SENIOR SCHOOL
2024 GUIDE

MERCY
REGIONAL COLLEGE

CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The Senior School Guide has been developed to assist and inform all VCE / VCE VM students and their parents. Students and parents are asked to read and familiarise themselves with the contents of this guide.

If you would like more detailed information regarding the central administration of the VCE / VCE VM you may visit the VCAA website.

Key Websites

Mercy Regional College website: www.mercy.vic.edu.au

VCAA website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

VCAA: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/HomePage.aspx

VCAA Subjects: https://vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Pages/vce-study-designs.aspx

VCAA FAQ: https://vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-faqs/Pages/Index.aspx

VCE Help: www.vcehelp.com.au

VTAC: www.vtac.edu.au

Headspace: headspace.org.au

At Mercy Regional College students can achieve a Senior School Certificate. This certificate could be either the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Education - Vocational Major (VCE VM). Both these certificates are acknowledged in the wider community. It is imperative when deciding a pathway for students that the students needs are considered.

Learning to Care, Caring to Learn

UNDERSTANDING VCE, VCE VM & VET

Victorian Curriculum of Education - VCE

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is a senior certificate of education within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It is designed to be completed over a minimum of two years and includes general education curriculum components (VCE studies) and programs from Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications.

VCE Vocational Major - VCE VM

The VCE Vocational Major (VM) is a vocational and applied learning program within the VCE designed to be completed over a minimum of two years. The VCE VM gives students greater choice and flexibility to pursue their strengths and interests and develop the skills and capabilities needed to succeed in further education, work and life. VCE VM prepares students to move into apprenticeships, traineeships, further education and training, university (via non-ATAR pathways) or directly into the workforce.

Vocational Education & Training - VET

Students may include Vocational Education and Training (VET) in their VCE. Students can undertake nationally recognised training through a VCAA approved VCE VET program as an apprenticeship or traineeship or any other VET qualification and may receive credit towards their VCE.

Accelerated Programs at Mercy Regional College

Students who are identified as being more capable in their studies have the opportunity to extend their learning and thinking skills by being involved in an appropriate accelerated program.

- Year 10 students may undertake VCE/VET Unit 1 & 2 subjects
- Year 11 students may undertake VCE/VET Units 3 & 4 subjects
- Year 12 students who are successful in VCE studies may apply to participate in Higher Education Studies offered through the appropriate universities. Normally this is the Deakin Accelerate Program. This option is explored mainly for students who are high achievers and who can cope with a more demanding workload. Students apply directly to the university that offers the study of their choice and should seek the advice of the Careers Coordinator before beginning an extension study.

