VCE Psychology (Unit 3 and 4: 2023–2027)

School-based assessment report

This report is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Psychology Study Design are provided in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx). It is recommended that teachers individually 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. The VCE Administrative Handbook and Important administrative dates are published on the Administration page of the [*VCAA Website*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/Pages/Index.aspx).

General comments

Responses to the School-based Assessment Audit for VCE Psychology indicated that the majority of audited schools have made a successful transition to the reaccredited VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027. School-based assessment enhances the validity of student assessment by providing opportunities for real-life and novel psychological applications to be explored in greater depth and breadth than is possible in an examination.

The audit process

The School-based Assessment Audit enables the VCAA to check that assessment tasks are compliant with the VCE assessment principles and the requirements of the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027.

Schools should read requirements carefully to ensure that all requested materials are complete when submitted for the audit. Materials potentially required for submission are listed in the VCE 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.

A number of schools designed and used tasks that met the requirements of the reaccredited study design and the VCE assessment principles. However, a large portion of schools proceeded to the second stage of the audit process due to incomplete submissions and tasks not being accurate representations of the selected task type. It is important that tasks reflect the chosen type in order to give students opportunities to develop a variety of key science skills and to demonstrate knowledge in different formats. There were also examples of schools using materials available in the public domain but not significantly modified. This included commercially produced tasks, past VCAA examination questions and materials sourced from teacher networks. All materials in the public domain must be significantly modified so that they are unique to the school. This ensures that prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others.

Schools that had not finalised their assessment tasks at the time of completing the audit questionnaire were required to outline planned activities for assessment. Further information was then requested to be submitted at a later stage if the information provided was insufficient to determine whether VCAA assessment requirements had been met and/or to give teachers more time to complete the audit.

Most schools reported that the questionnaire was a useful undertaking because it provided an opportunity to evaluate their teaching of the study. The VCE Psychology Teaching and Learning materials, available on the VCAA website, were also identified as useful resources for planning classroom activities, formative assessment, and summative School-assessed Coursework (SAC) tasks.

Assessment planning

All schools provided an assessment timetable to students at the beginning of the school year, or occasionally during the previous year’s orientation program, to assist them in planning for assessment.

Prior to each SAC task being undertaken, students should be given a clear and accurate statement of the:

* outcome being assessed
* type of task and date of completion
* requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and any materials allowed
* contribution of the task to the final outcome score
* opportunity for redemption.

Many schools reported using unmodified VCAA performance descriptors to assess student work, although it was often the case that the tasks did not address all of the criteria contained in the performance descriptors (particularly in regard to the key science skills). It is important that teachers modify performance descriptors to ensure only the elements contained in the task are included. In many cases, school-developed marking schemes would have been more appropriate.

Where schools did create their own marking schemes, these were often detailed and included a clear breakdown of allocation of marks and exemplar sample responses for students. The tasks and marking schemes were returned to students for future reference.

Task development

A range of methods was used to develop SAC tasks. In most cases, practical work and activities undertaken by students, as well as contemporary texts sourced by teachers, were used as a basis for developing school-specific assessment tasks.

Teachers should take care to ensure only the content from the current study design is assessed. There were examples of assessment including questions about types of extraneous variables, such as the placebo effect, or operationalising variables, which is no longer included in the Key Science Skills.

Where commercially produced materials and materials from teacher networks are used, these should also be checked carefully to ensure they are accurate representations of the task types and contain opportunities for students to demonstrate both their key science skills and their knowledge of course content. Likewise, schools are reminded that any materials available in the public domain must be significantly modified to minimise the risk that authentication issues will arise. The term ‘significant’ should be interpreted to mean that the task questions or responses should be changed in such a way that prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. As a general rule, the answer to a modified question should also be significantly different (i.e. changing names and occupations of characters in scenarios is often not sufficient to require the core aspects of an answer to change). Tasks developed collaboratively with teachers from other schools must also be modified so that the tasks are unique to each school.

In cases where it was not clear to what extent publicly available materials had been modified, or how unique collaborative tasks were, schools were asked to provide these original materials alongside their own modified SAC tasks as further evidence. Schools are advised that modifying previous years’ tasks may be insufficient to ensure student work can be authenticated, because contexts may be too specific to develop alternative questions. It may be possible to modify publicly available tasks through the mapping of key knowledge and key science skills, and then using other knowledge/skills as the basis of new questions/tasks.

In most cases, the materials students were permitted to use in SAC tasks were similar to those required for the external examination, such as pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, and sharpeners. Access to pre-written notes in students’ logbooks or from external excursions or fieldwork were also permitted in situations where the school could ensure authentication of student work. Students were also provided with clear instructions as to what materials could not be used during an assessment task, such as electronic devices and correction fluid/tape.

A small number of audited schools indicated that they retain SAC tasks in order to modify these for use in the following year. Returning SAC tasks to students enables valuable feedback to be provided and enables students to refer to the tasks for examination revision purposes. Schools are not required to store SAC tasks; they are simply required to retain access to students’ work until the publication of study scores at the end of the academic year.

Overall, SAC tasks addressed a wide range of key knowledge from the reaccredited study design and required students to demonstrate relevant key science skills. Many schools described how assessment tasks were developed to ensure that higher order/more complex questions were included and weighted appropriately. Reference was made to the use of Bloom’s taxonomy and inclusion of questions of varying cognitive demand, from questions requiring simple recall ranging through to analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and application questions involving unfamiliar scenarios. Teachers also used a variety of scaffolding strategies depending on the needs of their cohort.

One last consideration in preparing assessment is the mark allocations. While many schools opted to assess tasks out of 40, some had odd totals (ranging from 32–55, which meant that rounding errors may have impacted the ranking process). Schools should consider how marks are allocated to ensure fair ranking of student work. In most cases, it is advised that setting the task with a total score of 40 is the best way to avoid rounding errors.

Practical work and logbooks

A significant number of audited schools did not report their practical activities accurately and were required to submit further clarification of the activities and the timing allocated. While some schools were well below the minimum, others far exceeded the requirements. It is recommended a balance be sought. Practical work is an integral element of the teaching and learning program, which provides students with the opportunities to develop and practice their key science skills. There are numerous examples of activities for teachers to select from in the [VCE Psychology Teaching and Learning](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Psychology/Pages/TeachingandLearning.aspx) materials, on the [*VCAA Website*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/Pages/Index.aspx). Teachers are reminded that there is a minimum requirement of 10 hours across Outcomes 1 and 2 in each of Units 3 and 4, and an additional 10 hours in undertaking the student-designed scientific investigation and communicating findings.

Some schools reported undertaking excursions or incursions, such as inviting experts into the school for presentations or discussions based on mental wellbeing or responses to stress. Several schools also made connections with a local Aboriginal-led community or organisation and were able to access excellent resources to support student understanding in this area.

