



Swifts Creek

P-12 SCHOOL

Courage, Joy, Kindness

Later Years VCE and VCAL Policy Handbook

2019



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Our Purpose and Values

Everyone learning to be the best they can be, academically and as global citizens.

We will succeed together by showing courage, joy, and kindness.

Introduction

This handbook provides advice and information to students and parents about the administration and regulation of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) programs at Swifts Creek P-12 School. The information is based on the Victorian and Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) policies and regulations, as detailed in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* (published electronically annually and available online; the 2018 version can be downloaded at <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/schooladmin/handbook/2018/index.aspx>), other relevant VCAA publications, and Swifts Creek P-12 School Policies.

Changes to the VCAA information may occur during the year and are subsequently published in the *VCAA Bulletin* (published electronically monthly) and *Notices to Schools* (published electronically on an as needs basis). Any relevant information will be passed on to teachers, students, and parents as deemed appropriate.

All teachers and students should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this document and other relevant documents.

1. Timelines and dates

The teacher of each study will provide students in their class with a *Week-by-Week Planner* within the first two weeks of the commencement of each unit of study. This document will show a week-by-week course outline, including expected dates for all assessment tasks (subject to change).

2. Attendance

2.1. General

Students must complete a certain number of contact hours within each unit of study in order to be eligible to receive an overall Satisfactory (S) grade. This is specified within the Study Design for each subject, and is open to interpretation for the individual circumstances within each school.

A general interpretation of this criterion is that a student having unapproved absences in excess of 20% in any unit may be ineligible to receive a satisfactory grade for that unit. However it must be noted that while this interpretation may be applicable in some cases and is commonly applied in other schools, students at SCP12 will generally be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Approved absences

1. Only the Later Years Coordinator or Principal can approve an absence. Absences may be approved for reasons including school related activities, illness, family commitments, or at the Coordinator's or Principal's discretion.
2. For absences other than school related activities, the mechanism for having an absence approved is to present a written explanation to the relevant coordinator. This must contain:
 - an official Medical Certificate, especially for absences of any significant period of time (in general, greater than three days) or for an absence that results in a student missing an assessment task, in particular missing a SAC task for Unit 3/4 subjects.or, where a Medical Certificate is not available, a note or letter showing:
 - the student's name;
 - date(s) of the absence;
 - a brief explanation of the absence;
 - a parent's or guardian's signature.

In cases of short term absences (one day or less) a phone call may be an acceptable form of contact to create an approved absence.

3. Approval must be sought within two weeks of the last day of the absence. Beyond this time no absence may be approved without a Medical Certificate.
4. Class teachers will mark their class rolls accordingly and will use this information to determine whether the student has met the attendance requirements.
5. The coordinator is responsible for having school rolls amended to show approved absences.
6. Lateness to class may result in an absence being recorded and the student may be required to supply a note to their coordinator.

Reporting absences

- Parents/guardians/students should notify the coordinator of any expected or known absence at the earliest possible time.
- Teachers will maintain attendance class data for all students within each class.

- Teachers should notify the VCE Coordinator of any student who has unapproved absences of more than two sessions in a fortnight.
- Official attendance will be reported to parents once per semester, or as required.
- The coordinator, subject teachers, or administrative staff may contact parents/guardians at any time seeking clarification about recorded absences.

Appeals

If in any doubt, students are advised to check their approved attendance record with the coordinator and/or with all class teachers. Where a student has not met the attendance requirements for a particular subject, they may appeal in writing to their coordinator who will establish a review of their absences. Where appropriate, a meeting will be called with the teacher, the student, a parent or guardian, and the coordinator to discuss the circumstances. The coordinator and teacher will make the final decision on whether attendance requirements have been met.

2.2. Absence during Assessment Tasks/SACs

Students are advised and expected to attend all assessment tasks, including examinations, even if there are difficulties in doing so (e.g., due to illness, family problems, personal issues, etc). Under these circumstances students may be eligible for special provision and teachers will make a professional judgment with regard to this disadvantage, in consultation with the coordinator. For Units 3/4 School Assessed Coursework achieved marks will not be modifiable, but consideration for alternative methods of achieving S/N judgments may be made.

When the absence is known in advance, the student must complete a written *Application for Special Provision* to have the absence approved and alternative arrangements made.

