VCE Business Management 2023–2027

School-based Assessment report

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of VCE Business Management Study Design (2023–2027) and is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Business Management Study Design (2023–2027) are provided in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) and [Notices to Schools](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/notices/Pages/index.aspx). It is recommended that teachers subscribe to the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) to receive updated information regarding the study. Schools are required to alert teachers to information in the [VCAA Bulletin](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) and [Notices to Schools](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/notices/Pages/index.aspx), especially concerning assessment schedules. Important administrative dates and assessment schedules are published on the School administration page of the *[VCAA Website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/Pages/Index.aspx).*

General comments

The reaccredited study design incorporates some modifications to the previous study design. Modifications include changes to the key knowledge and key skills to be taught and assessed, and more explicit information about assessment task types. It is important that schools ensure that School-assessed Coursework tasks comply with, and reflect, the current study design.

The first stage of the audit requires schools to complete a study-specific audit questionnaire by providing information about the types of tasks set, assessment planning, timelines, and the administration of assessment. Responses provided to this questionnaire suggest that most schools audited were designing and using tasks that met the requirements of the reaccredited study design.

Teachers and schools are advised that prior to each School-assessed Coursework task, students should be given a clear and accurate statement of:

* the outcome being assessed
* the task types
* the requirements and conditions of the task, for example, the number of questions and the number of marks allocated to the task and the time allowed
* the contribution of the task to the final outcome score.

In some instances of schools audited there was insufficient detail provided to students prior to the task being sat, such as a lack of clarity about the time provided for the task and the total number of marks allocated to the task.

A significant proportion of schools indicated the use of commercially developed tasks drawn from a range of sources, including those from subject associations, as a basis for School-assessed Coursework task development. Generally, these tasks were reflective of the study design and compliant with VCAA requirements, provided appropriate modifications were made to ensure that the final task delivered was unique to the individual school. Some commercial tasks contained individual questions that required modification to ensure relevance to the study design. Teachers are reminded that commercial tasks cannot be used in entirety for school-based assessment. Any commercial task used must be modified to ensure that no student has an unfair advantage. Tasks purchased from a commercial provider, or the subject association, can only be used in entirety as practice tasks. These tasks are readily available in the public domain and are therefore accessible to students. It is especially problematic if students within a school are given tasks from the one publisher to assess all outcomes.

Unit 3: Managing a business

Teachers must ensure that all terms and questions contained within a task are reflective of the key knowledge and key skills relevant to the specific outcome being assessed.

The audit question requiring a description of how each task had been adapted to ensure authentication was not always answered comprehensively. This is especially important when the school is using a commercially produced task. Responses were often either incomplete or imprecise. The evidence required for this question included either a copy of any commercially produced task that had been used or details of how questions and the task had been modified to meet the needs of the student cohort to ensure work could be authenticated. This evidence was not provided by several schools resulting in a requirement to submit further evidence in the form of one or more of the following:

* copies of School-assessed Coursework tasks
* the commercial task used
* a description of how the task was modified (in detail)
* marking schemes used for Unit 3 assessment.

Tasks may be adapted by changing words, the key knowledge assessed and the case studies or prompt material on which questions are based.

There were several examples of teacher-designed tasks evident, most of which met the requirements of the outcomes. Teachers are reminded that the VCE Business Management Support materials contains sample approaches to developing assessment tasks. These are available to assist teachers requiring guidance in developing school-based assessment tasks.

Samples reviewed in the School-based Assessment Audit revealed that most teachers clearly set out a marking scheme to assess tasks, which was largely consistent with VCAA performance descriptors as set out in the Support materials. Many teachers adapted VCAA performance descriptors to provide mark allocations for specific questions. In some instances, teachers developed their own marking schemes, which were generally appropriate and compliant. All schools audited indicated that School-assessed Coursework tasks were completed by students under supervision, thus streamlining processes for authentication of student work.

The audit revealed that almost all schools have the following in place:

* moderation procedures
* detailed marking guides
* suggested responses
* cross-marking processes involving a team of subject teachers or an experienced teacher within the school or from another school, to ensure equity and consistency in the marking of student work. This is essential to ensure achievement of an accurate rank order.

Overall, tasks seen addressed a wide range of key knowledge and required students to demonstrate relevant key skills. It would be worthwhile if teachers examined each task developed with a view to ensuring inclusion of lower, medium, and higher order questions. (25%:50%:25%). It was apparent from looking at submitted School-assessed Coursework tasks that, generally, inclusion of higher order/more complex questions, weighted appropriately, would have enabled easier discrimination, and ranking of students. In several instances there was an over reliance on use of lower order task/command terms such as define and describe. In some cases, there is an over-representation of 1- to 2-mark questions asking for numerous definitions of key terms and concepts. It is recommended that a range of question types and a range of marks be used to ensure students can fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and key skills.

