

# Awarding VCE – Determining S/N and Levels of Achievement

## Dandenong High School Policy & Procedures

*NOTE: This is a draft policy and procedure for 2020 and 2021. All feedback about the policy and procedures should be emailed to Senior Studies Improvement team [senior.studies@dandenong-hs.vic.edu.au](mailto:senior.studies@dandenong-hs.vic.edu.au)*

### Introduction

The following policy and procedure apply to senior students enrolled in VCE studies and teachers and other staff employed at Dandenong High School who teach and administer VCE studies. It covers information about student eligibility for the award of VCE, teachers' judgements about the satisfactory completion of VCE outcomes and levels of achievement.

### Eligibility for the Award of VCE

VCE is awarded on the basis of a minimum requirement of satisfactory completion of 16 units, which must include:

- three units from the English group, including a Unit 3–4 sequence
- at least three other sequences of Unit 3–4 studies, which can include further sequences from the English group.

For VCE Units 3 and 4, evidence of satisfactory achievement of outcomes is collected by the teacher through a range of tasks (school-based assessments ie: SATs/SACs) for the study. These outcomes are detailed in the VCAA study designs.

It is important to note the decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is separate from the assessment of levels of achievement, which contribute to students' Study Score and therefore the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). Teachers assess for levels of achievement in units 3 and 4 and provide a score, which together with examination results, combine to give a student Study Score which is used to determine ATAR and then tertiary education pathways.

*“The decision about satisfactory completion of outcomes is based on the teacher’s judgment of the student’s overall performance on a combination of set work and assessment tools related to the outcomes. Students should be provided with multiple opportunities to develop and demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills required for the outcomes for the unit.*”

*The assessment of levels of achievement is separate from the decision to award an S for satisfactory completion of a unit. VCE unit results (S or N) contribute to satisfactory completion of the certificate and not to study score calculation.”*

*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook 2020 Pg 72*

A student may be eligible for the award of the VCE if they have submitted a range of tasks that include school-based assessments for satisfactory completion of units but have not been assessed for levels of achievement in the study and have not completed examinations. At DHS this is referred to as an “Unscored VCE”.

## Determining Satisfactory / Not Satisfactory Students enrolled in any VCE Unit

Students should be informed at the beginning of each unit of study about what is required for satisfactory completion of the outcome.

For all units the satisfactory completion of a study is assessed via formative and summative school-based assessments according to the outcomes stipulated in the study design.

The teacher uses their judgement to assess satisfactory completion of an outcome. Satisfactory completion *is not based* on a student's achieved score in a school-based assessment eg: "Student X got over 50% therefore it must be satisfactory."

A satisfactory result for an outcome is based on a "*student's overall performance on a combination of set work and assessment tools related to the outcomes*" this includes the school-based assessment (SAC or SATs) for an outcome. Teachers must use formative assessments such as class work and homework to complete their overall judgement of a satisfactory completion. If teachers are unable to do this, a redemption for the outcome may need to be conducted.

Students should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate that they can satisfactorily achieve outcomes for any assessments.

However, there are some circumstances where students are unable to demonstrate the satisfactory knowledge and skills for the outcome and as such, will need to be given an N (Not satisfactory) for the Outcome.

Students who receive a N for the Outcome will receive a N for the unit. A N for the Outcome is different to the score indicating a level of achievement. Students may complete a SAC or SAT and receive a score, but still not achieve a Satisfactory level of achievement against the Outcome.

## Letter Grades for Unit 1 and 2

A letter grade can be provided to students for unit 1 and 2 school-based assessments (SACs) to indicate their level of achievement, although this letter grade is not reported externally to VASS.

Letter grades must be consistent with the DHS grading scale, which was adjusted in August 2019 to be consistent with VCAA's grading scale (appendix 1).

## Using Year 11 Examination to Inform Unit Results

Year 11 students must complete mid-year and end-of-year examinations. Mid-year and end-of-year examinations should not form the basis of a teacher's judgement of a student's ability to achieve satisfactory completion for the outcome but can support the decisions as additional evidence where required.

Only letter grades are provided for mid-year and end-of-year exam results in Compass. Letter grades must be consistent with the DHS grading scale (appendix 1).

