VCE Special Provision Report 2023

VCE external assessment statistics

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Introduction

This report provides an overview and statistical information on Special Provision for VCE external assessments in 2023. This report also includes data from 2014 and from 2019 to 2023 so that trends can explored.

Two types of Special Provision are available to students completing VCE external assessments:

Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)

Derived Examination Score (DES).

All statistics in this report exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day. The statistics for DES are based on individual applications and exclude cases where a DES was approved due to either three examinations timetabled on one day or irregularities[[1]](#footnote-1).

All data for this report, including data from previous years, are based on a snapshot of data taken by the VCAA on 19 January 2024. Data presented here for previous years may differ from what was previously reported due to changes made after the data extract date.

The VCAA Special Provision policy provides students with disabilities, illnesses or other circumstances that affect their ability to access a VCE external assessment the opportunity to participate and complete their secondary level studies. The principles of the policy ensures that the most appropriate, fair and reasonable arrangements are available for students to access and communicate responses in a timed assessment. Special Provision provides equivalent alternative arrangements for students without conferring an advantage to any student over other students.

In addition to the VCAA Special Provision schools may approve special provision for both classroom learning and School-based Assessments to enable students with a disability, illness, impairment or other circumstance to demonstrated what they know and participate in classroom learning and School-based Assessments.

This report details the VCE external assessments managed by the VCAA. External assessments include VCE performance, languages oral and written examinations, the Extended Investigation Critical Thinking Test, and the General Achievement Test (GAT). The VCAA is responsible for determining eligibility and for approving applications for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) and Derived Examination Scores (DES).

Executive Summary

A high proportion of students who apply for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) or a Derived Examination Score (DES) have their applications approved.

**Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) (see page 3)**

The number of students applying for SEA is increasing. In 2023, 10,242 students applied for SEA, an increase of 175.1% from 3,722 in 2014. Between 2022 and 2023, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 22.4%.

The overall number of students with approved SEA has been steadily increasing. In 2023, there were 10,160 students with approved SEA, an increase of 182.7% from 3,594 in 2014. Between 2022 and 2023 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 23.4%.

* Overall, a high proportion of the applications submitted by students have provisions approved. In 2023, 99.2% of applications were approved.

The increase in the number of SEA applications is predominantly due the streamlining of evidence requirements implemented in February 2023 which place greater emphasis on school-based decisions and the history of provisions a student already has in place.

**Breakdown of Special Provision categories for SEA applications (see page 7)**

The most common categories with approved SEA in 2023 were Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment.

Of the approved SEA, 43.8% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 21.0% by Health Impairment.

**Derived Examination Score (DES) applications and approvals (see page 15)**

The number of examinations where a DES was requested has fluctuated over time. In 2023, there were 4,246 examinations where a DES was requested, an increase of 14.1% from 3,720 in 2014. In 2023, the number of requests was 48.7% less than the number of requests in 2022 (8,273 examinations). The difference is mainly due to the high number of DES requests received in 2022 due to floods. In 2023, there was a 23.5% increase on the 2022 ﬁgure (3,438 examinations), excluding DES requests due to 2022 floods.

The overall proportion of applications approved for a DES has been steadily increasing. In 2023 there were 3,943 (92.9%) DES approvals.

**DES applications by category (see page 17)**

The most common categories for DES applications are acute illness/circumstances which accounted for 46.2% of all applications in 2023, followed by Chronic illness/circumstances which accounted for 19.1% of all applications.

Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)

The VCAA recognises that some students with a disability, as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth), or illness, may require Special Examination Arrangements to enable them to access their examination/test questions and communicate their responses in a timed external assessment.

The VCAA considers each application for Special Examination Arrangements on the basis of the strength and completeness of evidence of existing modifications made by the school in classroom learning and school-based assessments.

The prime consideration is the impact of the student’s disability and/or illness on their capacity to access their VCE external assessments and, if necessary, what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable the student to complete their VCE external assessments.

