and participate in education and demonstrate their learning on the same basis as other students.

It is the school's responsibility to identify students who may be eligible for special provision for both School-based Assessments and VCE examinations. Many students eligible for special provision may already be known to school staff having been identified through ongoing support programs and discussions with teachers and/or parents.

Schools are encouraged to consider evidence provided by practitioners and professionals to assist with the identification of students requiring special provision and to determine the most suitable provisions.

Special provision for School-based Assessments

Schools are responsible for determining and approving special provisions for classroom learning and/or School-based Assessments.

Schools must consider individual student's circumstances, teacher observations and professional evidence provided by a student and/or their family when determining what provisions are appropriate.

Schools should consult the VCAA if they are unsure about appropriate arrangements.

For more information refer to www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/schoolassess.aspx

Applying for Special Examination Arrangements

The Special Examination Arrangements application form is to be used for all applications for Special Examination Arrangements.

Special Examination Arrangement applications are made to the VCAA through a student's school and must be endorsed by the principal.

Most schools nominate the VCE Coordinator or Year level advisor to coordinate the completion and submission of applications.

Applications for known cases must be submitted by the due date on the application form.

Emergency applications

If a student is ill immediately before, on the day of, or during an examination, the school should contact the VCAA Special Provision team to request and seek approval for immediate Emergency Special Examination Arrangements.

What does the VCAA do?

The VCAA will appoint a panel of specialists which will include medical practitioners, educational psychologists and other relevant professionals. The panel will be responsible for assessing each application.

The panel's decision regarding Special Examination Arrangements approved and/or declined will be communicated to the school via email.

The school is responsible for communicating the decision to the student.

Appeals

Schools may appeal a VCAA decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing by the school within 14 days of receiving a decision email. The appeal must state why the VCAA panel's decision is unacceptable and reference the evidence supplied in the original application.

Appeals should also include any new supportive evidence including other health professional letters of support, educational and academic tests not previously submitted and/or school-based evidence and observations.

The VCAA will review any new evidence submitted with the original application. The VCAA will process all appeals within 21 days of receipt of an appeal. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the school via email.

The school is responsible for communicating the appeal decision to the student.

Early engagement and application

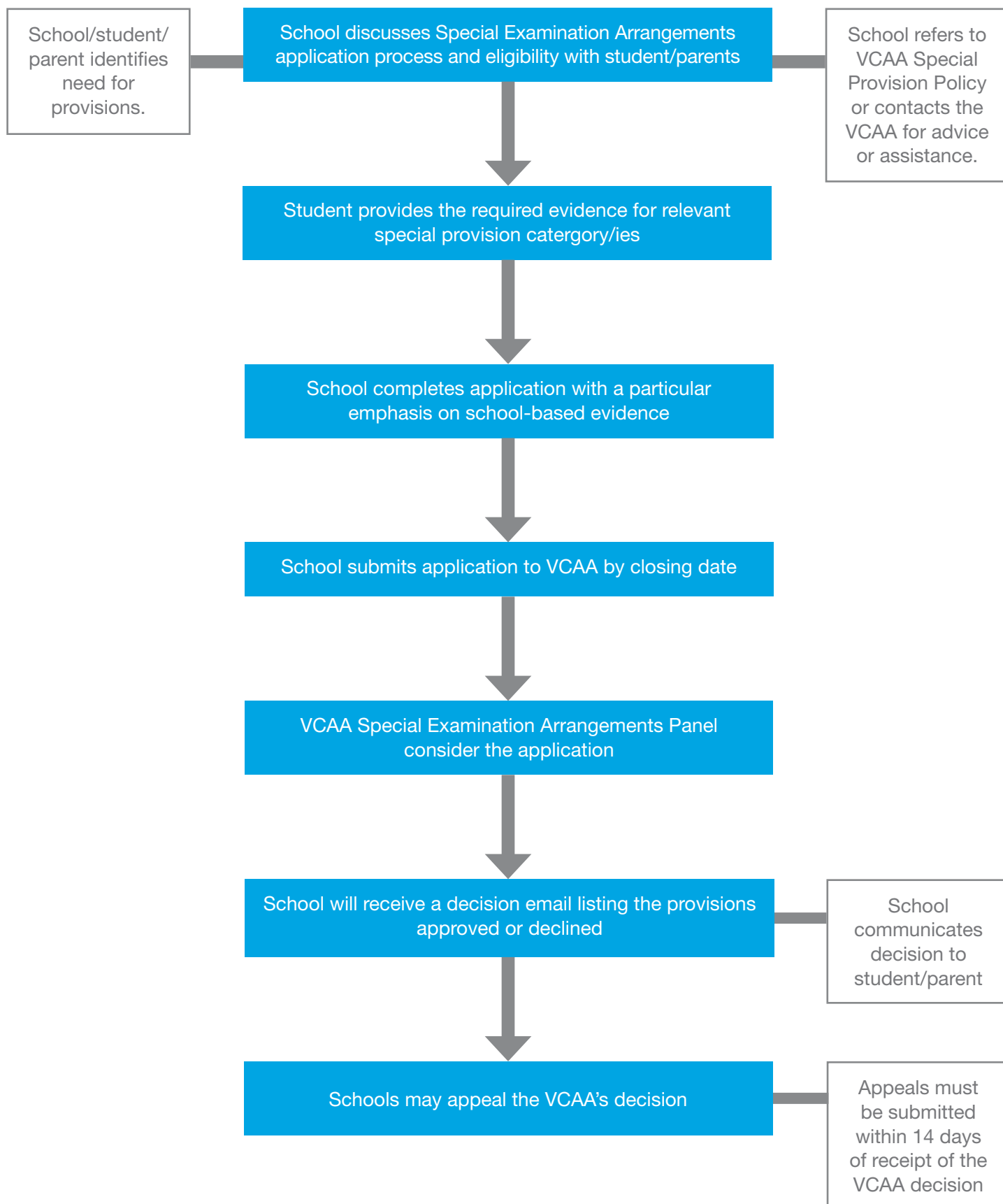
Schools are encouraged to engage with the VCAA to discuss appropriate special provisions for students in the secondary years, prior to enrolment in the VCE.