Some schools reported that they retain student logbooks so that students only access them under supervision. Ongoing access to logbooks is encouraged, except where supervision is necessary for assessment authentication purposes. The logbook requirement is intended to replicate its use in the real world so that students use this format to develop ideas for questions and investigation methods, record data and make notes on their investigations and practical activities throughout each area of study.

Authentication

All schools audited indicated that SAC tasks were completed under teacher supervision, reducing the risk of authentication issues. Where SAC tasks involved preparatory data generation (such as ‘analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data or ‘comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities’), student work was sighted regularly by the teacher and the majority of it completed in class, ensuring work could be authenticated.

Schools with multiple Psychology classes and more than one teacher indicated marking consistency was achieved through the use of a prepared answer sheet, discussion and/or cross-marking. For schools with only one class, marking validation was often achieved by working with another Psychology teacher, either within the school or at a different school, to mark a sample of ‘top’, ‘middle’ and ‘low’ student work. These practices are important to ensure an accurate student rank order is attained.

Schools need to be aware of the authentication requirements set out in the VCE Administrative Handbook. Any work set over an extended period of time should include a process for authentication of student work. Most schools provided details about the procedure used to authenticate student work that included how logbooks were used by students and monitored by the teacher. It is recommended that particular attention is paid to authentication for Unit 4 Outcome 3 and that as much work as possible is observed, completed in class, initialled, and dated by the teacher on a regular basis. The majority of audited schools had thorough and appropriate processes in place to authenticate student work.

Most schools reported an appropriate policy for student redemption of an ‘N’ outcome. It is important to note that students should not be limited to one supplementary task but should be provided every opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the outcome up to the date results are due to be entered into VASS. This may be documented through their workbook or logbook, or through a series of smaller tasks.

Specific information regarding assessment tasks

The study design specifies that each task type can only be selected once across Units 3 and 4 and there was a definite trend in the selection of particular tasks for each outcome. The most typical program for Unit 3 was:

Outcome 1 – the analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model, or simulation

Outcome 2 – the comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities.

The most typical program for Unit 4 was:

Outcome 1 – the analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data

Outcome 2 – the analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts.

There was a small number of schools that selected different task and outcome combinations, however, issues with task quality tended to be consistent regardless of the combination.

A significant proportion of audited schools prepared tasks that were not accurate reflections of the selected task type. Because the newly accredited study design contains new task types, it is important that teachers design tasks that more clearly align with the task type and its features. Further information is provided below for each task type. In addition, teachers are advised to refer to the support materials available on the Psychology page of the VCAA website. While some aspects of assessment from previous study designs may be employed, tasks should reflect the updated nature of the reaccredited design.

One key issue appeared to be an attempt by teachers to assess all content from an area of study in one task. This is not required and for the most part not possible given the task types. Teachers are reminded that although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development. While students receive a formal mark reported to the VCAA only for these tasks, it is expected that they also undertake activities and receive meaningful feedback on their achievement in relation to content across all key knowledge and key science skills.

Unit 3 Area of Study 1: How does the nervous system enable psychological functioning?

Analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation

As stated, this was the most common task for this area of study, with 58 per cent of audited schools selecting this task type. Generally, when this task was selected, schools used a case study or experiment as the stimulus. There were no examples of models or simulations being analysed or evaluated at any of the audited schools. Some schools selected interesting and contemporary case studies and experiments, such as coping strategies adopted by medical residents in dealing with work-related stress. The best tasks referred to research that provided students with sufficient information to analyse and evaluate. Where there was a lengthy report or detailed case study for students to read, some schools chose to release the stimulus ahead of the task; this is also an appropriate approach where authentication is managed through unique stimulus and question preparation for the cohort.

The concern with many tasks was the selection or creation of shorter, vignette style case studies, which provided less depth and made analysis and evaluation difficult. If a case study is selected as a stimulus, it must contain a real or hypothetical situation that includes the complexities that would be encountered in the real world. Teachers are encouraged to thoughtfully select stimulus materials that provide adequate detail and complexity for analysis and evaluation. Alternately, teachers should select a series of case studies or a case study alongside one of the other stated methodologies, such as a model or experiment.

In some of the submitted tasks, questions referred to content not included in the case study or studies. This was the most common cause of tasks moving away from the designated task type and towards becoming a short answer test style assessment. Teachers should ensure all questions have a clear relation to the stimulus material. Additionally, a range of key science skills should be covered. This may be done through questions that focus on methodology and methods, results, and implications of the findings. Questions should range from lower order to higher order to satisfy the ‘analysis and evaluation’ requirement, and they should provide students with opportunities to demonstrate a variety of key science skills.

Analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts

Thirty-six per cent of audited schools selected this task type. Media texts were located from a variety of sources and indicated consideration of the abilities of the cohort. A large number of schools focused on the new content, with articles referencing research and explanations of the gut-brain axis. Some media texts summarised research and provided good opportunities to assess key science skills. A general area for improvement in this task is to ensure questions provide opportunities for comparison (both similarities and differences) and are not a sequence of structured questions on each text.

Comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities

Only one school opted for this task. However, there is good potential for this task type to be used for this outcome. This could include logbook activities investigating reflexes or response times for different body parts, fieldwork on coping strategies and a correlational study on stress and another factor. Consideration of how comparison and evaluation will be assessed is important to ensure the task developed is a true representation of the task type.

Analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data

Four schools opted for this task. Some examples of secondary data presented for this outcome (and also Unit 4 Outcome 2) were statistics collated from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing or other similar statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that focused on stress or mental health and wellbeing experienced in the Australian population respectively.

Unit 3 Area of Study 2: How do people learn and remember?

Analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation

This task was only selected by one school. The task involved students observing a dog training session and then answering questions about the related learning elements and processes. This was a creative approach to provide a unique assessment task. In line with previous comments, care needs to be taken to ensure analysis and evaluation is the focus of the task and that there are opportunities for the key science skills to be demonstrated and assessed.

Analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts

This task was only selected by 2 schools. Contemporary media texts included case studies of observational learning occurring in family settings and a series of visual prompts (cartoons and advertisements). Creative selection of texts is encouraged because this increases student engagement. Questions in the assessment required students to apply theory and concepts to a variety of novel settings. However, questions also need to promote comparison of the texts to be a true representation of the task type and, again, key science skills should be incorporated into all tasks.

Comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities

This was by far the most common task selected, with 91 per cent of schools opting for this task type. It was evident that many schools were able to incorporate practical activities related to memory and learning from the previous study design when selecting practical activities to form the basis of this assessment, and there is no issue in doing so. However, a common error in creating these tasks was the reuse of questions based on the previous study design. The main issue was including separate questions for each practical activity that focused on application of key knowledge, rather than questions requiring comparison and evaluation of concepts, methodologies and methods between practical activities. There were limited examples of tasks requiring students to compare elements between activities. As a result, a large number of audited schools had not created tasks true to the selected type.

