

Victorian Certificate of Education

OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

STUDY DESIGN



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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022

Implementation of this study commences in 2018.

Other sources of information

The [VCAA Bulletin](#) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The *Bulletin* also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the *Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is available as an e-newsletter via free subscription on the VCAA's website at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online the *Advice for teachers*, which includes teaching and learning activities for Units 1–4, and advice on assessment tasks and performance level descriptors for School-assessed Coursework in Units 3 and 4.

The current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term 'school' is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

Copyright

VCE schools may reproduce parts of this study design for use by teachers. The full VCAA Copyright Policy is available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/aboutus/policies/policy-copyright.aspx.

Introduction

Scope of study

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies is concerned with the ways humans interact with and relate to outdoor environments. 'Outdoor environments' covers environments that have minimum influence from humans, as well as those environments that have been subject to different levels of human intervention. The study enables students to make critically informed comment on questions of environmental sustainability and to understand the importance of environmental health, particularly in local contexts.

In this study both passive and active outdoor activities provide the means for students to develop experiential knowledge of outdoor environments. Such knowledge is then enhanced through the theoretical study of outdoor environments from perspectives of environmental history, ecology and the social studies of human relationships with nature. The study also examines the complex interplay between outdoor environments and humans.

Outdoor experiences suited to this study are: a range of guided activities in areas such as farms, mining/logging sites, interpretation centres, coastal areas, rivers, mountains, bushland, forests, urban parks, and state or national parks. Activities undertaken could include bushwalking, cross-country skiing, canoe touring, cycle touring, conservation and restoration activities, marine exploration, and participation in community projects. Outdoor experiences that use weapons or motorised devices to replace human effort are not suitable for this study.

Rationale

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies provides students with the skills and knowledge to safely participate in activities in outdoor environments and to respect and value diverse environments. The blend of direct practical experience of outdoor environments with theory-based study enables informed understanding of human relationships with nature.

Historically, humans have modified outdoor environments to meet survival, commercial, conservation and recreation needs. Outdoor environments have become places of adventure, relaxation, scientific study, social action and enterprise. Outdoor environments also provide space for connectedness with nature and opportunities for reflection upon the past, present and future. These varying values and approaches generate a range of impacts on outdoor environments and can result in pressures and tensions between user groups, leading to issues concerning the preservation and sustainability of outdoor environments. Outdoor and Environmental Studies enables students to critically analyse these different relationships, effects and issues, providing the knowledge and skills to participate in and contribute to contemporary society.

Outdoor and Environmental Studies offers students a range of pathways including further formal study in areas where interaction with outdoor environments is central, such as natural resource management, nature-based tourism, outdoor leading and guiding, environmental research and policy, education, and agriculture.

Aims

This study enables students to:

- develop experiential relationships with, and knowledge of, outdoor environments
- develop an understanding of the ecological, historical, economic and social factors that have affected and will continue to affect outdoor environments over time
- develop skills, knowledge and behaviours that promote safe and sustainable interaction with outdoor environments

- identify and analyse the strategies used to protect, conserve and manage outdoor environments in a sustainable manner
- understand the implications of increasing awareness of sustainable environmental relationships
- critically analyse interactions with outdoor environments in shaping Australian cultural practices.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

Unit 1: Exploring outdoor experiences

Unit 2: Discovering outdoor environments

Unit 3: Relationships with outdoor environments

Unit 4: Sustainable outdoor relationships

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction, including outdoor experiences.

Changes to the Study Design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the [VCAA Bulletin](#). The *Bulletin* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the *Bulletin*.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study. The implementation of effective safety management plans and processes should ensure that all activities are conducted safely. This includes ensuring that all rules and regulations for the conduct of outdoor activities are rigorously followed. Teachers should refer to the Department of Education and Training's *Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors* available at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/outdoor.aspx.

Effective safety management also includes adequate levels of training of students and staff for the particular activity and outdoor setting, and the selection of a setting that is appropriate for the capabilities of the students and staff.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The [Advice for teachers](#) companion document provides specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher's decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student's result for each unit to the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory).

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 specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in VCE study designs.

