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

ISBN: 978-1-925867-87-9

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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2028

Implementation of this study commences in 2024.

Other sources of information

The [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The Bulletin also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the Bulletin. The *Bulletin* is available as an e-newsletter via [free subscription](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Subscribe.aspx) on the VCAA website.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/outdoor-and-environmentalstudies/advice-for-teachers/Pages/Index.aspx) (incorporating the content previously supplied in the *Advice for teachers*).

The current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term ‘school’ is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

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Introduction

Scope of study

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies develops students’ understandings of outdoor environments, and the ways in which humans interact with, relate to and have impacted outdoor environments over time. ‘Outdoor environments’ encompasses landscapes, both local and further afield, that range in health from protected wilderness to those heavily impacted by human practices.

The study enables students to make critically informed comments on outdoor environmental issues, including asking questions about environmental sustainability and human connections to Country, both past and present. Students are able to understand the importance of change to environmental health from human or natural influences.

In this study, both passive and active outdoor experiences provide essential means for students to develop experiential knowledge of outdoor environments. Such knowledge is then enhanced through the study of outdoor environments from perspectives of environmental history, ecology and the social studies of human relationships with nature. The study also examines the complex interplay between outdoor environments and humans historically through to the modern day, and into the future.

Outdoor experiences suited to this study are a range of guided activities in areas such as farms, mining/logging sites, interpretation centres, coastal areas, rivers, mountains, bushlands, forests, urban parks, cultural and historical sites, and state or national parks. Activities undertaken could include bushwalking, cross-country skiing, canoe touring, cycle touring, conservation and restoration activities, marine exploration, and participation in community projects. Outdoor experiences that use weapons or motorised devices to replace human effort are not suitable for this study. The duration of activities undertaken should include a range of multi-day/journey-based activities, half/whole-day activities and class-time activities on school campus grounds, or in the nearby local environment.

Rationale

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies provides students with the skills and knowledge to participate safely and sustainably in a range of outdoor experiences and environments. Through participation in outdoor experiences, students learn to respect and value these landscapes and their living cultural history.

Historically, Indigenous peoples modified outdoor environments on a small scale, but since colonisation Australian outdoor environments have been altered to meet commercial, conservation and recreation needs, as well as to feed an increasing population. Today, outdoor environments remain an important aspect of Australian identity and continue to be used by industry while also being places of adventure, recreation, scientific study, social action and enterprise. Outdoor environments also provide space for connectedness with nature and opportunities to reflect upon the past, live in the present and take action for sustainable futures.

By spending extended periods of time in outdoor environments to support experiential development of theoretical understandings, students learn to assess the health of, and evaluate the importance of, healthy outdoor environments. Students learn to recognise the impact of increasing pressures on these places through direct human use, while observing the indirect damage created by local, national and international practices. Students explore differing values and approaches of user groups; how these groups generate a range of impacts on outdoor environments; pressures and tensions between user groups; and issues concerning the preservation and sustainability of outdoor environments.

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies enables students to critically analyse different human relationships with outdoor environments and their subsequent effects, including socio-ecological issues at local and national levels. This provides students with the knowledge and skills to participate in, and contribute to, contemporary society by supporting and creating solutions for the future health of outdoor environments.

Through its cross-disciplinary approach to studying outdoor environments, the study informs a range of future pathways, including formal study and involvement in areas where knowledge of, and interaction with, outdoor environments is central, such as natural resource management, nature-based tourism, conservation advocacy, outdoor leading and guiding, environmental research and policy, education and agriculture.

Aims

This study enables students to:

* develop experiential relationships with, and knowledge of, outdoor environments through practical experiences varying in duration
* develop an understanding of the ecological, historical, cultural, economic and social factors that have affected and will continue to affect the health of a range of different outdoor environments
* develop practical skills, knowledge and behaviours that promote safe and sustainable interaction with varied outdoor environments, both local and afar
* identify, analyse and contribute to the strategies used to protect, conserve and manage outdoor environments in a sustainable manner
* develop an understanding of historical and contemporary Indigenous peoples’ relationships with outdoor environments via knowledge systems and traditional management techniques
* understand the role of environmental policy in maintaining the health of outdoor environments in Australia, including the influence of the public in shaping local, state and federal government legislation.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

* Unit 1: Connections with outdoor environments
* Unit 2: Discovering outdoor environments
* Unit 3: Relationships with outdoor environments
* Unit 4: Sustainable outdoor environments

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 and Unit 4 as a sequence. Units 1–4 are designed to the standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curricula.

