VCE Information

HANDBOOK

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OXLEY
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

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Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Assessing School	School responsible for providing the assessment for one or more units for a student, where the school differs from the 'home' school.
Authentication	Process of ensuring that the work submitted by students for assessment is their own. The student must follow the rules set by the VCAA to ensure that the teacher can authenticate the work.
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
Derived Examination Scores (DES)	DES is calculated by the VCAA and may be used as the student's examination result where the student has met the eligibility requirements for the provision. The DES is intended for the student who is ill or affected by other personal circumstances at the time of an examination and whose examination result is unlikely to be a fair or accurate indication of their learning or achievement in the study.
GAT	A test taken by all students doing a Unit 3 and 4 sequence. It is used by VCAA to check that a school's assessments and external examinations have been accurately assessed.
Home School	Student's major school. Responsible for ensuring that ALL their students have been allocated to an examination centre/room.
Outcomes	Outcomes are what a student must know, or be able to do, in order to satisfactorily complete a unit as specified in the Study Design.
SAC	School Assessed Coursework (SAC) is made up of a number of assessment activities specified in the Study Design. These activities are used to assess the learning outcomes.
SAT	School Assessed Tasks (SAT) are extended assessment tasks in studies such as Art, Visual Communication Design, Applied Computing: Software Development, where products and/or models are assessed.
Satisfactory Completion	For Satisfactory Completion of a unit, a student must demonstrate achievement of each of the outcomes for that unit as specified in the Study Design
Special Entry Access Schemes (SEAS-VTAC)	SEAS Applications are handled by the Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC) for tertiary entrance purposes. Students are eligible to apply for this if they experience continuing personal circumstances affecting their performance in their Year 12 program. Eligible students are advised to discuss their situation with their respective Year Level Coordinator or Careers Counsellor.
Special Provision (SEA- VCAA)	Special provisions are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities if their learning and assessment programs are affected by disability, illness, impairment or other circumstances. In the majority of these cases, our Learning Enhancement department works closely with families to ensure continuity of special provisions across the college. Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) applications must be made early in the year for students who require special provisions during the VCAA external examinations.
Student number	The unique number assigned to each student enrolled in VCE and VCE VET courses. Students should keep a record of their student number and keep the information confidential.

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

The VCE is the certificate that most students in Victoria receive on satisfactory completion of their secondary education. It is a qualification that is recognised around the world, normally completed over two years, including Year 11 and 12. The VCE provides pathways to further study or training at university or TAFE and to employment. It is through the VCE that a student can receive an ATAR or an overall ranking score and gain a university place.

Each school year is divided into two semesters and students are required to study units of work at both levels. The VCE units have been designed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). At Oxley Christian College, Year 11 students are required to study twelve units (six per semester) and at Year 12 ten units (five per semester). Exceptions to this requirement will only be approved by the VCE Coordinator under exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. Units 1 and 2 can be completed as single units, however, Units 3 and 4 must be studied as a sequence.

Eligibility for Award of the VCE

The VCE is awarded on the basis of satisfactory completion of units according to VCE program requirements. For VCE Units 3 and 4, evidence of achievement is collected by the teacher through a range of tasks, including School Assessed Coursework (SACs) or School Assessed Tasks (SATs) that are designated for the study. The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. SACs and SATs may be used to determine both satisfactory completion of the unit and assessment for a study score.

VCE Completion Requirements

The VCE requires the satisfactory completion of 16 semester-long units including:

- Three units from the English group, 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 once the English requirement has been met.

By the end of the two-year VCE most students will have completed a minimum of 22 units, typically 12 units in Year 11 and 10 units in Year 12.

Atypical VCE Programs

Completing VCE units without the calculation of a study score (unscored VCE) is only considered in response to individual need, such as illness or mental health, where a student's ability to complete a scored VCE will be affected. A student will still be required to be assessed for satisfactory completion of the units and will participate in all School-based Assessments but will not be awarded a result.

A student must be assessed for levels of achievement in two of the graded assessments in order to receive a study score for that subject. If a result is not provided for the unit, the student will not receive a study score.

When making their enrolment selection, students should consider the requirements for satisfactory completion and the award of the VCE. Not achieving graded assessments may limit a student's options for further training, study and work.

The VCE is normally completed over two years, but students may accumulate units over any number of years. It is possible for students returning as adults, and students who have received credit equivalent to a full Year 11 in another jurisdiction, to complete their VCE in a single year.

Fast-tracking a Unit 1 and 2 Study at Year 10

Students who have achieved a consistently high level of achievement in all Year 9 subjects and have demonstrated excellent work habits may apply to fast-track in a Unit 1 and 2 Study when they are in Year 10, with the understanding that they will usually continue on to the Unit 3 and 4 of the same Study. It is important that students, as with all VCE studies, see their fast-tracked subject as a two- year course.