For students missing for part or all of an assessment task with an approved absence teachers may be able to give students an extension of time (see section 6. *Extensions*), or conduct the assessment at a later date, on the provision that the student's work can be authenticated as their own (see section 3. *Authentication*). In order to assist with authentication teachers may elect to give the student an alternative assessment task to complete that has been judged to be at the same level of difficulty as that undertaken by other students in the class.

Where a teacher is unable to be satisfied that the student's work can be authenticated, a lower grade or a score of zero may be recorded for the task. The student may be required to undertake further assessment/s or provide further proof before achieving an S for the area of study or subject.

Students who miss an assessment task without an approved absence

Units 1 & 2:

- for an assessment task a score of zero will be given at the teacher's discretion. This will result in a UG grade on the student's end of semester report.
- if a Satisfactory result for an outcome relies on the missed assessment task, then a student may be allowed to undertake that task if appropriate, or be set an alternative task, in order to convert an N (Not Satisfactory) to an S (Satisfactory) result, however the original zero/UG score recorded may be retained.

Units 3 & 4; VCAA rules apply:

- a student will receive NA (Not Assessed) for any work submitted after the due date or for any unsubmitted school-based work. This may result in the failure to gain a study score in that subject.
- in some circumstances a grade of zero may be awarded if the piece of work is part of larger assessment task in which the student has scored marks for other components.

- a student will receive an N result for the associated outcome (or a J result in the case where they are not attending classes but have not formally withdrawn).
- alternative forms of determining a decision on satisfactory completion of the outcome may be made or a new assessment task may be set in order to enable a student to convert an N (Not Satisfactory) for an outcome to an S (Satisfactory) result. Note however that no change to the original score recorded for the assessment task can be made.

Note that if issues with absences or meeting assessment requirements occur before the official VCAA cut-off dates for withdrawing from a subject, students may be advised to officially withdraw from the subject rather than having unsatisfactory results recorded. This withdrawal may only proceed with the completion and submission of the Swifts Creek P-12 School *Application to Withdraw from a VCE or VET Subject and/or enrol in a new VCE or VET Subject* form (see section 12. *Changing selections*).

2.3. Absence during preparation for assessment tasks.

Students may be given an extension and/or an alternative task for completion of the assessment task under the Special Provision policy (see section 9. *Special Provision*). In this case, the mark obtained will be recorded on official school documents and will count towards final scores for Unit 3/4 subjects.

2.4. Program clashes

Occasionally, students will be faced with clashes in their VCE programs. These will mostly occur where a student is undertaking a VET program as well as a Unit 3/4 sequence(s). Where this occurs the student must make suitable alternative arrangements in advance, in consultation with the teachers concerned and the VCE Coordinator.

3. Authentication

Teachers must be satisfied that all work submitted for assessment is genuinely that student's own work. Teachers may require students to demonstrate their understanding of any aspect of the task at or around the time of submission. Any work that cannot be authenticated will be dealt with as a breach of the rules.

Some general guidelines for avoiding authentication issues include:

- teachers should ensure tasks are kept secure prior to administration.
- teachers should not 'recycle' tasks from previous years without modification.
- teachers should not utilise unmodified commercially purchased tasks, and teachers must be satisfied that these tasks meet the requirements of the study design.
- a significant amount of class time should be spent on each task so that the teacher can be familiar with each student's work and expected level of performance.
- students should document the specific stages of the development of work, particularly for extended tasks.
- teachers should file copies of student work at given stages in their development.
- teachers involved in a *Small School Partnership* with another school should aim to conduct assessment tasks as close as possible in the two (or more) schools to reduce the risk of students sharing tasks between the schools. These teachers will take part in cross-marking the students' work from the different schools and apply moderation processes.
- teachers supervising distance education students should aim to have students undertake assessment tasks as close as possible to the date specified by the administering institution. These tasks should be completed under supervision and following the guidelines given by the administering institution, as would be done for an internal task. The teacher should aim to clarify any uncertainties prior to conducting the task, and report any discrepancies occurring

during the task to the administering institution/teacher in charge. Note however that according to advice from the VCAA (2017), *it is the responsibility of the administering institution to implement authentication procedures and keep authentication records for these subjects.*

3.1. School-assessed Coursework (SACs)

The majority of SAC tasks are completed in class and within a limited timeframe. In most cases this will allow a teacher to satisfy authentication needs. Where an extension has been granted, teachers may deem it necessary to conduct an alternative task of the same level of difficulty in order to satisfy authentication needs. Where a teacher has doubts about the authenticity of work completed in class they may also require the student to complete an alternative task to verify their work.