To overcome this issue, it is recommended that teachers carefully curate the practical activities to ensure similarities and differences between methodologies and methods for each activity, thus providing ample opportunity for appropriate questions. The focus for creating questions should be based around comparison and evaluation rather than short answer test style questions requiring definitions or descriptions of psychological concepts related to individual activities. Changing the structure of the task away from the layout of structured questions may also assist in achieving this aim.

Analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data

Three schools selected this task type in the initial audit but did not provide task samples. Upon request for further evidence of the tasks, all 3 had changed the task type to comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities. It should be noted that the data gathered from student activities on learning and memory could be used as generated primary data. In this manner, schools could continue with the types of activities they are familiar with but change the focus of the task to data analysis.

Unit 4 Area of Study 1: How does sleep affect mental processes and behaviour?

Analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation

Two schools selected this task type with examples of experiments including trials for interventions to address the sleep of shift workers in mining operations and the sleep deprivation case study of Randy Gardner. Resources were located from reliable sources and presented in a format appropriate for students. The main issue with the case study was again the attempt to assess a wide variety of key knowledge from the area of study rather than focus on only the relevant concepts from the resource.

Analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts

Eight per cent of audited schools selected this task. Many chose interesting stimulus material, both relevant to VCE students and closely aligned with a selection of key knowledge, such as the impact of later school start times on sleep in teenagers and the impacts of night shift work. Analysis questions focused on application of key knowledge concepts to the texts, and this was mostly well done because the focus remained on the stimulus material. The trend again was a lack of opportunity for comparison between the texts.

Comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities

Only 2 schools selected this task type. A range of interesting and engaging activities were used, including:

comparing task errors with and without goggles that replicate impairment consistent with increased blood alcohol levels

recoding bodily responses such as temperature and blood pressure both before and after meditation

completing sleep diaries.

Analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data

By far, this task type was the most often selected for Unit 4 Outcome 1, used by 80 per cent of schools audited for Unit 4. Students were commonly required to collect primary data on their own sleep patterns through a sleep diary. Some schools provided a well scaffolded task prompting students to record a variety of data points over time and then create tables and graphs to represent the data before answering questions about the data in the assessment.

Where secondary data was provided to students, this was often from sleep studies or a series of case studies on sleep habits. The depth of information provided in these tasks varied. The best tasks included information presented in a series of formats including tables, graphs and charts, which students needed to interpret in order to answer the questions.

In many cases, regardless of the data type, a similar issue arose as in the ‘analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation’ in that stimulus material did not contain enough information for students to analyse and evaluate. Additionally, and most problematically, some questions referred to content unrelated to the collected/provided data such that the task became a short answer test style assessment. Schools are reminded that questions in these tasks should focus only on the data and content clearly related to the stimulus. The task should also provide opportunities for students to employ a variety of key science skills in analysing and evaluating the research methodology and methods, data, and findings.

Schools are advised that it is acceptable to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data into this type of task. Where qualitative data is used, the focus of questions may be on identifying trends and patterns in the data.

It is also important to reiterate that assessment of student achievement for key knowledge not included in the SAC may be completed through other tasks.

Unit 4 Area of Study 2: What influences mental wellbeing?

Analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation

Around a third of audited schools used this task type. Some examples of secondary case studies and experiments include a faecal microbiota transplantation in an elderly patient with mental depression and the mental health of a young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. The latter was strongly focused on ways of considering mental wellbeing, social and emotional wellbeing, and the influence of body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, country, spirituality and ancestors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Questions in this assessment were also culturally sensitive and prompted evaluation of the information.

Analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts

This task option was common, with 60 per cent of audited schools selecting this task type. Contemporary media texts took a variety of formats, including news articles, journal articles and extracts from research reports. Some schools submitted very interesting stimuli that had clearly been thoughtfully chosen to suit their cohorts. For example, news articles explaining how virtual reality exposure therapy is helping to treat phobias.

While appropriate texts were selected, the common issue with the design of this task was again the tendency to prepare a set of separate, structured questions for each of the texts rather than provide significant opportunity for students to analyse and compare the texts in a meaningful way. It is recommended that in preparing for this task type, teachers consider the similarities and differences between the chosen texts to ensure construction of a range of comparison questions that could focus on the models, theories, scientific or non-scientific ideas and methodology types present in each text.

Comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical activities

One school elected to base assessment on student practical activities, perhaps indicating a challenging combination of content and assessment type. For those schools wishing to create tasks for this assessment, particular care should be taken to ensure any practical activities in this area of study are conducted ethically. However, there are possibilities to create a series of student activities based on protective factors such as hydration, sleep and nutrition and mindfulness or meditation. Teachers are again reminded that assessments need not cover all the key knowledge in an area of study, which may make this option less fraught with ethical concerns.

Analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or collated secondary data

Three schools selected this task type for this area of study. Some examples of secondary data presented to students in tasks were statistics collated from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, or other similar statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that focused on mental health and wellbeing experienced in the Australian population. Again, the best tasks included enough data for a meaningful analysis and evaluation rather than structured questions with limited reference to the data.

Unit 4 Area of Study 3: How is scientific inquiry used to investigate mental processes and psychological functioning?

Student-designed and student-conducted scientific investigation through a structured scientific poster and logbook entries

The vast majority of schools opted to run the Unit 4 Outcome 3 task either between Units 3 and 4 (48 per cent) or during Unit 4 (44 per cent). Only 7 audited schools ran the task during Unit 3 or across Unit 3 and 4. Additionally, the content focus for 58 per cent of schools was from Unit 3 only, while 7 per cent of schools restricted students to Unit 4 content.

While approximately 25 per cent of schools allowed students to choose the outcome and topic for the basis of their investigation, a majority of schools nominated that students carry out a controlled experiment based on the key knowledge of Unit 3 Outcome 2, in particular, factors that might improve or reduce retention of new information. A small number of schools focused on Unit 4 Outcome 1 and Unit 4 Outcome 2 and common investigations were a correlational study related to sleep/mental wellbeing and another factor. While schools can specify the outcome and methodology type that students are to use as the basis for their investigation, they are strongly encouraged to open up the task to allow for greater student choice. This provides increased opportunity for students to actively design their investigation and may lead to more creativity and enthusiasm. It also allows for teachers to better discriminate student ability based on capacity to plan and conduct investigations.

The structure of the tasks varied in terms of the level of scaffolding provided to students. Some schools created detailed workbooks to guide students through the process of developing questions, designing their method, and collecting and presenting their findings, while others provided more limited direction. The level of scaffolding should be appropriate for the cohort.

