VCE Food Studies 2017–2022

School-based assessment report – Unit 3 and 4

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Food Studies Study Design are provided in the *VCAA Bulletin*. It is recommended that teachers subscribe to the VCAA Bulletin to receive updated information regarding the study. Schools are required to alert teachers to information in VCAA Bulletins, especially concerning assessment schedules. Important Administrative Dates and assessment schedules are published on the School administration page of the VCAA website.

GENERAL COMMENTS

This is the first School-based Assessment Audit undertaken with the newly accredited [*VCE Food Studies Study Design 2017–2022*](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/technology/FoodStudiesSD_2017.pdf). It is important to note that the main source of assessment information for the new study is the study design. There have not been any changes to the study design throughout 2017 and the VCAA Bulletin is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The [*VCE Food Studies Advice for Teachers*](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/foodstudies/introduction.aspx) provides teaching and learning advice for Units 1 to 4 and assessment advice for school-based assessment in Units 3 and 4. Other support materials for the study can be found on the [VCE Food Studies study page](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/foodstudies/foodstudiesindex.aspx) on the VCAA website. These include a Study Summary, Summary of changes and Frequently Asked Questions.

Results of the School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire indicated that a high proportion of schools used commercially-produced tasks. Teachers indicated they reviewed these against the key knowledge and key skills from the study design to ensure their relevance to the new study but there was limited evidence of this occurring in their responses to subsequent questions. Teachers are encouraged to modify commercial tasks to reduce authentication concerns, as well as being required to clearly state what the identified changes are in the questionnaire since the majority of tasks did not meet VCAA requirements based on the comments and evidence provided.

It was noted that there were fewer schools progressing from Stages 3 to 4 in the audit process for Unit 4 following the completion of the online audit questionnaire. The effective use of feedback obtained through the Unit 3 questionnaire, clarification about the feedback with the Curriculum Manager regarding assessment design, and professional learning through the VCAA Food Studies webinar in May meant that fewer schools were required to provide further evidence.

It was evident that many schools were using commercial tasks, modifying tasks and designing new tasks. Beyond the first year of the study, it is expected that all schools will modify existing tasks or design new tasks to reduce authentication risks. Most schools were selecting appropriate combinations of assessment tasks from the assessment table on page 22 in the [study design](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/technology/FoodStudiesSD_2017.pdf) to allow students to demonstrate the key skills and key knowledge and meet the requirements of the outcomes. A greater range of assessment types were also selected. Exemplars of assessment allowed students choice in the selection of stimulus material to promote engagement and reduce authentication risks. Concerns were raised where the same key knowledge and key skills were assessed in multiple assessment tasks or where inefficiencies were created by implementing more assessment tasks than required.

Specific information

Unit 3 - Food in daily life

Outcome 1

*Explain the processes of eating and digesting food and absorption of macronutrients, explain causes and effects of food allergies, food intolerances and food contamination, analyse food selection models and apply principles of nutrition and food science in the creation of food products.*

This outcome is assessed using three types of tasks, collectively contributing to 50 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Task type options

The first task type requires that students complete a range of practical activities related to the functional properties of components of food. The scope of practical activities is detailed in the study design and includes cooking, demonstrations, responding to design briefs, dietary analysis, food sampling and taste-testing, sensory analysis, product analysis and scientific experiments. The School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire indicated that schools most commonly selected cooking and usually limited this to only two practical activities instead of a range, as specified in the key skills and in the Unit 3 assessment information. The cooking in these practical activities must allow students to demonstrate a high level of skill and be aligned with the rationale and evidence underpinning the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* found in Chapter 2 of the [Educator’s Guide - Eat for Health](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55b_eat_for_health_educators_guide.pdf). Many assessment timelines received in the audit indicated that this was not the case. Well-designed assessment examples in questionnaire responses included a variety of practical activities such as cooking, product analysis, demonstrations and scientific experiments.

Students are required to complete two records of practical activities related to the functional properties of components of food as the second task type. A large range of examples of records of practical activities can be found in the *Advice for teachers*. Most respondents chose to assess more than two records of practical activities, often of the same assessment type for two different cooking activities, which created a situation where the outcome was over-assessed. The most common options were annotated photographic records and evaluation questions. It is important that a variety of assessment tasks are provided to students, that records of practical activities allow students to meet the outcome; that the task provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate the outcome at the highest level; and, that the workload of students be taken into account by efficiently designing the assessment. Differentiation between learning activities and assessment may provide further clarity for teachers here when designing programs. The terms ‘production’, ‘production plans’ and ‘evidence of production’ are used in the *VCE Food and Technology Study Design* and there is evidence to suggest that the transition to the new language surrounding assessment used in VCE Food Studies will be progressive for teachers when designing assessment.

The third task requires any one of the following forms:

* a short written report: media analysis, research inquiry, structured questions, case study analysis
* an annotated visual report
* an oral presentation or a practical demonstration
* a video or podcast.