A glossary of defining terms used across Units 1–4 in the *VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies Study Design* is included in the [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/outdoor-and-environmentalstudies/Pages/Index.aspx)*.*

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation, minor changes to the study will be announced in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx). The *Bulletin* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the *Bulletin*.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Outdoor and Environment Studies to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study. The implementation of effective safety management plans and processes should ensure that all activities are conducted safely. This includes ensuring that all rules and regulations for the conduct of outdoor activities are rigorously followed. Teachers should refer to the [Department of Education’s Safety Guidelines](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/outdoor-activities-and-working-outdoors/policy) for adventure activities.

Effective safety management also includes adequate levels of training of students and staff for the particular activity and outdoor setting, and the selection of a setting that is appropriate for the capabilities of the students and staff.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/outdoor-and-environmentalstudies/Pages/Index.aspx) provide specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Child Safe Standards

Schools and education and training providers are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards made under the Victorian *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. Registered schools are required to comply with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*. For further information, consult the websites of the [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx), the [Commission for Children and Young People](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/) and the [Department of Education](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx).

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher’s decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student’s result for each unit to the VCAA as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in VCE study designs.

The student’s level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SAC) as specified in the VCE study design, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student’s level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score, the student must achieve two or more graded assessments in the study and receive an S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale   
of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who completed the study. Teachers should refer to the current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score.

Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies are:

* Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 20 per cent
* Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 30 per cent
* end-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student’s own. Teachers need to refer to the current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for authentication rules and strategies.

Cross-study specifications

This section contains information on the key concepts and practical activities underpinning the study.

1. Key concepts

The following concepts underpin VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies. Teachers should ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop the concepts outlined below when framing questions and discussing, interpreting, analysing and evaluating issues related to the dynamic relationship between humans and outdoor environments.

Indigenous Australians’ knowledge, culture and history

Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) are the first peoples of Australia, and the oldest, continuous living cultures in human history. They have diverse cultures, social and Kinship structures, and unique, complex knowledge systems. VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies provides opportunities for students to develop understandings of the significant contributions of Indigenous Australians’ connection to Country, place and culture through their custodianship of the land.

In VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies, students consider historical and contemporary Indigenous peoples’ perspectives on the ways humans relate with outdoor environments. This includes knowledge systems of traditional and sustainable management techniques involving outdoor environments.

Teachers are encouraged to include Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and perspectives in the design and delivery of teaching and learning programs related to VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies. Many local Indigenous peoples’ communities have protocols that they have developed in relation to education. The Victorian Koorie community-preferred education model enables teachers to focus inclusively on supporting students to consider Victorian Koorie education matters, and systematically support students to learn about local, regional, state and national Indigenous peoples’ perspectives. VCE studies involve a focused extension of this model and include a broader application of national and international perspectives.

*Protocols for Koorie education in Victorian schools* and other resources relating to the inclusion of Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and perspectives may be accessed at [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc](https://www.vaeai.org.au/). website.

Outdoor environments

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies provides students with the skills and knowledge to respect and value outdoor environments while expanding their understanding of the different perspectives, interactions and impacts various groups of people have had regarding outdoor environments over time.

Outdoor environments are learning environments, enabling immersive learning experiences where students develop key knowledge authentically and tangibly. Through engagement with outdoor environments students undertake rich, place-based learning opportunities with experts.

A wide variety of outdoor environments could be studied, ranging from those that have experienced minimal human influence, through to those that have undergone significant human intervention. Students are expected to make specific reference to examples and information gathered from the outdoor environments they visit when applying theoretical concepts. Therefore, consideration should be given to how well the particular environment meets various aspects of the study design.

Environmental citizenship

In VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies students develop knowledge and skills that enable them to understand, analyse and contribute towards the health of outdoor environments, preparing them for future opportunities as stewards of outdoor environments. In relation to environmental citizenship, this study supports students in learning:

* to understand the importance of healthy outdoor environments
* to observe and measure the health of outdoor environments
* to assess interactions by humans that impact the health of outdoor environments over time
* Acts, conventions and management strategies for maintaining healthy outdoor environments
* the challenges faced by outdoor environments, both locally and globally.

The essential knowledge and experience gained by students during practical outdoor learning, coupled with rich observations and interactions with experts, helps to prepare them to take an active role in shaping the health of outdoor environments for future generations.

