VCAA Statistical Report

Special Provision in VCE External Assessment

2010 and 2015 – 2019

Authorised and published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority  
Level 7, 2 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

ISBN: 978-1-925264-06-7

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Introduction

This report provides statistical information on Special Provision related to VCE external assessments for 2010 and from 2015 to 2019. This includes information on applications for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) and Derived Examination Score (DES).

The statistics for SEA 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).

The statistical information presented in this report is based on snapshots taken from the VCAA Assessment Processing System (APS). Figures extracted from snapshots provide more comparable statistical information over time. The 2019 ﬁgures are based on a snapshot as at 3 January 2020.

Executive Summary

Overview of Special Provision related to VCE external assessments

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

Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) student applications and approvals (see page 4)

* The overall number of students who applied for SEA has been increasing. In 2019, 5,875 students applied for SEA, an increase of 125.4% from 2,607 in 2010. Between 2018 and 2019, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 7.1%.
* The overall number of students with approved SEA has been steadily increasing. In 2019, there were 5,642 students with approved SEA, an increase of 133.3% from 2,418 in 2010. Between 2018 and 2019 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 7.4%.
* Overall a high proportion (96.0%) of the applications submitted by students have provisions approved. In 2019, 96.0% of applications were approved.

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

* The most common category of approved SEA in 2019 is Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment.
* Of the approved SEA, 36.6% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 27.6% by Health Impairment.

Derived Examination Score (DES) applications and approvals   
(see page 14)

* From 2010 to 2017, the proportion of applications approved for a DES has steadily increased from 74.1% to 82.1%. In 2018, however, the proportion of applications approved decreased by 4.0 percentage points to 77.1% compared to 2017.
* In 2019, there were 2,349 (82.1%) DES approvals.

Breakdown of Special Provision categories for DES applications   
(see page 17)

The most common categories[[2]](#footnote-2) of applications for a DES are acute illness/circumstances and death, which combined accounted for 76.4% of all applications in 2019.

1 Overview of Special Provision related to VCE external assessments

This section provides background information on Special Provision related specifically to VCE external assessments.

1.1 Background

The VCAA Special Provision Policy aims to provide students in defined circumstances with the opportunity to participate in and complete their secondary level studies.

The underlying principle of the VCAA Special Provision Policy is to ensure that the most appropriate, fair and reasonable arrangements and options are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities if their learning and assessment programs are affected by illness, impairment or personal circumstances.

Special Provision should provide equivalent, alternative arrangements for students but not confer an advantage to any student over other students.

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

* Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)
* Derived Examination Score (DES).

The VCAA is responsible for determining eligibility and for granting approval for both SEA and DES application processes.

This report provides statistical information on the SEA and DES application processes.

2 Overview of the Special Examination Arrangements process

This section provides background information on the Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) application process.

2.1 Background

SEA may be approved to meet the needs of students who have disabilities, illnesses or other circumstances that would affect their ability to access a VCE external assessment.

The VCAA recognises that some students with a disability, as defined in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, or illness, may require SEA to enable them to access the examination/test questions and communicate their responses in a timed VCE external assessment.

In designing and approving SEA, the VCAA is mindful of the need to balance the competing demands of providing students with the opportunity to perform at their optimum with the need to preserve the academic integrity of the assessment process.

The VCAA considers each application for SEA on the basis of the independent medical and/or educational assessments, any history of school-based Special Provision and recommendations provided with the application, and the VCAA’s own assessment.

The fact that a student has a disability and/or illness does not automatically entitle them to SEA.

The prime consideration is the impact of that disability and/or illness on the student’s capacity to undertake their VCE external assessments and, if necessary, what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable the student to complete their VCE external assessments on the same basis as students who do not have a disability and/or illness.

SEA are available for VCE external assessments and the General Achievement Test (GAT), although only a small number of applications are received for the GAT.

2.2 Eligibility for SEA

Students are eligible for SEA if it can be demonstrated that their capacity to access a VCE external assessment is impaired due to a:

* Mental Health condition (e.g, anxiety disorders, depression)
* Health Impairment (e.g. Diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome)
* Physical Disability
* Speciﬁc Learning Disorder
* Language Disorder
* Deaf and Hard of Hearing
* Vision Impairment
* Motor Coordination Disorder.