Use of study design-specific terminology for this task type is important when designing assessment as this task type was often incorrectly named by respondents. A short written report, in the form of structured questions, was the most common option identified in the audit questionnaire, but, in most cases, the task was not short in nature. When combined with the evaluation questions in the records of practical activities, the use of the same style of assessment were frequently apparent. It is worth noting that the practical demonstration listed in the third task types refers to a demonstration performed by the student, and not the teacher.

Outcome 2

*Explain and analyse factors affecting food access and choice, analyse the influences that shape an individual’s food values, beliefs and behaviours, and apply practical skills to create a range of healthy meals for children and families.*

This outcome is assessed using three types of tasks, collectively contributing to 50 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Task type options

The first task type requires that students complete a range of practical activities related to healthy meals for children and families. The scope of practical activities is detailed in the study design and includes cooking, demonstrations, responding to design briefs, dietary analysis, food sampling and taste-testing, sensory analysis, product analysis and scientific experiments. There was more variation in the task type selected for the outcome, with responding to design briefs and dietary analysis being nominated in addition to cooking. In many instances, students were limited to only two practical activities in the task design instead of a range of healthy meals for children and families as specified in the outcome statement. As a consequence, study design requirements were often not met. Good examples of assessment had students designing a range of healthy breakfast and lunch ideas from design brief scenarios. Some examples, although identified as responding to a design brief, did not provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills with responding to a brief to design healthy meals.

Students are required to complete two records of practical activities related to healthy meals for children and families as the second task type. The most common options were questions related to dietary analysis, with this type of record repeated across two practical activities.

The third task requires any one of the following forms:

* a short written report: media analysis, research inquiry, structured questions, case study analysis
* an annotated visual report
* an oral presentation or a practical demonstration
* a video or podcast.

A short written report, in the form of a media analysis with structured questions, was the most common option chosen. When combined with the dietary analysis evaluation questions in the records of practical activities, patterns using the same style of assessment were once more apparent, which did not give students access to a variety of assessment opportunities.

Timing and assessment

The majority of schools indicated they had scheduled tasks related to Outcome 1 staggered throughout Term 1 and tasks related to Outcome 2, throughout Term 2. It is a requirement that the assessment be completed by students in one academic year, although it was apparent that some schools provide VCE policies and procedures in transition programs at the end of the previous year.

Schools with more than one teacher involved in the teaching of Food Studies indicated that consistency in marking was achieved through cross-marking with colleagues. Many teachers used the VCAA performance descriptors to provide mark allocations for aspects of tasks. In some instances, teachers developed their own marking schemes, which were generally appropriate to the task. Commercial task marking schemes were not always appropriate to the requirements of the task type, often identifying content outside the scope of the study to be assessed and not providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate the outcome at the highest level.

The student satisfactorily completes the unit when the teacher judges that all outcomes have been achieved in the work the student has produced. The student must also submit work on time, submit work that is clearly his/her own and observe the VCAA and school rules. Setting a percentage requirement, as indicated by some schools, for students to achieve to satisfy an outcome is not consistent with these guidelines.

Most responses indicated that test conditions were simulated when students completed assessment. The Authentication Record Form for School-based Assessment (located on VASS) can be used to monitor student work that is not completed in class, such as research or design thinking tasks related to responding to design briefs. Students practising recipes at home that will be used in practical activities, or practising a written task which is subsequently completed in class both constitute undue assistance.

The use of digital technologies was limited in the first year of the reaccredited study design for Unit 3 but examples of where digital technology supported assessment included: annotating photographic records using a variety of applications such as Thinglink; the use of iMovies to record practical experiments; the use of video to record student demonstrations; use of Mind Mapping tools to demonstrate design thinking and design options; and, using Food Choice to create food labels.

Specific information

Unit 4 – Food issues, challenges and futures

Outcome 1

*Explain a range of food system issues, respond to a selected debate with analysis of problems and proposals for future solutions, apply questions of sustainability and ethics to the selected food issue and develop and create a food repertoire that reflects personal food values and goals.*

This outcome is assessed using three types of tasks, collectively contributing 60 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.

Task type options

The first task type requires that students complete a range of practical activities related to sustainable and/or ethical food choices. A greater range of practical activities had been selected by school and reflective of the variety listed in the [Advice for teachers](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/foodstudies/developprogram.aspx), including cooking, demonstrations, responding to design briefs, dietary analysis, food sampling and taste-testing, sensory analysis, product analysis and scientific experiments to support a range of learning opportunities for students. A clear distinction was made by most schools between practical activities in a teaching and learning program and practical activities identified as part of assessment.

