VCE Accounting (2019–2024)

School-based Assessment Report

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This report provides advice for the first year of implementation of the [*VCE Accounting Study Design 2019–2024*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/accounting/2019AccountingSD.pdf). The [VCE Accounting *Advice for teachers*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/accounting/advice-for-teachers/Pages/Index.aspx) provides teaching and learning advice for Units 1 to 4, and assessment advice for school-based assessment in Units 3 and 4. Other support materials for the study can be found on the [VCE Accounting study webpage](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Accounting/Pages/index.aspx) on the VCAA website.

This report is based on the findings from the 2019 School-based Assessment Audit for Units 3 and 4 VCE Accounting. Schools providing the VCE must deliver the course to the standards established by the VCAA, ensure the integrity of student assessments and ensure compliance with the requirements of the VCAA for the relevant assessment program. For school-based assessment, the standards and requirements are stated in the assessment specifications set out in the relevant VCE study design and the [VCE assessment principles](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/VCE_assessment_principles.docx). The School-based Assessment Audit checks that the standards and requirements set out in study designs are being followed and that assessment is being carried out in line with the VCE assessment principles.

Responses to the audit indicated that the majority of schools possess a clear understanding of the VCE assessment principles and the requirements of the reaccredited study design. Additionally, many schools are taking advantage of opportunities to form teacher networks in order to collaborate and share advice and feedback on the development of assessment materials.

A positive note from the audit was the large number of schools developing detailed policies and processes in order to monitor students and ensure School-assessed Coursework (SAC) tasks are conducted under equitable conditions.

Some schools’ SAC tasks were found to include commercial materials that had not been significantly modified. In order to ensure assessment is equitable and that student work can be authenticated, schools are reminded that SAC tasks must be significantly different from any publicly available materials – such as commercially produced tasks, questions from textbooks or past VCAA examinations, or any school-devised questions that have been used in previous years’ SAC tasks. Any materials in the public domain are potentially accessible to students, and students who access these materials prior to undertaking their SAC task may gain an unfair advantage over other students in the cohort. Additionally, commercially produced tasks, textbooks and SAC questions from previous years do not always address the requirements of the current VCE study design and may not cater for the needs of the school’s current cohort of students. For schools undertaking the audit, it is recommended that audit submissions clearly identify any commercial materials included in school-based assessment. This can be achieved by submitting the original commercial materials alongside the school’s SAC task with modified questions highlighted or annotated.

Schools must also ensure that adequate authentication procedures are in place to validate the ICT-based tasks. Some schools made it clear that internet access was disabled or that small class sizes enabled observation of student screens during the SAC task. Other schools utilised a screen-monitoring program to track student activity throughout the ICT-based assessment. Caution is still warranted, however, as students may have access to textbooks, revision material, and class notes on the school’s network. It is therefore recommended that measures are put in place to accurately authenticate students’ work.

Responses to the audit indicated that few schools were using a variety of task types and conditions, generally favouring structured questions for both the manual and ICT-based tasks. Schools are reminded that the task type options for VCE Accounting in Unit 3 also include:

* folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)
* a case study (manual and ICT-based)
* a report (written, oral or ICT-based).

Where students’ SAC responses did not meet the required standard for satisfactory completion, the majority of schools had in place clear documented processes to enable students to redeem an S for the outcome. It was clear that schools were referring to the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook 2019* when developing redemption policies and processes (see ‘Redeeming outcomes – submitting further evidence for satisfactory completion’)*.* However, schools are reminded that students may only resubmit SAC tasks or further evidence to redeem an S result; they may not resubmit work to improve a SAC score.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Unit 3: Financial accounting for a trading business

Outcome 1

Record financial data using a double-entry system; explain the role of the General Journal, General Ledger and inventory cards in the recording process; and describe, discuss and analyse various aspects of the accounting system, including ethical considerations.

Task type option/s

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

* *structured questions (manual and ICT-based)*
* *folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a case study (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a report (written, oral or ICT-based).*

Most schools opted to split the Unit 3 Outcome 1 assessment into two SAC tasks. These were primarily assessed using structured questions. Generally, the submitted assessment tasks addressed the key knowledge and key skills appropriately. It was evident that schools were aware of and applied the terminology in the reaccredited study design.

Some schools’ SAC tasks included questions on ethical considerations that were similar to those contained in commercially produced tasks. However, most schools were using a range of approaches to assess this aspect of the study design. Schools are reminded that it is essential to integrate ethical considerations into all aspects of the study.

Assessment

Structured questions were predominately used as the assessment task for this outcome. While many schools used marking schemes provided by publishers of commercially produced tasks, several used VCAA performance descriptors to develop rubrics. Assessment weightings largely mimicked that of the study design and *Advice for teachers*.