Work completed outside of class

Some SAC tasks may require students to complete research or learning outside of class. Additionally students may be able to do preparation and bring resources into a SAC to help them complete the task. Teachers must be able to be satisfied that work conducted outside class is predominantly done by the student, and any preparatory research material brought into the SAC is the student's own work. Students should advise teachers of undue assistance or tutoring that they have received. Students may be required to sign a written declaration that any work is their own.

Where a SAC task or part of a SAC task is to be completed outside of class the teacher must monitor the student's progress by regularly sighting the work and record their progress using the *Authentication Record for School-based Assessment* form (available from the VCAA).

3.2. School-assessed Tasks (SATs)

Subjects such as Studio Arts, Food Studies, Media, and Computing require students to complete extended School-assessed Tasks (SATs). In order to facilitate authentication, teachers of these subjects must ensure there is a sufficient range of topics within the class to enable them to distinguish an individual student's work. They also must monitor the student's progress by regularly sighting the work and record their progress using the *Authentication Record for School-based Assessment* form (available from the VCAA). Observations of individual work done in class should be recorded, and each observation be signed by the teacher and student.

4. Satisfactory completion

For satisfactory completion of a unit students must satisfactorily complete all of the outcomes for that unit. The requirements for this are specified in the current Study Design for that subject, available on the VCAA website.

The teacher must inform students in writing of the work that is required to achieve an S for each outcome and the unit overall, and the conditions under which the work is to be done. In addition to the advice contained in this document, the information provided to students should outline:

- all the work they must complete to achieve an S for the unit;
- all the work they must complete for school-based assessment;
- class attendance requirements, where these vary from the guidelines in this document;
- how to submit work;
- timelines and deadlines for submitting work.

Some of this information should be provided on the *Week-by-Week Planner* and *Senior Support Documents* distributed to students at the start of each semester, or may be included in other *Course Outline* documents provided to students. Some outcome or assessment task specific information may

not be included in these documents, but may instead be provided to students in writing at the commencement of each task if the teacher deems this to be more helpful for students. Note that all advice provided to students and requirements for satisfactory completion must fully comply with the specifications of the current Study Design.

Satisfactory completion of an outcome means:

- the work meets the required standard;
- the work is submitted on time (see section 2. *Absences*);
- the work is clearly the student's own (see section 3. *Authentication*);
- there has been no substantive breach of rules (see section 18. *Breach of rules*).

Satisfactory completion is based on the teacher's judgment that the learning outcomes have been demonstrated. Thus the judgment of satisfactory completion is independent of performance levels on assessment tasks, SACs, and SATs. While these tasks may inform teachers' decision on satisfactory completion, they are not and should not be used as the only and final arbiter. Additionally, for this reason, students do not need to sit or pass examinations to pass a unit or to be awarded the VCE (see section 13. *Examinations*).

5. Assessment

Assessment tasks (Unit 1/2), School Assessed Coursework (SACs) (Unit 3/4), School Assessed Tasks (SATs) (some Unit 3/4), and VET Coursework Tasks (Unit 3/4 VET units) assess each student's overall level of achievement on the assessment tasks specified in the VCAA *Study Design* and *Advice for Teachers* for each subject (available online on the VCAA website). The Study Design indicates a task or a range of tasks to assess achievement of each of the unit's outcomes, which are further detailed in the *Advice for Teachers*. Assessment tasks, SACs, etc should be part of the regular teaching and learning program and are mainly completed in class time.

The teacher of each study will provide students in their class with a *Senior Support Document (SSD)* within the first two weeks of the commencement of each unit of study. This document will outline the Areas of Study, Outcomes, Assessment Tasks/SACs, and (for Units 3/4 subjects) the marks allocated for each task and overall weighting. Further details may be provided in a separate *Course Outline* document, and/or be given in writing prior to the commencement of any assessment task.

6. Extensions

Extensions of time may be given for completion or re-submission of work for learning outcomes in special circumstances. Students who have been given an extension for an assessment task may be required to undertake an alternative task. Note that students may *not* resubmit work for the purpose of obtaining a new mark for their coursework score/s.