The school-based evidence along with any additional evidence included to support an application including professional, educational and academic assessments will be considered by the VCAA on a case-by-case basis. The VCAA will make a decision based on all evidence received with an application.

Eligibility for Special Examination Arrangements

Students are eligible for SEA if they can demonstrate that their capacity to participate in a VCE external assessment is impaired due to:

* Mental Health condition (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression)
* Health Impairment (e.g., diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome)
* Physical disability
* Learning disorder
* Language disorder
* Deaf and hard of hearing
* Vision Impairment
* Motor Disorders
* Emergency Application (illness or other circumstance occurring immediately before or during an assessment period)

Types of Special Examination Arrangements

Special Examination Arrangements can include the following.

**Rest breaks**. Rest breaks are typically approved at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’. Rest breaks are in addition to the writing time. In specific circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘unlimited rest breaks’ to facilitate management of a medical or physical condition.

**Extra working time**. Extra working time is typically approved at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’. In specific circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘extra working time’ in excess of 10 minutes per hour.

**Separate rooms**. If the use of a scribe (or electronic scribe), reader (or electronic reader) or clarifier has been approved by the VCAA, a student must complete their external assessment in a separate examination room. Where a student is completing their external assessment in a separate room, a supervisor must be present.

**Use of computers, tablets and/or assistive technology.**

**Small group settings**. Where a school has two or more students undertaking an examination in the same session, that have the same or similar approved Special Examination Arrangements, the school can at their discretion choose to seat these students in the same room with appropriate supervision.

**Readers**. The function of a reader is to read the examination paper and/or the student’s responses as often as requested by the student.

**Electronic readers**. If a student is approved the use of an electronic reader or reader software, they must be supervised in a separate room.

**Scribes**. The function of a scribe is to record, on the appropriate response material, the verbal responses and directions made by the student in the process of answering the question/s.

**Electronic scribes**. If a student is approved the use of scribing software, they must be supervised in a separate room.

**Clarifiers**. The function of a clarifier is to clarify words contained within examination/test questions. The appointed clarifier may work with the student during any practice examinations.

**Auslan interpreters**. The role of an Auslan interpreter is to facilitate communication between the student, the supervisor, the reader, scribe and/or clarifier. The Auslan interpreter signs everything that is spoken and voices everything that is signed by the student.

**Alternative format examination papers**. Alternative format examination papers and materials can include enlarged print, electronic text and Braille.

**Alternative examination venues**. In exceptional circumstances the VCAA will approve for a student to sit an external assessment at an alternative venue, for example, at home or in hospital. Such circumstances include serious physical or psychological incapacity.

Special Examination Arrangements statistics

This section provides information on the number of students who applied for SEA and the number approved provisions, as well as a breakdown of SEA categories. The statistics for SEA exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day. Information on sector is based on the student’s home school or home provider.

Number of students with applications and approvals

The overall number of students who applied for SEA has been increasing (see Table 1).

In 2023, 10,242 students applied for SEA, an increase of 175.1% from 3,722 in 2014. Between 2022 and 2023, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 22.4%.

The increase in the number of students submitting applications over the past ten years may be attributed to one or more of the following reasons:

streamlining of evidence requirements and decisions on SEA applications based on evidence of existing modifications made by the school for classroom learning and school-based assessments

greater awareness among schools, students and parents as to the provisions available to support students with special needs while they undertake their VCE

improved support mechanisms within and outside schools

greater number of students presenting with issues that potentially require special provision. This may be due to there being less stigma associated with students making their school, and potentially peers, aware of their specific health issues and/or personal circumstances.

The overall number of students with approved SEA has been steadily increasing (see Table 1).

In 2023, there were 10,160 students with approved SEA, an increase of 182.6% from 3,594 in 2014. Between 2022 and 2023 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 23.4%.

From 2014 to 2023, there have been large increases in the number of students with approved SEA across the three major sectors (that is, the Catholic, government and independent sectors).