SENIOR PATHWAYS

Learning to Care, Caring to Learn

MERCY REGIONAL COLLEGE
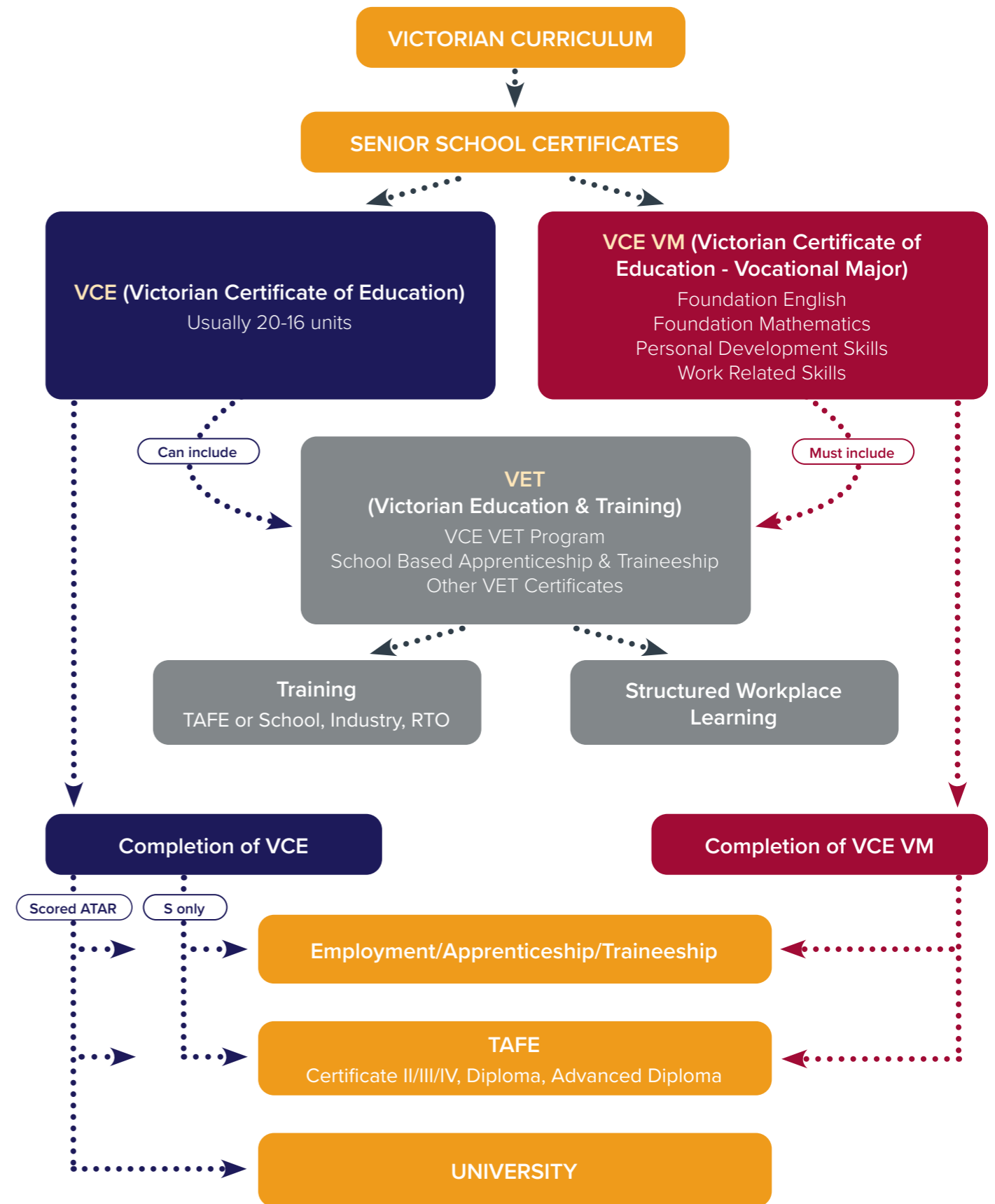
VCE & VCE VM

Eligibility to be Awarded VCE

Minimum Requirements

The minimum requirement is satisfactory completion of 16 units, which must include:

- Three units from the English group of studies including a Unit 3 & 4 sequence.
- At least three sequences of Unit 3 & 4 studies other than English, which may include any number of English sequences.
- To gain an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) VTAC (The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) requires the above minimum standards be attained, including the completion of the external examinations.

Satisfactory Completion of a Unit

For the satisfactory completion of a unit, a student must demonstrate achievement of each of the outcomes of the unit. To achieve the outcome, the student must:

- Produce work that meets the required standard.
- Submits work on time.
- Submit work that is clearly his/her own.
- Observe the VCAA and school rules.

An "S" result indicates that all outcomes for the unit were Satisfactorily achieved. An unsatisfactory completion of the unit will be signified as an 'N'.

- For VCE Units 3 & 4, evidence is collected by the teacher through a range of tasks, including School-based Assessments that are designated for the study.
- The decision about satisfactory completion is distinct from the assessment levels of achievement.
- School-based Assessment may be used to determine both satisfactory completion of the unit and assessment for a study score.

Mercy Regional College will publish School Assessed Coursework (SAC) results as a numerical score, with the advice to students that these scores will be moderated against the VCAA External Examinations.

Attaining a VCE Certificate

The VCE is gained as a result of a student satisfactory completing no less than 16 units. These units must include:

- An approved combination of three units from the group of English studies.
- Four sequences (or pairs) of units at the 3 & 4 level, including English. This may include VCE VET Studies.

Students must successfully complete both Unit 3 & 4 English, EAL English or Literature to attain their VCE certificate.

