

Guidance for students completing 2020 VCE written examinations

You should read the following information along with the advice relating to VCE written examinations contained in the [2020 VCE Exams Navigator](#). Please pay close attention to the sections relating to [Approved materials and equipment for VCE external assessments](#), [VCAA rules](#), [2020 VCE examination timetable](#) and [Special Provision](#).

While this information is directed at students, it is also provided to ensure families/carers are aware of the procedures the VCAA will have in place to ensure assessments are conducted in a COVIDSafe environment.

While VCE written examinations play an important part in determining final results for the VCE, if you are unable to complete any of your VCE written examinations due to coronavirus (COVID-19), you will be able to apply for a Derived Examination Score (DES).

A DES is calculated using your moderated school-based assessments, any other external assessments in the study, your General Achievement Test (GAT) results, and a range of additional data provided by your school.

The VCAA has established processes in place to ensure you receive fair and reliable results.

What will be different about VCE written examinations in 2020?

The main period of VCE written examinations starts on Tuesday 10 November and finishes on Tuesday 1 December 2020. These examination dates have been pushed back due to changes in school operations caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, the duration of each examination remains unchanged.

You should ensure your school has provided you with the following:

- a copy of your personalised **Student Examination/Assessment Timetable** listing the date, time and location for each of your examinations, as well as the final dates for submitting a DES application for each examination; and where relevant
- a copy of your **Special Examination Arrangements Advice slip** for any examination where the VCAA has approved Special Examination Arrangements.

What measures will be in place to make VCE written examinations COVIDSafe?

VCE written examinations will be held at your school or at another venue as advised by your education provider. All Victorian schools and other senior secondary providers are required to have a COVIDSafe Plan in place.

A range of safety measures approved by the Victorian Chief Health Officer will be put in place to make sure the examination environments are COVIDSafe for the wellbeing of all students, supervisors and school personnel.

These safety measures include:

- a registration process on arrival;
- setting up the venue in a way that supports physical distancing requirements, including all chairs spaced at least 1.5 metres apart; and
- disinfecting desks and chairs before and after each examination, as well as other high-touch surfaces regularly throughout the day.

What do I need to do to be COVIDSafe?

You must:

- Wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth, in line with current guidance for Victorian schools, unless you have an exemption due to a disability or medical condition. You must keep your face mask on

at all times, including as you arrive, throughout the examination, and as you leave. Face shields on their own do not meet public health requirements.

- Perform regular hand hygiene, including on entry to, and exit from, the venue, and
- Maintain physical distancing, keeping at least 1.5m away from other people at all times.

Will I be required to have my temperature tested?

Temperature testing of students on arrival to schools and other exam venues will not be required.

Based on the advice of the acting Deputy Chief Health Officer, given the current levels of community transmission in Victoria, mandatory temperature testing of all students on arrival to schools will not be required in Term 4.

What should I do if I have a disability, illness or other circumstance that makes me vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you have a disability, illness or other circumstance that makes you more likely to become very sick with coronavirus (COVID-19), you should discuss any Special Examination Arrangements with your school. This may allow you to sit your written examination(s) in isolation on school premises with appropriate health and safety controls in place.

What should I do if I am unwell in the week of, or on the day of an examination?

You **must not attend** an examination if you feel unwell or have any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, including:

- loss or change in sense of smell or taste
- fever, chills or sweats
- cough, sore throat or runny nose,
- shortness of breath
- in certain circumstances headache, muscle soreness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also be considered as symptoms.

You should contact your school and remain at home pending further advice.

If you display any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms on arrival, you will be asked to wait in a separate area and your parent or carer will be called to pick you up.

If you become unwell during an examination, you will be isolated in a separate room and allowed to continue with appropriate health and safety controls in place. If you are too unwell to complete the examination, you will be isolated while you wait for collection by a parent or carer.

If you are unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms on the day of an examination, you must not attend your examination. You should get tested and stay home until you receive your results. You will be eligible to apply for a DES.

Under what other circumstances should I not attend an examination?

In addition to feeling unwell on the day of an examination, you **must not attend** a written examination if:

- you have completed a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and are awaiting your results in isolation.
- you are isolating prior to completing a coronavirus (COVID-19) test (e.g. because you have symptoms)
- you have tested positive to coronavirus (COVID-19), or
- you have been directed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), including as a close contact of a close contact.

In these circumstances, you will be eligible to apply for a DES.

What evidence do I need to apply for a DES due to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

You will be eligible to apply for a DES if you are prevented from completing an examination or your performance is significantly impacted because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Evidence requirements include:

- supporting letter/incident report from the school.
- evidence of testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) – such as a medical certificate from an independent health professional recommending testing or direction to isolate having been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

School closure due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

If your school is temporarily closed because of coronavirus (COVID-19) and as a result one or more examinations cannot be conducted, your school will work with the VCAA to ensure you are not disadvantaged. You will not have to apply for a DES if this happens.

What mental health and wellbeing support is there for me?

You might experience feelings of general stress and anxiety during the VCE external assessments period. If you feel that you may need additional support, you can contact your school or a trusted teacher directly. Your school will be able to help you through this challenging school year.

Others may need additional support from family, friends or a medical or mental health professional. If you have previously seen a medical or mental health professional, now may be a good time for a “check-in” to refresh strategies to actively manage any concerns that you, your family, friends or school may have.

- [eheadspace](#)
- [Kids helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [ReachOut – getting a mental health care plan.](#)

What resources are available for parents/carers?

It can be difficult at times for parents and carers to know how to provide the best support for their children. Resources for parents and carers include:

- [Tips for parents to support their child’s health and wellbeing.](#)
- [Raising Learners Podcast Series.](#)

Where can I find further information?

- For information specific to your school or other secondary education provider’s arrangements for the conduct and administration of VCE written examinations, please get in touch with your school or education provider.
- For further health advice you can contact the 24-hour COVID-19 hotline 1800 675 398, your GP, or visit the DHHS website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#what-are-the-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19>.