The process for students to obtain an extension is:

- the student completes an *Application for Extension*.
- consultation will take place between the student, classroom teacher, and coordinator.
- a final decision will be made and the classroom teacher or coordinator will notify the student.

Any decision to grant an extension, and the length of the extension granted, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The final decision for this rests with the Later Years Coordinator and/or Principal.

Note that extensions cannot under any circumstances be granted beyond official VCAA data entry dates for the Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS). These dates are available from the VCAA and can also be found on the *Swifts Creek P-12 School Later Years Critical Dates* document.

Additionally no extensions are possible for externally assessed Units 3/4 examinations or the General Achievement Test (GAT). Students adversely affected by unforeseen circumstances during the final exam period may apply to the VCAA for one or more Derived Examination Scores (DES). Any decision about the granting of a DES is entirely at the discretion of the VCAA.

7. Redemption

Students may be able to convert an 'N' to an 'S' result for outcomes in order to avoid receiving an overall 'N' and thus failing a subject – this is known as redemption. Redemption may include re-submission of a task, completion of an alternative task, or presentation of other evidence as deemed appropriate by the class teacher. Note that it is *not* possible to change a mark for a coursework assessment task as part of the redemption process.

Arrangements for redemption are to be made between the students and their teacher, based upon the teacher's professional judgment. The coordinator and/or principal may contribute or make a final judgment on this process.

8. Appeals

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated and have not been able to have a situation resolved through other means have the right to appeal decisions about:

- non-satisfactory completion of outcomes or units;
- extensions;
- redemptions;
- authentication;
- Special Provision;
- other breaches of rules.

The process for appeals is as follows:

- the student notifies the coordinator of their intention to appeal;
- a formal interview will be undertaken with a school-based appeals panel;
- the composition of the panel will be the Principal or nominee, Later Years' Coordinator, and relevant teachers. Students may request a support person, e.g. parent/guardian/friend;
- the final decision of the panel rests with the Principal;
- all deliberations will be documented and outcomes will be conveyed to the student in writing.

9. Special Provision

In some circumstances students whose learning and assessment programs are affected by illness, impairment, or personal circumstances may be able to demonstrate their capabilities through Special Provision. The student's official Statement of Results or VCE/VCAL Certificates do not indicate that Special Provision has been made.

A student who believes he or she may be eligible for Special Provision should apply through the Later Years' Coordinator. This must be done as soon as possible to the commencement of studies or to an

event that may lead to Special Provision being applicable. Documentary evidence will be required to support the application, such as Medical Certificates, Counselling or Psychological Reports, etc.

There are four types of Special Provision for the VCE:

- curriculum delivery and student programs – for example, where a student may be given assistance by an aide, or be allowed to use technological assistance.
- school-based assessment – where the school may vary the assessment arrangements for an individual, such as rescheduling a task, allowing extra time for a task to be completed, or sitting an alternative task.
- special examination arrangements – for example, where a student may be given extra time to complete an exam, or permission to use technology.
- Derived Examination Scores (DES) – where a student's exam score is unlikely to be a fair or accurate indication of their learning or achievement throughout the year in the subject, the VCAA may calculate a score based on other assessment the student has done.

It is the student's responsibility to apply to the school for Special Provision consideration, and to supply the supporting documentation. Any student who believes they may be eligible should speak to the Later Years' Coordinator. Following advice at the school level, some categories require the school to apply to the VCAA for official approval of the Special Provision. For Derived Examination Scores, the school will supply forms to the student, who must then apply directly to the VCAA. In these cases the decision to approve or reject the Special Provision is entirely at the discretion of the VCAA.

10. Release of results and feedback

After work is submitted and marked teachers should provide feedback to students at the earliest possible time. Feedback should be timely in order to allow students to act on the feedback in future tasks and to allow the school to put in place any remedial measures required such as course advice or redemption. Note that teachers should generally avoid returning work until all students in the class have completed the assessment. Appropriate feedback includes:

- advice on particular problem areas;
- advice on where and how improvements can be made in the future;
- reporting S or N decisions and/or written comments on performance against each outcome;
- risk of unsatisfactory completion;
- a mark, grade, mark range, or ranking for a task, where appropriate.