Inclusion of a Unit 3 and 4 Study for Year 11 students

Students who have achieved a consistently high level of achievement in their fast-tracked Unit 1 and 2 Study at Year 10 and have demonstrated excellent work habits will be able to continue with the Unit 3 and 4 study in Year 11.

Students should only attempt one Unit 3 and 4 Study during Year 11. Exceptions to this require the approval of the VCE Coordinator.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

The ATAR is calculated by VTAC and is used for entry into university courses. This is a ranking of all students in the state and ranges from 0 to 99.99. If a student gets an ATAR above 90, then they are in the top 10% of the state.

The Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC) advises that satisfactory completion of a scored Unit 3–4 of an English group sequence is required for the calculation of a student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Administrative Guidelines

Introduction

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is a senior secondary certificate of education recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The VCE is overseen by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). The VCE includes VCE curriculum components and programs from VET qualifications and is designed to be completed over a minimum of 2 years.

Subject Selection

Students would normally complete the process for subject selection in Semester 2 each year, in preparation for the next year. However, in some circumstances, students may desire to make changes to their VCE subjects.

The final day for making changes to subject selection for Unit 1 and Unit 3/4 sequences is the Friday of Term 1 Week 1. No subject changes will be allowed after this date, except in exceptional cases.

The final day for making changes to subject selection for Unit 2 will be the Wednesday after the exam period.

If students experience difficulties with a study or workload, they should first speak to their subject teacher and/or Year Level Coordinator. If they require further assistance, they can speak with the VCE Coordinator. For specific help and advice regarding subject selection and tertiary entrance requirements, students should seek the assistance of the Careers Coordinator.

Satisfactory Completion of a Unit

The VCE is awarded based on satisfactory completion of units. To satisfactorily complete a VCE unit, students must demonstrate their achievement of the set of outcomes as specified in the study design.

Achievement of an outcome means:

- The work meets the required standard;
- The work was submitted on time (unless extension authorised);
- The work is clearly the student's own;
- There has been no major breach of rules (e.g. failure to meet attendance requirements).

If all outcomes are achieved, the student receives an S for the unit. A student may not be granted satisfactory completion if one or more of the above criteria is not met. In this instance, the student receives N for the unit.

Unsatisfactory Completion of an Outcome

If a student receives an N for an outcome, the student will be given the opportunity to redeem the N and show they have a satisfactory understanding of the course content and skills. The teacher will send an Academic Progress Notification letter home for parents to sign and return, which will explain the task the student will re-sit and the preparation that is required. Students normally re-sit these outcomes on a Tuesday or Thursday after school. If a student redeems the outcome and achieves an S, the original level of achievement or mark remains the same.

The VCE Coordinator will monitor the progress of all VCE students, and if a student receives three Ns for an outcome (either three re-sits over all subjects or sitting one SAC three times), the VCE Coordinator will bring their names before the Academic Progress Committee for discussion. An Academic Progress Warning letter will also be sent home to parents.

Attendance Policy

Students must attend the majority of class periods to undertake and complete learning outcomes and Coursework. This is a VCAA requirement for students to gain a satisfactory result in the subject.

All VCE units involve at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction. Students need to demonstrate sufficient class attendance to fulfil the time and work requirements of the unit. If a student has completed work but there has been a substantial breach of the school's attendance policy, the school may be unable to authenticate the student's work completed across the outcome.

When a student's work cannot be authenticated, the school must assign an N for the outcome or outcomes that cannot be authenticated.

As such, students must attend regularly and complete work in class time to allow teachers to make accurate judgements on authentication. Attendance records will be used as evidence to substantiate a breach of authentication.

At Oxley Christian College, it is expected that all students should be attending more than 90% of class time.

If students are absent for more than a total of 3 days each term, they should submit a doctor's certificate for any further absences during that term to their year level coordinator. In instances where there has been a substantial breach of attendance rules, the school may assign an N to the unit, by assigning an N to the outcome in which the student was away for without a valid reason.

Statistical Moderation of Coursework Assessment

Moderation is a process of ensuring that the same assessment standards are applied to students from every school doing a particular study. Statistical Moderation is a process for adjusting schools' assessments to the same standard, while maintaining the students' rank order given by the school.

To ensure comparability of school assessments of Coursework from different schools, the VCAA will apply statistical procedures to each moderation group, study by study. Moderation groups are defined as the cohort of students in each school undertaking the study, or the total cohort of students from schools that combine for the purposes of assessment and moderation.