The increase in the number of students with approved SEA over this period is most likely attributed to similar reasons to those outlined in relation to the increasing number of applications. In essence, schools are more likely to be better informed and equipped to manage the application process for their students, ensuring applications are only submitted where appropriate and evidence provided details existing provisions made by the school for the student for their classroom learning and school-based assessments.

Table - Number of students with SEA applications and approvals by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of students with applications** | | | | | | **Number of students with approvals** | | | | | | **Percentage of students approved** | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Adult | 78 | 50 | 59 | 61 | 28 | 48 | 77 | 49 | 59 | 61 | 28 | 47 | 98.7 | 98.0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 97.9 |
| Catholic | 919 | 1,499 | 1,512 | 1,733 | 2,093 | 2,508 | 895 | 1,452 | 1,470 | 1,712 | 2,064 | 2,486 | 97.4 | 96.9 | 97.2 | 98.8 | 98.6 | 99.1 |
| Government | 1,496 | 2,347 | 2,747 | 2,812 | 3,162 | 4,056 | 1,449 | 2,277 | 2,661 | 2,793 | 3,123 | 4,027 | 96.9 | 97.0 | 96.9 | 99.3 | 98.8 | 99.3 |
| Independent | 1,229 | 1,979 | 2,158 | 2,568 | 3,084 | 3,626 | 1,173 | 1,864 | 2,054 | 2,517 | 3,018 | 3,596 | 95.4 | 94.2 | 95.2 | 98.0 | 97.9 | 99.2 |
| Other Providers | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | N/A | N/A | 100 | N/A | 100 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **3,722** | **5,875** | **6,477** | **7,177** | **8,369** | **10,242** | **3,594** | **5,642** | **6,245** | **7,086** | **8,235** | **10,160** | **96.6** | **96.0** | **96.4** | **98.7** | **98.4** | **99.2** |

Figure - Number of students with approved SEA by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

Percentage of students with approvals

A high proportion of the applications submitted by students had provisions approved (see Table 1). The percentage of approvals has increased over time.

In 2023, the overall proportion of applications with provisions approved was 99.2%, an increase of 2.6 percentage points from 2014. The proportion of approvals is similar in the Catholic, government and independent sector.

Figure 2 - Percentage of students with approved SEA by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

Breakdown of Special Provision categories for SEA applications

The most common categories with approved SEA in 2023 were Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment (see Table 2). Of the approved SEA, 43.8% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 21.0% by Health Impairment.

Up until 2018, SEA applications submitted on the basis of a Motor Disorders were included under the category of Learning Disability. From 2019, statistics on Motor Disorders conditions are reported as a separate category.

Similarly, until 2017, SEA applications submitted on the basis of a Mental Health Condition were included under the category of Health Impairment. Since 2018 statistics on Mental Health conditions are reported as a separate category.

Emergency applications relate to SEA applications that are submitted on the basis of students experiencing the onset of an illness, accident or personal trauma immediately before or during an assessment period.

Table - Number of approved SEA by category and percentage distribution across categories, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of applications that are approved** | | | | | | **Percentage distribution** | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2,014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Emergency Application | 816 | 903 | 1,240 | 1,474 | 1,830 | 1,666 | 22.7 | 16.0 | 17.5 | 17.9 | 18.7 | 13.1 |
| Health Impairment | 2,177 | 1,560 | 1,683 | 1,790 | 1,988 | 2,675 | 60.6 | 27.6 | 23.7 | 21.8 | 20.3 | 21.0 |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 46 | 87 | 89 | 70 | 78 | 118 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Language Disorder | 24 | 51 | 81 | 98 | 136 | 301 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 2.4 |
| Mental Health Condition | - | 2,063 | 2,750 | 3,351 | 4,092 | 5,582 | - | 36.6 | 38.8 | 40.8 | 41.8 | 43.8 |
| Motor Disorder | - | 148 | 225 | 272 | 291 | 378 | - | 2.6 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Physical Disability | 106 | 77 | 213 | 189 | 175 | 280 | 2.9 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.2 |
| Learning Disability | 362 | 668 | 726 | 888 | 1,082 | 1,603 | 10.1 | 11.8 | 10.2 | 10.8 | 11.0 | 12.6 |
| Vision Impairment | 63 | 85 | 82 | 90 | 121 | 151 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **3,594** | **5,642** | **7,089** | **8,222** | **9,793** | **12,754** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Note: From 2020, students could be recorded against multiple categories. Prior to this students were only recorded against one category.