At MRC, it is a requirement that Year 12 students choose five Unit 3 & 4 subjects even if they have already completed a Unit 3 & 4 in Year 11. Possible exemptions:

- Consideration will be given to students who have a documented medical history.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is compulsory. This attendance expectation includes all designated school days, such as sports days and retreats. Regular, punctual attendance is essential, in many instances, it will be impossible to satisfy VCE work requirements if a student's attendance is irregular. Mercy Regional College's attendance policy requires students to be present for 90% of class time.

In circumstances where prolonged illness affects a student's attendance, a medical certificate is required and special provision can be sought. Liaison with the Senior Team to discuss these circumstances is necessary. Even when students have a medical condition there are still minimum attendance requirements.

The College is currently updating processes and procedures relating to absenteeism. Information will be provided as soon as possible.

A student who is absent from school on a day when a formal School Assessed Task is undertaken must provide a medical certificate upon their return to school. Refer to Extensions of a SAC section for this process.

Any absence that has not been verified will be considered 'unapproved' and the satisfactory completion of the unit will be in jeopardy.

Eligibility to be Awarded VCE VM

Minimum Requirements

To be eligible to receive the VCE VM, students must satisfactory complete a minimum of 16 units, including:

- 3 VCE VM Literacy or VCE English units (including a Unit 3-4 sequence)
- 2 VCE VM Numeracy or VCE Mathematics units
- 2 VCE Work Related Skills unit
- 2 VCE Personal Development Skills units
- 2 VET credits at Certificate II level or above (180 nominal hours)
- Three other Unit 3 & 4 sequences

Satisfactory Completion of a Unit

Each VCE VM unit of study has specified learning outcomes. The VCE VM studies are standards based. All assessments for the achievement of learning outcomes, are school-based and assessed through a range of learning activities and tasks.

There are no external assessments of VCE VM Unit 3-4 sequences, and VCE VM studies do not receive a study score. If a student wishes to receive study scores, they can choose from a wide range of VCE studies and scored VCE VET programs that contain both internal and external assessment components.

Attaining a VCE VM Certificate

Completing the VCE VM requirements means that students have also completed the requirements of the VCE. Upon satisfactory completion of the VCE VM, students receive recognition through the appellation of 'Vocational Major' on their Victorian Certificate of Education and a Statement of Results.

Successful completion of VET units of competency are recognised by additional statements of attainment or certificates provided by the Registered Training Organisation

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is compulsory. This attendance expectation includes all designated school days, such as sports days and retreats. SWL and SBA, RIST and offsiteTAFE have 100% attendance requirements. Regular, punctual attendance is essential, in many instances, it will be impossible to satisfy VCE VM work requirements if a student's attendance is irregular. Mercy Regional College's attendance policy requires students to be present for 90% of class time.

In circumstances where prolonged illness affects a student's attendance, a medical certificate is required. Liaison with the Senior Team to discuss these circumstances is necessary. Even when students have a medical condition there still minimum attendance requirements.

Understanding the ATAR

The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) uses VCE results issued by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to calculate the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). The ATAR may be used either solely or in conjunction with other criteria as a selection tool for university course entry.

The ATAR is a ranking of graduate results that measure a student's overall academic achievements compared with all other final year students in Australia. The ATAR is not a score out of 100 – it is a rank. The ATAR allows tertiary institutions to compare the overall achievements of all students who have graduated from secondary school in that year.

An ATAR is developed from an aggregate produced by adding:

- ATAR study score in English, English Language, ESL, or Literature.
- The next best three ATAR study scores permissible.
- 10% of the fifth and/or sixth permissible ATAR study that is available
- VET certificates may also contribute to an ATAR score.

Examinations and GAT

Detailed information about examinations, GAT, results and other VCE matters are obtainable from the VCAA website.

The examination period for Units 3 & 4 is run externally by VCAA in October and November. These results are used by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) to create an ATAR score. This score is developed by combining the exam result with the School Assessed Coursework (SAC) and School Assessed Task (SAT) result to create a study score out of a possible 50 for each subject completed. The ATAR score is used solely for the purpose of establishing admission into University courses. The ATAR and study score do NOT indicate failure of the VCE or a subject. As said previously, the VCE is only awarded for the satisfactory completion of units of study. There are always some students for whom the exam process is unnecessary for their future career pathway and they will choose not to sit the exams. This does not impact the successful completion of the VCE (see Unscored VCE). At Mercy Regional College we strongly encourage students to complete their VCE examinations.

