

Dear Principals and Non-school Secondary Providers

I write today to inform you of two things. Firstly, the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training has asked me to take on the role of CEO of the VCAA for the foreseeable future, while Sharyn Donald is redeployed to undertake critical planning for school transitions for 2021. In the DET we are all being asked to adapt to meet the priorities of government in fighting the pandemic, and I am happy to use the knowledge I gained earlier in the year to assist you, your students and the VCAA.

Secondly, this advice today is in regard to on-site attendance for Essential Assessments for VCE Unit 3 & 4 and VCAL, during Stage 3 and Stage 4 Restrictions. I will be providing further information on the General Achievement Test and end of year Examinations as essential assessments as well as Consideration of Educational Disadvantage as soon as possible.

### **Essential Assessment for VCE and VCAL**

The VCAA can confirm that the Stay at Home Directions<sup>1</sup> (the Directions) across Victoria enable:

- students to leave their premises to undertake essential VCE and VCAL assessments onsite,
- a school or other educational facility or institution to operate for the purposes of providing those services to those students, where it is 'not reasonably practicable for those assessment to be undertaken' from the student's home, and
- education staff can leave their premises to undertake support for the delivery of mandatory VCE and VCAL assessments onsite.

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<sup>1</sup> Stay at Home Directions (Restricted Areas) (No 11) - cl 8(3)(a)(i), Stay at Home Directions (Non-Melbourne) (No 2) - cl 8(3)(a)(i), Restricted Activity Directions (Restricted Areas)(No 7) - cl 8(7)(a)(i), Restricted Activity Directions (Non-Melbourne) (No 2) -cl 15(2)(a)(i)

The definition for Essential Assessments listed in the Directions, or what was referred to as Mandatory Assessments in the Operations Guide for DET schools, includes:

- for Unit 3 and 4 VCE and VCAL students, essential assessments include all School-based Assessments (School-assessed Coursework and School-assessed Tasks) for all studies and VCAL strands. This includes these VCE and VCAL essential assessments delivered at a school or other educational facility or institution. For VET programs, undertaken as part of VCE or VCAL, including VCE VET, essential assessments include any units of competency that require access to facilities, resources, equipment or materials for practical assessments that are unable to be conducted via remote learning.

In conducting Essential Assessments onsite for Unit 3 and 4 VCE and VCAL, all providers must follow all COVID-19 related Health directions and Department of Education and Training guidelines as well as **Specific controls for Essential Assessments for VCE and VCAL** approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (defined in Attachment 1).

Schools and non-school secondary providers can delay essential assessments where it is not possible to access the school site during school closure. For those schools and non-school secondary providers that have made arrangements for assessments to be conducted remotely with assurance of validity, this can continue.

For operational advice on implementation of existing and additional health controls, including cleaning, venue density and arrival and departure arrangements please contact

- DET COVID-19 hotline: the Department's dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) phone advice line on 1800 338 663 can address or appropriately refer calls on all matters. This operates from 8am to 6pm seven days a week.

Advice in this letter will be published on the VCAA website and may be refined as required.

This advice is to ensure that schools and non-school secondary providers are able to continue to support all senior secondary students, inclusive of students undertaking both VCAL and VCE. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to the class of 2020.