Reporting of student results on assessment tasks, SACs or SATs is an important aspect of the feedback to students. In providing this feedback on individual coursework tasks teachers may give students a specific mark, a letter grade, indicate a range of marks within which their mark lies, or provide a ranking within the class or moderation group. Teachers may also choose to provide a combination of these. The marks or grades will be in line with the individual study program and will be determined by the subject teacher based on what they consider to be the most effective form of feedback.

When provided with marks or grades, students in Unit 3/4 subjects need to be aware that any mark given is indicative only and may change as a result of statistical moderation or other processes. Students must also be aware that their total coursework scores may also change for this reason, and any scores given for coursework may be significantly impacted by exam performance. Any feedback or advice given by teachers or coordinators on grades, final study scores, or ATARs is advisory only based on the teacher's best judgement and the evidence available at that point in time (see also section 16. Study scores and the ATAR).

11. Storage and release of student work

Students should retain *all* work completed during a course of study until the end of the year in which the work was undertaken. This work may be required at a later date for revision purposes, and may be called upon as part of the redemption or authentication processes.

Particularly in Unit 3/4 subjects, teachers may be required to keep original copies of assessment tasks for possible course audit or authentication purposes. With subjects involving SATs completed over extended periods of time, teachers will usually be required to maintain all assessment materials until the end of the assessment period. Such work may be requested as evidence by the VCAA. In these situations, in most cases students may request a copy of completed assessment tasks for their own records and revision purposes. Teachers can generally return any original work to students at the conclusion of the academic year, or early in the following year.

Any student work assessed as N, or about which any concerns are held such as doubts about authentication should be retained by the teacher, preferably in original form.

Teachers should also retain a representative sample of student work for each outcome to assist in the review of college courses and teaching practises.

12. Changing selections

Students undergo a rigorous subject selection process in the second half of each year in order to choose their subjects for the following academic year. This is done in consultation with the Later Years' Coordinator, Careers' Coordinator, VCAL Coordinator, subject teachers, and, where required, the Principal. This process aims to ensure all students choose the most suitable program for themselves, including a range of subjects that suit both their interests and needs, such as prerequisite subjects for tertiary entry.

Nonetheless, despite the selection process, students may determine for a variety of reasons that a subject is no longer suitable for them and elect to change subjects, withdraw from a subject, change programs, or withdraw from school. Students need to be aware when considering a change or withdrawal that they must meet certain unit and sequence requirements to successfully complete the VCE or VCAL. They therefore need to discuss any possible changes with the Later Years' Coordinator and Careers' Coordinator at the earliest possible time.

12.1. Process

A student who wishes to withdraw from a VCE or VET subject, or to enrol in a new subject, must complete a written application form, the *Application to Withdraw from a VCE or VET Subject and/or enrol in a new VCE or VET Subject*, available from the Later Years' Coordinator. This form needs to be signed by the student, parent, teachers, and coordinator. Where a student does not complete and return this form, the student will be regarded as still being enrolled in that subject until the end of the semester for the purposes of attendance, reporting, and official results recorded on VASS.

12.2. Time restrictions

Change of subject

Students wishing to change subjects should do so as early as possible in the semester. In general, students will not be permitted to change subjects more than four weeks after the commencement of each semester. While teachers aim to be flexible with student subject selection, for some subjects the

nature of the program or assessments makes late commencement in a subject very difficult, so earlier cut-offs may apply. The final decision in each case will be made by the Later Years Coordinator, in consultation with subject teachers.

Withdrawal from a subject

For VCE Unit 1/2 and VCAL, students may usually withdraw from a subject or unit at any time during the semester of study. A final cut-off date to withdraw students from subjects on VASS occurs in mid-November each year, and thus no withdrawals may occur after this date (date to be advised by the VCAA and available from the Later Years' Coordinator). Students who do not officially withdraw before the cut-off date will be assessed as though they have completed the unit (usually resulting in unsatisfactory completion) and results will appear on their official Statement of Results.

For VCE Unit 3/4 and scored VET, students may 'unofficially' withdraw at any time during the semester. However strict cut-off dates apply on VASS, and students cannot *officially* withdraw after these dates. For Unit 3 the cut-off date is usually early in Term 2, whilst for Unit 4 the cut-off date is usually at the start of Term 3 (dates to be advised by the VCAA and available from the Later Years' Coordinator). Students who do not officially withdraw before the cut-off dates will be assessed as though they have completed the unit (usually resulting in unsatisfactory completion) and results will appear on their official Statement of Results.