In cases where schools have multiple classes or large numbers of students in a single class, it may not be practicable for each student to undertake a unique investigation. Some schools indicated that students worked in groups to develop questions and methods, and then worked individually to collect data. It is essential that there is robust evidence of students being able to independently develop a research question, state an aim, formulate a hypothesis, and plan an appropriate methodology and method to answer the question. Each student should also be assessed on their individual capacity to design, undertake and report on an investigation.

Schools must ensure that questions developed by students are based on actual research and have some scientific basis. For example, the research question ‘Does gender affect recall?’ does not have any apparent basis in current research. Questions should also be ethical and able to be conducted by students. For example, the research question ‘Does ethnicity and/or race affect the ability to retrieve memory efficiently?’ presents ethical concerns in the design and participant selection and is not appropriate for students to complete.

The scientific poster template from the study design was implemented well by most schools and the word limit was also adhered to. The main issue encountered in the audit of this task was the weighting of the logbook and poster in terms of contribution to the final mark. Many audited schools nominated a token contribution of 2 marks for logbook completion, while 38 marks were dependent on the final task of producing the poster. Teachers are reminded that the preparation and planning undertaken in the logbook forms a significant part of the assessment and the marking should reflect this. An appropriate strategy that some schools used was to base scores from the logbook and the poster to allocated sections of the performance descriptors for this task.

While the logbook forms a significant part of the assessment, it should not be used to pre-write sections of the poster. There were a number of submissions in which students had used the logbook to write out entire paragraphs or sections for the poster. This is a potential authentication issue, particularly if the logbook has been completed outside of class time. It also increases the possibility of drafting and teacher feedback, which is not permitted.

A final finding was that some schools explicitly discouraged students from carefully considering the design of their investigation and ways to minimise errors. This was done with the premise that students could save time and write about these errors in the discussion section of their poster. This approach undermines the aim of the course, which is to encourage students to understand and confidently apply key science skills and is strongly discouraged. In addition, skills in planning and conducting investigations should form part of the assessment criteria for the task.

Ethical considerations

A large number of schools reported using RiskAssess in the process of meeting ethical guidelines for their teaching and learning. This is good practice and should run alongside an approval process for student investigations. It is essential that there is a documented process in place to monitor student development of questions for appropriateness and adherence to ethical guidelines. It was pleasing to see that some schools had a clear process in place within the task timeline to check ethical considerations and provide a sign-off. Such a process is encouraged for all schools. There were instances of student research investigation questions that were not ethically sound, such as interventions for specific phobia. Schools are also reminded that practical activities and fieldwork involving human subjects require ethical consent to be obtained from participants and debriefing procedures to be followed. This should also be an explicit component of the approval process for student investigations. Further advice regarding the ethical conduct of experimental investigations is provided in the VCE Psychology Study Design.

Inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ perspectives

The reaccredited VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027 was updated to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ perspectives. This provides an opportunity to contrast the Western paradigm of psychology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology and highlights the complexities and diversities of psychology. A number of schools thoughtfully and meaningfully included Aboriginal perspectives in their school-based assessments. This was most seen in Unit 4 Outcome 2 for the analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts task. Many schools located media articles that were topical to the political landscape of the time, with the corresponding questions focused on the social and emotional wellbeing framework and cultural determinants. One school organised a local Aboriginal leader to take them around their local community to discuss multimodal systems of knowledge, and this approach is commended and encouraged.

Sensitivity is required to avoid stereotypes when discussing any cultural group. Schools are advised against the creation of case studies involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples because they may not be culturally appropriate. Instead, it is recommended that suitable stimulus material, such as research summaries, videos, and articles, be acquired from reliable sources. Wherever possible, material such as videos should be chosen from sources that highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives.

**Appendix 1: Mapping of VCE Psychology assessment tasks against key science skills**

The VCE Psychology performance descriptors enable teachers to assess key knowledge and key science skills across Units 3 and 4. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist below provides a planning template for teachers to map the contextualised key science skills for VCE Psychology across Units 3 and 4 to ensure that the VCE assessment principle of balance is achieved. Only one task can be selected for each outcome. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt the performance descriptors to suit their own school contexts.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Key science skill | VCE Psychology Units 3–4 | Task 1 | Task 2 | Task 3 | Task 4 | U4 AoS3 Scientific poster |
| Develop aims and questions, formulate hypotheses and make predictions | * identify, research and construct aims and questions for investigation |  |  |  |  |  |
| * identify independent, dependent and controlled variables in controlled experiments |  |  |  |  |  |
| * formulate hypotheses to focus investigations |  |  |  |  |  |
| * predict possible outcomes of investigations |  |  |  |  |  |
| Plan and conduct investigations | * determine appropriate investigation methodology: case study; classification and identification; controlled experiment; correlational study; fieldwork; literature review; modelling; product, process, or system development; simulation |  |  |  |  |  |
| * design and conduct investigations: select and use methods appropriate to the selected investigation methodology, including consideration of sampling technique and size, equipment, and procedures, taking into account potential sources of error and uncertainty; determine the type and amount of qualitative and/or quantitative data to be generated or collated |  |  |  |  |  |
| * work independently and collaboratively as appropriate and within identified research constraints, adapting or extending processes as required and recording such modifications |  |  |  |  |  |
| Comply with safety and ethical guidelines | * demonstrate ethical conduct when undertaking and reporting investigations |  |  |  |  |  |
| * demonstrate safe laboratory practices when planning and conducting investigations by using risk assessments that are informed by safety data sheets (SDS), and accounting for risk |  |  |  |  |  |
| * apply relevant occupational health and safety guidelines while undertaking practical investigations |  |  |  |  |  |
| Generate, collate and record data | * systematically generate and record primary data, and collate secondary data, appropriate to the investigation |  |  |  |  |  |
| * record and summarise both qualitative and quantitative data, including use of a logbook as an authentication of generated or collated data |  |  |  |  |  |
| * organise and present data in useful and meaningful ways, including tables, bar charts and line graphs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Analyse and evaluate data and investigation methods | * process quantitative data using appropriate mathematical relationships and units, including calculations of percentages, percentage change and measures of central tendencies (mean, median, mode), and demonstrate an understanding of standard deviation as a measure of variability |  |  |  |  |  |
| * identify and analyse experimental data qualitatively, applying where appropriate concepts of accuracy, precision, repeatability, reproducibility, and validity; errors; and certainty in data, including effects of sample size on the quality of data obtained |  |  |  |  |  |
| * identify outliers and contradictory or incomplete data |  |  |  |  |  |
| * repeat experiments to ensure findings are robust |  |  |  |  |  |
| * evaluate investigation methods and possible sources of error or uncertainty, and suggest improvements to increase validity and to reduce uncertainty |  |  |  |  |  |
| Construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions | * distinguish between opinion, anecdote and evidence, and scientific and non-scientific ideas |  |  |  |  |  |
| * evaluate data to determine the degree to which the evidence supports the aim of the investigation, and make recommendations, as appropriate, for modifying or extending the investigation |  |  |  |  |  |
| * evaluate data to determine the degree to which the evidence supports or refutes the initial prediction or hypothesis |  |  |  |  |  |
| * use reasoning to construct scientific arguments, and to draw and justify conclusions consistent with evidence and relevant to the question under investigation |  |  |  |  |  |
| * identify, describe, and explain the limitations of conclusions, including identification of further evidence required |  |  |  |  |  |
| * discuss the implications of research findings and proposals, including appropriateness and application of data to different cultural groups and cultural biases in data and conclusions |  |  |  |  |  |
| Analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas | * use appropriate psychological terminology, representations, and conventions, including standard abbreviations, graphing conventions, and units of measurement |  |  |  |  |  |
| * discuss relevant psychological information, ideas, concepts, theories and models, and the connections between them |  |  |  |  |  |
| * analyse and explain how models and theories are used to organise and understand observed phenomena and concepts related to psychology, identifying limitations of selected models/theories |  |  |  |  |  |
| * critically evaluate and interpret a range of scientific and media texts (including journal articles, mass media communications, opinions, policy documents and reports in the public domain), processes, claims and conclusions related to psychology by considering the quality of available evidence |  |  |  |  |  |
| * analyse and evaluate psychological issues using relevant ethical concepts and guidelines, including the influence of social, economic, legal, and political factors relevant to the selected issue |  |  |  |  |  |
| * use clear, coherent, and concise expression to communicate to specific audiences and for specific purposes in appropriate scientific genres, including scientific reports and posters |  |  |  |  |  |
| * acknowledge sources of information and assistance, and use standard scientific referencing conventions |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2: Checklist for task type** – Analysis and evaluation of at least one psychological case study, experiment, model or simulation

