VCE Texts and Traditions 2017–2022

School-based assessment report

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) Texts and Traditions 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.

Unit 3 – Texts and the early tradition

GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the Unit 3 School-based Assessed Audit questionnaire for VCE Texts and Traditions revealed that most schools met VCAA requirements. Further evidence was usually requested from schools as a result of the following concerns: tasks described in ways which seemed to indicate the previous study design was being used; a lack of explanatory detail in questionnaire responses or a tendency to summarise outcome information from the study design; apparent misinterpretations of the study design, for example, assessing all passages for special study in Unit 3; and, assessment process issues such as not providing appropriate information to students about the task.

Teachers are advised to review the *VCE Texts and Traditions 2017–2022 Study Design* carefully to ensure that the tasks designed are compliant with the outcome statements for each area of study and the relevant key knowledge and key skills.

Responses to the audit questionnaire which met requirements tended to be able to indicate an understanding of assessment principles, including what is involved in designing tasks that allow students to demonstrate the highest level of performance for the study.

Assessment Planning and Administration

It is evident from the School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire that, for the most part, students are suitably informed of school and VCAA policies and procedures and that the timeline of assessment is well planned, with each area of study allocated an adequate period for learning, practising and reviewing.

The audit of further evidence revealed that School-assessed Coursework tasks were almost exclusively completed under test conditions. This may mean that assessed work is more readily authenticated but may not ensure that students are given the opportunity to perform at the highest level. Schools are encouraged to deliver assessment in a range of ways to support students and to enable clear differentiation of student achievement.

Teachers should inform students not just of the format and structure of the task, but also how it will be assessed, for example providing performance descriptors. This will allow students to understand what knowledge and skills they are expected to demonstrate in the tasks. Teachers should ensure coherence between the performance descriptors and the assessment task to ensure that the descriptors are not broader or narrower than the task itself.

Specific information

Unit 3 coursework

Outcome 1

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and explain sociocultural and historical contexts that influenced the early development of the religious tradition.*

The students’ performance in Outcome 1 can be assessed using one or more of the following: extended responses, report, short-answer questions, textual commentary. Most schools used short answer questions.

This outcome contributes 30 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

In addition to the general comments introduced above, most schools were able to accurately assess features of the reaccredited study design such as historical context. One area for improvement is assessing the skill of identifying historical context and identifying conditions and institutions as required in the key skills.

Outcome 2

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss major themes of the set text, and analyse the literary structure and other aspects related to the writing of the set text.*

Student performance in Outcome 2 can be assessed using one or more of the following: extended responses, report, short-answer questions, textual commentary.

This outcome contributes 30 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

This area of study requires students to understand the set text in terms of major themes and literary form, structure and techniques. This understanding was assessed through a variety of available task types. Many tasks included opportunities for higher order thinking such as discussion of the intent of the author in the use of literary techniques.

Most schools assessed tasks using the performance descriptors available in the *Advice for Teachers*.

Outcome 3

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of some of the passages for special study, and discuss the nature of exegetical method.*

Student performance for Outcome 3 is assessed using one or more exegetical tasks.

All schools involved in the School-based Assessment Audit used an exegetical task, however, some schools assessed students on their understanding of all the passages for special study rather than just ‘some’ as the outcome statement stipulates. Students gradually develop capacity for all passages as they go on to study Unit 4.

The differences between the key knowledge and skills of Unit 3 Outcome 3 and Unit 4 Outcome 1 should be noted, in particular where cognitive demand increases. Many schools reproduce the exegesis task instructions provided in the examination in their assessment tasks. In such cases, it is important that students are being assessed on their performance level reflective of their learning in Unit 3 Outcome 3. It may be helpful to issue the criteria and performance descriptors or marking scheme to students prior to the task.

Unit 4

GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework audit questionnaire for VCE Texts and Traditions revealed that most schools met VCAA requirements. Further evidence was usually requested from schools as a result of the following concerns: tasks described in ways which seemed to indicate the previous study design was being used; a lack of explanatory detail in questionnaire responses or a tendency to summarise outcome information from the study design; apparent misinterpretations of the study design; and, assessment process issues such as not providing appropriate information to students about the task, in particular performance descriptors or other assessment advice.

Teachers are advised to review the 2017-2022 *VCE Texts and Traditions Study Design* carefully to ensure that the tasks designed are compliant with the outcome statements for each area of study and the relevant key knowledge and key skills. While assessment tasks must reflect the study design, it is important to avoid merely repeating a key knowledge point as this ultimately results in predictable tasks.

Responses to the audit questionnaire which met requirements tended to be able to indicate an understanding of assessment principles, including what is involved in designing tasks that allow students to demonstrate the highest level of performance for the study.

Assessment Planning and Administration

It is evident from the School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire that, for the most part, students are suitably informed of school and VCAA policies and procedures and that the timeline of assessment is well planned, with each area of study allocated an adequate period for learning, practising and reviewing.

The audit of further evidence revealed that School-assessed Coursework tasks were almost exclusively completed under test conditions. This may mean that assessed work is more readily authenticated but may not ensure that students are given the opportunity to perform at the highest level. Schools are encouraged to deliver assessment in a range of ways to support students and to enable clear differentiation of student achievement.

Teachers should inform students not just of the format and structure of the task, but also how it will be assessed, for example providing performance descriptors. This will allow students to understand what knowledge and skills they are expected to demonstrate in the tasks. Teachers should ensure coherence between the performance descriptors and the assessment task to ensure that the descriptors are not broader or narrower than the task itself.

In addition the tasks themselves should be clearly set out with unambiguous written instructions and written conditions, such as the length of time allowed for the task.

In some cases it was evident that students had prior access to specific material that would appear on the task. This raises authentication issues. Better practice is to provide students with the performance descriptors or other assessment schemes instead.

Specific information

Unit 4 coursework

Outcome 1

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of all the passages for special study.*

The students’ performance in Outcome 1 can be assessed using one or more exegetical tasks.

This outcome contributes 60 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.

Most schools used the suggested performance descriptors in the *Advice for Teachers* for their assessment tasks.

Most schools indicated in the audit questionnaire that one exegetical task was assessed, which may not ensure that students are given the opportunity to perform at the highest level. Rather than repeatedly modeling the examination structure for the exegetical task, clear differentiation of student achievement may be better achieved by providing shorter passage extracts or setting more than one exegetical task.

Outcome 2

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss a significant religious idea, belief or theme in the set text, and analyse and evaluate how related passages from the set text have been interpreted with the tradition at a later stage in light of the particular idea, belief or theme.*

Student performance in Outcome 2 can be assessed using one or more of the following: essay, extended responses, report, short answer questions.

This outcome contributes 40 marks out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4.

Most schools used the suggested performance descriptors in the *Advice for Teachers* for their assessment tasks.

Most schools reflected the key knowledge and skills of the reaccredited study design, although many copied key knowledge or skill wording exactly, which may result in predictable tasks, raising authentication issues in the future.