

9 September 2020

Dear Principals and Non-school Senior Secondary Providers

This is the second in a series of communications to keep you updated with the latest information regarding the delivery of the 2020 Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program. I am committed to providing you with updates, at least fortnightly, until we deliver VCE and VCAL results to Victorian 2020 Year 12 students on 30 December 2020.

This update provides information on:

1. General Achievement Test (GAT) – confirmed for 7 October
2. VCAL and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools
3. Further advice on Consideration of Educational Disadvantage

General Achievement Test (GAT)

The GAT will be held on 7 October 2020 as scheduled.

The health, wellbeing and safety of students and staff is our top priority during this time. We have worked closely with the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure schools are provided with clear and up-to-date advice about arrangements for the conduct and administration of the GAT as well as examinations.

Operational guidelines to support schools and providers deliver the GAT will be provided at the beginning of the week of 14 September 2020. The operational guidelines will include specific health controls to be put in place in the lead up to and on the day of the GAT. The guidelines will include as a starting point the *Specific controls for Essential Assessments for VCE and VCAL* approved by the Department of Health and Human Services which I provided to you on 17 August 2020 (attachment 1). All providers will be required to follow all coronavirus (COVID-19) related Health Directions and Department of Education and Training guidelines.

Further advice about supervisor availability and capacity for the GAT will be provided as soon as possible.

VCAL and VET in Schools

As many of you are aware, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education has sent a letter directly to all VCAL school providers, recognising the specific challenges our VCAL students have experienced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the government has announced an additional **\$2.4 million in VET 'Catch Up' funding** to cover additional costs schools may face in helping VCAL (and VCE VET) students complete applied VET studies in Term 4. This could include additional fee and materials costs associated with changed enrolments in VET Units, or transport costs associated with additional training.

I have also had further suggestions and some concerns regarding support for VCAL students raised with me directly. I met with a number of key groups as well as principals and practitioners today and will provide a further update as soon as possible and before Term 4.

To further identify schools and individual students that require additional support, the VCAA has extracted data from the Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS) for current Year 12 VCAL students who have **not yet** completed the minimum of 90 hours of VET units of competency to meet the Industry Specific Skills (ISS) Strand requirement for Senior VCAL. This includes students across 321 schools where this is the case.

To assist schools in identifying students for further support in Term 4, we will set **all blank VET result fields on VASS to “N”**. Schools can then run VCE or VCAL eligibility reports to determine which students require follow up to support completions. Following these actions, we will assess each Year 12 VCAL student in 2020 who has not yet completed the required VET practical training and assessment and work with the Department of Education and Training and individual schools to determine a pathway for these students to complete their VCAL. Specific instructions on completing the eligibility reports has been provided through a dedicated **Notice to Schools**, a webinar to support the completion of eligibility reporting will be held later this week.

Consideration of Educational Disadvantage for VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3-4

In recognition of the disruptions to learning caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) and the differing levels of impact at the school and individual student level, the VCAA will introduce a new Consideration of Educational Disadvantage process when calculating VCE scores. This process will require schools to provide us with information on all students and school circumstances to help calculate their study scores.

To ensure the fairness of final results, we will consider all available information, including the GAT and appropriate comparisons of performance across all assessments and schools. Based on this analysis, disadvantage will be factored into students' final scores, which will then contribute to the study score calculation.

I acknowledge the dedicated work to support, motivate and inspire students during these challenging times. I also understand there will be some students who have been impacted, despite the mitigation strategies employed by schools and the best efforts of students and their families. Accordingly, schools will be asked to consider the impact on each student completing one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3-4 sequences. Following consideration of impact on each student, two new pieces of additional information will be required from schools for all students to be provided to us for each impacted study:

1. An **Expected Score** at graded assessment level for internal assessment – what the score the student would have been expected to attain if they had suffered no disadvantage, and
2. An **Expected Grade** for each external assessment – what the grade the student would have been expected to attain if they had suffered no disadvantage.