2.3 Types of SEA

SEA may take the form of:

* extra working time (extra reading and/or writing time) not exceeding 10 minutes per hour and to be used in addition to the ‘scheduled writing time’ of the VCE external assessment. In specific or exceptional circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘extra working time’ in excess of 10 minutes per hour
* rest breaks not exceeding 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’ (the scheduled writing time plus any ‘extra working time’ approved for the VCE external assessment). In exceptional circumstances, the VCAA may approve ‘unlimited rest breaks’ to facilitate management of a significant medical or physical condition. Students may decide how to manage their allocation, and decide when and how long each break will be, with the supervisor noting the start and end times on the Special Examination Arrangements Rest Break Log Sheet. The rest break allocation displayed on the Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS) Special Examination Arrangements Advice Slip should not be exceeded. Students must be offered the full allocation of writing time in addition to the time taken for rest breaks
* alternative format examination papers such as enlarged print, electronic text and Braille. (Students with vision impairment may be eligible to apply for an exemption from the GAT because Braille and some other alternative format papers are not available for that VCE external assessment.)
* permission to use technological aids such as a computer or Microlink assistive technology for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing
* a reader and/or a scribe
* a clarifier, if the student has hearing impairment or severe language disorder
* an alternative examination venue, such as a separate room, a home or a hospital.

3 Special Examination Arrangements statistics

This section provides information on the number of students who applied for SEA and the number that had provisions approved, as well as a breakdown on categories for SEA. 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.

3.1 Number of students with applications and approvals

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

In 2019, 5,875 students applied for SEA, an increase of 125.4% from 2,607 in 2010. Between 2018 and 2019, the percentage of students who applied for SEA increased by 7.1%.

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:

* 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 numbers 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 2019, there were 5,642 students with approved SEA, an increase of 133.3% from 2,418 in 2010. Between 2018 and 2019 the percentage of students with approved SEA increased by 7.4%.

From 2010 to 2019, 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 above 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 all required evidence is provided.

Table 1: Number of students with SEA applications and approvals by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with applications | | | | | | Number of students with approvals | | | | | | Percentage of students approved | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Adult | 60 | 75 | 74 | 71 | 56 | 50 | 59 | 75 | 73 | 71 | 56 | 49 | 98.3 | 100.0 | 98.6 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 98.0 |
| Catholic | 592 | 1,046 | 1,094 | 1,209 | 1,396 | 1,499 | 560 | 1,032 | 1,062 | 1,168 | 1,357 | 1,452 | 94.6 | 98.7 | 97.1 | 96.6 | 97.2 | 96.9 |
| Government | 1,040 | 1,640 | 1,927 | 2,085 | 2,154 | 2,347 | 982 | 1,593 | 1,851 | 2,030 | 2,070 | 2,277 | 94.4 | 97.1 | 96.1 | 97.4 | 96.1 | 97.0 |
| Independent | 915 | 1,324 | 1,543 | 1,676 | 1,878 | 1,979 | 817 | 1,257 | 1,452 | 1,589 | 1,772 | 1,864 | 89.3 | 94.9 | 94.1 | 94.8 | 94.4 | 94.2 |
| Other Providers | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | N/A | N/A | 100.0 | 100.0 | N/A | N/A |
| **Total** | **2,607** | **4,085** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** | **2,418** | **3,957** | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | **92.8** | **96.9** | **95.7** | **96.4** | **95.8** | **96.0** |

Figure 1: Number of students with approved SEA by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

Note: Adult and Other Providers not included.

3.2 Percentage of students with approvals

A high proportion of the applications submitted by students had provisions approved (see Table 1). The percentage of approvals had been relatively stable from 2015 to 2019.

In 2019, the overall proportion of applications with provisions approved was 96.0%, an increase of 3.3 percentage points from 2010. The proportion of approvals is similar in the Catholic and government sectors and slightly lower in the independent sector. Although the adult sector has a high proportion of approvals, the number of students applying is much smaller than the other sectors.

Figure 2: Percentage of students with approved SEA by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

Note: Other Providers not included.

3.3 Breakdown of Special Provision categories for SEA applications

The most common categories with approved SEA in 2019 were Mental Health Condition followed by Health Impairment (see Table 2). Of the approved SEA, 36.6% were accounted for by Mental Health Condition and 27.6% by Health Impairment.

