Advice for students doing VCE written exams in 2020

Please read this important information

* [2020 VCE Exams Navigator](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/studentguides/ExamsNavigator/Pages/index.aspx)
* [Approved materials and equipment for VCE external assessments](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/materials/Pages/index.aspx)
* VCAA rules
* 2020 VCE examination timetable
* [Special Provision](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/special-provision/Pages/SpecialProvisionVCEandVCAL.aspx).

*This information is for students but it may also be useful for families or carers. It explains how VCAA will manage the exams so that everyone is COVIDSafe.*

VCE written exams are important for your final results. If you can’t finish your VCE written exam because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you can apply for a Derived Examination Score (DES).

DES is based on:

* your schoolwork during the year
* other assessments in the subject,
* your General Achievement Test (GAT) results and
* other information given by your school

The VCAA has strict rules to make sure your results are fair and reliable.

**What will be different about VCE written exams in 2020?**

Most VCE written exams start on Tuesday 10 November and finishes on Tuesday 1 December 2020. These exam dates have been changed because of coronavirus (COVID-19). The time it takes to do each exam is still the same.

Please check that the school gives you:

* Your **Student Examination/Assessment Timetable.** It will have the date, time and place for each of your exams. It will also have the final dates for submitting a DES application for each exam.
* Your **Special Examination Arrangements Advice slip** if VCAA agreed to Special Examination Arrangements.

**How will the VCE written exams be COVIDSafe?**

Your school will tell you where the VCE written exams will be held. All Victorian schools will have a COVIDSafe Plan.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer will make rules about safety of the exams for everybody at school. Here are some rules:

* There will be a a place to register when you arrive.
* Exam seats will be spaced at least 1.5 metres apart.
* Exam seats and other surfaces will be cleaned regularly.

**What do I need to do to be COVIDSafe?**

**You must**:

* Wear a face mask at all times. No exceptions,
* Wear the mast so that it covers your mouth and nose.
* Clean your hands regularly, especially when you come in and leave the venue.
* Keep at least 1.5m away from other people at all times.

Important:

* Face shields without a mask are not enough.
* If you have a disability or medical condition, you do not need to wear a mask.

**Will the school test my temperature?**

No. Your temperature will not be tested in Term 4.

**What should I do if I have a disability or an illness?**

You should talk to your school and they will make special arrangements for you.

**What should I do if I am sick before the exam?**

You **must not attend** an exam if you feel sick. For example:

* Not being able to smell or taste things.
* Fever, chills or sweats.
* Cough, sore throat or runny nose.
* Shortness of breath
* Headache, muscle soreness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

You should contact your school and stay at home.

**What should I do if I am sick during the exam?**

If you feel well enough to keep going, we will take you to a separate room. You can finish your exam with special arrangements.

**What should I do if I am too sick during the exam to keep going?**

If you are too sick to finish the exam, we will call your parent or carer to pick you up.

You should get tested and stay home until you get your results. You can apply for a DES.

**Under what other circumstances should I not attend an examination?**

Even if you are feeling well on the day of an exam, you **must not attend** it if:

* You have done a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and are awaiting your results in isolation.
* You are waiting to do a coronavirus (COVID-19) test in isolation.
* You have tested positive to coronavirus (COVID-19).
* The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) told you to isolate.
* You have been around somebody or know somebody with coronavirus (COVID-19).

If this happens, you can apply for a DES.

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

You can apply for a DES if you can’t finish an exam or a struggling because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You will need to show:

* Letter or report from the school.
* Coronavirus (COVID-19) test results.
* Medical certificate from a doctor recommending testing.
* Direction to isolate if you were 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 exams cannot be held, your school will speak with the VCAA. You will not have to apply for a DES if this happens.

**How do I get help with my mental health?**

You might feel stress and anxiety during the VCE exams.  Speak to your school or a trusted teacher if you need help.

Some people need extra help with their mental health from family, friends or a doctor. Here is a list of places that can help:

* + [eheadspace](https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/)
  + [Kids helpline](https://kidshelpline.com.au/)
  + [Lifeline](http://www.lifeline.org.au/)
  + [Beyond Blue](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support)
  + [ReachOut – getting a mental health care plan](https://au.reachout.com/articles/part-1-getting-yourself-a-mental-health-care-plan).

**What help can parents/carers get?**

If you are a parent or carer, here is more information for you:

* [Tips about health](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/learning/Pages/home-learning-screentime-wellbeing.aspx).
* [Podcast](https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/podcasts-and-webinars/podcasts) about how to help students.

**Where can I find more information?**

* Your school can give you more information.
* You can also:
  + Call the 24-hour COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398
  + Speak to your doctor or GP.
  + Visit the DHHS website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#what-are-the-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19>.