Change of program

Students who wish to change programs from VCE to VCAL may do so at any time, subject to advice from school personal about the suitability of such a change and the likelihood of being able to complete the requirements of the changed course of study. Students changing programs must be aware that the cut-off dates listed above still apply, so any change after the cut-off dates may result in the official recording of unsatisfactory completion of VCE units of study. Students will be advised about this at the time of any possible changes. Students wishing to change from VCAL to VCE can usually only do so at the start of each academic year.

Withdrawing from school

Students who wish to withdraw completely from VCE or VCAL may do so at any time subject to DEECD requirements, e.g., age limits. Withdrawal is effected by completing the official school leaving procedures, including returning *Student Exit Forms*, and advising the Later Years' Coordinator. Students withdrawing from school must be aware that the cut-off dates listed above still apply, so any withdrawal after the cut-off dates may result in the official recording of unsatisfactory completion of VCE or VCAL units of study. Students will be advised about this at the time of withdrawal. Where possible students who withdraw from school will be withdrawn from any incomplete units of study on VASS and will not receive a semester school report unless requested.

13. Examinations

13.1. Unit 1/2 (Year 11)

A Year 11 examination week will be set aside at the end of each semester to allow students to sit internal exams in Unit 1/2 subjects. An examination timetable will be created and published by the school, and distributed to students undertaking any Unit 1/2 subject at the earliest possible time.

Students will be expected to sit an exam in all their subjects which will test the subject content covered in that unit of the study. The subject teacher will set the type, duration, and value of each exam, and

will be responsible for marking and grading the exams. Performance levels will be included on mid-year and end-of-year school reports.

13.2. Unit 3/4 (Year 12)

All studies will hold an external end of year examination or examinations as prescribed and set by the VCAA. All students enrolled in a Unit 3/4 subject are also required to sit the General Achievement Test (GAT) in June. External examinations are set and marked by panels appointed by the VCAA and operate to a state-wide timetable.

At around the time of the GAT the school will operate internal school-assessed exams in all Unit 3/4 subjects. Internal exams will also be held early in Term 4 as practise for the external end of year exams.

Examination timetables will be published at the earliest available opportunity. The date of the GAT is available prior to the start of the school year, as are dates for the final examination period. The official end-of-year exam timetable is usually published by the VCAA in early September of each year.

Students who have applied for Special Provision will have arrangements organised as appropriate.

All examinations must take place on the day and time scheduled on the timetable. While the school may be able to make alternative arrangements for internal exams in special circumstances, VCAA regulations state that it is not possible to reschedule external examinations. Students are therefore expected to attend examinations even if there are difficulties in doing so (e.g., due to illness, personal problems, etc). Where a student feels they have been unduly impacted in their examination performance by circumstances beyond their control they may apply for a Derived Examination Score (see section 9. *Special Provision*).

Students who arrive late for an external examination will be permitted to sit the exam, and, where possible, will be granted the full time permitted for the exam with the exclusion of any missed reading time. If a student arrives for an exam more than half-an-hour after the official commencement of writing time they will be granted entry to the exam, but the school will be required to report the situation to the VCAA and the student must be aware that their exam and results may be rejected.

In the unlikely event that a student has a clash on their external examination timetable the student should be sure to notify the Later Years Coordinator as early as possible. This is to allow time for special arrangements to be made with the VCAA prior to the exam period to allow the student to sit both examinations.

Details of conditions, rules, approved materials, etc, will be provided by the VCAA via a student information booklet prior to each examination period.

13.3. Withdrawal from examinations

While the school strongly encourages all students to undertake all examinations in all subjects, there are circumstances where, for a variety of reasons, a student may choose not to sit an exam in a particular subject or subjects, or choose not to sit any exams or scored assessments.

The general expectation is that students will sit all exams in Unit 1/2 subjects as part of the normal assessment program. A similar expectation exists for internal exams for Unit 3/4 subjects. However, as completion of final external examinations is not a requirement for satisfactory course completion, a student may choose to withdraw from the final external examination period.

Students wishing to withdraw from exams or other scored assessments need to apply in writing using the *Application for withdrawal from examinations in Unit 3/4 VCE* available from the Later Years'

Coordinator. This form details possible consequences of not undertaking examinations, and must be signed by the student, parent/guardian, coordinators, and relevant teachers. Where a student does not complete this form and fully acknowledge the terms set out on this form, the school will regard that student as still intending to undertake all examinations.