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| **Does the task meet the requirements of the VCE assessment principles and the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027?** | |
| **VALID and REASONABLE** | |
| The task fits the requirements of the current study design in terms of the:  task type  number of tasks  language used within the study design  time allocation. |  |
| The task covers a representation of Key Knowledge from the outcome to enable student performance to be differentiated.  *Note: Although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development.* |  |
| The task assesses a range of Key Science Skills.  *Note: Across the assessment tasks for the year, a range of different Key Science Skills should be assessed. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist (Appendix 1) may be useful as a planning tool.* |  |
| Students have been provided with the following information both prior to the SAC **and** on the SAC task itself:   * the outcome being assessed and the Key Knowledge and the Key Science Skills that may be assessed * type of task and date of completion * the requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and the nature of any materials allowed * the contribution of the task to the final outcome score * opportunities for redemption. |  |
| If students are permitted notes/resources for completion of the SAC, there are clear processes in place to ensure authentication. |  |
| **EQUITABLE** | |
| If commercial tasks are being used in the development of the SAC:   * the task has been carefully checked to ensure it is an accurate representation of the task type and contains opportunities to demonstrate both Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge of course content * the task has been significantly changed to ensure that any prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. |  |
| The task does not privilege or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status or geographical location. |  |
| If students are offered a choice of task, or there are different tasks provided to classes, then these are comparable in scope and demand. |  |
| The task does not allow for drafting or undue teacher assistance. |  |
| **BALANCED** |  |
| The task includes a range of question types, with varying cognitive demand, to ensure student performance can be differentiated.  *Note: The use of Bloom’s taxonomy may be a useful reference.*  *Note: Consider the 25-50-25 rule (25% of your tasks should be allocated to higher-order thinking, 50% should be to the medium level of thinking, and 25% to lower-order thinking to allow accessibility for all your students).* |  |
| The mark allocations accurately reflect the question difficulty (i.e. more complex questions that require higher cognitive demand have a greater mark weighting). |  |
| Students have been provided with appropriate information on how the task will be assessed.  *Note: If a rubric or set of performance descriptors is being used, this should be provided with the task.* |  |
| If VCAA performance descriptors are being used, these have been carefully checked and modified to ensure that they fit the nature of the outcome. |  |
| The mark allocation aligns with the study design and does not require rounding (i.e. total mark is out of 40). |  |
| **EFFICIENT** |  |
| The task is not over-assessing students in terms of the number of tasks set or the task being outside the study design demands.  *Note: If the task has been split into multiple tasks, this does not lead to over-assessment or generation of undue pressure considerate of their VCE program.* |  |
| The task does not generate undue stress on students in regard to the timing of the tasks in relation to one another. |  |
| The task can reasonably be completed in the nominated timeframe. |  |
| **Is the task an accurate representation of the task type?** | |
| **Stimulus material** | |
| The stimulus material is a classic, contemporary or original psychological case study, experiment, model and/or simulation. |  |
| The stimulus material provides sufficient information for students to identify, analyse and evaluate the relevant psychological concepts, methodologies and method, data and findings.  *Note: A case study should be far more detailed than a vignette style scenario.* |  |
| **Task design in relation to stimulus material** | |
| All questions have a clear relation to the stimulus material. |  |
| The task assesses a selection of Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge in the context of the stimulus material. |  |
| **The task provides students with the opportunity to…** | |
| apply their understanding of the relevant key knowledge |  |
| where relevant, generate, collate and record data. This may include students:   * recording and collating data in appropriate forms in their logbook * organising data in useful and appropriate ways, such as a table or graph.   *Note: The stimulus material may be a primary or secondary source. If a secondary source is used, students may record and collate information applicable to the Key Knowledge and Key Science Skills being assessed.* |  |
| analyse and evaluate data and investigation methods. This may include students:   * describing trends, patterns, and relationships in the data * identifying contradictory data * identifying and evaluating the methodology used in the investigation * evaluating the method in terms of concepts such as validity, accuracy, and repeatability. |  |
| construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions. This may include students:   * evaluating the degree to which the data supports the aim of the investigation * making recommendations for modifying or extending the investigation * outlining the implications of the findings in a real-life context * identifying possible cultural biases in the data and conclusions. |  |
| analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas. This may include students:   * discussing how the investigation findings link to the relevant key knowledge * using appropriate psychological terminology * critically evaluating any claims or conclusions made in the investigations by considering the quality of available evidence. |  |