Students are also required to complete two records of practical activities related to sustainable and/or ethical food choices. On occasions, it was difficult to determine the two records of practical activities that related to the key knowledge and key skills from the questionnaire. Schools are encouraged to clarify the practical records as part of planning and designing assessment at the outset of the unit and should include more than sensory analysis records. A detailed list of examples of the types of records that could be included around the practical activities and task types can be found in the [Advice for teachers](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/foodstudies/examples.aspx).

The third task type requires students to complete a written report that includes a food-related topic, explanation of concerns related to environment, ethics and/or equity, analysis of work being done to solve problems and support solutions, and a conclusion outlining major findings and suggested set of practical guidelines for food consumers. The written report was scaffolded for students with a clear research methodology framework evident. Minimal use of digital technologies was evident in the completion of the task. Most aspects of the task were completed with teacher supervision, but where research is conducted by students outside class time then the VCAA Authentication record form for School-based assessment is used to validate student work. Good examples of using the Authentication record form were evident but a more consistent approach across schools is required.

Outcome 2

*Explain a variety of food information contexts, analyse the formation of food beliefs, evaluate a selected food trend, fad or diet and create food products that meet the Australian Dietary Guidelines.*

This outcome is assessed using three types of tasks, collectively contributing 40 marks out of 100 marks allocated to the School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.

Task type options

The first task type requires that students complete a range of practical activities related to healthy food choices based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. Suggested forms of practical activities in the [Advice for teachers](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/foodstudies/examples.aspx) include cooking, demonstrations, responding to design briefs, dietary analysis, food sampling and taste-testing, sensory analysis, product analysis and scientific experiments. A greater range in the task type was selected for the outcome, with cooking, product analysis, dietary analysis and sensory analysis. The practical activities that were selected were mostly healthy and linked to the key knowledge and key skills. Practical activities include recipes that reflect a healthy, balanced diet in alignment with the key principles in the study design.

Students are required to complete two records of practical activities related to healthy food choices based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. The most common options were records related to the evaluation of cooking sessions and the recording of results and analysis required in product analysis. Records that ‘mapped’ food according to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating demonstrated a simplistic understanding of this food model and did not address the key knowledge and key skills. Most practical records were completed under teacher supervision but, if practical records are completed out-of-class time and the same task is being completed by all students, then the VCAA Authentication record form for School-based assessment is used.

The third task type requires any one of the following forms:

* a short written report: media analysis, research inquiry, structured questions, case study analysis
* an annotated visual report
* an oral presentation or a practical demonstration
* a video or podcast.

A short written report, in the form of a case study analysis, was the most common option selected in the audit questionnaire. A fad diet was the focus of the case study analysis where students responded to a series of questions. Questionnaire responses did not always address how food labelling, nutritional content claims and health claims would be addressed in the assessment according to the key knowledge and key skills and should be included as part of the assessment design. In the questionnaire, schools were also asked how students would assess the validity of information as part of the survey. The source of the information, reliability of the information, the author and source, value of the information and objectivity and coverage are some of the considerations. Minimal use of digital technologies was evident in the completion of the task.

Timing and assessment

Timelines that were set by schools provided adequate opportunity for students to develop knowledge of the outcomes and had allowed sufficient time for results to be entered on VASS. The time allocation given to students completing assessment tasks was more appropriate in comparison to Unit 3 where too much time allocated to assessment. Most schools ensured that students are provided with the same conditions when assessment tasks are implemented, unless school-based Special Provision was made available to individual students. Clarity was sought in some instances where schools had outlined conditions for assessment rather than assessment types listed in the study design in questionnaire responses. Use of digital technologies were integrated into assessment in some instances but is still limited in the first year of the reaccredited study design. There was minimal demonstration of students using digital technologies to create and most examples were of students using digital tools to research.

Commercial marking guides were commonly used by schools to assess tasks because they included reference to mark allocation and performance descriptors from the Advice to teachers. The performance descriptors in the [Advice for teachers](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/foodstudies/perfdescriptors.aspx) were also commonly referenced by schools when designing and correcting assessment tasks to give students the opportunity to perform at the highest level. Where it became evident that schools were not utilising VCAA’s performance descriptors in the development of marking guides, further evidence was requested to ensure that the key knowledge and key skills were accounted for.

Schools had carefully considered the provision of feedback to students after the completion of assessment tasks in a timely manner. Assessment tasks can be returned to students once all students have completed the tasks and the feedback process is complete. The same assessment tasks may not be reused in following years without modification. Schools that had formed partnerships had procedures in place for cross-marking to ensure consistent application of VCAA principles.

Schools were asked to provide information where there was insufficient evidence for the authentication of student work. VCAA requirements and clarification about school policy were consulted in responses. The importance of monitoring student work and maintaining documentation, such as the VCAA authentication record form for School-based assessment, are important considerations as part of the assessment program.

There are a range of useful resources for teachers and schools to reflect on their students’ results and assessment. Statistical moderation reports, examination reports, and the Unit 3 coursework report are being used more frequently by teachers to inform assessment practices.