Table 3 presents the number of SEA applications, the number and percentages approved within each SEA category for 2014 and 2019 to 2023. Overall, 99.3% SEA applications were approved in 2023. The categories with the highest proportion of approvals in 2023 were Deaf and Hard of Hearing (100%) followed by Emergency Application (99.8%), and Mental Health Condition and Health Impairment (both 99.6%). The category with the lowest proportion of approvals in 2023 was Language Disorder (96.8%).

Figure 3 presents the proportion of approvals within each category. There has been an overall increase in the proportion of approvals over the last 10 years. In 2023, the overall proportion of approvals was 99.3%, an increase of 2.8 percentage points from 2014.

Table - Number of approved SEA by category and percentage distribution across categories, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of applications** | | | | | | **Number of approvals** | | | | | | **Percentage approved** | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Emergency Application | 816 | 904 | 1,241 | 1,474 | 1,833 | 1,670 | 816 | 903 | 1,240 | 1,474 | 1,830 | 1,666 | 100 | 99.9 | 99.9 | 100.0 | 99.8 | 99.8 |
| Health Impairment | 2178 | 1,578 | 1,730 | 1,793 | 1,997 | 2,685 | 2,177 | 1,560 | 1,683 | 1,790 | 1,988 | 2,675 | 100 | 98.9 | 97.3 | 99.8 | 99.5 | 99.6 |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 46 | 88 | 92 | 70 | 80 | 118 | 46 | 87 | 89 | 70 | 78 | 118 | 100 | 98.9 | 96.7 | 100.0 | 97.5 | 100.0 |
| Language Disorder | 33 | 61 | 94 | 112 | 143 | 311 | 24 | 51 | 81 | 98 | 136 | 301 | 72.7 | 83.6 | 86.2 | 87.5 | 95.1 | 96.8 |
| Mental Health Condition | - | 2,084 | 2,774 | 3,357 | 4,109 | 5,603 | - | 2,063 | 2,750 | 3,351 | 4,092 | 5,582 | - | 99.0 | 99.1 | 99.8 | 99.6 | 99.6 |
| Motor Disorder | - | 152 | 226 | 273 | 294 | 381 | - | 148 | 225 | 272 | 291 | 378 | - | 97.4 | 99.6 | 99.6 | 99.0 | 99.2 |
| Physical Disability | 106 | 77 | 217 | 190 | 177 | 282 | 106 | 77 | 213 | 189 | 175 | 280 | 100 | 100.0 | 98.2 | 99.5 | 98.9 | 99.3 |
| Learning Disability | 480 | 845 | 877 | 954 | 1,180 | 1,638 | 362 | 668 | 726 | 888 | 1,082 | 1,603 | 75.4 | 79.1 | 82.8 | 93.1 | 91.7 | 97.9 |
| Vision Impaired | 63 | 86 | 82 | 92 | 121 | 153 | 63 | 85 | 82 | 90 | 121 | 151 | 100 | 98.8 | 100.0 | 97.8 | 100.0 | 98.7 |
| **Total** | **3,722** | **5,875** | **7,333** | **8,315** | **9,934** | **12,841** | **3,594** | **5,642** | **7,089** | **8,222** | **9,793** | **12,754** | **96.6** | **96.0** | **96.7** | **98.9** | **98.6** | **99.3** |

Figure - Percentage of approved Special Examination Arrangements by category, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

Breakdown of Special Provision Applications by Category and Sector

The largest growth in the number of applications from 2014 to 2023 has been in the Mental Heath Condition categories with increases across the three major sectors (that is, the Catholic, government and independent sectors) (see Table *4*).