## Level of Achievement Scores in Unit 3 and 4

For Units 3 and 4, students must be given a numerical score out of the marks allocated for each school-based assessment. This is reported by teachers at the end of each unit on a form provided by the VASS Administrator. This numerical score contributes to the student's study score for the subject. It is important to note that numerical scores awarded from internal school-based assessments are moderated and adjusted by VCAA. Further information about the calculation of study scores can be found on VCAA website (appendix 2).

Teachers must award marks for school-based assessments based on the knowledge and skills that have been demonstrated by the student. Teachers are not to remove marks for late submissions or what has not been demonstrated but must be objective in their marking allocation.

Teachers may choose to provide a percentage or letter grade to students for unit 3 and 4 school-based assessments to indicate their level of achievement. Letter grades must be consistent with the DHS grading scale (appendix 1).

Students should not be given a zero (0) for their level of achievement unless:

- A student never undertakes the assessment for the outcome and therefore never achieves a score.
- The student breaches VCAA rules and the outcome and consequence of the investigated breach is a 0.
- Subject to discussion with HLT a 0 may be given if a student does not present a medical certificate or letter of extenuating circumstances, or is not a candidate for special provisions, for a missed SAC/SAT and completes a SAC/SAT for an S/N only.
- A student attends the assessment and does not correctly answer any questions (thereby does not make a genuine attempt at the SAC/SAT). A redemption would then be completed, if a student hasn't demonstrated the outcome prior to the SAC, following a discussion with the teacher and in consultation with the HLT.

## Unit 3 and 4 Practice Examination Results

Unit 3 and 4 students complete end-of-year practice examinations in term 4. These end-of-year examinations help to provide Indicative Grades to report to VASS. End-of-year examinations should not form the basis of a teacher's judgement of a student's ability to achieve satisfactory completion for the Outcomes. But the exam may support an S or N judgement if required.

End-of-year examination results are not reported in Compass.

## Cross-marking and moderation of scores

All VCE teachers are expected to cross-mark each school-based assessment in their study teams.

In addition, teachers must moderate scores to ensure that the ranking of students across the school cohort is accurate at the end of Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Professional development opportunities and time will be offered to teachers to undertake moderation processes.

Students should be advised that their scores are provisional until such time that cross-marking across the school cohort has taken place. And are subject to Statistical Moderation by the VCAA and so school grades are always indicative only. Teachers may provide an indication of the range that students have achieved prior to cross-marking.

### Breach of VCAA Rules

Students will receive a satisfactory if the teacher determines that the student has produced work that demonstrates the outcomes and the work submitted is their own. If it is suspected that a student has produced work that is not their own or, in any other way may have breached the VCAA rules for school-based assessments, this must be investigated.

Further information about the DHS policy and procedure for breaching VCAA rules is available or teachers can contact the Senior Studies improvement team for advice.

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure their students are informed about the VCAA rules and their roles and responsibilities in the context of their study at the start of the academic year.

### Designing Assessments

All school-based assessments must comply with the [assessment principles outlined by VCAA](#), which states that VCE assessments must be valid and reasonable, equitable, balanced and efficient.

Required types of assessments are outlined in the study designs for Unit 3 and 4. There are no recommended types of assessments in the study designs for Unit 1 and 2.

Formative and school-based assessments and rubrics are designed by the teacher according to options specified in the Study Design and associated Advice to Teachers. Teachers who are part of a team where there are multiple classes of the same subject eg: English, must work collaboratively to plan, design and moderate assessments (via cross marking) to ensure that school-based assessments are accessible for all students in all classes and there is consistency in marking. Teachers who are not working in subject teams are encouraged to work with or seek advice from another teacher in their domain to plan, design and moderate assessments.

For each outcome two Assessment Tasks need to be designed, the first as the SAC task and the second for students who do not attend for valid reasons.

### Unscored VCE

An unscored VCE is where a student is eligible for the award of the VCE if they have submitted a range of tasks that include school-based assessments for satisfactory completion of units but have not been assessed for levels of achievement in the study and have not completed examinations.