Sustainability

Sustainability is presented throughout this study as a complex, holistic concept with environmental, social and economic dimensions. Sustainability is understood as a response to the need to educate students on the effects of unsustainable human actions.

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies values the importance of education for sustainability. Embedded throughout the study design are case studies and the application of sustainability principles regarding managing for the health of outdoor environments. This study aims to develop future learners and leaders who have the knowledge, skills and capacities to address the root causes of unsustainable human actions.

The main focus of the study is the environmental dimension of sustainability, focusing on biodiversity and climate change, with investigation into protection, mitigation and rehabilitation strategies extending across outdoor environments. It extends to land custodianship that is considerate of the broader community and future generations.

The pillars of sustainability are taught in the study as explicit key knowledge, as well as being referenced throughout the study via a focus on people (relationships), profit (economic benefits coming from outdoor environments) and planet.

Sustainability as a cross-study specification culminates in VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies across both Units 3 and 4, with students undertaking an independent investigation of at least two different visited outdoor environments, focusing on changing relationships and sustainability.

1. Outdoor experiences

Experiential education is the foundation of VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies. Students are required to connect practical experiences with the theoretical content studied in each unit.

VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies has a strong focus on time spent in outdoor environments and developing human relationships with Country. The cross-study specifications and the associated key knowledge within each unit are intended to be learned ‘about’ and ‘through’ outdoor environments, and most importantly learned ‘in’ different Victorian outdoor environments, both local and afar.

Outdoor experiences allow the development of understandings of outdoor environments from various perspectives. This includes geological and human history over the last 60,000 years, changes to human interactions with the outdoor environment, protocols and management of outdoor environments and strategies to care for, and goals for sustainable use of, outdoor environments.

Outdoor experiences provide opportunities for students to develop the observational knowledge and theoretical application required to satisfactorily complete each outcome and collect primary data needed for School-assessed Coursework tasks.

Time in outdoor environments

In this study, both passive and active outdoor activities provide essential means for students to develop experiential knowledge of outdoor environments.

Teachers are encouraged to seek a range of outdoor environments and outdoor experiences, varying in duration from multi-day/journey-based activities to half/whole-day activities and class-time activities on school campus grounds or in the nearby local environment.

It is recommended that in completing each unit students spend between 25 and 50 hours participating in outdoor experiences (not inclusive of time spent travelling or sleeping).

Examples of types of outdoor environments and experiences

Adventure activity guidelines give teachers further advice on safely preparing, planning and running outdoor experiences. Teachers should refer to the [Department of Education's Safety Guidelines](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/outdoor-activities-and-working-outdoors/policy) for adventure activities available.

A sample list of possible outdoor environments and experiences is provided in the support material for teachers.

3. Key practical skills

Area of Study 1 and Area of Study 2

In designing teaching and learning programs for Area of Study 1 and Area of Study 2 and in assessing student learning for each Outcome, teachers should ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the required key skills in practical ways, through a range of outdoor experiences and in a variety of outdoor environments.

Area of Study 3

The purpose of Area of Study 3 is to provide students with a focused opportunity to apply key practical skills through outdoor experiences in a variety of outdoor environments (at least two).

Unit 1, Area of Study 3 and Unit 2, Area of Study 3 contain a specific set of key practical skills that complement the key knowledge and key skills within Unit 1 and Unit 2 respectively.

Unit 4, Area of Study 3 contains key practical skills that can be demonstrated through the application of key knowledge across both Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Evidence collection of outdoor experiences

Logbooks

Students undertaking this study must maintain a logbook of practical activities in each of Units 1–4 for recording, authentication and assessment purposes. All items in the logbook must be dated and clearly documented.

The logbook is maintained and cited as a source of primary data, as a requirement for satisfactory completion of each unit, rather than being used as a specific assessment task. Teachers must regularly sight and monitor the logbook, particularly for the investigative task in Units 1 and 2 Area of Study 3 and Unit 4 Area of Study 3.

Logbook criteria may include:

* location
* environment type
* flora and fauna
* outdoor activity(ies) undertaken
* sustainability measures
* observation of key knowledge relevant to the experience chosen by the teacher
* observation of key skills.

Entries in the logbook could be in written, visual (drawing, photo), audio (a self-recorded audio) or audio-visual (self-recorded video) format(s). School-assessed Coursework tasks requiring student reference to data, observations and reflections collected from outdoor environments visited should be designed in a way that allows students to refer to their logbook when applying their knowledge. Students are expected to make direct reference to the outdoor environments visited and studied via the entries in their logbook.