Up until 2018, SEA applications submitted on the basis of a Motor Coordination Disorder were included under the category of Specific Learning Disorder. From 2019, statistics on Motor Coordination Disorder conditions are reported as a separate category. As a result, the number of students in 2019 with an approved SEA for Specific Learning Disorder is lower when compared to previous years.

Similarly up 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. As a result, the number of student after 2018 with an approved SEA for Health Impairment are signiﬁcantly lower when compared to previous years.

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

Table 2: Number of students with approved SEA by category and percentage distribution across categories, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with approvals | | | | | | Percentage of students with approvals | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Emergency Application | 777 | 688 | 757 | 799 | 896 | 903 | 32.1 | 17.4 | 17.1 | 16.4 | 17.1 | 16.0 |
| Health Impairment | 1,211 | 2,591 | 2,915 | 3,172 | 1,532 | 1,560 | 50.1 | 65.5 | 65.7 | 65.3 | 29.2 | 27.6 |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 41 | 52 | 46 | 67 | 63 | 87 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.5 |
| Language Disorder | 18 | 12 | 23 | 26 | 50 | 51 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| Mental Health Condition | - | - | - | - | 1,778 | 2,063 | - | - | - | - | 33.8 | 36.6 |
| Motor Coordination Disorder | - | - | - | - | - | 148 | - | - | - | - | - | 2.6 |
| Physical Disability | 66 | 83 | 55 | 55 | 63 | 77 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| Specific Learning Disorder | 251 | 457 | 574 | 667 | 786 | 668 | 10.4 | 11.5 | 12.9 | 13.7 | 15.0 | 11.8 |
| Vision Impairment | 54 | 74 | 69 | 73 | 87 | 85 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| **Total** | **2,418** | **3,957** | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 3 presents the number of students with a SEA application, the number of students with a SEA approval and the percentage of students with an approval within each SEA category for 2010 and 2015 to 2019. Overall, 96.0% students with SEA applications were approved in 2019. The category with the highest proportion of students approved in 2019 was Physical Disability (100%) followed by Emergency Application (99.9%) and Mental Health Condition (99.0%). The category with the lowest proportion of students approved in 2019 was Specific Learning Disorder (79.1%) followed by Language Disorder (83.6%).

Figure 3 presents the proportion of students approved within each category. There has been an overall increase in the proportion of students approved over the last 10 years. In 2019, the overall proportion of students approved was 96.0%, an increase of 3.2 percentage points from 2010. The proportion of students approved has remained fairly stable over all categories except for Language Disorder where there has been a 25.5 percentage point increase in the number of students with an approved application, followed by Specific Learning Disorder where there has been an 18.4 percent point increase and Deaf and Hard of Hearing where there has been a 9.8 percentage point increase.

Table 3: Number of students with SEA applications, approvals and percentage distribution of students approved by category, 2010 and 2015 –2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with applications | | | | | | Number of students with approvals | | | | | | Percentage of students approved | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Emergency Application | 778 | 688 | 757 | 799 | 897 | 904 | 777 | 688 | 757 | 799 | 896 | 903 | 99.9 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 99.9 | 99.9 |
| Health Impairment | 1,217 | 2,595 | 2,931 | 3,192 | 1,542 | 1,578 | 1,211 | 2,591 | 2,915 | 3,172 | 1,532 | 1,560 | 99.5 | 99.8 | 99.5 | 99.4 | 99.4 | 98.9 |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 46 | 53 | 47 | 70 | 66 | 88 | 41 | 52 | 46 | 67 | 63 | 87 | 89.1 | 98.1 | 97.9 | 95.7 | 95.5 | 98.9 |
| Language Disorder | 31 | 20 | 31 | 27 | 61 | 61 | 18 | 12 | 23 | 26 | 50 | 51 | 58.1 | 60.0 | 74.2 | 96.3 | 82.0 | 83.6 |
| Mental Health Condition | - | - | - | - | 1,786 | 2,084 | - | - | - | - | 1,778 | 2,063 | - | - | - | - | 99.6 | 99.0 |
| Motor Coordination Disorder | - | - | - | - | - | 152 | - | - | - | - | - | 148 | - | - | - | - | - | 97.4 |
| Physical Disability | 67 | 83 | 55 | 55 | 64 | 77 | 66 | 83 | 55 | 55 | 63 | 77 | 98.5 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 98.4 | 100.0 |
| Specific Learning Disorder | 414 | 572 | 746 | 825 | 981 | 845 | 251 | 457 | 574 | 667 | 786 | 668 | 60.6 | 79.9 | 76.9 | 80.8 | 80.1 | 79.1 |
| Vision Impairment | 54 | 74 | 72 | 74 | 87 | 86 | 54 | 74 | 69 | 73 | 87 | 85 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 95.8 | 98.6 | 100.0 | 98.8 |
| **Total** | **2,607** | **4,085** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** | **2,418** | **3,957** | **4,439** | **4,859** | **5,255** | **5,642** | **92.8** | **96.9** | **95.7** | **96.4** | **95.8** | **96.0** |

