Guidance for schools: completing VCE units without calculation of a study score

This guidance aims to assist school leaders, counsellors, and teachers with the responsibility for guiding students in the decision to complete VCE units without calculation of a study score.

Completing the VCE without requisite study scores to receive an Australian Tertiary Entrance Rank (ATAR) is often referred to as ‘Unscored VCE’. This is not an official Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) term.

Completing the VCE in this way is available for individual students because the VCE provides the flexibility under certain circumstances to satisfactorily complete units without being assessed for levels of achievement in all or any graded assessments (2 graded assessment scores are required to achieve a study score).

Deciding to complete VCE units without calculation of a study score should only occur in response to individual student needs. Students, parents or carers, and school staff should work in partnership through a supportive and informed decision-making process. Students need to understand the implications of completing VCE units without calculation of a study score, which may include not being eligible for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and not having access to some post-school pathways.

Students should provide informed written consent as part of a school’s process. An example [Student Consent Form](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/VCEWithoutStudyScore.aspx#SupportMaterials) which schools can adopt or adapt is available on the [VCAA website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/HomePage.aspx).

**When to consider completing VCE units without calculation of a study score**

The VCAA guidelines for completing VCE units without calculation of a study score are in the [2024 VCE Administrative Handbook.](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-handbook/Pages/index.aspx)

The VCE provides the option for individual students to satisfactorily complete a VCE unit without being assessed for levels of achievement in some or all school-based graded assessments.

This option may be appropriate for some individual students based on their personal circumstances, which may include:

* illness and absence
* mental health and wellbeing issues
* clear and well supported post-school aspirations that do not require an ATAR, for example an offer of an apprenticeship
* other specific personal circumstances.

Students, parents or carers, and school staff should work in partnership to decide if a student will undertake this option. This decision should be made with informed written consent from the student and a parent or legal guardian.

This decision can be made at any point during the study of Units 3 and 4 and should be considered following other options to support the student to complete the VCE, such as accessing [Special Provision](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/special-provision/Pages/Index.aspx) including deferral of studies, if appropriate.

**Satisfactory completion of VCE units**

All VCE students are required to demonstrate their achievement of the outcomes in the study design for satisfactory completion of a VCE unit. Students who completeVCE units without a study score are still required:

1. to be assessed for satisfactory completion and
2. to participate in school-based assessment for levels of achievement, even if a score is not provided to the VCAA. However, the conditions under which it is completed may be varied

Detailed requirements for school-based assessment are also included in the [2024 VCE Administrative Handbook](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-handbook/Pages/index.aspx).

Teachers base their decision about satisfactory completion of units through on-balance judgement of the student’s achievement of the outcomes. This decision is based on evidence gained through the student’s overall performance on assessment of a range of set work (learning activities) and assessment tasks (including school-based assessments) related to these outcomes.

Students should be provided with multiple opportunities across the learning program to develop and demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills required to achieve the outcomes of the unit. Judgements regarding satisfactory completion must not be made based on a single school-based assessment (SAC or SAT).

The decision to award an ‘S’ for satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from assessing levels of achievement for study score calculation. VCE unit results (S or N) contribute to satisfactory completion of the certificate.

**Addressing student suitability**

The VCAA has observed that schools demonstrate best practice when they adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to determine student suitability. The following steps can support schools when addressing an individual student’s suitability for completing VCE units without calculation of a study score:

* **Step 1:** Use the checklist to support the decision-making process.
* **Step 2:** Obtain informed written consent from student and parent or legal guardian.
* **Step 3:** Provide ongoing student support through follow-up discussions and review of support needs.

Checklist

* Consult with school staff, including the student’s teachers and any educational support staff, regarding the student’s progress and achievement.
* Provide and explain your school’s process for completing VCE units without calculation of a study score to the student and their parent or carer.
* Provide the student and their parent or carer with the [Student and Parent Carer Fact Sheet](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/VCEWithoutStudyScore.aspx#SupportMaterials) and an example [Student Consent Form](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/VCEWithoutStudyScore.aspx#SupportMaterials) – these can be found on the VCAA website.
* Discuss options for [Special Provision](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/special-provision/Pages/Index.aspx) including options to defer studies.
* Discuss the wellbeing and education support available to the student within the school.
* Put in place any support the student may need based on their individual circumstances. For example, learning support or wellbeing support.
* Map the individual student’s options for completing the VCE, including other combinations of VCE, VCE Vocational Major (VM) and Vocational Education and Training (VET).
* Ensure that the student’s program of studies and course selection align with their post-school goals and aspirations.
* If a student is motivated to complete the VCE without requisite study scores to receive an ATAR on the basis that they have received an early entry offer from a university or an apprenticeship or traineeship offer, explain how this decision may impact their learning opportunities and post-school pathways.
* Explain what a student must achieve to demonstrate satisfactory completion of the outcomes in their units for each study.
* Explain what a student must complete to receive their VCE, what they must achieve to receive study scores, and how they can become eligible to receive an ATAR.
* Explain the requirements of the General Achievement Test (GAT).
* Organise follow up meetings.