For authentication purposes, logbook entries should occur while completing outdoor experiences or within the classroom. A hard copy format of the logbook is to be used by students when completing School-assessed Coursework tasks.

Unit 1: Connections with outdoor environments

This unit examines some of the ways in which Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples understand and relate to nature through experiencing outdoor environments. The focus is on individuals and their personal responses to experiencing outdoor environments.

Students are provided with the opportunity to explore the many ways in which nature is understood and perceived. Students develop a clear understanding of the range of motivations for interacting with outdoor environments, the factors that affect an individual’s access to experiencing outdoor environments and how they connect with outdoor environments.

Through outdoor experiences, students develop practical skills and knowledge to help them act sustainably in outdoor environments. Students understand the links between practical experiences and theoretical investigations, gaining insight into a variety of responses to, and relationships with, nature.

Area of Study 1

Our place in outdoor environments

In this area of study students examine how humans connect with outdoor environments and why these connections are important. They consider a range of contemporary uses and meanings of the term ‘nature’ and examine a variety of outdoor environments. Students are introduced to Indigenous people’s perspectives on the ways humans connect with outdoor environments.

Students learn to participate safely in outdoor experiences and use their experiences and observations as the basis for reflection and analysis of key skills and knowledge from this area of study.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse motivations for experiencing outdoor environments and plan to safely participate in specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* Indigenous peoples’ and non-Indigenous peoples’ ways of knowing outdoor environments, including the meaning and use of terms such as Kinship, nature, Country, outdoor environments, private land, wilderness, managed parks, urban environments, built environments and outdoor experiences
* features of biomes, including alpine, coastal, inland waterways, grassland, heathland, forest, marine and arid
* the range of motivations for experiencing outdoor environments and responses to outdoor environments, such as fear and appreciation
* the variety of ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples experience and understand outdoor environments:
* through custodianship
* as recreation
* as a resource
* as spiritual connection
* as a study site

Key skills

* describe the meaning and use of terms including Kinship, nature, Country, outdoor environments, private land, wilderness, managed parks, urban environments, built environments and outdoor experiences
* describe the features of a range of biomes
* analyse motivations for experiencing outdoor environments and responses to experiencing outdoor environments
* compare the variety of ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples experience and understand outdoor environments
* safely participate in specific outdoor experiences

Area of Study 2

Exploring outdoor environments

Students understand how their personal responses are influenced by media portrayals of outdoor environments and perceptions of risk involved in outdoor experiences.

Practical outdoor experiences provide students with the opportunity to observe and experience various ways of encountering and understanding outdoor environments. Students consider factors that affect access to outdoor experiences and explain the effect of different technologies on outdoor experiences, examining how these factors and technologies influence the ways humans understand nature.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain factors that influence personal responses and access to outdoor experiences and interact sustainably with outdoor environments.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the influence of depictions of experiencing outdoor environments on personal responses, such as in the mainstream media, social media, music, art, writing and advertising
* factors that affect access to experiencing outdoor environments, including socioeconomic status, cultural background, age, gender and physical ability
* relevant technologies and their influences on outdoor experiences
* the variety of personal responses to risk when experiencing outdoor environments, including the interplay between competence, perceived risk and real risk

Key skills

* analyse the depictions of experiencing outdoor environments on personal responses
* explain factors that affect access to experiencing outdoor environments
* explain the influence of relevant technologies on experiencing outdoor environments
* compare a range of personal responses to risk when experiencing outdoor environments
* interact sustainably with outdoor environments

Area of Study 3

Safe and sustainable participation in outdoor experiences

This area of study focuses on planning and participating in outdoor experiences. Experiencing outdoor environments safely requires an understanding of how to plan and conduct sustainable outdoor experiences in chosen outdoor environments.

In this area of study students contribute to designing an outdoor experience(s) that enables them to appropriately demonstrate key knowledge and skills, as well as undertake the outdoor experience, and reflect on its success, suggesting changes for the future.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate strategies for safe and sustainable participation in outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will gather and analyse evidence that draws on key knowledge and applies the key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* safe and sustainable interactions with outdoor environments, involving minimum impact strategies for individuals, route planning, tent-site selection, fuel stove usage, navigation and packing a pack
* basic first aid skills, including blister management, small wounds, snake bites, severe bleed treatment, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and immobilisation techniques
* equipment required to safely explore outdoor environments
* risk management of outdoor experiences

Key skills

* plan for participation in a range of sustainable outdoor experiences
* demonstrate and apply basic first aid knowledge and skills
* evaluate strategies for safe and sustainable participation within outdoor environments
* explain the use of equipment designed to improve the safety of participants in outdoor experiences
* identify hazards, analyse risks and suggest controls for an outdoor experience in a chosen outdoor environment
* analyse relevant information collected during outdoor experiences

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments for Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit, students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set, these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the list below.