The VCE Business Management Study Design requires use of ‘contemporary business case studies from the past four years’ throughout several areas of study. Teachers must be mindful of this when planning and developing assessment tasks. Previous case studies used need to be updated to ensure they are relevant and within the four-year time requirement.

Schools audited indicated use of a range of resources in developing tasks for Unit 3. These are included the Assessment advice, Support materials, textbooks, networks, commercial products, and subject association resources.

Schools should ensure that all requested materials are submitted for the audit. Materials potentially required for submission are listed in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. If materials are not submitted as requested, a judgment cannot be reached by the audit panel as to whether the school concerned has satisfied VCAA requirements for school-based assessment. When providing information for the panel, it is also important that sufficient detail is provided. In some instances, there was minimal information about how information was communicated to students and parents/carers, and limited details about school redemption processes.

Unit 4: Transforming a business

The first stage of the Unit 4 audit requires schools to complete a questionnaire providing information on task types, assessment planning, timelines, and administration of assessment. Responses identified that the majority of schools that were audited, designed, and utilised tasks meeting the specifications of the study design.

The second stage required submission of further evidence. This was usually requested due to insufficient information having been provided in the audit questionnaire, meaning it was unclear whether appropriate practices had been followed. Evidence requested usually comprised copies of tasks used to assess outcomes, any commercial material used, marking schemes and assessment timelines. In several cases an outline of processes followed to redeem an ‘S’ result was requested.

Most schools provided a detailed timeline for students, covering both the key knowledge and the dates of assessment tasks. In some cases, there was limited information provided; however, the information that was provided indicated that the times set for assessment tasks was suitable for the specific unit and outcomes. It is emphasised that students should be provided with an assessment timetable clearly stating the number of tasks for each outcome, plus a description of the nature and the date of each task. This is required in order to assist students in planning for assessment.

Specific information

Unit 3 – School-assessed Coursework

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the key characteristics of businesses, their stakeholders, management styles and skills, and corporate culture.

Outcome 1 contributes 20 marks to Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework.

**Task type options**

The student’s performance will be assessed using **two or more** of the following:

* a case study
* structured questions
* an essay
* a report
* a media analysis.

Most schools audited chose to assess this outcome through a single assessment task. The most common form of assessment used was a case study combined with structured questions.

Many schools used specific structured questions to assess this area. Teachers are reminded that an extensive coverage of key knowledge is required in the assessment tasks, as well as opportunity for students to demonstrate key skills. It was noted that some schools did not use the full marks allocated to the outcome. Outcome 1 Unit 3 contributes 20 marks to the Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework. Some schools marked the task out of less than 20 marks. This does not provide students with the opportunity to fully demonstrate their knowledge and makes discrimination between responses difficult. It was noted that some schools chose to allocate more than 20 marks to the specific task, which allowed for greater opportunities to evaluate student responses.

Assessment

A variety of assessment methods were utilised for Outcome 1. While many schools used the marking schemes provided by the publishers of commercially produced tasks, a number of schools developed rubrics aligning VCAA assessment criteria with questions provided in the tasks. Other schools developed a detailed marking guide and provided sample responses. In these cases, weightings suggested in the Support materials were applied.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain theories of motivation and apply them to a range of contexts and analyse and evaluate strategies related to the management of employees.

Outcome 2 contributes 40 marks to Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework.

**Task type options**

The student’s performance will be assessed using **two or more** of the following:

* a case study
* structured questions
* an essay
* a report
* a media analysis.

Most schools audited opted to assess this outcome through use of case studies with structured questions. Many chose to split this into two tasks, often separating motivation from workplace relations. One school chose to use an essay to assess the workplace relations aspect of this outcome. There was a focus on structured questions again as the task type. Teachers are reminded that at least two different task types should be used across the unit.

Teachers are also reminded that the VCE Business Management Study Design 2023–2027 focuses specifically on businesses and the timeframe is within the last four years when using a contemporary case study.

A wide range of key skills were utilised in assessment tasks, especially regarding motivation theories and strategies. However, teachers are encouraged to engage with the key skills specified for each specific outcome and try to apply these when assessing key knowledge. Again, a range of command/task words should be used to ensure that there is a range of lower and higher order questions.

Assessment

Similarly to Outcome 1, different assessment methods were utilised for Outcome 2. Many schools used the marking schemes provided by the publishers of purchased tasks and some used the VCAA assessment criteria with questions within tasks. In these cases, the weightings suggested in the Support materials were applied.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the relationship between business objectives and operations management and propose and evaluate strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of business operations.

Outcome 3 contributes 40 marks to Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework.

**Task type options**

The student’s performance will be assessed using **two or more** of the following:

* a case study
* structured questions
* an essay
* a report
* a media analysis.

Most schools used case studies with structured questions for this task; however, a number of schools opted for a report as an assessment type. The majority of the schools audited completed this as one task.