The Mental Health Condition category, although only reported as a separate category from 2018, has seen a continual high increase in the number of applications.

Table - Number of applications by Special Provision category and sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CATEGORY** | **SECTOR** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
|  | **Adult** | 2 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 4 |
|  | **Catholic** | 196 | 275 | 322 | 382 | 465 | 402 |
| **Emergency Application** | **Government** | 339 | 354 | 577 | 599 | 710 | 692 |
|  | **Independent** | 279 | 271 | 337 | 481 | 650 | 572 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 816 | 904 | 1,241 | 1,474 | 1,833 | 1,670 |
|  | **Adult** | 68 | 14 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 14 |
|  | **Catholic** | 567 | 441 | 419 | 471 | 524 | 688 |
| **Health Impairment** | **Government** | 868 | 662 | 781 | 747 | 844 | 1157 |
|  | **Independent** | 675 | 461 | 519 | 559 | 621 | 826 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 2,178 | 1,578 | 1,730 | 1,793 | 1,997 | 2,685 |
|  | **Adult** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Catholic** | 11 | 11 | 20 | 19 | 28 | 32 |
| **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** | **Government** | 25 | 54 | 49 | 38 | 35 | 51 |
|  | **Independent** | 9 | 23 | 22 | 13 | 17 | 33 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Total** | 46 | 88 | 92 | 70 | 80 | 118 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 15 | 22 | 30 | 40 | 85 | 122 |
| **Language Disorder** | **Government** | 3 | 18 | 33 | 18 | 27 | 70 |
|  | **Independent** | 15 | 21 | 31 | 54 | 31 | 119 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 33 | 61 | 94 | 112 | 143 | 311 |
|  | **Adult** | - | 25 | 41 | 35 | 15 | 36 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | 522 | 648 | 805 | 974 | 1314 |
| **Mental Health Condition** | **Government** | - | 901 | 1,152 | 1,347 | 1,563 | 2265 |
|  | **Independent** | - | 636 | 933 | 1,169 | 1,557 | 1986 |
|  | **Other Providers** | - | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
|  | **Total** | - | 2,084 | 2,774 | 3,357 | 4,109 | 5,603 |
|  | **Adult** | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | 45 | 58 | 72 | 74 | 106 |
| **Motor Disorder** | **Government** | - | 43 | 72 | 79 | 78 | 103 |
|  | **Independent** | - | 61 | 94 | 121 | 142 | 172 |
|  | **Other Providers** | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | - | 152 | 226 | 273 | 294 | 381 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
|  | **Catholic** | 27 | 23 | 47 | 42 | 44 | 66 |
| **Physical Disability** | **Government** | 48 | 26 | 90 | 85 | 72 | 126 |
|  | **Independent** | 31 | 27 | 77 | 61 | 58 | 89 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 106 | 77 | 217 | 190 | 177 | 282 |
|  | **Adult** | 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
|  | **Catholic** | 86 | 141 | 136 | 170 | 236 | 363 |
| **Learning Disability** | **Government** | 179 | 248 | 284 | 272 | 371 | 538 |
|  | **Independent** | 208 | 453 | 454 | 509 | 573 | 733 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Total** | 480 | 845 | 877 | 954 | 1,180 | 1,638 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 17 | 19 | 20 | 29 | 31 | 47 |
| **Vision Impaired** | **Government** | 34 | 41 | 34 | 26 | 37 | 57 |
|  | **Independent** | 12 | 26 | 27 | 35 | 52 | 49 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 63 | 86 | 82 | 92 | 121 | 153 |
| **Grand Total** |  | **3,722** | **5,875** | **7,333** | **8,315** | **9,934** | **12,841** |

Derived Examination Score (DES)

Students who are ill or affected by other personal circumstances at the time of a VCE external assessment and whose result is unlikely to be a fair or accurate indication of their learning or achievement in the study may apply for a DES. If their application is approved, a Derived Examination Score (DES) will be calculated by the VCAA.

