

## **General Achievement Test – Wednesday June 13<sup>th</sup> 10am- 1:15pm**

### **What is the General Achievement Test?**

The General Achievement Test is a test of general knowledge and skills in:

- written communication
- mathematics, science and technology
- humanities, the arts and social sciences.

These areas are very broad.

Each represents a body of general knowledge and skills that students are likely to have built up through their school years.

Because it is a general test, no special study is required for the GAT. Students will already have done preparation for the GAT in past study of subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and History, where they have built up general knowledge and skills in writing, numeracy and reasoning. These are the knowledge and skills that will be tested.

Students can get a good idea of the questions by looking at previous GAT papers. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these questions and note that all the information needed to work out the right answer is provided.

### **Why do students have to do the GAT?**

The GAT is an essential part of the VCE assessment procedures.

All students enrolled in one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequences must sit the GAT.

Although GAT results do not count directly towards a student's VCE results, they play an important role in checking that school-based and external assessments have been accurately assessed, and in calculating Derived Examination Scores.

The GAT is used in these ways because achievement on the GAT is a good predictor of achievement on other assessments. If students have done well on the GAT, then their achievements are likely to be high on their school-based and external assessments.

Clearly, some GAT questions relate more closely to achievement in particular studies. The VCAA takes this into account when it calculates students' expected achievements in each study for each school. For example, GAT results in mathematics, science and technology play only a minor part in calculating students' expected achievements in humanities studies.

## How is the GAT used?

The VCAA will use students' GAT scores as a basis for:

- contributing to statistical moderation of school-based assessment results
- checking the accuracy of external assessment marking
- calculating the Derived Examination Scores.

## Step-by-Step Instructions for Completing the GAT

### Introduction

The first thing to note is that all instructions given on this booklet will also appear in writing on the GAT, so there's no need to memorise them. Supervisors will also help if students have problems with the instructions, but not with the questions themselves.

A copy of the front cover of the GAT the assessment criteria and instructions for the writing tasks, a copy of the multiple-choice answer sheet and instructions for answering multiple-choice questions are available. Copies of previous GAT examinations are available from the GAT archive page. (<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/gat/gat.aspx> )

### Permitted materials

An English and/or bilingual printed dictionary may be taken into the GAT; however, a thesaurus or a combined thesaurus-dictionary is not permitted. Electronic dictionaries and calculators are not allowed. Pens, pencils and an eraser to complete answers to the GAT will be required. Students must use a blue or black pen for the two Writing Tasks and a pencil for their responses on the Multiple-Choice Answer Sheet.

### Time and tasks

The GAT will take place in a single three-hour session. There will be two writing tasks and 70 multiple-choice questions.

While students may complete the tasks in any order it is suggested they complete the writing tasks first, then the multiple-choice questions. Bear in mind that any part of the test may be revisited at any time because the answers won't be collected until the end.

It is suggested that students divide the three hours into the following approximate time allocations.

Writing task 1	30 minutes
Writing task 2	30 minutes
Multiple-choice questions	2 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 hours</b>

## Writing tasks

**Writing task 1** will present written and graphical information in colour. The task will be to write a piece that presents the main information in this material. Students should not present an argument. Remember the writing is being assessed, not the extra knowledge students may have about the material. Students' writing will be judged on:

- how well they organise and present their understanding of the material
- how effectively they communicate the information
- how clearly they express themselves.

**Writing task 2** will present some statements on an issue. The task will be to develop a piece of writing presenting a point of view on the issue based on one or more of the statements. Students are free to include other knowledge or information they may have to support their view. In doing this task, students should aim to present reasons and arguments to support their view and to rebut opposing ideas. Students must also aim to communicate clearly and effectively to the reader. Students' writing will be judged on:

- the extent to which they develop their point of view in a reasonable and convincing way
- how effectively they express themselves

## Multiple-choice questions

The multiple-choice questions will cover mathematics, science, technology, humanities, the arts and social sciences. There will be 70 questions in this section, which will take about two hours to complete. Students should attempt every question. Marks will not be taken off for incorrect answers. Students must use a pencil on the answer sheet for multiple-choice questions. The instructions will show how to shade the boxes to indicate answers. The multiple-choice section will begin with some single questions, with the rest divided into groups of questions or units. Each unit will offer one or more pieces of information and a number of questions about that information.

## Tips on doing the GAT

- Read all the information carefully.
- Read each question carefully and try to pick out the key ideas and information.
- For the multiple-choice questions, try to quickly reject choices that appear wrong, then read the question again and select the answer most likely to be right.
- Attempt all questions and don't spend too much time on any one question. Questions can also be revisited later.

## **How GAT relates to school-based and external assessments**

### **School-based assessment and the GAT**

The VCAA applies statistical moderation procedures to all school-based assessments to even out the differences in marking standards that may occur from school to school. This is to ensure that the final results are comparable across the state and are fair to all students.

The statistical moderation process compares the level and spread of each school's assessments of its students in each study with the level and spread of the same students' scores in the external assessments, and adjusts the school scores if necessary.

In some studies, statistical moderation uses students' GAT scores as well as their scores for external assessments. This is done where it gives a better match with schools' school-based assessments throughout the State. The external assessment scores will always have the major influence in the statistical moderation calculations.

There are two key principles in whether and how the GAT is used.

1. The GAT components are only used if they make the moderation process more reliable in the sense that the external scores are a better predictor using the GAT scores than without them. The statistic R-square is used to measure the increase in reliability.
2. When used, the GAT components must not exert too much influence on study scores. A variety of tests are performed to determine the influence of the GAT, of which one test is that no more than 5% of study scores should vary by more than 2. To achieve this, the influence of the GAT is kept to the minimum optimal level.

The decision on whether to use the GAT is made separately for each school-based assessment.

### **External assessment and the GAT**

The VCE external assessment marking process is rigorous, carefully and expertly conducted, and designed to be fair to all students. VCE external assessment will be marked twice, by two different assessors. Each assessment is completed separately and each assessor does not know the marks given by the other assessor. If there is insufficient agreement between their marks, the paper is assessed by a third assessor.

If a student's score for an external assessment is significantly different from the score predicted by the GAT, school indicative grades and the scores for any other external assessment in the same study, their assessment will be assessed again by the Chief Assessor.

A student's score may go up or stay the same, but it will not go down as a result of this final check.

## **Derived Examination Scores and the GAT**

A student whose performance on an examination is affected by the onset of illness, accident or personal trauma may apply for a Derived Examination Score.

All applications for a Derived Examination Score are assessed by a trained, external panel. If an application is approved, a student's GAT scores will be used in the calculation of the Derived Examination Score.

## **2018 General Achievement Test and VCE written examination timetable**

The General Achievement Test (GAT) will be held on Wednesday 13 June 2018 from 10.00am to 1.15pm.

A GAT information brochure will be distributed to students when it arrives at school in May.

The 2018 VCE written examination timetable will be published on the VCAA website in May and the *VCE Exams Navigator 2018*, which will be distributed in July.