Outcomes 1 and 2

For each outcome,

* a case study
* an oral presentation which can include the use of multimedia and podcast
* data analysis
* a written response to an issue
* a visual presentation such as a graphic organiser, concept/mind map, annotated poster or presentation file.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Outcome 3

A practical demonstration of key skills, with reference to outdoor experiences in addition to ongoing logbook entries of outdoor practical experiences.

Unit 2: Discovering outdoor environments

This unit focuses on the different ways to understand outdoor environments and the impact of humans on outdoor environments.

In this unit students study the effects of natural changes and impacts of land management practices on the sustainability of outdoor environments by examining a number of case studies of specific outdoor environments, including areas where there is evidence of human intervention.

Students develop the practical skills required to minimise the impact of humans on outdoor environments. They comprehend a range of vocational perspectives that inform human use of outdoor environments. Through reflecting upon their experiences of outdoor environments, students make comparisons between outdoor environments, as well as develop theoretical knowledge about natural environments.

Area of Study 1

Understanding outdoor environments

This area of study introduces students to a range of understandings of outdoor environments, including those visited during practical outdoor experiences locally and afar. Students investigate different types of outdoor environments from several perspectives, and how these environments are managed. They investigate a range of vocational perspectives that inform human use of outdoor environments.

Students learn to participate safely in outdoor experiences and use their experiences and observations as the basis for reflection on, and analysis of, key knowledge from this area of study.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe a range of understandings of outdoor environments and the effect of natural changes with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* scientific understandings of a range of outdoor environments including:
* the interrelationships between biotic and abiotic components
* the effects of natural and human-induced changes on a range of outdoor environments, such as day to night, seasons, tides, flood, drought, fire, migration and climate change
* Indigenous peoples’ land management understandings and perspectives of an outdoor environment
* understandings of vocational perspectives of outdoor environments, including at least two of the following:
* natural resource management
* nature-based tourism
* outdoor leading and guiding
* environmental research and policy
* land management roles including Traditional Owner groups and National Indigenous Australians Agency programs
* education
* agriculture

Key skills

* compare abiotic and biotic interrelationships in an outdoor environment
* describe the effect of natural and human-induced changes and apply these to a range of environments
* explain Indigenous peoples’ perspectives and different forms of land management within an outdoor environment
* compare a range of vocational perspectives on outdoor environments

Area of Study 2

Observing impacts on outdoor environments

This area of study focuses on human activities undertaken in outdoor environments and their impacts on those environments. Although environmental impacts include both natural and human-induced changes on components of the environment, the focus in this area of study is on the observation of impacts of humans, both positive and negative. Students investigate and model individual and group responsibilities for activities in outdoor environments, including community-based environmental action to promote positive impacts on outdoor environments.

Practical outdoor experiences enable students to develop skills related to minimal impact travelling and living. Students use these experiences as the basis for reflection on, and analysis of, theoretical knowledge about the effects of natural changes and human-induced impacts on outdoor environments.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to evaluate the impacts of humans on outdoor environments and associated management strategies, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* impacts of conservation, economic and recreational activities on a range of outdoor environments
* the role of community-based environmental action to promote positive impacts of humans on outdoor environments
* direct and indirect impacts of technologies that support human interactions with outdoor environments, including:
* equipment manufacture
* transport
* snow making
* recreational vehicles
* the impact of urbanisation on outdoor environments
* identification and management of threatened species and/or ecological communities in an outdoor environment

Key skills

* evaluate a range of impacts on contrasting outdoor environments
* compare direct and indirect impacts of technologies on outdoor environments
* discuss and predict impacts of urbanisation on outdoor environments
* describe a local environmental policy that supports management of threatened species or an ecological community
* evaluate the effectiveness of management strategies on an outdoor environment

Area of Study 3

Independent participation in outdoor environments

In this area of study students will analyse one outdoor environment explored during practical experiences. They will further develop their understanding of the chosen outdoor environment and analyse how this environment is impacted upon by human user groups.