The purpose of a DES is to ensure that a student’s final result for an external assessment reflects as accurately as possible the level of achievement that would be expected based on the learning and achievement the student has demonstrated in the study over the year.

A DES is not available for the GAT, Music Style and Composition Externally-assessed Task or Extended Investigation Externally-assessed Task written report.

Eligibility for a Derived Examination Score

Students are eligible for a DES if they meet all of the following criteria:

They have completed the course of study leading to the external assessment and have a result for at least one other graded assessment in the same study.

They experience the onset of an illness or the occurrence of an injury, personal trauma or serious intervening event in the period before or during a VCE external assessment, that has either prevented them from attending the external assessment or significantly affected their performance during the external assessment.

They provide independent professional written evidence that demonstrates the illness, injury, personal trauma or serious intervening event has affected their performance in the external assessment or has prevented them from attending the external assessment.

A ‘personal trauma’ may include, but is not limited to, the death or serious illness or an accident involving a family member, or family break-up.

A ‘serious intervening event’ may include, but is not limited to, an accident on the way to or at an examination, attendance at a funeral of a family member or other person of close relationship, or the required attendance at a court proceeding.

How Derived Examination Scores are calculated

The calculation for the DES uses all other available scores for the student in the affected study and the indicative grade for any external assessments provided by the school and the GAT component scores. For each approved application for a specific external assessment, the VCAA will calculate a range of possible DES scores, which will be calculated statistically from the student’s other assessments, including:

moderated School-based Assessments

GAT component scores

other external assessment scores if applicable

indicative grades provided by the school.

The contribution made by the graded assessments, the indicative grade and the GAT component scores is determined by analysis of the comparison of this data with the final score for external assessment for all students who have not applied for a DES. For all external assessment this analysis indicates that the two graded assessment scores provide the greatest contribution to all the predictors.

If a student is eligible for a DES and the highest of the predictors is greater than the achieved external assessment score, the highest predictor is chosen as the final score for the student in the relevant external assessment.

Derived Examination Score statistics

This section provides information on student applications and applications approved for a Derived Examination Score (DES). The DES statistics are based on individual applications and exclude students with three examinations timetabled on one day and irregularities. Information on sector is based on the student’s home school or home provider.

Number of examinations DES applications and approvals

The number of examinations where a DES was requested has fluctuated over time. In 2023, there were 4,246 examinations where a DES was requested, an increase of 14.1% from 3,720 in 2014. In 2023, the number of requests decreased by 48.7% decrease on the number of requests in 2022 (8,273 examinations). This decrease is mainly due to the high number of DES requests in 2022 due to floods. Excluding DES requested due to floods, there was a 23.5% increase on the 2022 ﬁgure (3,438 examinations) in 2023.

The significant decrease in 2023 is due primarily to no major event occurring during the assessment period impacting on students’ ability to attend or complete their examinations. In 2022, schools were able to apply for a DES on behalf of students for one or more of their examinations if they were prevented from completing the examination or their performance was significantly impacted by the floods. All these applications were approved.

In 2023, this arrangement continued for only one school, Rochester Secondary College, in recognition of the ongoing impact students experienced in 2023 as a result of the 2022 floods.

Similarly, the number of applications approved for a DES has shown some fluctuation over time.

Percentage of approvals

The overall proportion of applications approved for a DES has been steadily increasing. In 2023 there were 3,943 (92.9%) DES approvals.