Detailed advice will be provided so schools can make recommendations to us with information on all students and school circumstances to help calculate their final study VCE scores. This will include an implementation kit with guidance and support materials, and practical examples,

to be provided to schools before the start of Term 4. This will also be supported by a series of webinars.

The Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS) is currently being adjusted to ensure that this additional data can be captured in the normal system for VCE student data. Attached to this letter is a timeline with key due dates for scored assessments and administrative information to support principals and school staff (**Attachment 2**).

If you have any other concerns or queries, please contact us on vcaa@education.vic.gov.au or (03) 9032 1629.

The next CEO, VCAA updates will focus on –

- Beginning of week of 14 September 2020 – Operational guidelines on arrangements for GAT
- Week of 28 September 2020 – Consideration of Educational Disadvantage School Guidelines and Implementation Kit

Yours sincerely



STEPHEN GNIEL

Chief Executive Officer

Specific Additional Health Controls for Essential Assessments for VCE and VCAL

Activity	Existing controls	Additional controls
<p>Essential <u>assessments</u> (VCAL or VCE) includes all School-based Assessments (School-assessed Coursework and School-assessed Tasks) for all studies and VCAL strands</p> <p>(For VET programs, undertaken as part of VCE or VCAL, including VCE VET, essential assessments include any units of competency that require access to facilities, resources, equipment or materials for practical assessments that are unable to be conducted via remote learning)</p>	<p>Regular hand hygiene and supplies, including hand sanitiser.</p> <p>Daily environmental clean and twice daily cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces such as door handles.</p> <p>Face coverings</p> <p>Temperature checks</p> <p>Promote fresh air flow indoors where feasible.</p> <p>Mixing of staff and students avoided.</p> <p>Movement of students across schools and mixing of students from different schools should be minimised, wherever possible.</p> <p>Daily environmental clean of the venue</p>	<p>Physical distancing of 1.5m between all individuals on site is strongly advised.</p> <p>Students should be spread out across as many separate spaces as practical for the assessment venue. This will reduce the number of students who may be deemed close contacts should a staff member or student later test positive.</p> <p>The maximum number of individuals in any one indoor space should not exceed the venue density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres. For a classroom sized 10m by 10m, i.e. 100m², this would mean a maximum of 25 occupants, inclusive of students and staff.</p> <p>Workstations, where required, should be spaced at a minimum of 1.5m between each chair.</p> <p>Arrival and departure processes – local arrangements to be in place to limit congregation of students in and around the assessment venue. Access on site should be limited to staff and students only, unless it is essential for a parent/carer to be on site.</p> <p>Strict register of attendance and seating plan (where appropriate).</p>

		<p>Cleaning and disinfection of any shared equipment such as desks between groups of students (where use of equipment in succession cannot be avoided).</p> <p><i>Specific controls for dance, music and drama assessments</i></p> <p>Face coverings can be removed for the purpose of a performance where appropriate – when face coverings are removed the distance between individuals should be maximised (minimum 1.5m) to the extent that still allows the performance to take place and both can hear or see each other. Face coverings should be used as much as practical for the purpose of rehearsals.</p> <p>Performances should be planned for in a way that aims to minimise prolonged face to face contact between performers.</p> <p>Musical instruments should not be shared. An exception would be large percussion instruments (e.g. marimba) that can be wiped with a disinfectant/detergent wipe between use.</p> <p>If there is considerable contact with floor during a dance/drama performance, cleaning and disinfection of the floor between performances where possible is recommended.</p> <p>Given the possibility of respiratory droplet spread with wind instruments etc., recommend cleaning and disinfection of the floor between relevant music performances, where possible.</p> <p>Music students should be actively reminded to undertake hand hygiene regularly, especially before and after cleaning their instrument.</p>
<p>Essential <u>assessment preparation</u> (VCE or VCAL, including VET programs, undertaken as part of VCE or</p>	<p>Regular hand hygiene and supplies, including hand sanitiser.</p>	<p>Physical distancing between all individuals on site of 1.5m is strongly advised, noting that this may not always be practical given performance requirements.</p>