Students will plan for their outdoor experience and peer lead the experience with their peers. During the experience they will analyse the impacts of other users and themselves on the outdoor environment and investigate ways to reduce this and promote sustainable interactions.

As a result of this outdoor experience investigation, students will suggest changes to the management of users in their chosen outdoor environment and work to promote sustainable interactions into the future.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to participate in a range of outdoor experiences safely and sustainably in an independent manner.

To achieve this outcome the student will gather and analyse evidence that draws on key knowledge and applies the key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* how to conduct safe and sustainable peer-led outdoor activities, involving minimal impact strategies for groups, route planning, food and equipment planning, risk management planning and transport planning
* how to plan and adapt outdoor experiences due to weather, including weather patterns and extreme weather
* how to monitor observations of own and other groups’ impacts on the outdoor environment during an outdoor experience

Key skills

* plan and demonstrate safe and sustainable participation in outdoor environments
* describe the influence of weather and weather patterns on planning and conducting outdoor experiences
* analyse observations of impacts of groups on outdoor environments

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments for Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit, students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set, these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the list below.

Outcomes 1 and 2

For each outcome,

* a case study
* an oral presentation which can include the use of multimedia and podcast
* data analysis
* a written response to an issue
* a visual presentation such as a graphic organiser, concept/mind map, annotated poster or presentation file.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Outcome 3

A practical demonstration of key skills with reference to outdoor experiences in addition to ongoing logbook entries of outdoor practical experiences.

Unit 3: Relationships with outdoor environments

The focus of this unit is the ecological, historical and social contexts of relationships between humans and outdoor environments in Australia. Case studies of a range of impacts on outdoor environments are examined in the context of the changing nature of human relationships with outdoor environments in Australia over 60,000 years.

Students consider several factors that influence relationships with outdoor environments. They also examine the dynamic nature of relationships between humans and their environment.

Students are involved in multiple experiences in outdoor environments, including in areas where there is evidence of human interaction. Through these practical experiences, students make comparisons between, and reflect upon, outdoor environments, as well as develop theoretical knowledge and skills about specific outdoor environments.

Students undertake an independent investigation into the changing relationships with, and sustainability of, at least two different visited outdoor environments across both Units 3 and 4, which is assessed in Unit 4, Outcome 3.

Area of Study 1

Changing human relationships with outdoor environments

This area of study explores how humans have understood and interacted with Australian outdoor environments over time. Students examine the unique nature of Australian outdoor environments and investigate a range of human relationships with outdoor environments, from various Indigenous peoples’ cultural experiences, through to the influence of several major historical environmental events and issues following European colonisation.

Case studies are used to analyse the role of environmental movements in changing human relationships with outdoor environments at state and local level, and their influence on the development of government policies.

Students engage in practical outdoor experiences that enable them to investigate human relationships with specific outdoor environments.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the changing nature of relationships with outdoor environments between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians at a local and state level over time, and evaluate the impact of environmentalism on political parties and/or policies.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* Australian outdoor environments before humans arrived, including characteristics of biological isolation, geological stability and climatic variations
* relationships with outdoor environments expressed by specific Indigenous peoples’ communities before and after European colonisation
* relationships of non-Indigenous peoples with specific outdoor environments as influenced by and observed in local or visited outdoor environments during historical time periods:
* Early colonisation (1788–1859)
* Pre-Federation (1860–1900)
* Post-Federation (1901–1990)
* the beginnings of environmentalism and the resulting influence on political party policy, as observed in one of the following historical campaigns:
* Lake Pedder
* Franklin River
* Little Desert

Key skills

* explain characteristics of Australian outdoor environments before humans arrived
* analyse the changing relationships with Victorian outdoor environments expressed by specific Indigenous peoples’ communities before and after European colonisation
* analyse the changing relationships of non-Indigenous peoples with Victorian outdoor environments as observed during historical time periods
* describe the beginnings of environmentalism as observed in a historical campaign
* evaluate the influence of environmentalism on the development of a government policy or political party

Area of Study 2

Relationships with Australian environments in the past decade

In this area of study students examine conflicting values of human use and relationships with outdoor environments in the past decade. The dynamic nature of relationships between humans and outdoor environments are considered, as well as the social, cultural, economic and political factors that influence these relationships.