Table - Number of examinations where a DES was requested, number of approvals and percentage of DES approvals by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of examinations where a DES was requested** | | | | |  | **Number of examinations where a DES request was approved** | | | | | | | **Percentage of DES approved** | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Adult | 33 | 44 | 33 | 58 | 16 | **16** | 24 | 31 | 31 | 53 | 15 | **14** | 72.7 | | 70.5 | 93.9 | 91.4 | 93.8 | 87.5 |
| Catholic | 1048 | 888 | 571 | 1,008 | 3,000 | 1,021 | 812 | 750 | 504 | 869 | 2,945 | 935 | 77.5 | | 84.5 | 88.3 | 86.2 | 98.2 | 91.6 |
| Government | 1618 | 1,084 | 1,120 | 2,032 | 3,440 | 2,089 | 1208 | 875 | 998 | 1,896 | 3,326 | 1,946 | 74.7 | | 80.7 | 89.1 | 93.3 | 96.7 | 93.2 |
| Independent | 1021 | 838 | 683 | 1,042 | 1,803 | 1,088 | 741 | 686 | 604 | 973 | 1,693 | 1,017 | 72.6 | | 81.9 | 88.4 | 93.4 | 93.9 | 93.5 |
| Other Providers | 0 | 7 | 0 | 9 | 14 | 32 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 9 | 13 | 31 | - | | 100 | - | 100 | 92.9 | 96.9 |
| **Total** | **3,720** | **2,861** | **2,407** | **4,149** | **8,273** | **4,246** | **2,785** | **2,349** | **2,137** | **3,800** | **7,992** | **3,943** | **74.9** | | **82.1** | **88.8** | **91.6** | **96.6** | **92.9** |

Figure - Percentage of approvals by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

Number of students with DES applications and approvals

The number of students with one or more DES applications has shown some fluctuation over time (see Table 6). In 2023, there were 2,026 students with one or more DES applications, an increase of 41.2% from 1,435 in 2014.

Some students are applying for a DES for more than one examination, however, they may not have all of these approved

Table - Number of students with DES applications and approvals by sector, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of students with DES application** | | | | | | **Number of students with approval** | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Adult | 17 | 16 | 16 | 24 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 23 | 7 | 7 |
| Catholic | 359 | 325 | 264 | 460 | 969 | 481 | 303 | 297 | 232 | 416 | 944 | 455 |
| Government | 647 | 431 | 569 | 1,019 | 1,292 | 995 | 517 | 366 | 506 | 956 | 1,247 | 929 |
| Independent | 412 | 317 | 308 | 490 | 690 | 536 | 323 | 283 | 265 | 461 | 645 | 505 |
| Other Providers | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| **Total** | **1,435** | **1,091** | **1,157** | **1,995** | **2,966** | **2,026** | **1,155** | **962** | **1,018** | **1,858** | **2,849** | **1,902** |

Breakdown of DES categories

The most common categories of applications for a DES are Acute illness/circumstances which accounted for 46.2% of all applications in 2023 followed by Chronic illness/circumstances which accounted for 19.1% of all applications. (see Table 8).

In 2023, the highest proportion of approvals where the DES was requested was in the middle east and other categories (see Table 9).

There were 100% approved applications where the DES was requested in the middle east and the other category.

Table - Description of DES Categories

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | DESCRIPTION |
| Acute illness/circumstances | First onset or ﬂare-up of illness, ﬂus, colds, headaches, migraines, hospitalisation during exams |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | Illness diagnosed longer than a month, family breakdown, homeless |
| COVID-19 | Student significantly impacted or unable to complete exam because of COVID-19 |
| Death1 | Family member/close friend before or during exams |
| Family | Illness/trauma of family/close friend |
| Flood | Flood |
| Psychological | Newly diagnosed psychological illnesses |
| Middle East | Middle East Crisis |
| Other | Exam irregularities, ﬁre, ﬂood, etc |

