**Cheating in the 2016 End of Year
VCE Examinations**

### The VCAA is committed to safeguarding the integrity and fairness of VCE external assessment.

Unfortunately a small number of students seek an unfair advantage over the overwhelming majority of honest VCE exam candidates.

To ensure the fairness and integrity of VCE examinations, the VCAA has established clear and consistent rules which it rigorously enforces, in conjunction with schools.

These rules and VCAA’s processes for investigating breaches deter and prevent cheating and make sure that students caught breaking the rules are appropriately penalised.

These rules also ensure that students doing the right thing are not disadvantaged by the behaviour of other students whether this involves nuisance, annoyance or interference.

VCAA is increasingly able to use analysis of anomalous results to identify possible cases of cheating, which are then investigated. VCAA’s enhanced capability means that it is harder than ever to get away with cheating in VCE examinations.

**VCE Examination Rules**

The VCAA works closely with schools to ensure students are made aware of and are familiar with the rules for VCE examinations.

There are 22 VCAA rules for the conduct of VCE examinations which are communicated to schools each year.

Examination supervisors are trained in the application of the rules and the reporting requirements for any alleged breaches of those rules.

VCE students receive clear advice on VCE examination rules in the *GAT brochure* and *VCE Exams Navigator* booklet. The GAT brochure is distributed to schools prior to the General Achievement Test (GAT). The *VCE Exams Navigator* is distributed to students in Term 3 and is made available on the VCAA website at the same time.

The VCAA rules are also available on the VCAA website and displayed outside all examination rooms.

**VCAA Review Committees**

VCAA Review Committees comprise three members of the VCAA Board or VCAA staff. They are chaired by a VCAA Board member and are assisted by an experienced lawyer.

VCAA Review Committees determine whether a breach of VCE examination rules has occurred and, if so, the appropriate penalty, after hearing all the available evidence, including hearing from the student if the student has elected to attend the hearing.

Review Committees administer penalties that maintain the integrity of the examination system. They ensure that honest students are rewarded for their efforts.

Penalties always exceed any possible advantage.

**Breaches**

In 2016, there were 84,217 students who sat at least one end of year VCE exam.

Some 50,840 students were eligible to complete their VCE and there were 106 subjects with a written exam.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) investigated 68 alleged breaches of the examination rules in the 2016 end of year VCE examinations.

The comparable figures in previous years are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Number of investigations** |
| 2011 | 51 |
| 2012 | 78 |
| 2013 | 54 |
| 2014 | 38 |
| 2015 | 65 |
| 2016 | 68 |

The types of alleged breaches that were reported in 2016 are shown in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reported incident type** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Attempted to cheat (including alleged allowing copying) | 25 | 36.8 |
| Mobile phone in examination | 19 | 27.9 |
| Did not cease writing when time elapsed | 10 | 14.7 |
| Notes or writing on hand in examination | 6 | 8.8 |
| Electronic device (MP3 / iPod / iPad / smart watch / portable video game console / earphones) in examination | 3 | 4.4 |
| Distracted other students/caused disturbance | 2 | 2.9 |
| Began writing or using calculator before instructed | 1 | 1.5 |
| Communicated with other student | 1 | 1.5 |
| Other | 1 | 1.5 |
| **Total reported incidents** | **68** | **100** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mobile phones**Figures for alleged incidents involving mobile phones in previous years are shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **VCE Examination Incidents involving a mobile phone** |
| 2012 | 27 |
| 2013 | 15 |
| 2014 | 9 |
| 2015 | 18 |
| 2016 | 19 |

The VCE examination rules forbid the possession of mobile phones in examinations, however mobile phones continue to be a major category in breaches of exam rules.In some cases, the breach was simply a case of the student not wishing to be parted from their phone during the exam. Others claimed to have simply forgotten to hand it in. In 2016 there was only one incident in which a mobile phone was found by a Review Committee to have enabled a student to gain an unfair advantage in a VCE examination. |

**Penalties**

**Serious Penalties**

Ten students received significant penalties from VCAA Review Committees following hearings. These penalties ranged from a reduction in exam marks but no change in the grade or study score in one case, to the reduction of six exam grades resulting in a reduction of nine in the study score in another case.

* Five students were found to have taken unfair advantage by copying multiple choice answers from another student. One student’s exam grade was reduced by six grades; another had their exam mark lowered by five grades; the third student had their exam grade reduced by four grades; the fourth received a penalty of two grades; the fifth student’s penalty was a reduction by one grade.
* Three students were penalised for bringing notes into the exam. Two students’ exam grades were reduced by two grades and for the third the grade was reduced by one grade.
* A student was penalised for being in possession of a mobile phone and texting another student to obtain an unfair advantage. The student’s exam grade was reduced by two grades.
* A student was penalised for repeatedly disobeying the exam supervisor’s instructions to cease writing. Their exam mark was reduced by two marks.

**CEO Reprimands**

Nine students received a reprimand from the Chief Executive Officer of VCAA.

Reprimands are issued where a breach of an examination rule has occurred but careful investigation satisfied the Chief Executive Officer that the breaches did not result in any advantage being obtained by the student.

**Cautions**

The VCAA issued cautions to26 students for minor breaches of the rules. Students are cautioned where, after careful investigation, VCAA is satisfied that there was no intent to cheat.

**No Further Action**

There were 23 cases where no further action was taken as preliminary investigation found the evidence either did not substantiate the allegation, or the alleged actions were of a trivial nature.