Students engage in practical outdoor experiences that enable them to collect information about, reflect on, and analyse specific relationships with outdoor environments in the last decade, including conflicts over such relationships.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse factors that influence relationships between humans and outdoor environments in the last decade, and evaluate methods and processes used to influence relationships and decisions about the use of outdoor environments.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* Indigenous peoples’ custodianship of outdoor environments including the formation of land and water councils and Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP)
* conservation, recreation and economic relationships with outdoor environments
* methods used by individuals and groups to influence decisions about two conflicts over the use of outdoor environments, and the processes followed by land managers to resolve said conflicts, including at least one from the following list:
* feral species in the Alpine National Park
* commercial logging in Victoria
* establishment of new mountain bike parks
* Southern Ocean Whale hunting
* Murray-Darling Basin water allocations
* an environmental issue in Australia and related policy from two federal political parties or representatives, including at least one of:
* Labor Party
* Liberal-National Coalition
* The Greens
* the influence of social debates on relationships with outdoor environments, including one of:
* climate change
* renewable energy
* water management

Key skills

* compare different human relationships with outdoor environments, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples’ relationships
* describe two conflicts and evaluate the methods used by conflicting parties to influence decisions in their favour, and the processes followed to resolve or potentially resolve said conflicts
* analyse differing environmental policies in Australia
* analyse the influence of social debates about environmental issues on relationships with outdoor environments

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/outdoor-and-environmentalstudies/Pages/Index.aspx) for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 20 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**  Analyse the changing nature of relationships with outdoor environments between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians at a local and state level over time, and evaluate the impact of environmentalism on political parties and/or policies. | **40** | For each outcome, at least one task is selected from:   * a case study analysing collected primary and/or collated secondary data relating to a selected outdoor environment * a data analysis analysing collected primary and/or collated secondary data relating to a selected outdoor environment * a media analysis relating to a selected outdoor environmental issue * a visual presentation such as a graphic organiser, concept/mind map, annotated poster that includes both text and still images collected through the outdoor experience logbook.   Each task type can only be selected once across Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. |
| **Outcome 2**  Analyse factors that influence relationships between humans and outdoor environments in the last decade, and evaluate methods and processes used to influence relationships and decisions about the use of outdoor environments. | **40** |
| **Total marks** | **80** |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination (see [page 30](#examination)), which will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Unit 4: Sustainable outdoor environments

In this unit students explore the sustainable use and management of outdoor environments. They observe and assess the health of outdoor environments and consider the importance of this health for the future of Australian outdoor environments and the Australian population.

Students examine the importance of the sustainability of human relationships with outdoor environments and the urgent need to balance human needs and the needs of outdoor environments. They investigate current acts and conventions as well as management strategies for achieving and maintaining healthy and sustainable Australian outdoor environments in contemporary Australian society.

Students engage in multiple related experiences in outdoor environments, conducting an ongoing investigation into the health of, and care for, these places. They learn and apply the practical skills and knowledge required to sustain healthy outdoor environments and evaluate the strategies and actions they employ. Through these practical experiences, students reflect upon outdoor environments and make comparisons between them by applying theoretical knowledge developed about outdoor environments.

As global citizens, students investigate how individuals and community members take action towards promoting sustainable and healthy outdoor environments and describe possible solutions to threats facing outdoor environments and their sustainability.

Students undertake an independent investigation into the changing relationships with, and sustainability of, at least two different visited outdoor environments across both Units 3 and 4, which is assessed in Unit 4, Outcome 3.

Area of Study 1

The importance of healthy outdoor environments

This area of study explores the contemporary state of outdoor environments in Australia and the importance of environments for individuals and society. Students examine the nature of sustainability and use observations to evaluate the health of outdoor environments. They investigate current and potential threats to a range of outdoor environments and the subsequent impacts, as well as proposing improved solutions for environmental sustainability.

Practical outdoor experiences enable students to further develop and apply their knowledge and skills.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to describe a range of environmental sustainability measures, analyse threats to outdoor environments and justify the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individuals and society, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the pillars of sustainability, the interdependence between these pillars and related critiques of sustainability
* observable characteristics to assess the health of outdoor environments, including:
* quality of water, air and soil
* species and ecosystem biodiversity
* the impact of threats on society and outdoor environments, including two of the following:
* land degradation
* introduced species
* urbanisation
* climate change
* flood
* fire
* the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individual physical and emotional wellbeing, and for society now and into the future
* local, national and international solutions and mitigation strategies to combat climate change across a range of environments

Key skills

* analyse understandings of the interdependence of the pillars of sustainability and related critiques of sustainability
* evaluate the health of outdoor environments and create possible solutions to improve environmental health
* analyse threats to society and outdoor environments
* justify the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individuals and society
* analyse possible solutions and mitigation strategies for combatting climate change