All students completing Units 3 & 4 and Senior VCE VM are required to complete the General Achievement Test (GAT). This includes students who may have already completed the GAT the previous year. The GAT results are used by the VCAA to statistically check that school assessments and examinations have been accurately assessed, as well as determining Derived Examination Scores.

Students are not permitted to leave any Unit 3 & 4 examination (including the GAT) prior to the conclusion of the examination. If students do attempt to leave these examinations early, this conduct will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.
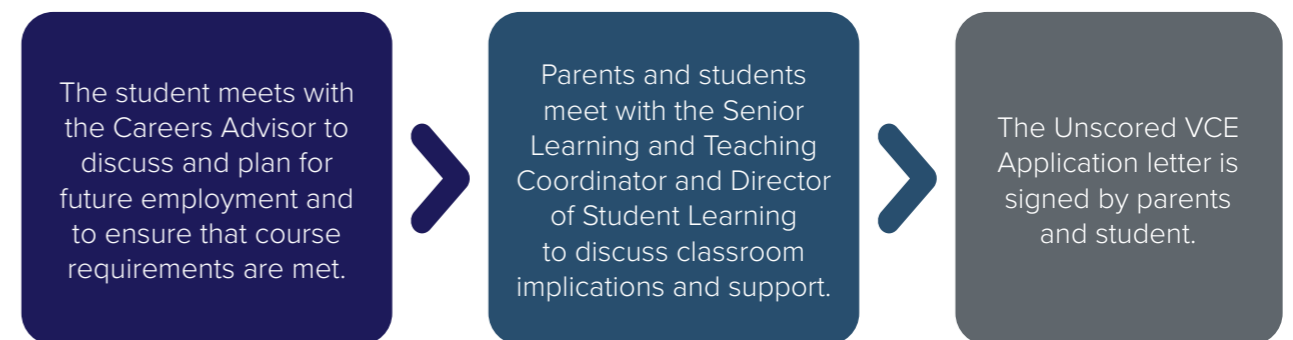
The examination period for Units 1 & 2 is run internally by MRC in June and November. Attendance at these examinations is compulsory.

Unscored VCE

At Mercy Regional College we understand that some students may request to undertake an unscored VCE program, however it is encouraged that all students complete their VCE examinations.

The following process needs to be followed to ensure parents/guardians and students are provided with information about possible impacts of this decision on a student's future employment.

A form requesting to go unscored needs to be completed. This process also involves a meeting with the student, parents, and members of the Senior School Team.

> The student meets with the Careers Advisor to discuss and plan for future employment and to ensure that course requirements are met.

> Parents and students meet with the Senior Learning and Teaching Coordinator and Director of Student Learning to discuss classroom implications and support.

> The Unscored VCE Application letter is signed by parents and student.

Learning to Care, Caring to Learn

Special Provision

VCAA guidelines outline three types of special provision for illness, impairment and personal circumstances. All applications need to be directed to the Senior Pathways Leader.

School Based Coursework

Students are eligible for Special Provision for School-Based Assessment if their ability to demonstrate achievements is adversely affected by:

- An acute or chronic illness
- A long term impairment
- Personal circumstances

Students should apply for Special Provision by completing the form obtainable from the Senior Pathways Leader. Current external evidence will be required to support the student's application. If the student is granted special provision, subject teachers will assist students by:

- Rescheduling assessment tasks, or
- Setting alternative or substitute tasks, or
- Allowing more time to complete a task or
- Allowing the use of different arrangements to complete an assessment.

Please note that any Special Provision afforded a student during SAC conditions, must be in line with that approved by the VCAA for the same student's Examination arrangements.

Special Examination Arrangements (Including the GAT VCE)

Students may be eligible due to an illness or disability that prevents them from completing their VCE examinations in the same way or under the same conditions as other students.

Applications for Special Examination Arrangements must be accompanied by recent supporting medical or specialist documentation.