The student's level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SACs) and/or School-assessed Tasks (SATs) as specified in the VCE study designs, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student's level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score the student must achieve two or more graded assessments and receive S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies are as follows:

- Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
- End-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this Study Design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student's own. Teachers need to refer to the current [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#) for authentication procedures.

Unit 1: Exploring outdoor experiences

This unit examines some of the ways in which humans understand and relate to nature through experiences of outdoor environments. The focus is on individuals and their personal responses to, and experiences of, outdoor environments.

Students are provided with the opportunity to explore the many ways in which nature is understood and perceived. Students develop a clear understanding of the range of motivations for interacting with outdoor environments and the factors that affect an individual's access to outdoor experiences and relationships with outdoor environments.

Through outdoor experiences, students develop practical skills and knowledge to help them live sustainably in outdoor environments. Students understand the links between practical experiences and theoretical investigations, gaining insight into a variety of responses to, and relationships with, nature.

Area of Study 1

Motivations for outdoor experiences

In this area of study students examine motivations for and responses to nature and outdoor experiences. They investigate a range of contemporary uses and meanings of the term 'nature', and examine a variety of different types of outdoor environments. Students are introduced to a cultural perspective on the ways humans relate to outdoor environments.

Students learn to participate safely in outdoor experiences and develop relevant practical skills including first aid to enable safe participation in practical experiences. Students use these experiences as the basis for reflection.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse motivations for participation in and responses to outdoor environments and be able to participate safely in specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

- the use and meanings of terms including nature, outdoor environments, wilderness, managed parks, and urban environments and built environments
- types of outdoor environments: wilderness, managed parks, urban environments and built environments
- the range of motivations for seeking outdoor experiences
- the range of differing personal responses to outdoor environments, such as fear, appreciation, awe and contemplation
- a variety of ways in which people know, experience and respond to outdoor environments:
 - as a resource, for recreation and adventure, spiritual connection and as a study site
 - through experiential knowledge, environmental history and ecological, social and economic perspectives
- the requirements for safe participation in outdoor experiences, such as basic first aid or the conditions necessary for the safe conduct of specific activities.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences
- define and describe a range of relevant terms
- analyse motivations for seeking outdoor experiences
- analyse ways in which outdoor environments can be known, experienced and responded to, by reflecting on both personal experiences and the experiences of other people
- use appropriate practical skills for safe participation in outdoor experiences.

Area of Study 2

Influences on outdoor experiences

This area of study focuses on planning and participating in outdoor experiences. Students evaluate how their personal responses are influenced by media portrayals of outdoor environments and perceptions of risk involved in outdoor experiences.

Practical outdoor experiences provide students with the opportunity to observe and experience various ways of encountering and understanding outdoor environments. Students consider factors that affect access to outdoor experiences and explain the effect of different technologies on outdoor experiences, examining how all of these influence the ways humans understand nature.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain factors that influence outdoor experiences and plan for sustainable interactions with outdoor environments while participating in practical experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- the influence of media portrayals on personal responses to outdoor environments
- rationales for codes of conduct relating to recreational activities
- strategies for planning safe and sustainable interactions with outdoor environments
- the factors that affect access to and kinds of outdoor experiences, including socioeconomic status, cultural background, age, gender and physical ability
- relevant technologies and their effects on outdoor experiences
- the variety of personal responses to risk in outdoor experiences, including the interplay between competence, perceived risk and real risk.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences
- describe and analyse specific examples of recreational codes of conduct
- describe and analyse a range of personal responses to risk, to outdoor environments and outdoor experiences and to sustainable interactions with outdoor environments
- explain the effects of relevant technologies on outdoor experiences
- plan for and use appropriate skills for safe and sustainable interactions with outdoor environments
- explain factors that affect access to outdoor experiences.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set, these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

The major assessment task for this unit is a journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken.

Additionally, at least one task for assessment of each outcome is to be selected from the following:

- a case study
- an oral presentation including the use of multimedia and podcasts
- data analysis
- structured questions
- written responses, including essays and web discussion forums.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 2: Discovering outdoor environments

This unit focuses on the characteristics of outdoor environments and different ways of understanding them, as well as the impact of humans on outdoor environments.