Figure 3: Percentage of students with approved SEA applications by category, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

Note: Mental Health Condition and Motor Coordination Disorder not included.

3.4 Breakdown of Special Provision Applications by Category and Sector

The largest growth in the number of student applications from 2010 to 2019 has been in the Specific Learning Disorder category with applications from the independent sector accounting for most of the increase followed by the government sector (see Table 4).

Mental Health conditions category, although only reported as a separate category from 2018, is expected to represent the largest growth category in the coming years.

Table 4: Number of student applications by Special Provision category and school sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | SECTOR | 2010 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|  | **Adult** | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
|  | **Catholic** | 209 | 216 | 214 | 235 | 238 | 275 |
| **Emergency Application** | **Government** | 301 | 257 | 298 | 298 | 346 | 354 |
|  | **Independent** | 261 | 213 | 241 | 264 | 308 | 271 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 778 | 688 | 757 | 799 | 897 | 904 |
|  | **Adult** | 46 | 64 | 61 | 57 | 18 | 14 |
|  | **Catholic** | 277 | 693 | 710 | 778 | 455 | 441 |
| **Health Impairment** | **Government** | 505 | 1,048 | 1,258 | 1,409 | 602 | 662 |
|  | **Independent** | 389 | 790 | 902 | 947 | 467 | 461 |
|  | **Other Providers** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | 1,217 | 2,595 | 2,931 | 3,192 | 1,542 | 1,578 |
|  | **Adult** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 15 | 11 | 11 | 17 | 20 | 11 |
| **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** | **Government** | 24 | 27 | 27 | 32 | 29 | 54 |
|  | **Independent** | 7 | 14 | 9 | 20 | 17 | 23 |
|  | **Total** | 46 | 53 | 47 | 70 | 66 | 88 |
|  | **Catholic** | 17 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 21 | 22 |
| **Language Disorder** | **Government** | 5 | 4 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 18 |
|  | **Independent** | 9 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 26 | 21 |
|  | **Total** | 31 | 20 | 31 | 27 | 61 | 61 |
|  | **Adult** | - | - | - | - | 27 | 25 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | - | - | - | 431 | 522 |
| **Mental Health Condition** | **Government** | - | - | - | - | 759 | 901 |
|  | **Independent** | - | - | - | - | 569 | 636 |
|  | **Total** | - | - | - | - | 1,786 | 2,084 |
|  | **Adult** | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
|  | **Catholic** | - | - | - | - | - | 45 |
| **Motor Coordination Disorder** | **Government** | - | - | - | - | - | 43 |
|  | **Independent** | - | - | - | - | - | 61 |
|  | **Total** | - | - | - | - | - | 152 |
|  | **Adult** | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
|  | **Catholic** | 8 | 20 | 14 | 14 | 22 | 23 |
| **Physical Disability** | **Government** | 43 | 37 | 26 | 23 | 26 | 26 |
|  | **Independent** | 13 | 25 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 27 |
|  | **Total** | 67 | 83 | 55 | 55 | 64 | 77 |
|  | **Adult** | 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
|  | **Catholic** | 59 | 83 | 121 | 145 | 181 | 141 |
| **Specific Learning Disorder** | **Government** | 134 | 228 | 268 | 273 | 339 | 248 |
|  | **Independent** | 218 | 254 | 349 | 398 | 455 | 453 |
|  | **Total** | 414 | 572 | 746 | 825 | 981 | 845 |
|  | **Adult** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Catholic** | 7 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 28 | 19 |
| **Vision Impairment** | **Government** | 28 | 39 | 39 | 37 | 39 | 41 |
|  | **Independent** | 18 | 21 | 21 | 23 | 20 | 26 |
|  | **Total** | 54 | 74 | 72 | 74 | 87 | 86 |
| **Grand Total** |  | **2,607** | **4,085** | **4,639** | **5,042** | **5,484** | **5,875** |

4 Overview of the Derived Examination Score (DES) application process

This section provides background information on the Derived Examination Score (DES) application process.