**Appendix 3: Checklist for task type** –Analysis and evaluation of generated primary and/or secondary data

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| **Does the task meet the requirements of the VCE assessment principles and the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027?** | |
| **VALID and REASONABLE** | |
| The task fits the requirements of the current study design in terms of the:   * task type * number of tasks * language used within the study design * time allocation. |  |
| The task covers a representation of Key Knowledge from the outcome to enable student performance to be differentiated.  *Note: Although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development.* |  |
| The task assesses a range of Key Science Skills.  *Note: Across the assessment tasks for the year, a range of different Key Science Skills should be assessed. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist (Appendix 1) may be useful as a planning tool.* |  |
| Students have been provided with the following information both prior to the SAC **and** on the SAC task itself:   * the outcome being assessed and the Key Knowledge and the Key Science Skills that may be assessed * type of task and date of completion * the requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and the nature of any materials allowed * the contribution of the task to the final outcome score * opportunities for redemption. |  |
| If students are permitted notes/resources for completion the SAC, there are clear processes in place to ensure authentication. |  |
| **EQUITABLE** | |
| If commercial tasks are being used in the development of the SAC:   * the task has been carefully checked to ensure it is an accurate representation of the task type and contains opportunities to demonstrate both Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge of course content * the task has been significantly changed to ensure that any prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. |  |
| The task does not privilege or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status or geographical location. |  |
| If students are offered a choice of task, or there are different tasks provided to classes, these are comparable in scope and demand. |  |
| The task does not allow for drafting or undue teacher assistance. |  |
| **BALANCED** |  |
| The task includes a range of question types, with varying cognitive demand, to ensure student performance can be differentiated.  *Note: The use of Bloom’s taxonomy may be a useful reference.*  *Note: Consider the 25-50-25 rule (25% of your tasks should be allocated to higher-order thinking, 50% should be to the medium level of thinking, and 25% to the lower-order thinking to allow accessibility for all your students).* |  |
| The mark allocations accurately reflect the question difficulty (i.e. more complex questions that require higher cognitive demand have a greater mark weighting). |  |
| Students have been provided with appropriate information on how the task will be assessed.  *Note: If a rubric or set of performance descriptors is being used, this should be provided with the task.* |  |
| If VCAA performance descriptors are being used, these have been carefully checked and modified to ensure that they fit the nature of the outcome. |  |
| The mark allocation aligns with the study design and does not require rounding (i.e. total mark is out of 40). |  |
| **EFFICIENT** |  |
| The task is not over-assessing students in terms of the number of tasks set or the task being outside the study design demands.  *Note: If the task has been split into multiple tasks, this does not lead to over-assessment or generation of undue pressure considerate of their VCE program.* |  |
| The task does not generate undue stress on students in regard to the timing of the tasks in relation to one another. |  |
| The task can reasonably be completed in the nominated timeframe. |  |
| **Is the task an accurate representation of the task type?** | |
| **Stimulus material** | |
| The provided stimulus material is primary data (e.g. collated primary data from a class activity or across different classes or across schools) or secondary data (accessed through a variety of print and electronic resources or generated by VCE Psychology students in previous years and de-identified). |  |
| The stimulus material provides sufficient information and scope for students to analyse, interpret and use the data, construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions and evaluate and communicate scientific information. |  |
| **Task design in relation to stimulus data** | |
| All questions have a clear relation to the stimulus material. |  |
| The task assesses a selection of Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge in the context of the stimulus material. |  |
| **The task provides students with the opportunity to…** | |
| apply their understanding of the relevant key knowledge |  |
| where relevant, generate, collate and record data. This may include students:   * recording and collating data in appropriate forms in their logbook * organising data in useful and appropriate ways, such as a table or graph.   *Note: The stimulus material may be from a primary or secondary source. If a secondary source is used, the students may record and collate information from the stimulus material that is related to the Key Knowledge or the Key Science Skills being assessed.* |  |
| analyse and evaluate data and investigation methods. This may include students:   * representing the data using an appropriate graph or table * analysing the results of the research study presented * describing relationships or trends in the data * identifying and detailing possible sources of error in the data collection * discussing the strengths and limitations of the method used. |  |
| construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions. This may include students:   * explaining how the results support/do not support a psychological concept, theory or model * evaluating data to determine the degree to which the evidence supports the aim of the investigation and/or the initial hypothesis * identifying further information required to make a conclusion. |  |
| analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas. This may include students:   * discussing how the investigation findings link to the relevant Key Knowledge * using appropriate psychological terminology, representations, and conventions relevant to the topic under investigation * discussing relevant psychological information, ideas, concepts, theories and models, and the connections between them. |  |

**Appendix 4: Checklist for task type** –Comparison and evaluation of psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from 3 student practical investigations

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| --- | --- |
| **Does the task meet the requirements of the VCE assessment principles and the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027?** | |
| **VALID and REASONABLE** | |
| The task fits the requirements of the current study design in terms of the:   * task type * number of tasks * language used within the study design * time allocation. |  |
| The task covers a representation of Key Knowledge from the outcome to enable student performance to be differentiated.  *Note: Although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development.* |  |
| The task assesses a range of Key Science Skills.  *Note: Across the assessment tasks for the year, a range of different Key Science Skills should be assessed. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist (Appendix 1) may be useful as a planning tool.* |  |
| Students have been provided with the following information both prior to the SAC **and** on the SAC task itself:   * the outcome being assessed and the Key Knowledge and the Key Science Skills that may be assessed * type of task and date of completion * the requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and nature of any materials allowed * the contribution of the task to the final outcome score * opportunities for redemption. |  |
| If students are permitted notes/resources for completion of the SAC, there are clear processes in place to ensure authentication. |  |
| **EQUITABLE** | |
| If commercial tasks are being used in the development of the SAC:   * the task has been carefully checked to ensure it is an accurate representation of the task type and contains opportunities to demonstrate both Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge of course content * the task has been significantly changed to ensure that any prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. |  |
| The task does not privilege or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status or geographical location/ |  |
| If students are offered a choice of task, or there are different tasks provided to classes, these are comparable in scope and demand/ |  |
| The task does not allow for drafting or undue teacher assistance/ |  |
| **BALANCED** |  |
| The task includes a range of question types, with varying cognitive demand, to ensure student performance can be differentiated.  *Note: The use of Bloom’s taxonomy may be a useful reference.*  *Note: Consider the 25-50-25 rule (25% of your tasks should be allocated to higher-order thinking, 50% should be to the medium level of thinking, and 25% to the lower-order thinking to allow accessibility for all your students).* |  |
| The mark allocations accurately reflect the question difficulty (i.e. more complex questions that require higher cognitive demand have a greater mark weighting). |  |
| Students have been provided with appropriate information on how the task will be assessed.  *Note: If a rubric or set of performance descriptors is being used, this should be provided with the task.* |  |
| If VCAA performance descriptors are being used, these have been carefully checked and modified, to ensure that they fit the nature of the outcome. |  |
| The mark allocation aligns with the study design and does not require rounding (i.e. total mark is out of 40). |  |
| **EFFICIENT** |  |
| The task is not over-assessing students in terms of the number of tasks set or the task being outside the study design demands.  *Note: If the task has been split into multiple tasks, this does not lead to over-assessment or generation of undue pressure considerate of their VCE program.* |  |
| The task does not generate undue stress on students in regard to the timing of the tasks in relation to one another. |  |
| The task can reasonably be completed in the nominated timeframe. |  |
| **Is the task an accurate representation of the task type?** | |
| **Practical activity requirements** |  |
| Three practical activities have been conducted as part of the regular teaching and learning program. |  |
| The activities are underpinned by one of the scientific investigation methodologies listed on page 14 of the study design. |  |
| The 3 activities allow for the generation of primary data. |  |
| **Task design in relation to practical activities** |  |
| All questions have a clear relation to the practical activities. |  |
| The task assesses a selection of Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge in the context of the practical activities. |  |
| **The task provides students with the opportunity to…** |  |
| apply their understanding of the relevant key knowledge |  |
| plan and conduct investigations. This may include students:   * identifying/determining the investigation methodology * considering sampling technique and size in terms of representativeness * considering potential sources of error and uncertainty.   *Note: Students should be conducting the activities to generate primary data, however, the planning may be student-and/or teacher-led.* |  |
| generate, collate and record data*.* This may include students:   * recording and collating data in appropriate forms in their logbook * organising data in useful and appropriate ways, such as a table or graph.   *Note: It is encouraged that students use their logbooks to record data from the practical activities.* |  |
| analyse and evaluate data and investigation methods*.* This may include students:   * processing data using appropriate mathematical relationships and units * comparing the type of data collected in the activities * comparing the trends, patterns, and relationships in the data * identifying possible outliers and contradictory or incomplete data * comparing and evaluating the aim, methodology and methods of the practical activities * comparing limitations of the activities and outlining ways they could be improved to increase validity and decrease uncertainty   *Note: The analysis must include interpretation and use of the primary data recorded in student logbooks and should consider limitations and possible sources of error and uncertainty.*  *Note: The analysis and evaluation must include a comparison of the psychological concepts, methodologies and methods, and findings from the three student practical activities.* |  |
| construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions. This may include students:   * explaining how the results support/do not support a psychological concept, theory or model * evaluating data to determine the degree to which the evidence supports the aim of the investigation and/or the initial hypothesis |  |
| analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas. This may include students:   * discussing how the investigation findings link to the relevant Key Knowledge * using appropriate psychological terminology, representations, and conventions relevant to the topic under investigation * discussing relevant psychological information, ideas, concepts, theories and models and the connections between them. |  |