Area of Study 2

The future of outdoor environments

In this area of study students explore the sustainable use and management of outdoor environments. They examine a range of land management practices in different environments and investigate local and individual actions to sustain outdoor environments, now and into the future. Students examine the importance of developing a balance between human needs and the conservation of outdoor environments, and consider the skills needed to be environmentally responsible citizens. They investigate current Acts and conventions and propose improvements to these for greater conservation benefits.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able evaluate practices and strategies for sustaining outdoor environments, with reference to specific outdoor experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples’ land management strategies for achieving and maintaining healthy and sustainable outdoor environments
* Acts or conventions related to the management and sustainability of a specific outdoor environment, species or ecological community, including two of the following:
* *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019* (Vic)
* Ramsar Convention (international treaty, 1971)
* *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cmwth)*
* *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*
* *Planning Environment Act 1987* (Vic)
* community actions undertaken to sustain healthy outdoor environments, including two of the following:
* regenerative farming
* Trust for Nature
* Landcare
* community groups such as ‘Friends of …’
* individual actions undertaken to promote and sustain healthy outdoor environments, including two of the following:
* environmental activism
* environmental advocacy
* ethical and sustainable consumerism
* green home design

Key skills

* analyse management strategies for maintaining outdoor environments
* evaluate the effectiveness of specific Acts and conventions related to managing and sustaining outdoor environments
* propose changes to current Acts and conventions to further improve the health of a specific environment, species or ecological community
* evaluate the effectiveness of community actions undertaken to sustain outdoor environments
* compare a range of individual actions to sustain healthy outdoor environments

Area of Study 3

Investigating outdoor environments

To achieve this outcome students undertake an independent investigation, collecting and evaluating information gathered during at least two different visited outdoor environments across both Units 3 and 4. The selection of appropriate outdoor environments is contingent on local school settings, resources and capabilities.

The selected outdoor environments should draw on at least four selected key knowledge points across Units 3 and 4. Students are expected to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills as described in the process below.

The investigation requires students to generate primary data (such as observations, images, interviews, documents) from time spent in the selected outdoor environments, and combine this with the collation of any required secondary data. The collected data should draw together understandings of outdoor environments related to the human relationships with, and the health and sustainable use of, the selected outdoor environments, and allow for the evaluation of the selected outdoor environments. The student logbook is used to document the collection of evidence required to complete the investigation.

The investigation within the selected outdoor environments can occur at any time during Unit 3 or Unit 4, with the expectation that the assessment of the investigation would occur at any time during Unit 4.

The student investigation will be assessed as a written report in which students will use the evidence recorded in their logbook to produce a written report that demonstrates the application of the key skills and key knowledge to the selected outdoor environments. The logbook is used for authentication purposes when assessing the written report documenting the investigation.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to plan and conduct an independent investigation that evaluates selected outdoor environments.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* outdoor and environmental concepts related to human relationships with, and the health and sustainable use of, the selected outdoor environments
* the nature of primary and secondary data relevant to the investigation
* conventions of report communication, including appropriate structure (Introduction, Body and Conclusion), terminology and representations of the data

Key skills

* plan for and conduct an independent investigation in a range of outdoor environments
* collect relevant data in a range of outdoor environments, authenticated through use of a logbook
* evaluate and report data and information, including findings and implications

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/outdoor-and-environmentalstudies/Pages/Index.aspx) for this study, which includes advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 30 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**  Describe a range of environmental sustainability measures, analyse threats to outdoor environments and justify the importance of healthy outdoor environments for individuals and society, with reference to specific outdoor experiences. | **40** | For each outcome, at least one task is selected from:   * a case study or data analysis analysing generated primary and collated secondary data relating to a selected outdoor environment(s) * a media analysis relating to a selected outdoor environmental issue * structured questions, including a combination of short answer and one extended response question * an oral presentation that draws on practical experiences documented in the outdoor experience logbook.   Each task type can only be selected once across Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. |
| **Outcome 2**  Evaluate practices and strategies for sustaining outdoor environments, with reference to specific outdoor experiences. | **40** |
| **Outcome 3**  Plan and conduct an independent investigation that evaluates selected outdoor environments. | **40** | A written report that documents findings from an independent investigation on at least two visited outdoor environments. |
| **Total marks** | **120** |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

End-of-year examination

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

* Duration: 2 hours
* Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA
* VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the   
  [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx)
* The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format(s) and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.