

Fact sheet for school leaders

This fact sheet provides questions and answers to help school leaders explain the 2024 VCE exam results and outcomes of the analysis undertaken to address the early publication of exam material.

Explanation of Impacted Examinations and Treatments applied

Was my exam impacted?

A total of **65 exams** were impacted by the publishing error. Of these:

- 25 were cleared as having had sufficient changes made to the exams students sat, or because the material available in the coversheets provided no advantage to anyone who accessed them early.
- 40 exams underwent extensive psychometric analysis with the oversight of an Independent Expert Advisory Panel. The analysis found:
 - 35 exams could be cleared as having no evidence in the results that suggest any student had an unusual advantage.
 - 5 exams – Business Management, Legal Studies, Product Design and Technologies, Philosophy and Visual Communication Design – had anomalous results for 69 students on questions that could have been accessed prior to the examination.

Does this mean 69 students have accessed exam material before the exam?

No. There is no indication that any of these 69 students had accessed exam material before sitting the exam.

The statistical analysis showed anomalies where a small number of students in 5 exams performed significantly better on the impacted questions compared to their performance in the rest of the paper.

This applied to:

VCE Study	No of students
Business Management	29
Legal Studies	26
Visual Communication Design	6
Product Design and Technologies	5
Philosophy	3

There were no groups of students in a single school with anomalies in their results, and no suggestion of a coordinated behaviour by students to access examination material.

There was no instance of an individual student having an anomaly their results in more than one impacted exam.

Statistical anomalies occur in exams regularly and this could be for a number of reasons.

The Panel took a conservative approach to the impacted exams and recommended that the VCAA applied a process to ensure that no one was disadvantaged from students *potentially* having access to published materials ahead of the exam. This recommendation was accepted and applied.

Do the 69 students have an advantage over me?

No. The 69 students do not have any advantage over you or any other students. Treatments were applied to avoid any consequent disadvantage to other students.

This involved removing the students from the cohort, calculating the standard study score and distributing the study scores. The scores of impacted students were then inserted into the overall distribution at a matched point after the study scores had been distributed.

This means that impacted students have not bumped anyone down the study score ranking.

This also means that impacted students retained the marks and study score they achieved.

Will I know if I'm one of the 69 students that they have been part of this process?

No. No information about the 69 students will be released. There is no indication that any of the 69 students had actually accessed any exam material before sitting the exam and this process has not resulted in any disadvantage for the impacted students.

How is a VCE study score calculated?

A study score shows how you performed in a study at Unit 3 and 4 level, compared to everybody else in Victoria who took that study. Study scores are calculated by VCAA and are used by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) to calculate ATARs.

The maximum study score is 50. Each year, and for every study, the mean study score is set at 30. A score of between 23 and 37 shows that you are in the middle range of students; a score of 38 or more indicates that you are in the top 15%.

The VCAA combines the standardised scores for each of the graded assessments. Each graded assessment in a study contributes a specific percentage, or weighting, to the final study score. Once the scores have been standardised, weighted, and totaled, the total score is compared with the scores of all other students in that study and then converted to a score out of 50.

The [What is a Study Score explainer video](#) on the VCAA website demonstrates how study scores are calculated.

Can you explain how my results have not been impacted?

There were only 69 cases out of 304,451 exams undertaken by 75,851 students where students had anomalous results. That is, there were only 69 cases where students performed significantly better on an exposed question than in the rest of the exam.

Anomalies such as this one happen often in exam marking. There is no evidence that these 69 students accessed exam material before sitting the exam.

Given the particular circumstances of this year, the VCAA took a conservative approach and applied a treatment to these 5 studies.

For example, in Business Management, the 29 students with anomalous results were removed from the cohort. The remaining 13,861 students who sat this exam had their standard study scores calculated, and distributed, or ranked against each other.

The 29 students were then returned to the group at matched point, meaning couldn't bump anyone down the study score ranking.

This also means that 29 impacted students retained the marks and study score they achieved.

Have I had marks taken away?

No. No marks have been taken away for any student. For the impacted questions in the 5 examinations, all 69 students were awarded their marks consistent with the marking guides.