The VCAA may not approve special examination arrangements for students who have long-term impairments if they have not been given similar arrangements by their school during the year.

All applications for special examination arrangements are to be lodged by the end of March. The student needs to contact the Senior Pathways Leader immediately for information on how to apply for this special provision. Late applications may be accepted and emergency special exam arrangements can be requested up to the day prior to the exam.

Special examination arrangements may include:

- Extra reading time
- Rest breaks
- Use of special technology
- A reader and/or scribe

Derived Examination Scores

This provision is for students who are prevented from attending an examination, or whose performance on an examination is adversely affected as a result of illness, accident or personal traumatic events occurring on the day of the examination. The Derived Examination Scores will be calculated statistically from the student's other assessments:

- Moderated coursework (SACs)
- School assessed Task Scores (SATs)
- GAT scores
- Other examination scores if applicable
- Indicated results provided by the school

For a student who attended the examination, the person providing the independent evidence must have examined or treated the student or have been consulted by the student in the period from two days before the examination to one day after the examination.

If the student did not attend the examination, the person providing the evidence must have treated the student or been consulted by the student on the day before or on the same day as the examination.

Applications to VCAA for a derived score must be lodged within VCAA specified time for each examination that was affected. Advice from the school should be sought (directed to the Senior Community Leader), the primary responsibility for the application rests with the student.

Students may not apply on the grounds of long term illness or matters of the students own choosing such as sporting or social events.

Moderation

Moderation is the process by which the marking of student work across different class groups and teachers is standardised to ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment process. This occurs when there are multiple classes of one subject and several teachers - most commonly English. This also occurs when there are small VCE classes and a partnership is established between MRC and another school.

VCAA also uses statistical moderation, using information from the GAT, SACs and the end of year examinations to judge and rank all assessments according to their scale to ensure that all students in Victoria are marked in the same way. This may result in the increase or decrease of a student's SACs results at the end of Units 3 & 4. It is important to remember that all SAC results are provisional until they have been reviewed by VCAA at the end of the year.

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The moderation process will differ between tasks and subjects, but includes a range of different methods including cross marking, double-marking, blind samples and independent reviews to ensure that each task is judged against its formal, published criteria effectively and fairly. This adds time to the marking process also. Moderation rarely results in a major change to a student's results. All VCE assessment is judged by criteria with five achievement bands ranging from Very Low to Very High, and although an individual result may change slightly (up or down), rarely does it change achievement bands.

If a student has any questions or concerns regarding the assessment or moderation process, they can direct their questions to their teacher. The moderation process assists teachers in the ranking process, by which all VCE students are placed in a rank-order of achievement in their class group to assist VCAA in their statistical moderation process.

Reviews of Results

If a student is unsure of their result for a SACs, they may request that it be reviewed. This request should be made directly to their teacher, who will engage in the moderation process. The Domain Leader should also be informed. The student's work is given to another teacher in the same field, as well as a rubric in order to mark this task. If there is a large discrepancy, then a third teacher will be engaged to provide feedback. The professional opinion of these two or three teachers will determine the appropriate result and report this outcome to the student in writing within two weeks. It is possible that a result may decrease as well as increase during the review process.

Mercy Regional College SAC Procedures and Rules

- Students who arrive late to their SAC will not be granted extra time unless approval is given from the Senior Pathways Leader.
- Students who finish early are not permitted to leave the room.
- Mobile phones and electronic communication devices such as watches capable of storing, receiving or transmitting information or electronic signals are not permitted in an examination room or in a SAC under any circumstances.
- Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns about assessment tasks with a member of the Senior School Team.
- Mercy Regional College implements the following program - VCE Substitute School Assessed Coursework Session (Sub-SAC). This program is for students who miss a VCE SAC, a student who has not completed hurdle tasks required to meet the unit outcomes and for any student who has not satisfactorily met the requirements for a SAC/coursework and needs to redeem an N result. This program occurs on Wednesday and Monday afternoons (3.10-4.30pm).