From Year 9, schools can submit formal applications to the VCAA for Special Examination Arrangements for known conditions.

Schools should contact the VCAA Special Provision team if they wish to submit an early application.

For more information refer to www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialexams.aspx

HOW TO APPLY FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS



CASE STUDIES

Specific learning disorder

Harry has been diagnosed with having a learning deficit in written expression. His parents and teachers have reported he often takes longer to complete tasks than most children his own age. He never completes examinations on time and therefore underperforms. With additional time he is able to complete tasks and perform to his ability. In addition, Harry sometimes switches off during class. This tends to happen when Harry is overwhelmed with the task in front of him. Cognitive assessments and academic evidence indicate high verbal comprehension but low processing speed and poor working memory. Harry's school has approved extra working time for School-based Assessments allowing him sufficient time to complete tasks.

Special Examination Arrangements approved: extra working time, rest breaks (both at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of examination time).

Mental health

Georgie has been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder with panic attacks. The school has reported she is unable to complete School-based Assessments in the same room as her classmates. Georgie has sought support from the school psychologist who recommended cognitive behavioural therapy. The school has trialled rest breaks and permission to leave the room under supervision; however Georgie found it difficult to return to the task once leaving the room. The school then trialled the use of a separate room combined with rest breaks. The school has found this combination of provisions to be successful.

Special Examination Arrangements approved: rest breaks (at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of examination time) and separate room.

Physical disability

Marcus has severe cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair. He has a mild speech impediment and muscle weakness with limited movement of his arms. His school has approved the use of a computer with assistive technology in both classroom learning and School-based Assessments.

Special Examination Arrangements approved: use of a computer with assistive technology, extra working time (at a rate of 30 minutes per hour of examination time), untimed rest breaks and a familiar aide.

Health impairment

Two weeks prior to her VCE Health and Human Development examination, Monica was diagnosed with glandular fever. Her school contacted the VCAA Special Provision team detailing her symptoms and completed an **emergency application** for Special Examination Arrangements which included medical evidence outlining severe fatigue and flu-like symptoms. The application requested rest breaks.

Special Examination Arrangements approved: rest breaks at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of examination time.

Travis injured his back playing football in March. His teachers report that Travis is experiencing pain when seated for extended periods of time during class and when completing School-based Assessments. Travis has provided to the school a letter from his GP which confirms his injury and indicates recovery is likely to be within four months.

Special Examination Arrangements approved: rest breaks at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of examination time and permission to stand and stretch for the General Achievement Test. The school was asked to provide updated health professional evidence in September so a final decision could be made on Special Examination Arrangements for his VCE examinations in October/November.

Support for schools

The VCAA Special Provision team can provide detailed advice and support to schools that would like further information on special provisions or to discuss particular student cases or require assistance with completing an application.

Contact details

VCAA Special Provision

(03) 9225 2219 or 1800 205 455

vcaa.special.provision@edumail.vic.gov.au

The VCAA Special Provision Policy is available on the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialexams.aspx