In this unit students study the impact of nature on humans, and the ecological, social and economic implications of the impact of humans on outdoor environments. Students develop a clear understanding of the impact of technologies and changing human lifestyles on outdoor environments.

Students examine a number of case studies of specific outdoor environments, including areas where there is evidence of human intervention. They develop the practical skills required to minimise the impact of humans on outdoor environments. Through practical experiences students are able to make comparisons between and to reflect upon outdoor environments, as well as to develop theoretical knowledge about natural environments.

Area of Study 1

Investigating outdoor environments

This area of study introduces students to the characteristics of a variety of outdoor environments, including those visited during practical outdoor experiences. Students investigate different types of outdoor environments from a number of perspectives.

Students undertake case studies of different types of outdoor environments to observe and experience how changes to nature affect people. They develop appropriate practical skills for safe and sustainable participation in outdoor experiences and for investigations into various outdoor environments. Students use these experiences as the basis for reflection and analysis of theoretical knowledge of natural environments.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe the characteristics of different outdoor environments and analyse a range of understandings of these environments, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

- characteristics of outdoor environments, including alpine, marine, coastal, wetlands, grassland, forest and arid
- recreational users' understandings of specific outdoor environments
- scientific understandings of specific outdoor environments, including:
 - interrelationships between biotic and abiotic components
 - effects of natural changes to environments on people and places such as day to night, seasons, tides, flood, drought, migration, succession, and climate change
 - the effect fire (both wildfire and controlled burns) has on the environment
- land managers' understandings of specific outdoor environments, including the features that can be used to delineate one particular area from another such as landform, vegetation type, public and private land, types of parks and reserves, management zones
- artistic, Indigenous, and historical understandings of specific outdoor environments.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected
- describe, compare and contrast the characteristics of different outdoor environments
- analyse a range of understandings of the use of, and relationship to, outdoor environments.
- analyse how land managers delineate outdoor areas.

Area of Study 2

Impacts on outdoor environments

This area of study focuses on the human activities undertaken in outdoor environments and their impacts on those environments. Although environmental impacts include both natural and human-induced changes on components of the environment, the focus here is on the impacts of humans – both positive and negative.

Students investigate and model individual and group responsibilities for activities in outdoor environments, including community-based environmental action to promote positive impacts on outdoor environments.

Practical outdoor experiences enable students to develop skills related to minimal impact travelling and living, and to experience the impact of technology on outdoor environments. Students use these experiences as the basis for reflection and for analysis of theoretical knowledge about the effects of natural and human-induced impacts on outdoor environments.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate the impacts of humans on outdoor environments and analyse practices for promoting positive impacts, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- the impact of conservation, commercial and recreational activities on outdoor environments
- community-based environmental action to promote positive impacts of humans on outdoor environments
- impacts of technologies on outdoor environments, including:
 - direct impacts, such as recreational vehicles and snow making
 - indirect or deferred impacts, such as equipment manufacture and transport
- the impact on outdoor environments of urbanisation and changing human lifestyles.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected
- identify and evaluate the impacts of different types of activities on outdoor environments
- identify and apply practices for promoting positive impacts on outdoor environments
- analyse direct and indirect impacts of technologies on outdoor environments
- analyse the impact of urbanisation and changing human lifestyles on outdoor environments.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

The major assessment task for this unit is a journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken.

Additionally, at least one task for assessment of each outcome is to be selected from the following:

- a case study
- an oral presentation including the use of multimedia and podcasts
- data analysis
- structured questions
- written responses, including essays and web discussion forums.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 3: Relationships with outdoor environments

The focus of this unit is the ecological, historical and social contexts of relationships between humans and outdoor environments in Australia. Case studies of a range of impacts on outdoor environments are examined in the context of the changing nature of human relationships with outdoor environments in Australia.

Students consider a number of factors that influence relationships with outdoor environments. They also examine the dynamic nature of relationships between humans and their environment.

Students are involved in one or more experiences in outdoor environments, including in areas where there is evidence of human interaction. Through these practical experiences students are able to make comparisons between and to reflect upon outdoor environments, as well as to develop theoretical knowledge and skills about specific natural environments.