Students who are considering an unscored VCE, must discuss with the HLT during their pathways discussions in year 12. Decisions about a student undertaking an unscored VCE will be made before the end of Term 3. No student will be allowed to do an unscored VCE without first consulting their HLT who will in turn discuss this with the student's teachers and parents/guardians. These discussions may be triggered by a student's achievement in Unit 3, and students may be put on a support plan prior to selection of an unscored pathway.

Students and their parents/guardians will be required to attend an interview to discuss pathways options and the implications of an Unscored VCE with HLT. Following this meeting, parents and students will be required to sign documentation confirming that their child will undertake an Unscored VCE.

Teachers should not advise a student about whether they should undertake an unscored VCE. Teachers are to ensure that all students enrolled in unit 3 and 4 subjects undertake the same school-based assessments as other students and assess according to a satisfactory or not satisfactory outcome and level of achievement.

Teachers will be informed by HLT if a student and their parent/guardian has confirmed that they will complete an Unscored VCE. Teachers are not to accept a student's verbal assurance that they are undertaking an unscored VCE without notification from the HLT. Teachers must also reiterate that students are still required to demonstrate a satisfactory completion of school-based assessments to be awarded an "S" for their study.

Students undertaking an Unscored VCE do not complete end-of-year examinations.

### Redeeming outcomes

If, in the judgment of the teacher, work submitted by a student does not meet the required standard for satisfactory completion, the teacher may consider other work produced by the student relating to the outcomes for the unit. This work may include class work, homework, additional tasks or discussions with the student that demonstrate their understanding of the outcome.

A VCE student may only redeem for a satisfactory result for the outcome. There will be no change to the level of achievement score and the original mark given, will stand.

At DHS, students must be given an opportunity to redeem and demonstrate their understanding of the outcome.

Students who have not taken responsibility to make a genuine attempt to satisfactorily complete the outcome will not be given an opportunity to redeem and will automatically be given a not-satisfactory (N) for the outcome. This includes students who:

- Do not attempt the task at all
- Make a token attempt such as writing one or two lines on a school-based assessment, such as a test, which is below the expectation as defined by the study design
- Leaves the learning space where they are undertaking the school-based assessment and thereby makes no further attempts to complete it
- Disrupts other students from completing their school-based assessment such as breaching VCAA assessment and examination conditions
- Uses their school-based assessment materials to draw, scribble or write information not related to their assessment
- Puts their head down to rest or sleep through the duration of the assessment
- Consistently having to redeem multiple areas of studies, thereby not demonstrating any improvement in results or effort to study.

Teachers are not under any obligation to give students a particular number of opportunities to redeem. If the student has demonstrated improvement and has made a genuine attempt, but still has not demonstrated the outcome, another redemption process may be offered and the above process needs to be followed again. Giving multiple redemptions should not become an onerous burden for teachers or students.

It is the student's responsibility to manage their time and complete the work required with the support of their teacher.

When scheduling the redemption, teachers are to speak with the student about what they have achieved and the skills or knowledge that still need to be demonstrated. This is to be communicated to the student and HLT, as well as parents, via Compass.

The redemption tasks should not be a replication of the same task already given at the original time of the SAT/SAC. The redemption task should allow students to demonstrate the areas of the outcome not already met. See Assessment Design information also.

The process for arranging a redemption is:

1. A date will be set by the teacher, in consultation with the student, for a redemption to take place at a suitable time for both the teacher and student. Wherever possible, the redemption must occur within two weeks of the original task date.
2. Redemptions should not be scheduled to take place during any other timetabled class. They can take place during lunchtime, a timetabled class for the applicable subject or a study period.
3. The teacher is to complete the Compass Chronicle entry using the "Extension, Redemption, Absence and Change of Date" form, which will alert HLT of the redemption.
4. The teacher must also email the student to confirm the date, time and place for the redemption, including preparations they must make to demonstrate a satisfactory outcome.
5. Once a redemption is completed and a satisfactory outcome achieved, the teacher must go back to the original Compass Chronicle entry for that student and update the entry which alerts HLT of the outcome.

If a VCE student does not attend the scheduled redemption or refuses to complete the redemption they will be given an N for the outcome, (unless a medical certificate for not attending is provided), until such time the student contacts the teacher and provides the work required to demonstrate a satisfactory outcome.