**Appendix 5: Checklist for task type** –Analysis and comparison of 2 or more contemporary media texts

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| **Does the task meet the requirements of the VCE assessment principles and the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027?** | | | |
| **VALID and REASONABLE** | | | |
| The task fits the requirements of the current study design in terms of the:   * task type * number of tasks * language used within the study design * time allocation. | |  | |
| The task covers a representation of Key Knowledge from the outcome to enable student performance to be differentiated.  *Note: Although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development.* | |  | |
| The task assesses a range of Key Science Skills.  *Note: Across the assessment tasks for the year, a range of different Key Science Skills should be assessed. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist (Appendix 1) may be useful as a planning tool.* | |  | |
| Students have been provided with the following information both prior to the SAC **and** on the SAC task itself:   * the outcome being assessed and the Key Knowledge and the Key Science Skills that may be assessed * type of task and date of completion * the requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and nature of any materials allowed * the contribution of the task to the final outcome score * opportunities for redemption. | |  | |
| If students are permitted notes/resources within the SAC, there are clear processes in place to ensure authentication. | |  | |
| **EQUITABLE** | | | |
| If commercial tasks are being used in the development of the SAC:   * the task has been carefully checked to ensure it is an accurate representation of the task type and contains opportunities to demonstrate both Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge of course content * the task has been significantly changed to ensure that any prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. | |  | |
| The task does not privilege or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status or geographical location. | |  | |
| If students are offered a choice of task, or there are different tasks provided to classes, these are comparable in scope and demand. | |  | |
| The task does not allow for drafting or undue teacher assistance. | |  | |
| **BALANCED** | |  | |
| The task includes a range of question types, with varying cognitive demand, to ensure student performance can be differentiated.  *Note: The use of Bloom’s taxonomy may be a useful reference.*  *Note: Consider the 25-50-25 rule (25% of your tasks should be allocated to higher-order thinking, 50% should be to the medium level of thinking, and 25% to the lower-order thinking to allow accessibility for all your students).* | |  | |
| The mark allocations accurately reflect the question difficulty (i.e. more complex questions that require higher cognitive demand have a greater mark weighting). | |  | |
| Students have been provided with appropriate information on how the task will be assessed.  *Note: If a rubric or set of performance descriptors is being used, this should be provided with the task.* | |  | |
| If VCAA performance descriptors are being used, these have been carefully checked and modified, to ensure that they fit the nature of the outcome. | |  | |
| The mark allocation aligns with the study design and does not require rounding (i.e. total mark is out of 40). | |  | |
| **EFFICIENT** | |  | |
| The task is not over-assessing students in terms of the number of tasks set or the task being outside the study design demands.  *Note: If the task has been split into multiple tasks, this does not lead to over-assessment or generation of undue pressure considerate of their VCE program.* | |  | |
| The task does not generate undue stress on students in regard to the timing of the tasks in relation to one another. | |  | |
| The task can reasonably be completed in the nominated timeframe. | |  | |
| **Is the task an accurate representation of the task type?** | | | |
| **Stimulus material** | | | |
| At least 2 media texts have been selected.  *Note: These may include print articles, social media posts, advertisements, interview excerpts, audiovisual programs, artworks or performance items.* |  | |
| All media texts are contemporary (published in the last calendar year). |  | |
| The selected texts allow for analysis and comparison*.*  *Note: It is suggested that articles are selected that allow for identification of both similarities and differences in terms of Key Knowledge and Key Science Skills.* |  | |
| **Task design in relation to stimulus material** | | |
| All questions have a clear relation to the stimulus material. |  | |
| The task assesses a selection of Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge in the context of the stimulus material. |  | |
| **The task provides students with the opportunity to…** | | |
| apply their understanding of the relevant key knowledge |  | |
| construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions. This may include students:   * comparing the texts to distinguish between opinion, anecdote, and evidence and scientific/non-scientific ideas * using data (quantitative and/or qualitative) to construct scientific arguments * justifying responses with the evidence presented in the selected texts * comparing possible conclusions, including limitations and the implications of findings presented in the selected texts   *Note: This must include comparison of the texts in terms of the arguments presented and the conclusions that may be drawn.* |  | |
| analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas. This may include students:   * using appropriate psychological terminology, representations, and conventions relevant to the topic under investigation * discussing relevant psychological information, ideas, concepts, theories and models and the connections between them * interpreting and evaluating the quality of evidence represented in the selected texts * applying relevant ethical concepts and/or guidelines.   *Note: This must include a comparison of the scientific ideas that are included in the selected media texts.* |  | |