Area of Study 1

Historical relationships with outdoor environments

This area of study explores how Australians have understood and interacted with outdoor environments over time. Students examine the unique nature of Australian outdoor environments and investigate a range of human relationships with outdoor environments, from various Indigenous cultural experiences, through to the influence of a number of major historical events and issues subsequent to European settlement. Case studies are used to analyse the role of environmental movements in changing human relationships with outdoor environments. Students study the foundation and role of environmental and political movements in changing relationships with outdoor environments and the subsequent effects of these on environmental politics.

Students engage in practical outdoor experiences that enable them to investigate human relationships with specific outdoor environments.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain and evaluate how relationships with Australian outdoor environments have changed over time, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

- an overview of Australian outdoor environments before humans, including characteristics of biological isolation, geological stability, and climatic variations
- relationships with Australian outdoor environments expressed by specific Indigenous communities before and after European colonisation
- relationships with Australian outdoor environments as influenced by:
 - the first non-Indigenous settlers' experiences
 - increasing population
 - industrialisation
 - nation building

- the foundation and role of environmental movements in changing relationships with outdoor environments, in relation to at least one of the following:
 - Lake Pedder (Tasmania)
 - The Little Desert (Victoria)
 - The Franklin River (Tasmania)
- the impact of increasing environmental awareness in Australia on the policies of political parties.

Key skills

- explain the characteristics of the Australian environment before humans
- describe and analyse the changing relationships with Australian outdoor environments expressed by specific Indigenous communities
- describe and analyse the changing relationships with Australian outdoor environments influenced by historical events and associated key social and cultural issues
- evaluate the foundation and role of environmental and political movements in changing relationships with outdoor environments
- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences.

Area of Study 2

Relationships with Australian environments since 1990

In this area of study students examine relationships between humans and outdoor environments since 1990. They examine a number of ways outdoor environments are depicted in different media. The dynamic nature of relationships between humans and their environment are considered, as well as the social, cultural, economic and political factors that influence these relationships.

Students engage in practical outdoor experiences that enable them to collect information about, reflect on and analyse relationships with outdoor environments since 1990.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments since 1990, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- societal relationships with outdoor environments reflected in different forms of conservation, recreation, primary industries, and tourism practice
- the factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments, including:
 - the effects of different technologies
 - commercialisation of outdoor environments and outdoor experiences
 - depictions of outdoor environments and outdoor experiences in the media, music, art, writing and advertising
 - social responses to risk taking
- social and political debates about climate change, water management, and renewable energy and the impacts of these debates on societal relationships with outdoor environments
- an overview of environmental politics in Australia, including:
 - environmental policies of the major Australian political parties
 - the role of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC).

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences
- compare different societal relationships with outdoor environments
- analyse and evaluate factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments
- analyse environmental politics in Australia
- analyse social and political debates about environmental issues.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes *Advice for teachers* for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher's assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Explain and evaluate how relationships with Australian outdoor environments have changed over time, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.	10	A journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken
	40	AND at least one task from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a case study • a multimedia presentation or podcast • a written report.
Outcome 2 Analyse and evaluate the factors influencing societal relationships with outdoor environments since 1990, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.	10	A journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken
	40	AND at least one task from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data analysis • structured questions.
Total marks	100	

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

Unit 4: Sustainable outdoor relationships

In this unit students explore the sustainable use and management of outdoor environments. They examine the contemporary state of environments in Australia, consider the importance of healthy outdoor environments, and examine the issues relating to the capacity of outdoor environments to support the future needs of the Australian population.

Students examine the importance of developing a balance between human needs and the conservation of outdoor environments and consider the skills needed to be environmentally responsible citizens. They investigate current acts and conventions as well as management strategies for achieving and maintaining healthy and sustainable environments in contemporary Australian society.

Students engage in one or more related experiences in outdoor environments. They learn and apply the practical skills and knowledge required to sustain healthy outdoor environments, and evaluate the strategies and actions they employ. Through these practical experiences students are able to make comparisons between and to reflect upon outdoor environments, as well as to develop and apply theoretical knowledge about outdoor environments.