Note that even after completing this form the student may still elect to undertake any examinations at any time up until the time of the exam. However, in this situation, the school will hold no responsibility for adequate preparation of the student for the examination/s.

13.4. Examinations and satisfactory completion

Whilst all students are advised to undertake examinations, it should be noted that undertaking and passing exams is not a requirement for satisfactory completion of any Units 1 – 4 VCE study. Passes and fails in VCE are determined solely on satisfactory completion of course requirements (see 4. *Satisfactory completion*). However, in some cases a teacher may use an examination as a final piece of evidence to determine whether the student has demonstrated a satisfactory level of performance in a part of the unit of study, or to help authenticate other work or results. Nonetheless, in general it is possible for students to complete an irregular VCE where they do not undertake examinations.

14. General Achievement Test (GAT)

All students enrolled in one or more sequences of Units 3/4 must sit the General Achievement Test (GAT) in June. Exemptions from the GAT may be given only in exceptional circumstances.

The GAT is used as a comparison for SAC and SAT results to help the VCAA moderate these scores with final examination results, and to help identify possible anomalous results obtained in any graded assessment. The GAT is also an important data set used by the VCAA in the event that a student has to apply for a Derived Examination Score. Students should therefore be aware of the significance of the GAT and the importance of performing to their best on this test.

A sentence on the student's Statement of Results will indicate whether the student has obtained results in the GAT. A statement of GAT results is mailed to each student with all the other VCE results at the end of the year, however the GAT is not used in decisions about tertiary selection.

15. Quality assurance

15.1. Internal procedures

Swifts Creek P-12 School is committed to delivering quality later years' courses that fully satisfy the requirements of the VCAA and prepare students for tertiary studies and/or the workforce. To this end internal reviews of procedures are undertaken periodically, observations of teacher practise take place on a regular basis, and audits of course materials such as planning documents take place on at least an annual basis.

Monitoring of courses undertaken through external providers such as distance education also occurs. The school aims to choose the most suitable providers for any such course of study and will provide suitable advice around selection of these programs, including advice around the perception of student suitability to undertake such programs. To further ensure quality of the overall later years' program, except in exceptional circumstance the school will not permit a student to undertake more than a combined total of two subjects through external provider/s in any calendar year.

Process for dealing with concerns about quality

Students who are concerned with the delivery of a program should in the first instance consult with the Later Years Coordinator, who will follow up any concerns raised. Where concerns are found to be substantiated the Later Years Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, will review programs and practises that are the cause of concern, and seek to remedy any concerns with the classroom teacher or external provider involved.

This review and remedy may be an ongoing process, however if the Later Years Coordinator and Principal deem the situation to be having, or to have the potential to have, a serious impact on the progress and likely success of the student or class, more immediate remedies such as teacher replacement or seeking alternative programs may result. Note that the school has limited power to effect any change from external providers, other than registering formal complaints. The final decision for any course of action rests with the Principal.

15.2. External procedures

As part of a state-wide system of senior secondary program provision, Swifts Creek P-12 School is additionally subject to state-wide quality assurance practises.

VCAA School-based Assessment Audit

Unit 3/4 VCE and VET studies are randomly subject to a VCAA School-based Assessment Audit twice annually. In practical terms, in general approximately two subjects undergo a VCAA audit each semester. The VCAA audit analyses assessment tasks and practises to ensure they meet the principles set out by the VCAA and the requirements specified in the Study Design. Where concerns are found, the VCAA will follow up with the teacher involved and/or the school to ensure the program and assessment practises are adjusted to meet VCAA requirements. Any subject judged by the VCAA to have any concerns will be subject to a further audit in the following audit cycle.

Note that the VCAA VCE audit process is to ensure practises state-wide adhere to the VCAA requirements. The audit is not aimed at individual student work, and where practises are found to be outside VCAA requirements the intention is that students will not in any way be penalised for this. Generally any results already generated will be allowed to stand, but where serious irregularities are found the VCAA may alter schools' assessments in order to ensure students are not disadvantaged.

VCAA Examination Audits

The VCAA periodically audits examination practises in all examination centres state-wide. This may involve a visit by VCAA officials to review the full practises, conditions, security, and paperwork related to examinations. Alternatively it may involve a visit during the examination period to observe the conduct and administration of an actual examination or GAT.