Feedback to Students

After assessment tasks are submitted and marked, teachers should provide feedback to students. Appropriate feedback includes:

- Written comments on the student's work.
- As assessment sheet which addresses the criteria of the task, where the student has addressed the criteria successfully and where they can improve.
- Speak to the class about one or two areas where the group has shown success and areas for improvement.

- Discussion of the student's work in a one-on-one situation.
- Peer group assessment and discussions.
- Modelling aspects of good pieces with the group – done with the student's permission.
- Programs such as Edrolo.

At Mercy Regional College, satisfactory completion of Outcomes is reported to students as S or N and levels of achievement for SACs and SATS are reported as a numerical score. These levels of achievement are reported on SIMON and PAM.

Missing a SAC

Students who, for whatever reason, do not sit the SAC will receive 0 marks. The student can redeem the mark by participating in the VCE Substitute Assessed Coursework (Sub-SAC) Sessions. Subject teachers will schedule the SAC completion following the Sub-SAC guidelines. Parents will be notified of the session their child/children will be attending to redeem their mark via PAM.

If a SAC is missed due to illness, a medical certificate must be provided to the Senior School Office as soon as the student returns to school. The student can then automatically be scheduled to attend the next Sub-SAC session.

If a SAC is missed due to a school-based activity (external or internal) the student would be scheduled to attend a Sub-SAC session.

Sport, work or travel concerns are not valid reasons for not attending the Sub-SAC session. These must be adjusted.

If a student fails to attend a scheduled Sub-SAC session they will receive an N notification (parents to be notified via official letter/form) and be registered to attend the next session to redeem the N but will not receive a score for the SAC. The SAC will be 'ungraded'.

Rescheduling an Assessment Task for an Individual Student

If a student does not complete a SAC at the same time as the rest of the class, the VCE Substitute School Assessed Coursework Session (Sub-SAc) will be activated. The teacher will register the student for a session. Parents will be notified through a letter sent via PAM, this will outline the date and time of this session.

Failure to Submit Assessment Task/Hurdle Task

A student who has not submitted a Coursework Assessment task will need to complete the task as per the VCE Substitute School Assessed Coursework Session (Sub-SAC) guidelines. If the task is still not completed an N will be assigned for the task and thus an N will be recorded for the Unit.

Failure to Meet Assessment Criteria

If a student does not demonstrate sufficient competency within a Coursework Assessment Task, they shall receive an N for the relevant outcome. A student who has received an N has to be given a chance to redeem. The VCE Substitute School Assessed Coursework Session (Sub-SAC) process will be enacted in redeeming a Satisfactory completion for the task/outcome.

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Redemption Process

A student who has received an N result for an Outcome after participating in the Sub-SAC process will be notified of a 'Not Satisfactory' via a PAM. A N result for an Outcome can be redeemed to an S up to one month from being notified of a 'Not Satisfactory' (or by the end of the semester, whichever comes first) of being notified on the N. It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the subject teacher and the Senior School team concerning the most appropriate way of demonstrating satisfactory completion.

Appeals Process

Within reasonable limits, students are free to query their subject teacher as to the reasons why a grade or S/N was given. They must however, accept the grade given for an Assessment Task. If a student receives an N result, a reassessment by the Subject teacher or Senior Team or their representative can be requested.

VCAA Rules for School Based Assessment

Mercy Regional Colleges SAC procedures are governed by the VCAA and, as such, SAC conditions are to be equitable for all students and dates for all VCE assessable work must be adhered to by all students. An extension of time for all students in a class should only be given by the subject teacher on conditions that all students are given adequate notice and that no one in the class or another class is disadvantaged by the change.

A student must ensure that all unacknowledged work submitted for assessment is genuinely their own.

A student must acknowledge all resources used, including: text, websites and source material the name/s and status of any person/s who provided assistance and the type of assistance provided.

A student must not receive undue assistance from another person in the preparation and submission of work.

Authentication of School Assessed Coursework and School Assessed Tasks

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) have policies and procedures for the monitoring and authentication of students' work to ensure equity amongst all senior students. The information below provides students/teachers/parents with the relevant advice as well as Mercy Regional College's own policy and procedures relating to authentication.

- Students must submit work for assessment that is their own. The use of AI platforms is not permitted.
- Students need to be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that the teacher has no difficulty in authenticating their work.