<p>VCAL) where it is not reasonably practicable for those assessment to be undertaken from the student's home and where it is essential to access specialist equipment, e.g. sprung floors for dance, or for group performance. These cannot be 'teaching' times (as that is not permitted), but strictly rehearsal where only supervision is provided.</p>	<p>Daily environmental clean and twice daily cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces such as door handles.</p> <p>Face coverings</p> <p>Temperature checks</p> <p>Promote fresh air flow indoors where feasible.</p> <p>Mixing of staff and students avoided.</p> <p>Movement of students across schools and mixing of students from different schools should be minimised, wherever possible.</p>	<p>Students should be spread out across as many separate spaces as practical for the venue. This will reduce the number of students who may be deemed close contacts should a staff member or student later test positive.</p> <p>The maximum number of individuals in any one indoor space should not exceed the venue density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres. For a classroom sized 10m by 10m, i.e. 100m², this would mean a maximum of 25 occupants, inclusive of students and staff.</p> <p>Arrival and departure processes – local arrangements to be in place to limit congregation of students in and around the assessment venue. Access on site should be limited to staff and students only, unless it is essential for a parent/carer to be on site.</p> <p>Avoiding shared use of equipment where possible. Where it cannot be avoided, equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.</p> <p><i>Specific controls for dance, music and drama rehearsals</i></p> <p>Face coverings can be removed for the purpose of a performance where appropriate – when face coverings are removed the distance between individuals should be maximised (minimum 1.5m) to the extent that still allows the performance to take place and both can hear or see each other. Face coverings should be used as much as practical for the purpose of rehearsals.</p> <p>Performances should be planned for in a way that aims to minimise prolonged face to face contact between performers.</p> <p>Musical instruments should not be shared. An exception would be large percussion instruments (e.g. marimba) that can be wiped with a disinfectant/detergent wipe between use.</p>
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To support the introduction of Consideration of Educational Disadvantage, schools will be asked to provide additional data for students. The timeline below highlights the due dates for externally assessed tasks, external grades, school-based assessments and additional information requested for 2020.

VASS will not allow entry of scored assessments or administrative information after the due date.

Key: ● External indicative grade ● New expected external grade ◆ Administrative information
★ Initial school score ★ New expected school score

School
Holidays

Scored assessment due dates

Exam / Assessment	Last day to enter	September	October	November
Externally Assessed Task (EAT) Scores for Music Styles & Composition	Scores	★ 11 Sep	★ 12 Oct	
EAT Scores for Extended Investigation – Written Report only	Scores	★ 18 Sep		
Grades for performance examinations	Grades	● 18 Sep	● 12 Oct	
Grades for Extended Investigation - Critical Thinking Test	Grades		● 12 Oct	
VCE Unit 3 School-based Assessment results	Scores		★ 12 Oct	★ 23 Nov
EAT Grades for Extended Investigation (Combined written report and oral presentation)	Grades		● 12 Oct	
Written VCE examinations	Grades			● ● 2 Nov
VCE Unit 4 School-based Assessment results	Scores			★ ★ 18 Nov
Scores for VCE VET tasks	Scores			★ ★ 23 Nov

Administrative information due dates

Administrative information	Last day to	September	October	November
Enrolment or withdrawal of VCE, VCAL and VET units of competency*	Complete entry of enrolments in 2020			◆ 23 Nov
VCE, VCAL and VET units of competency results and VCE VET task scores**	Enter results and VCE VET task scores			◆ 23 Nov
VCE VET Assessing groups selection	Modify groups selection			◆ 23 Nov

* Includes:

- VCE Units 1 and 2
- VCAL Units
- VET units of competency

**Includes:

- VCE unit results
- VCAL unit results
- VET units of competency results
- VCE VET coursework task scores.