VCAL

The VCAL program is also subject to quality assurance. A VCAL quality assurance panel is set up in each region to establish regional benchmarks, provide advice to providers to ensure consistent judgments, and select and provide advice regarding exemplar models of VCAL tasks.

16. Study Scores and the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

16.1. Study scores

All students who undertake two or more graded assessments for any Unit 3/4 study will receive a study score for that subject on their Statement of Results from the VCAA. All study scores are a score out of 50, with the mean score for each subject being 30.

The VCAA is responsible for determining study scores based on teacher reported performance on school-based assessments and performance on externally assessed examinations. The scores determined by teachers for school-based assessments are moderated against examination performance in order to try to ensure that all students across the state are assessed at the same level of difficulty for each study (see also 10. *Release of results*).

16.2. Scaled study scores

Students will additionally receive a scaled study score for each subject. Scaling is also wholly the responsibility of the VCAA.

Scaling is a statistical moderation of study scores across subjects which tries to adjust study scores so that all subjects are assessed on the same scale. The purpose of scaling is that students are not penalised for choosing more difficult subjects, nor rewarded for choosing easier subjects. Thus scores for some subjects will scale up, some scores will scale down, and some scores will remain essentially unchanged. Whilst the direction and amount of scaling is relatively consistent from year to year, the actual figures used are dependent on state-wide results in the year that the study was undertaken.

16.3. ATARs

The ATAR will be calculated from the individual scaled study scores obtained in English and up to five other subjects. The ATAR is a rank of performance state-wide, segmented into 0.05 percentiles. The highest possible ATAR is 99.95, meaning that student performed better than 99.95% of the state, or in the top 0.05% of the state. Thus an ATAR of 70.25 for example would mean that student performed better than 70.25% of the state, i.e., in approximately the top 30% of the state overall. About 35 students state-wide achieve each ATAR.

ATARs are calculated by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) and are *only* used by VTAC and other national tertiary entrance organisations in determining eligibility for entry into tertiary courses.

Note that ATARs and study scores are not an indication of a pass or fail at VCE, which is determined solely on satisfactory completion of course requirements (see 4. *Satisfactory completion*).

17. Privacy

Swifts Creek P-12 School is committed to protecting students' privacy, and is subject to DEECD, VCAA, and VTAC regulations concerning handling of student data and privacy. Further information about privacy restrictions is publicly available from the DEECD, VCAA, and VTAC.

In general terms, students' personal data is stored securely and only shared internally on a need-to-know basis. Similarly, any information regarding applications or granting of Special Provision, etc, are as far as possible kept private. The school will not share any private student information publicly or with any external body, including parents or family, without the express consent of the student.

At the beginning of each year students complete the *Personal Details Form* from VASS, and have the option to consent to sharing certain data for a variety of purposes, such as release of high performing study scores to the media and public use of exemplary work. Students must separately consent in writing to sharing their ATAR results. Students may choose to change these consents at any time by consulting with the Later Years' Coordinator.

Students who do not give written consent to the sharing of their data as specified above will be regarded as *not* having given consent, and their data will be kept private. Note that this does not allow students to opt out of having basic data such as unit or subject completion, achievement levels on assessment tasks, and final subject study scores from being shared internally to help the school improve its practises. Students may however choose to have their ATAR kept private from everyone but the Principal and their representative.

Note also that aggregated school data that does not personally identify individual students may be used for any purpose, both internal and external, that the school requires or deems suitable.

18. Breach of rules

Students are subject to the rules covered in this document and rules detailed in the VCAA's *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*, Study Designs, and other documents. This includes rules for the conduct of external examinations. Students furthermore must follow rules set down by subject teachers concerning completion of assessment tasks, submission of work, timelines, authentication requirements, etc.

A student who breaches these rules may be subject to internal or external penalties. These may include, but are not limited to:

- the requirement to repeat an assessment task, outcome, or unit of study, or to complete alternative work;
- being graded as having unsatisfactory completion of an assessment task, outcome, or unit of study;
- exclusion from a unit of study or subject;
- confiscation of evidence, such as mobile phones in examinations;
- referral to the VCAA for further investigation;
- negation of all current or previously recorded results;
- expulsion from the school;
- referral to the police or other relevant authorities.

Further advice about legal representation and appeals regarding any alleged or actual breach of rules is available from the school or the VCAA.