4.1 Background

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.

The purpose of a DES is to ensure that a student’s final result on a VCE 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. The DES is designed for students who have completed the course leading to the VCE external assessment but perform below expectations or cannot attend due to adverse circumstances.

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

4.2 Eligibility for a DES

Students are only eligible for a DES for a VCE external assessment if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. They have completed the course of study leading to the VCE external assessment, and have a result for at least one other graded assessment in the same study.
2. 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 or affected their performance during the VCE external assessment.
3. They provide independent professional written evidence that demonstrates the illness, injury, personal trauma or serious intervening event has affected their performance in or has prevented them from attending the external assessment.

A ‘personal trauma’ may include, but is not limited to, the death or serious illness of 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.

4.3 DES versus achieved VCE external assessment score

For each approved application for a specific VCE 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 scores
  + other examination scores if applicable
  + indicative grades provided by the school
* record the DES as the final score if the highest possible DES is greater than the achieved VCE external assessment score
* use this final score to determine the grade for the VCE external assessment
* use this final score to calculate the study score.

Therefore, for approved applications the student will receive the score from either the DES or VCE external assessment, whichever is more favourable.

5 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.

5.1 Number of examinations where a DES was requested and number of approvals

The number of examinations where a DES was requested has been decreasing yearly from 2010 to 2019 (see Table 5) except in 2017 where it increased. In 2019, there was a 1.1% decrease on the 2018 ﬁgure.

Similarly, the number of applications approved for a DES has been decreasing yearly from 2010 to 2019 except in 2017 where it increased.

5.2 Percentage of approvals

From 2010 to 2017, the proportion of applications approved for a DES has steadily increased from 74.1% to 82.1%. In 2018, however, the proportion of applications approved decreased by 4.0 percentage points to 77.1% compared to 2017.

In 2019, there were 2,349 (82.1%) DES approvals.

Table 5: Number of examinations where a DES was requested, number of approvals and Percentage of DES approvals by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of examinations where a DES was requested | | | | | | Number of examinations where DES request was approved | | | | | | Percentage of DES approval | | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Adult | 66 | 38 | 19 | 32 | 40 | 44 | 49 | 29 | 8 | 19 | 26 | 31 | 74.2 | 76.3 | 42.1 | 59.4 | 65.0 | 70.5 |
| Catholic | 1,166 | 933 | 839 | 875 | 742 | 888 | 893 | 727 | 725 | 749 | 583 | 750 | 76.6 | 77.9 | 86.4 | 85.6 | 78.6 | 84.5 |
| Government | 2,284 | 1,616 | 1,472 | 1,469 | 1,239 | 1,084 | 1,677 | 1,237 | 1,159 | 1,165 | 971 | 875 | 73.4 | 76.5 | 78.7 | 79.3 | 78.4 | 80.7 |
| Independent | 1,339 | 811 | 884 | 990 | 863 | 838 | 977 | 643 | 706 | 796 | 643 | 686 | 73.0 | 79.3 | 79.9 | 80.4 | 74.5 | 81.9 |
| Other Providers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **4,856** | **3,399** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | **3,597** | **2,637** | **2,599** | **2,730** | **2,231** | **2,349** | **74.1** | **77.6** | **80.8** | **81.1** | **77.1** | **82.1** |

Figure 4: Percentage of approvals by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

Note: Adult and Other Providers not included.

5.3 Number of students with DES applications and approvals

With the exception of 2017, the number of students with one or more DES applications has been steadily decreasing (see Table 6).

