

17 September 2021

Emily Frawley  
President  
Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE)  
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Dear Dr Frawley

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 August 2021 in which you share concerns and feedback from VATE members and stakeholders regarding the current lockdown in Victoria, and the impact on teachers and students.

Further to the conversation between Annelise Balsamo (English Curriculum Manager) and Kate Gillespie (EEO, VATE) on Friday, 10 September 2021, I write to reassure you and your membership of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (VCAA) active commitment to supporting the education community.

The health, wellbeing and safety of students and staff is our top priority during this time. We have been working closely with the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health and Victoria's Chief Health Officer to ensure the safe delivery and administration of the General Achievement Test (GAT), school-based assessments and external examinations.

The GAT has been rescheduled to Tuesday 5 October 2021 and will be conducted with health and safety controls in place.

Victorian Certificate and Education (VCE) written, and performance exam dates will remain as originally set – with performance and oral exams scheduled to begin on Monday 4 October 2021, and written exams to run until Friday 17 November 2021.

These timetables will allow results and the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) to be released on Thursday 16 December 2021.

In recognition of the disruptions and impact on the 2021 VCE student cohort caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) in both 2020 and 2021, and the differing levels of impact at the school and individual student level, the Consideration of Educational Disadvantage (CED) process will apply again this year when calculating VCE scores. This process will require schools to provide the VCAA with information on all students and school circumstances to help calculate their study scores. To ensure the fairness of final results the VCAA will consider all available information, including examination results, the GAT and appropriate comparisons of performance across all assessments and schools, which will contribute to ensuring fair and valid VCE study scores.

As schools and students are already well into the delivery of Unit 4, making amendments to study designs or examinations would disadvantage schools and students that have already worked hard to learn a significant portion of the content. That's why implementing the CED process in 2021 is so important – we're confident the process will address the periods of disruption to ensure all students are assessed individually and fairly and give everyone the best chance of success.

In addition to the CED, students can also continue to access existing special provisions like Special Examination Arrangements, Derived Examination Scores and VTAC's Special Entry Access Scheme in special circumstances.

The conditions and arrangements for which school-based assessments are undertaken and assessed to ensure they meet the [VCE assessment principles](#), the [study design requirements](#) and the requirements of the [VCE and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning \(VCAL\) Administrative Handbook](#) is a school-based decision. This may vary between schools and sectors given their cohort and unique circumstances. However, there is some inherent flexibility with the delivery of school-based assessment, including how you assess and rank your cohort of students using school-based assessments. Of course, the administration of school-based assessments in 2021 must be consistent with current public health advice.

Furthermore, the scores for the Unit 4 School-based assessments do not have to be submitted to the VCAA until November, which provides for additional flexibility in the timing of delivery and assessment.

I hope this information assists members in these difficult times. Further information to support schools and students is available on the VCAA's website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Gniel', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**STEPHEN GNIEL**  
Chief Executive Officer