For SACs and Assessment Tasks completed under test conditions, students are required to observe all stated conditions including those related to electronic devices and written resources.

Should a breach of SAC, SAT or Assessment Task rules be reported, an investigation into the breach will be conducted by the school.

- On receipt of an investigation, the student's work should not be accepted for assessment, pending the conduct of an investigation by the school. The original of the final version of the work is to be retained by the school. The student should be given a copy of the work

- If an allegation raises the suggestion that a student has submitted work that is not their own, as part of seeking a response from the student the investigator should ask the student to provide evidence that demonstrates that the work submitted is their own and/or was completed in accordance with VCAA requirements. The student is invited to attend an interview to respond to the allegation
- Parent contact will be made by the Senior Teaching and Learning Coordinator, outlining the seriousness of the authentication breaches.
- The offending student will be required to complete the task again in a detention scenario. It is the discretion of the subject teacher in consultation with the Senior Teaching and Learning Coordinator as to whether the piece of work will be graded or redeemed to an S.
- In serious cases, the principal will decide whether a penalty should be imposed, and if so, what penalty is appropriate.
- If further breaches occur, then the student is in danger of receiving an N, with severe implications for attaining a VCE or VCE VM certificate.

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VET

VET (Vocational Education and Training) in the VCE or VET allow students to include vocational studies within their senior secondary certificate. Students undertake nationally recognised training from either accredited state curriculum or national training packages which may contribute to their VCE and/or VCE VM.

VET along with ASBA (Australian School Based Apprenticeships) can be completed within the standard VCE program or VCE VM program. A VET subject means that students will be undertaking training in a specific industry, such as Hospitality-Kitchen Operations, Allied Health, Building and Construction and Furnishing. At Mercy Regional College, we are fortunate to offer these subjects to our students. School Based Apprenticeships offer students the option of combining a senior secondary program with part time employment, school and training.

Successful completion of VET in a senior secondary program may provide students with:

- A VCE or VCE VM certificate issued by the VCAA and a VET certificate issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).
- Two statements of results issued by the VCAA giving details of units completed in the VCE and units of competency/modules competed in their VET qualification.
- May contribute to ATAR calculations which can improve access to further education
- Pathways into employment and or further VET qualifications.
- Workplace experience including structured workplace learning.

Students value VET because it:

- Allows them to combine general and vocational studies which for many, provides a practical focus in a range of industry areas.
- Provides direct experience of business and industry.

Employers value VET because it:

- Contributes to the development of entry level skills for their industry.
- Provides students with a practical and focused introduction to workplace requirements.
- Enhances the employability of students.
- Enables industry to contribute to educational programs in schools.
- Enables industry to participate in local community networks.

Students can undertake VET within their senior secondary certificate in the following ways

- VCE VET programs
- School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

VET Certificates Offered Onsite at Mercy Regional College

- Certificate III in Health Services Assistance - Year 1 & 2
- Certificate II in Animal Care - Year 1 & 2
- Certificate II in Building & Construction - Years 1 & 2
- Certificate II in Hospitality - Years 1 & 2
- Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics & Recreation - Years 1 & 2
- Certificate II in Furnishing - Years 1 & 2

More details regarding these courses are located in the 2025 Subject Selection & Pathways Booklet.

Off-Campus VET Courses

Mercy Regional College, in partnership with Registered Training Organisations (RTO), offers VET Courses which are available on or off campus, depending on the course. Some of the courses available include:

- Automotive
- Retail Cosmetics
- Salon Assistant
- Engineering
- Community Services
- Agriculture
- Animal Studies

FAQ about VET

▶ **When are VET Courses held?**
Apart from the VET Certificates offered at Mercy Regional College as part of the regular school timetable, all other courses currently operate on a Wednesday or Thursday. Students enrolled in these courses need to sign out of the College to attend their VET Certificate which may be offered off site.

▶ **What do VET Courses cost?**
The costs vary, depending on the Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

▶ **How do I enrol in a VET course?**
Please arrange an appointment with the VET Coordinator to discuss VET options.

Learning to Care, Caring to Learn

KEY CONTACTS

Senior School Team

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