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

Table 2: Number of students with DES applications and approvals by sector, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students with DES application | | | | | | Number of students with approval | | | | | |
| **SECTOR** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Adult | 33 | 19 | 9 | 15 | 13 | 16 | 26 | 16 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 14 |
| Catholic | 449 | 327 | 306 | 363 | 281 | 325 | 393 | 288 | 285 | 320 | 241 | 297 |
| Government | 879 | 612 | 574 | 604 | 535 | 431 | 745 | 508 | 484 | 508 | 441 | 366 |
| Independent | 564 | 331 | 362 | 398 | 348 | 317 | 474 | 274 | 312 | 351 | 285 | 283 |
| Other Providers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| **Total** | **1,926** | **1,290** | **1,252** | **1,382** | **1,180** | **1,091** | **1,639** | **1,087** | **1,088** | **1,191** | **977** | **962** |

5.4 Breakdown of DES categories

The most common categories of applications for a DES are acute illness/circumstances and death, which combined, accounted for 76.4% of all applications in 2019 (see Table 8).

All applications specifically related to the illness/trauma of family/close friend that met the eligibility criteria were approved.

Table 3: 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 |
| Death**1** | Family member/close friend before or during exams |
| Family | Illness/trauma of family/close friend |
| Psychological | Newly diagnosed psychological illnesses |
| Other | Exam irregularities, ﬁre, ﬂood, etc |

1 Each case is assessed individually.

Table 4: Number and percentage of examinations where DES was requested by category, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Number of examinations where DES was requested | | | | | | Percentage of examinations where DES was requested | | | | | |
| **CATEGORY** |  | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Acute illness/circumstances |  | 2,607 | 1,733 | 1,654 | 1,763 | 1,554 | 1,771 | 53.7 | 51.0 | 51.4 | 52.3 | 53.7 | 61.9 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances |  | 667 | 748 | 531 | 607 | 555 | 217 | 13.7 | 22.0 | 16.5 | 18.0 | 19.2 | 7.6 |
| Death |  | 926 | 536 | 600 | 482 | 454 | 414 | 19.1 | 15.8 | 18.7 | 14.3 | 15.7 | 14.5 |
| Family |  | 516 | 270 | 324 | 444 | 255 | 267 | 10.6 | 7.9 | 10.1 | 13.2 | 8.8 | 9.3 |
| Psychological |  | 128 | 93 | 70 | 51 | 49 | 177 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 6.2 |
| Other |  | 12 | 19 | 36 | 21 | 25 | 15 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.5 |
| **Total** |  | **4,856** | **3,399** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 5: Number of examinations where DES was requested and number of examinations where DES was approved by category, 2010 and 2015 – 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 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** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2010** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Acute illness/circumstances | 2,607 | 1,733 | 1,654 | 1,763 | 1,554 | 1,771 | 1,915 | 1,372 | 1,301 | 1,412 | 1,206 | 1,462 | 73.5 | 79.2 | 78.7 | 80.1 | 77.6 | 82.6 |
| Chronic illness/circumstances | 667 | 748 | 531 | 607 | 555 | 217 | 361 | 476 | 378 | 399 | 342 | 165 | 54.1 | 63.6 | 71.2 | 65.7 | 61.6 | 76.0 |
| Death | 926 | 536 | 600 | 482 | 454 | 414 | 832 | 476 | 533 | 461 | 410 | 368 | 89.8 | 88.8 | 88.8 | 95.6 | 90.3 | 88.9 |
| Family | 516 | 270 | 324 | 444 | 255 | 267 | 400 | 234 | 303 | 400 | 226 | 235 | 77.5 | 86.7 | 93.5 | 90.1 | 88.6 | 88.0 |
| Psychological | 128 | 93 | 70 | 51 | 49 | 177 | 84 | 63 | 56 | 39 | 27 | 110 | 65.6 | 67.7 | 80.0 | 76.5 | 55.1 | 62.1 |
| Other | 12 | 19 | 36 | 21 | 25 | 15 | 5 | 16 | 28 | 19 | 20 | 9 | 41.7 | 84.2 | 77.8 | 90.5 | 80.0 | 60.0 |
| **Total** | **4,856** | **3,399** | **3,215** | **3,368** | **2,892** | **2,861** | **3,597** | **2,637** | **2,599** | **2,730** | **2,231** | **2,349** | **74.1** | **77.6** | **80.8** | **81.1** | **77.1** | **82.1** |

1. Irregularities are events which materially interrupt and adversely impact a student’s performance in an examination and which are outside the student’s control. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please refer to Section 5, Table 8 for further details on the specific DES categories (for example, acute illness/circumstances). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)