Table – Number and percentage of examinations where DES was requested by category, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of examinations where DES was requested** | | | | | | **Percentage of examinations where DES was requested** | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Acute illness/circumstances | 1,813 | 1,771 | 1,063 | 1,203 | 1,541 | 1,905 | 48.7 | 61.9 | 44.2 | 29.0 | 18.6 | 44.9 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | 852 | 217 | 345 | 558 | 488 | 790 | 22.9 | 7.6 | 14.3 | 13.4 | 5.9 | 18.6 |
| COVID-19 | - | - | 173 | 1,607 | 568 | 591 | - | - | 7.2 | 38.7 | 6.9 | 13.9 |
| Death | 665 | 414 | 416 | 451 | 492 | 420 | 17.9 | 14.5 | 17.3 | 10.9 | 5.9 | 9.9 |
| Family | 335 | 267 | 249 | 205 | 259 | 287 | 9.0 | 9.3 | 10.3 | 4.9 | 3.1 | 6.8 |
| Flood | - | - | - | - | 4,835\* | 119\* | - | - | - | - | 58.4 | 2.8 |
| Psychological | 31 | 177 | 147 | 96 | 64 | 49 | 0.8 | 6.2 | 6.1 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| Other | 24 | 15 | 14 | 29 | 26 | 7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Middle East |  |  |  |  |  | 78 |  |  |  |  |  | 1.8 |
| **Total** | **3,720** | **2,861** | **2,407** | **4,149** | **8,273** | **4,246** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

\*In 2022 and 2023, schools were able to apply for a DES on behalf of students for one or more of their examinations if they were prevented from completing an examination or their performance was significantly impacted by the floods.

Figure - Number of DES Approved/Not Approved, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

Table - Number of examinations where DES was requested and number of examinations where DES was approved by category, 2014 and 2019 – 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of examinations where a DES was requested** | | | | | | **Number of examinations where DES requested was approved** | | | | | | **Percentage of examinations where DES requested was approved** | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2014** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Acute illness/circumstances | 1,813 | 1,771 | 1,063 | 1,203 | 1,541 | 1,905 | 1,313 | 1,462 | 919 | 1,075 | 1,422 | 1,751 | 72.4 | 82.6 | 86.5 | 89.4 | 91.9 | 91.9 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | 852 | 217 | 345 | 558 | 488 | 790 | 545 | 165 | 286 | 482 | 423 | 725 | 64.0 | 76.0 | 82.9 | 86.4 | 91.8 | 91.8 |
| COVID-19 | - | - | 173 | 1,607 | 568 | 591 | - | - | 169 | 1,513 | 544 | 549 | - | - | 97.7 | 94.2 | 92.9 | 92.9 |
| Death | 665 | 414 | 416 | 451 | 492 | 420 | 628 | 368 | 395 | 430 | 452 | 402 | 94.4 | 88.9 | 95.0 | 95.3 | 95.7 | 95.7 |
| Family | 335 | 267 | 249 | 205 | 259 | 287 | 255 | 235 | 237 | 191 | 242 | 265 | 76.1 | 88.0 | 95.2 | 93.2 | 92.3 | 92.3 |
| Flood | - | - | - | - | 4,835 | 119 | - | - | - | - | 4,835 | 119 | - | - | - | - | 100 | 100 |
| Psychological | 31 | 177 | 147 | 96 | 64 | 49 | 22 | 110 | 119 | 83 | 52 | 47 | 71.0 | 62.1 | 81.0 | 86.5 | 81.3 | 95.9 |
| Other | 24 | 15 | 14 | 29 | 26 | 7 | 22 | 9 | 12 | 26 | 22 | 7 | 91.7 | 60.0 | 85.7 | 89.7 | 100 | 100 |
| Middle East |  |  |  |  |  | 78 |  |  |  |  |  | 78 |  |  |  |  |  | 100 |
| **Total** | **3,720** | **2,861** | **2,407** | **4,149** | **8,273** | **4,246** | **2,785** | **2,349** | **2,137** | **3,800** | **7,992** | **3,943** | **74.9** | **82.1** | **88.8** | **91.6** | **96.6** | **92.9** |

1. Irregularities are events that significantly interrupt and adversely affect a student's performance immediately before, or during, a VCE external assessment that are outside their control [↑](#footnote-ref-1)