If the student is still deemed to have not demonstrated an adequate understanding of the outcome being assessed, the HLT of that student needs to be informed immediately. A meeting will be called with the student, a parent/guardian and HLT to discuss further options. The course of action following this meeting will be determined by the teacher and HLT.

It is recommended that each teacher informs their students about the importance of genuine attempt and the process for any possible redemptions in the context of their study at the start of the academic year.

## Attendance

*“Each VCE unit involves 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction. In addition, it is expected that students will undertake up to 50 hours of self-directed learning for each unit.”*

*(VCAL and VCE Handbook pg. 1)*

At Dandenong High School, six periods of learning are equal to approximately 68 hours of a subject in a unit, across 18 weeks or 9 timetable cycles.

Given this, based on attendance a student would be considered At Risk when they have missed 7 periods (approximately 90%) across the Unit for a subject.

If students miss 14 periods of a subject then they would have fallen to below 80% attendance and below the required 50 hours of classroom learning required for VCE subjects.

This means the student may receive a not satisfactory for the unit based on attendance, unless there are circumstances that would require a Special Provisions Application. From 2021, it is the student’s responsibility to apply for Special Provisions from 2021 via the process in the VCE Student Handbook.

Consistent and timely attendance at school has a significant impact on a student’s learning and achievement at school. Students are expected to be at school and on time over 90% of the time. If a student is not attending class, teachers are expected to notify the student’s HLT by adding a Compass Chronicle entry and selecting the “Student at Risk” form. If a student is regularly late to class, the teacher is responsible for administering consequences.

### Procedure for teachers about VCE students declining attendance:

1. When a student’s attendance falls below 7 periods (90% attendance) and below in a Unit 1, 2, 3 or 4 class the teacher is responsible for alerting the House via a ‘Student at Risk’ chronicle in Compass.
2. The teacher is to have a conversation with the student regarding their attendance.
3. If the attendance of the student improves the teacher alerts the HLT again.
4. If the attendance continues to decline and reaches the threshold of 80% a meeting with HLT is required warning the student and their parents/guardian of N result, as the minimum class attendance requirement class time has not been met.
5. In the event a student sits below 80% or 50 hours of class time at the completion of a unit, the student would receive an N due to failure to meet the VCAA requirements.

### Procedure for House Leaders about VCE students declining attendance:

1. Receive Chronicle notification of students falling below 7 periods or 90% attendance from teacher.
2. House Leaders will update Chronicle to acknowledge the teacher notification. If this is occurring for the student across multiple subjects the House Leader will meet with the student and notify parents/guardians of potential at risk.

3. If student attendance continues to decline or the House Leader receives another Chronicle notification of students falling below 14 periods (80% attendance).
4. House Leaders need meet with the student and parent to inform the student they have fallen below the threshold of 80% and, unless there is a special provision, this students will receive an N for the unit
5. The House Leader needs to update the teacher in the Chronicle about a N to be awarded to the student for the unit.

### Absence for a school-based assessment

If a student in year 11 or 12 is absent for a school-based assessment they must provide a medical certificate to explain their absence or letter from parents outlining extenuating circumstances.

This must be presented to the House Administrative Officer on the day they return to school and a copy given to the classroom teacher who will reschedule a date for the assessment to be completed as soon as possible.

- The teacher must complete a Compass Chronicle “Extension, Redemption, Absence and Change of Date Form” which automatically advises the student’s HLT of the extension; and
- The teacher must discuss with the student and follow up with an email to confirm the rescheduled date, time and location.

If a student does not provide a medical certificate or letter from parents, the teacher needs to contact the HLT for advice. The teacher must also contact HLT for advice if the student does not attend the rescheduled assessment date.

If a student is aware of an impending absence, they must discuss this with their classroom teacher before the date of the school-based assessment – they cannot do this on the day of the assessment. The teacher may agree with the student the rescheduled date and complete the Compass Chronicle “Extension, Redemption, Absence and Change of Date Form”, which will alert HLT of the change.

Students who have three school-based assessments scheduled on the same day, can ask one of their teachers for an extension for one assessment. Again, this must be done in advance, and if a teacher is uncertain about the number of school-based assessments scheduled for that student, they can consult the SAT/SAC calendar or with the teachers of the other subjects and/or HLT.