Kind Regards



Stephen Gniel

Chief Executive Officer

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

17 August 2020

# Specific Additional Health Controls for Essential Assessments for VCE and VCAL

Activity	Existing controls	Additional controls
<p>Essential <u>assessments</u> (VCAL or VCE) includes all School-based Assessments (School-assessed Coursework and School-assessed Tasks) for all studies and VCAL strands</p> <p>(For VET programs, undertaken as part of VCE or VCAL, including VCE VET, essential assessments include any units of competency that require access to facilities, resources, equipment or materials for practical assessments that are unable to be conducted via remote learning)</p>	<p>Regular hand hygiene and supplies, including hand sanitiser.</p> <p>Daily environmental clean and twice daily cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces such as door handles.</p> <p>Face coverings</p> <p>Temperature checks</p> <p>Promote fresh air flow indoors where feasible.</p> <p>Mixing of staff and students avoided.</p> <p>Movement of students across schools and mixing of students from different schools should be minimised, wherever possible.</p> <p>Daily environmental clean of the venue</p>	<p>Physical distancing of 1.5m between all individuals on site is strongly advised.</p> <p>Students should be spread out across as many separate spaces as practical for the assessment venue. This will reduce the number of students who may be deemed close contacts should a staff member or student later test positive.</p> <p>The maximum number of individuals in any one indoor space should not exceed the venue density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres. For a classroom sized 10m by 10m, i.e. 100m<sup>2</sup>, this would mean a maximum of 25 occupants, inclusive of students and staff.</p> <p>Workstations, where required, should be spaced at a minimum of 1.5m between each chair.</p> <p>Arrival and departure processes – local arrangements to be in place to limit congregation of students in and around the assessment venue. Access on site should be limited to staff and students only, unless it is essential for a parent/carer to be on site.</p> <p>Strict register of attendance and seating plan (where appropriate).</p>

		<p>Cleaning and disinfection of any shared equipment such as desks between groups of students (where use of equipment in succession cannot be avoided).</p> <p><i>Specific controls for dance, music and drama assessments</i></p> <p>Face coverings can be removed for the purpose of a performance where appropriate – when face coverings are removed the distance between individuals should be maximised (minimum 1.5m) to the extent that still allows the performance to take place and both can hear or see each other. Face coverings should be used as much as practical for the purpose of rehearsals.</p> <p>Performances should be planned for in a way that aims to minimise prolonged face to face contact between performers.</p> <p>Musical instruments should not be shared. An exception would be large percussion instruments (e.g. marimba) that can be wiped with a disinfectant/detergent wipe between use.</p> <p>If there is considerable contact with floor during a dance/drama performance, cleaning and disinfection of the floor between performances where possible is recommended.</p> <p>Given the possibility of respiratory droplet spread with wind instruments etc., recommend cleaning and disinfection of the floor between relevant music performances, where possible.</p> <p>Music students should be actively reminded to undertake hand hygiene regularly, especially before and after cleaning their instrument.</p>
<p>Essential <u>assessment preparation</u> (VCE or VCAL, including VET programs, undertaken as part of VCE or</p>	<p>Regular hand hygiene and supplies, including hand sanitiser.</p>	<p>Physical distancing between all individuals on site of 1.5m is strongly advised, noting that this may not always be practical given performance requirements.</p>

<p>VCAL) where it is not reasonably practicable for those assessment to be undertaken from the student's home and where it is essential to access specialist equipment, e.g. sprung floors for dance, or for group performance. These cannot be 'teaching' times (as that is not permitted), but strictly rehearsal where only supervision is provided.</p>	<p>Daily environmental clean and twice daily cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces such as door handles.</p> <p>Face coverings</p> <p>Temperature checks</p> <p>Promote fresh air flow indoors where feasible.</p> <p>Mixing of staff and students avoided.</p> <p>Movement of students across schools and mixing of students from different schools should be minimised, wherever possible.</p>	<p>Students should be spread out across as many separate spaces as practical for the venue. This will reduce the number of students who may be deemed close contacts should a staff member or student later test positive.</p> <p>The maximum number of individuals in any one indoor space should not exceed the venue density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres. For a classroom sized 10m by 10m, i.e. 100m<sup>2</sup>, this would mean a maximum of 25 occupants, inclusive of students and staff.</p> <p>Arrival and departure processes – local arrangements to be in place to limit congregation of students in and around the assessment venue. Access on site should be limited to staff and students only, unless it is essential for a parent/carer to be on site.</p> <p>Avoiding shared use of equipment where possible. Where it cannot be avoided, equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.</p> <p><i>Specific controls for dance, music and drama rehearsals</i></p> <p>Face coverings can be removed for the purpose of a performance where appropriate – when face coverings are removed the distance between individuals should be maximised (minimum 1.5m) to the extent that still allows the performance to take place and both can hear or see each other. Face coverings should be used as much as practical for the purpose of rehearsals.</p> <p>Performances should be planned for in a way that aims to minimise prolonged face to face contact between performers.</p> <p>Musical instruments should not be shared. An exception would be large percussion instruments (e.g. marimba) that can be wiped with a disinfectant/detergent wipe between use.</p>
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