Area of Study 1

Healthy outdoor environments

This area of study explores the contemporary state of outdoor environments in Australia and the importance of outdoor environments for individuals and society. Students examine the nature of sustainability and use observations to evaluate the health of outdoor environments. They investigate current and potential damage to outdoor environments and the subsequent impacts.

Practical outdoor experiences enable students to further develop and apply their practical knowledge and skills for safe and sustainable interaction with outdoor environments.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate the contemporary state of Australian outdoor environments and analyse the importance of healthy outdoor environments and sustainability for individuals and society, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

- understandings and critiques of sustainability and sustainable development
- observable characteristics of healthy outdoor environments, including:
 - quality and adequacy of water, air and soil
 - amount of biodiversity
 - amount of pest and introduced species
- the state of outdoor environments in Australia, with reference to common themes used in the current national State of the Environment report
- the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individual physical and emotional wellbeing, and for the future of society
- the potential impact on society and outdoor environments of land degradation, introduced species, climate change, urbanisation and other significant threats.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences
- analyse definitions of sustainability and the concept of sustainable development
- use observations to evaluate the health of outdoor environments
- evaluate the contemporary state of Australian outdoor environments
- analyse the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individuals and society
- identify and predict the potential impact of significant threats on society and on outdoor environments.

Area of Study 2

Sustainable outdoor environments

In this area of study students focus on the sustainability of environments to support the future needs of ecosystems, individuals and society, and the skills needed to be an environmentally responsible citizen. Students investigate at least two case studies of conflict over uses of outdoor environments and develop a clear understanding of the methods and processes commonly used to resolve these conflicts.

Students develop an understanding that management strategies, together with acts and conventions, contribute to maintaining the health and sustainability of outdoor environments in contemporary Australian society.

Students use their outdoor experiences to reflect on the actions taken by individuals and groups in contemporary Australia to maintain the health of outdoor environments.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse conflicts over the use of outdoor environments, and evaluate practices and strategies for sustaining outdoor environments, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- at least two recent or current conflicts over the use of outdoor environments, including at least one from the following:
 - marine national parks and sanctuaries
 - grazing in the Alpine National Park
 - desalination plant at Wonthaggi
 - proposed Great Forest National Park
 - extraction of coal seam gas
- the methods used by individuals and groups to influence decisions about the use of outdoor environments
- the processes followed by land managers and/or governments or their agencies relating to conflicts over the use of outdoor environments, including community consultations, use of court systems, legislation and management plans
- management strategies for achieving and maintaining healthy and sustainable outdoor environments that may be adopted by public and private land managers
- acts or conventions related to the management and sustainability of outdoor environments, including the following:
 - *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic)
 - Ramsar Convention (international treaty, 1971)

- actions undertaken to sustain healthy outdoor environments, including at least two of the following:
 - green building design
 - integrated farming
 - Landcare
 - urban planning.

Key skills

- plan for and reflect upon a range of practical sustainable outdoor experiences and analyse relevant information collected during these experiences
- explain the actions undertaken by individuals and groups with respect to conflicts over the use of outdoor environments
- analyse methods used by individuals and groups to influence decisions about the use of outdoor environments
- evaluate processes relating to conflicting interests over the use of outdoor environments
- analyse specific management strategies for maintaining outdoor environments
- describe and evaluate the effectiveness of specific acts and conventions related to managing and sustaining outdoor environments
- analyse specific actions undertaken to sustain healthy outdoor environments.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes *Advice for teachers* for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher's assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

Outcomes	Marks allocated	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Evaluate the contemporary state of Australian outdoor environments and analyse the importance of healthy outdoor environments and sustainability for individuals and society, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.	10	A journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken
	40	AND at least one task from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data analysis • structured questions • a written report.
Outcome 2 Analyse conflicts over the use of outdoor environments, and evaluate practices and strategies for sustaining outdoor environments, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.	10	A journal or report demonstrating links between theoretical content studied and practical experiences undertaken
	40	AND at least one task from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a case study • structured questions.
Total marks	100	

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent.

End-of-year examination

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

- Duration: two hours.
- Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA.
- VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook](#).
- The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format/s and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.