No other students were marked down because of this process.

I know the material was widely shared. How can they say my results are not impacted?

While there may be anecdotal accounts of material being shared among students, there is no evidence to suggest that any student has had significant advantage because of this.

Only 69 students across 5 exams were found to have anomalies in their results. There were no groups of students in a single school with anomalies in their results and no suggestion of a coordinated behaviour by students to access examination material that then led to an advantage.

There was no instance of an individual student having an anomaly in their results in more than one impacted exam.

The treatment described above made sure that no student was advantaged or disadvantaged.

How has this impacted my ATAR?

It hasn't. The expert panel found that there were 69 cases across 304,451 exams sat by 75,851 students where there were anomalies in the results.

The treatments applied related only to the 5 exams impacted and were designed in a way so as not to impact other students or studies.

All student results were reviewed by VTAC and were approved to be calculated into ATARs.

This has ensured that there has been no impact on student ATARs.

How does the VCAA know this process worked?

The treatment applied is not new and is not exclusive to Victoria.

Similar measurement processes are used across Australia and internationally to check and validate exam results periodically.

It is based on well-founded practice here in Australia and internationally.

The VCAA is confident the process has left no student advantaged or disadvantaged.

Results and Appeals

Can I appeal my results?

There is no basis for you to appeal your results with regards to the impacted exams as marks were not adjusted.

No students, including students who sat the 5 impacted exams, had marks deducted or changed.

There was a treatment applied to only 69 cases out of 304,451 examinations sat by 75,851 students, and there has been no impact on the results you received.

If you think there is an error in your marking, there is a process to support you.

I would like to know how my exam was marked. What should I do?

The first step is to request a Statement of Marks. This will show you the marks you received for each question against the question's criteria and out of the total marks available. It does not provide you with your exam.

As no one's marks were deducted or changed, this process cannot be used to appeal results relating to the publishing error or treatments applied.

To apply, fill out the application form included in your December results package. There is no fee for this process.

I think my exam was marked incorrectly. What should I do?

If you've requested a Statement of Marks and would like to see your exam response material, you can make a request to inspect your exam paper.

This inspection is completed with your teacher present and must be supported by your school.

Applications to inspect examination response material are open until 7 February 2025.

If after reviewing your paper, you and your teacher believe there has been a clear error in the marking of your exam, you can apply for a VCE Examination Score Review for the question/s you believe have been marked incorrectly.

This process cannot be used to appeal any concerns relating to the exam cover sheet publishing error or associated treatment.

This application is made by a school principal on behalf of you and supported by your subject teacher.

Applications for a VCE Examination Score Review are open until 21 February 2025.

How long does this process take? Will it be before I receive my university offers?

The VCE Examination Score Review process takes several months each year. The process is open until Friday 21 February 2025. Outcomes of a score review are not available before university offers.

What happens if I apply to inspect my exam paper?

Inspections take place at your school, with your principal's permission.

Your principal must sign the Inspection of Scripts application and the VCAA will then send material to the principal.

An appointment must be made at the school for the inspection. When schools are closed, inspections can take place at the VCAA, in which case the VCAA will make an appointment with you.

You have 15 minutes per exam to inspect your exam material. You attend the inspection with your study teacher. If the study teacher is not available, contact your school to discuss a suitable substitute.

You will see a copy of the paper you submitted on exam day. There are no notes, mark ups or additional comments on the paper, just what you wrote during the exam.

Why does a teacher need to be present when the examination inspection takes place?

Your subject teacher is present to answer any questions you might have on your written response and the marks you were awarded.

As a subject expert, your teacher can provide explanations on how marks have been awarded according to the marking criteria.

What is involved in a VCE Examination Score Review?

A VCE Examination Score Review takes place if you, your teacher and your principal believe there has been an error in the way your exam response was marked.

School principals make this application on your behalf.

What if my result was impacted by another student or students having early access to exam material?

The process we have outlined shows clearly that no one could have been disadvantaged by another student having early access to exam material.

However, if you would like to discuss your particular circumstances, you can contact the VCAA's Post Results and ATAR Service (PRAS) on 9637 3877 or via email at:

pras@education.vic.gov.au