A student should not be automatically given an ‘N’ for an outcome for not attending or completing a school-based assessment. If in doubt, the teacher must contact the HLT to seek advice.

Any rescheduled school-based assessments must comply with the [assessment principles outline by VCAA](#) (VCE assessments must be valid and reasonable, equitable, balanced and efficient).

As a guide:

- Students who do not provide a medical certificate or letter in unit 1 or 2 can reschedule for school-based assessment for the awarding of a ‘satisfactory’ or ‘not satisfactory’ only.
- Students in unit 3 and 4 who do not complete the rescheduled school-based assessments as arranged with their teacher will be given an N for the outcome until such time the student contacts, rearranges and completes the assessment.

VCAA states that extensions for tasks related to units of competency contributing to scored VCE sequences are not permitted beyond the final date for results submission to VASS. At DHS this means students who do not complete the school-based assessments within the unit timeframe (all unit 3 assessments completed by the end of unit 3 and unit 3 results submission), will be given a 'not satisfactory' for the outcomes and consequently, for the unit. It is important that teachers explain the consequences of students not attending or completing their rescheduled school-based assessments in a timely manner. This can be done via email and in person, in class.

### Authenticating student work

Students are not able to be awarded the VCE or VCAL if they are unable to verify the work they have submitted is their own. Teachers must also be able to verify this.

Teachers must be aware of and clearly inform students about rules concerning the authentication of work. One of these rules is that students must ensure that all unacknowledged work submitted for assessment is genuinely their own.

Teachers may consider it appropriate to ask students to demonstrate their understanding of the task at, or about the time of, submission of the work. If any part or all of the work cannot be authenticated or a student is found to be cheating or is believed to have cheated on a task then the HLT and Senior Studies Improvement team must be informed immediately.

Students in unit 3 and 4 who are undertaking a school-based assessment task (SAT) will be required to complete an authentication log of their work in conjunction with their teacher.

All VCE and VCAL students will be required to complete a form called Authentication Record for School-based Assessment in which they declare that the work that they produce is their own according to school and VCAA rules. See document *Breach of VCAA Rules Policy & Procedures – 2020*.

### Students breaching VCAA rules

This advice should be read in conjunction with the more detailed document *Breach of VCAA Rules for School Based Assessments - Policy & Procedures*.

If any part or all of a student's work cannot be authenticated or a student is found to be cheating or is believed to have cheated, then they have breached VCAA rules. In this case the teacher must inform the relevant HLT and Senior Studies Improvement team immediately.

The Senior Studies Improvement team and the HLT of the student will appoint an investigator and a decision maker, who will conduct an investigation and make a final decision on the suspected breach including the appropriate consequence.

Students and their parents/guardians will be informed of the suspected breach. Students will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations to the investigator and decision-maker.

## Appendix 1: DHS Letter Grade Scale

### Level of achievement

The levels of achievement are the school-based assessment scores which contribute to the calculation of a study score. The DHS letter grading scale is below.

<b>Senior Studies Grade Scale</b>	
Must be used for Year 10 Exams; Units ½ SATs and Exams; Units 3&4 SACs and Practice Exams	
GRADE	NUMERIC SCORE %
A+	90-100
A	81-89
B+	74-80
B	66-73
C+	58-65
C	49-57
D+	38-48
D	28-37
E+	18-27
E	9-17
UG	0-8

Students undertaking an “Unscored VCE” would receive S or N only and no level of achievement as indicated by an NA on the VASS scoring sheet.

## Appendix 2: Resources

### **VCE and VCAL Handbook 2020**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vc-al-handbook/Pages/index.aspx>

### **VCE General Advice and Policy**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/Pages/VCEPoliciesandGuidelines.aspx>

### **VCAA Assessment Principles - Teachers Discuss School-based assessment**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/School-basedAssessment/Pages/School-based-Assessment-Teacher-videos.aspx>

### **VCAA – What is a study score?**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/results/Pages/StudyScoreVideos.aspx>

### **VCAA VCE Study Designs**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Pages/vce-study-designs.aspx>

### **VCAA VCAL Information**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vcal/Pages/index.aspx>

### **VCAA VCAL Curriculum Guides**

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vcal/vcal-curriculum/Pages/Index.aspx>

### **Victorian Curriculum**

<https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>