Appendix 6: Checklist for task type – Student-designed practical investigation

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| **Does the task meet the requirements of the VCE assessment principles and the VCE Psychology Study Design 2023–2027?** | |
| **VALID and REASONABLE** | |
| The task fits the requirements of the current study design in terms of the:   * task type * number of tasks * language used within the study design * time allocation. |  |
| The task covers a representation of Key Knowledge from the outcome to enable student performance to be differentiated.  *Note: Although all elements of each outcome must be met by students in order to be awarded an ‘S’, a representative section of the outcome is sufficient as the basis for SAC task development.* |  |
| The task assesses a range of Key Science Skills.  *Note: Across the assessment tasks for the year, a range of different Key Science Skills should be assessed. The Key Science Skills assessment checklist (Appendix 1) may be useful as a planning tool.* |  |
| Students have been provided with the following information both prior to the SAC **and** on the SAC task itself:   * the outcome being assessed and the Key Knowledge and the Key Science Skills that may be assessed * type of task and date of completion * the requirements and conditions of the task, including the time and nature of any materials allowed * the contribution of the task to the final outcome score * opportunities for redemption. |  |
| If students are permitted notes/resources within the SAC, there are clear processes in place to ensure authentication. |  |
| **EQUITABLE** | |
| If commercial tasks are being used in the development of the SAC:   * the task has been carefully checked to ensure it is an accurate representation of the task type and contains opportunities to demonstrate both Key Science Skills and Key Knowledge of course content * the task has been significantly changed to ensure that any prior access to the task would not provide an advantage to a student and therefore disadvantage others. |  |
| The task does not privilege or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of gender, culture, physical disability, socioeconomic status or geographical location. |  |
| If students are offered a choice of task, or there are different tasks provided to classes, these are comparable in scope and demand. |  |
| The task does not allow for drafting or undue teacher assistance. |  |
| **BALANCED** |  |
| The task includes a range of question types, with varying cognitive demand, to ensure student performance can be differentiated.  *Note: The use of Bloom’s taxonomy may be a useful reference.*  *Note: Consider the 25-50-25 rule (25% of your tasks should be allocated to higher-order thinking, 50% should be to the medium level of thinking, and 25% to the lower-order thinking to allow accessibility for all your students).* |  |
| The mark allocations accurately reflect the question difficulty (i.e. more complex questions that require higher cognitive demand have a greater mark weighting). |  |
| Students have been provided with appropriate information on how the task will be assessed.  *Note: If a rubric or set of performance descriptors is being used, this should be provided with the task.* |  |
| If VCAA performance descriptors are being used, these have been carefully checked and modified, to ensure that they fit the nature of the outcome. |  |
| The mark allocation aligns with the study design and does not require rounding (i.e. total mark is out of 40). |  |
| **EFFICIENT** |  |
| The task is not over-assessing students in terms of the number of tasks set or the task being outside the study design demands.  *Note: If the task has been split into multiple tasks, this does not lead to over-assessment or generation of undue pressure considerate of their VCE program.* |  |
| The task does not generate undue stress on students in regard to the timing of the tasks in relation to one another. |  |
| The task can reasonably be completed in the nominated timeframe. |  |
| **Is the task an accurate representation of the task type?** | |
| **Timing and nature of the task** | |
| A clear decision has been made on whether the investigation will be undertaken in either Unit 3 or Unit 4 or across both Units 3 and 4  *Considerations include: The estimated time it will take to cover the Key Knowledge and relevant Key Science skills; management of different student investigations; availability of school resources to support the student investigations; when assessment tasks are being conducted in other studies; and the workload implications for students.* |  |
| A clear decision has been made regarding the degree of choice students will be given regarding the choice of outcome, methodology and/or method. |  |
| If students are given the option to work in groups to develop an investigation question and method, there is a clear process in place to ensure that individual student skills can still be adequately assessed. |  |
| A clear decision has been made regarding the type of scientific inquiry that will be used (confirmation/prescription, structured, guided, coupled, open).  *Note: Further information on these scientific inquiry types is available in the planning section on the* [*Psychology*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/psychology/Pages/Index.aspx) *page of the VCAA website.* |  |
| A process has been put in place to assess, approve and monitor the ethical and safety implications for each student investigation. |  |
| A process has been put in place to ensure that questions developed by students are based on actual research and have some scientific basis. |  |
| The level of scaffolding provided is appropriate to the cohort. |  |
| **Information provided to students** | |
| Prior to the task, students have been advised of:   * the timeline and the conditions under which the task will be conducted * the Key Knowledge and Key Science Skills that will be assessed * how levels of achievement will be determined. |  |
| The expectations regarding the use of the logbook have been clearly communicated, including how the logbooks will be monitored for authentication purposes. |  |
| **The task provides students with the opportunity to…** | |
| develop aims and questions, formulate hypothesis and make predictions. This may include students:   * formulating a research aim and question/s for investigation * formulating a hypothesis to focus the investigation |  |
| plan and conduct an investigation. This may include students:   * determining an appropriate investigation methodology * considering and using an appropriate method with consideration to sampling technique and size, equipment and procedures, possible errors, and the type of data to be generated * applying ethical concepts and guidelines |  |
| generate, collate and record primary data. This may include students:   * recording and summarising primary data in their logbook * organising and presenting selected data in useful and meaningful ways as part of the scientific poster |  |
| analyse and evaluate data and investigation methods. This may include students:   * processing data using appropriate mathematical relationships and units * analysing trends, patterns, and relationships in their data * identifying outliers and contradictory or incomplete data * identifying errors, limitations, and uncertainty in the data * evaluating the investigation methodology and method, including possible improvements to increase validity and reduce uncertainty |  |
| construct evidence-based arguments and draw conclusions. This may include students:   * explaining how the results support/do not support a relevant psychological concept, theory or model * evaluating data to determine the degree to which the evidence supports the aim of the investigation * using reasoning to draw conclusions consistent with the evidence available and the initial prediction or hypothesis * discussing the implications of research findings and proposals |  |
| analyse, evaluate and communicate scientific ideas. This may include students*:*   * using appropriate psychological terminology, representations, and conventions relevant to the topic under investigation * using clear, coherent, and concise expression in the communication of the selected scientific investigation as part of the scientific poster * discussing relevant psychological information, ideas, concepts, theories and models and the connections between them * acknowledging sources of information and assistance and using standard scientific referencing conventions. |  |
| **Use of the logbook** |  |
| The logbook forms a significant component of the overall marks. |  |
| The logbook is not being used for drafting or pre-writing sections of the poster. |  |
| **Poster format** | |
| The scientific poster template from the study design is being used. |  |
| The word limit (600 words) is being adhered to. |  |