Outcome 2

Record transactions and prepare, interpret and analyse accounting reports for a trading business.

Task type option/s

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

* *structured questions (manual and ICT-based)*
* *folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a case study (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a report (written, oral or ICT-based).*

Most schools audited chose to assess Outcome 2 using one task in the form of structured questions. Schools are encouraged to consider using a range of task types in Unit 3 to enable students to demonstrate their highest possible level of performance.

The ICT-based requirement was generally covered through recording into general ledgers. An array of graphical interpretations were included throughout the SACs submitted through the audit.

Many submissions, however, overlooked the important distinction between cash and profit. Schools are reminded that the key knowledge and key skills, as specified in the study design, identify the essential content associated with the outcome statement and should be used to scaffold student learning. Schools are reminded that school-based assessment should cover a range of key knowledge and key skills to ensure students are able to demonstrate the outcome at their highest possible level.

SAC tasks in the form of structured questions should include a variety of task words and question types (from lower through to medium and higher order questions). ‘Discuss’ and ‘explain’ questions were used frequently in the tasks submitted through the audit. It is recommended that schools draw on a broader array of task words to ensure students’ depth and breadth of knowledge can be demonstrated.

Assessment

Similar to Outcome 1, Outcome 2 was generally assessed using structured questions along with an ICT-based requirement worth 30 marks across Unit 3. A small number of schools chose to set multiple tasks for this outcome. The majority of audit responses indicated the use of VCAA performance descriptors as a basis for the assessment criteria. Outcome 2 was generally assessed toward the end of Unit 3 as one task.

Unit 4: Recording, reporting, budgeting and decision-making

Outcome 1

Record financial data and balance day adjustments using a double entry system, report accounting information using an accrual-based system and evaluate the effect of balance day adjustments and alternative methods of depreciation on accounting reports.

Task type option/s

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

* *structured questions (manual and ICT-based)*
* *folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a case study (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a report (written, oral or ICT-based).*

The majority of Unit 4 Outcome 1 SAC tasks were in the form of structured questions and followed the order of the key knowledge points in the *VCE Accounting Study Design*. Generally, the new areas throughout the reaccredited study design (for example, allowances for doubtful debts) were effectively assessed. The audit did, however, highlight some concerns about how to prepare and assess valuable ethical-based questions.

Where commercially produced materials were used in the assessment of this outcome, appropriate modifications had generally been made to ensure that the task met the requirements of the current VCE study design and catered for the needs of the student cohort. However, some schools included questions in their entirety that were identical to commercially produced materials, raising concerns around authentication. These schools were asked to further modify these materials to ensure that no students who accessed them prior to undertaking their SAC task would be unfairly advantaged.

Schools are reminded that any materials available in the public domain are potentially accessible to students. Any publicly available materials included in school-based assessment must be significantly modified to ensure SAC tasks are unique to the school.

The audit showed that some schools had exceptional measures in place to moderate student work with another school as necessary. Many schools had in place strong processes for authenticating students’ work during ICT-based tasks. However, it is recommended that schools also limit students’ access to the school’s server and networks during these SAC tasks to ensure that students do not have access to other materials.

Assessment

Structured questions were predominately used as the assessment task for this outcome. While many schools used marking schemes provided by publishers of commercially produced materials, several used VCAA performance descriptors to develop rubrics. Assessment weightings largely mimicked that of the study design and *Advice for teachers*.

Outcome 2

Prepare budgeted accounting reports and variance reports for a trading business using financial and other relevant information, and model, analyse and discuss the effect of alternative strategies on the performance of a business.

Task type option/s

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

* *structured questions (manual and ICT-based)*
* *folio of exercises (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a case study (manual and ICT-based)*
* *a report (written, oral or ICT-based).*

A large number of the schools audited for VCE Accounting in Unit 4 assessed Outcome 2 through two SAC tasks. Commonly, one was based on budgeting, often utilising ICT-based tasks. The second SAC task was commonly an analysis of business performance. A variety of graphical representations were used, inviting students to respond, analyse, draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the data presented.

SAC tasks generally assessed students’ knowledge of and ability to analyse financial indicators, and provided appropriate stimulus material to allow students to demonstrate understanding of this topic and the key knowledge and key skills required. There was, however, a notable absence of modelling questions: a new component of the reaccredited study design. Although discussion and evaluation questions were prevalent throughout all submitted SAC tasks, students should be provided with appropriate data or evidence to analyse in class beforehand. This is important as it can ensure adequate scaffolding is provided, which enables the development of appropriate skills that allow for a high-level response to these types of questions.

Assessment

Outcome 2 was also typically assessed through structured questions. The ICT-based requirement for Unit 4 was generally assessed via the key knowledge related to budgeting. Most audited schools used VCAA performance descriptors as a basis for assessment criteria.