As a basis for the School-assessed Coursework, several schools used a site visit, so students could view business operations in action first hand, or used information about a business that was available on the business’s website or through reports and articles. There was less reliance by these schools on commercially published tasks. Tasks resulting from site visits tended to either take the form of a report or structured questions completed under test conditions in a subsequent lesson. This practice assists with ensuring authentication of student work.

It was noted, however, that some schools did rely on commercially produced tasks. This may be due, in part, to the changing nature of work in some businesses and less access to onsite visits. When commercially produced tasks are used, teachers need to alter the questions and command/task words used. If, for example, an available task asks for a particular strategy to improve efficiency and effectiveness, then the strategy could be changed, or a choice given. Schools are encouraged to seek out and use service providers as well as manufacturers to assist their students’ understanding of this type of operations system.

The operations strategies were addressed accurately in tasks sighted as part of the audit, and a range of relevant key skills were assessed appropriately. As strategies increase and change, teachers are encouraged to look at ways to assess these different strategies.

It is also suggested that teachers try, where possible, to use a case study of an existing business, as it provides students with an example of a contemporary business case study and also allows students to see the key knowledge applied in ‘real life’.

Assessment

As in Outcomes 1 and 2, a variety of assessment methods were utilised for Outcome 3. A significant number of schools developed original assessment criteria aligning with that of the VCAA. Most reports were written immediately after a site visit. This outcome provides an excellent opportunity to use a report rather than a case study and structured questions to ensure there are different types of assessment. In these cases, weightings suggested in the Support materials were applied.

Specific information

Unit 4 – School-assessed Coursework

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the way business change may come about, analyse why managers may take a proactive or reactive approach to change, use key performance indicators to analyse the performance of a business, explain the driving and restraining forces for change, and evaluate management strategies to position a business for the future.

**Outcome 1 contributes 50 marks to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.**

**Task type options**

* a case study
* structured questions
* an essay
* a report
* a media analysis.

Unit 4 stipulates that a contemporary business case study from the past four years be applied to enable students to evaluate business practice against theory. It was evident that several schools had utilised commercially produced tasks for assessment of Outcome 1 in Unit 4. Several of these tasks contained fictitious case studies. Teachers must ensure students are aware of the requirement to study a contemporary business case study, regardless of whether this example appears in their School-assessed Coursework tasks or not. In Outcome 1, students need to apply Lewin’s Force Field Analysis theory to contemporary case studies.

Schools completed the assessment for this outcome as either one task allocated 50 marks or two smaller tasks. It is noted that many schools completed a case study and structured questions to cover this outcome. The marks allocated to this outcome allow tasks to assess a range of key knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is suggested that the full 50 marks are used and there are an appropriate number and weighting of higher-order questions included.

A small number of schools submitted tasks not adding up to the 50 marks allocated to this outcome. Evidence of conversion allowing final scores as provided to the VCAA to be out of 50 marks was not forthcoming. Teachers are reminded that this is a requirement.

Assessment

As in Unit 3, a variety of School-assessed Coursework task types were utilised in Outcome 1, Unit 4, although mainly structured questions and case studies. Several schools used the marking schemes provided by the publishers of commercial tasks. Some developed rubrics aligning VCAA assessment criteria with questions in the tasks. In these cases, the weightings suggested in the Support materials were applied.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss the importance of effective management strategies and leadership in relation to change, evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of strategies used by managers to implement change, and discuss the effect of change on the stakeholders of a business.

Outcome 2 contributes 50 marks to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.

**Task type options**

* a case study
* structured questions
* an essay
* a report
* a media analysis.

In Outcome 2, students again need to be exposed to one or more contemporary business case studies and be able to evaluate business practice against theory. Some schools used commercially produced assessment tasks which often involved one or more case studies and short-answer questions. It is noted that some of the commercially produced materials were fictitious case studies. If this is the case, teachers are encouraged to cover some contemporary business examples as part of the teaching and learning program.

Some schools completed one task for the 50 marks, others completed the task in two parts. Most schools used a contemporary business as the case study for students to investigate. Schools are again encouraged to ensure students are exposed to an appropriate range of question types, including a 25 per cent weighting of higher order questions. The time required to complete the tasks should also be realistic and not represent either over or under assessment (not too little or too much time) for students.

Some schools were yet to plan tasks for Outcome 2 at the time of the audit. In the first year of a reaccredited study design this is not uncommon; however, in subsequent years, it will be expected that the nature and timing of tasks will be planned well in advance and clearly communicated to students in a timely manner.

The panel strongly suggests that a report task type would be suitable for Outcome 2, as it allows students to engage with a contemporary case study and evaluate the strategies and impact of change on a business.

Assessment

A variety of assessment types were utilised for Outcome 2 in Unit 4. Many schools used the marking schemes provided by publishers of purchased tasks, a number of schools developed rubrics aligning VCAA assessment criteria with questions in the tasks. In these cases, the weightings suggested in the Support materials were applied.