In the first instance, subject teachers will mark coursework tasks and provide students with an indication of their achievement. However, final grades will be subject to change through the moderation process. Students will be provided with the raw scores on assessment tasks in each subject. Raw scores are a preliminary result only. The total result for all school assessed coursework and SATs in a study will be statistically moderated against the end-of-year external assessment (i.e. examination) results.

Students will receive a study score out of 50 for each study undertaken. This is a ranking to indicate how you have performed in comparison with the rest of the state. A study score of above 37 indicates that the student is approximately in the top 15% of students in the study. A study score of above 40 indicates that a student is approximately in the top 8% of the students in the study.

SAC / SAT Dates

SAC / SAT dates for each Unit 3/4 subject are listed in the 'Course Outline and Timeline' for each subject, distributed to all students taking that subject, by the class teacher, at the beginning of the semester. These timelines provide a general guide as to when teachers plan to conduct assessments. In peak assessment periods (e.g. Term 1 Week 5), it is common for students to have a number of SACs / SATs to complete, depending on their chosen subjects. As such, students are strongly advised to begin preparation for SACs early and plan a balanced workload.

A SAC Calendar for both Year 11 and Year 12 will be distributed at the start of each semester detailing when SACs will occur throughout the semester.

Students should note that there will be a degree of flexibility in the scheduling of assessment dates, particularly when they are published at the beginning of a semester. Excursions and/or other extracurricular activities that are organised later in the semester can impact course delivery. As professionals, teachers may expertly adapt the pace of course delivery, to cater effectively to their student cohorts each year. These may impact planned assessment dates.

In all cases where SACs / SATs tasks need to be rescheduled:

- Students will be advised of the rescheduled date by the subject teacher;
- It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they know when assessments will occur.

Student Absence from SAC / SAT

Students with a valid reason need to complete a 'VCE Reschedule Form' and submit it to the relevant Year Level Coordinator together with any documentation (e.g. medical certificate), who will consider the application in conjunction with the VCE Coordinator. For example, Year 10 students fast-tracking a Unit 1 / 2 study (which is normally undertaken in Year 11) must submit the form to the Year 11 Coordinator.

i. The VCE Coordinator retains the right to approve an application when a student has been absent for non-medical reasons and there are valid reasons for the absence which ought to be taken into consideration.
ii. In such cases, students will normally be required to complete the task (or in some cases an alternative task) at a time determined by the subject teacher and VCE Coordinator, following their return to school. Please note that if a SAC has been re-scheduled, the same regulations apply in terms of student absence. If a student is absent from a re-scheduled SAC without a valid reason, the student will be awarded an 'N' for the assessment. See the next section below for further details.

Students without a valid reason

i. Any student who fails to complete a SAC on the designated day during the designated time, without a satisfactory reason will be awarded an 'N' for the assessment.
ii. Where a SAC extends over more than one day and the student is absent for part of their assessment without a valid excuse, no extension of time will be granted, that is the student will have less than the designated time to complete the task.
iii. Where the student's absence from the SAC has resulted in learning outcomes not being met for the Unit, the student will be required to complete the task (or an alternative task) at a time and place determined by the subject teacher and VCE Coordinator.

Late Submission of Coursework

Students with a valid reason for an extension

i. All students must provide a medical certificate to the subject teacher for cases where extensions or SAC re-schedules are requested due to unforeseen and prolonged health impairments. In cases where extensions are requested due to unforeseen and significant events (of a nonmedical nature), students are required to provide documentation to the VCE coordinator for consideration.
ii. In special cases, if students hand in Coursework on time and fail to meet the criteria for satisfactorily completing the task, the subject teacher will issue an Academic Progress Notification, for the student to

re-submit the work, in order to gain a satisfactory ('S') completion. Students will be given an opportunity for re-submission to gain an 'S'.

End of Semester

The end of Semester 1 for VCE students occurs at the end of Semester 1 examination week. The end of Semester 2 for Year 12 students will be on Year 12 Final Day. Year 11 students are required to attend examinations and Head Start programs.

All coursework for S/N reporting must be completed by these dates. Failure to do so will require all students to come in on a non-school day to complete assessment tasks.

Assessment

a. The internal assessment reporting for a Unit at Oxley Christian College will be based on Coursework and specific assessment tasks as advised by the subject teachers.
b. For external assessments, the VCAA will issue a statement of results to schools, in the last week of the school year. The statement of results will record S (satisfactory), or N (not satisfactory), for each Unit undertaken. For students completing Units 3 and 4, the VCAA and VTAC offer three options for accessing VCE results and the ATAR: internet, mail, and app. The VCAA also offers an email option for accessing VCE and VCAL results.

The VCAA and the VTAC encourage all students to register for access to the VCE Results and ATAR service before the release of results.

Lost or Damaged Work

Any student who has lost or damaged work will need to complete a Statutory Declaration form, which is to be signed by an authorised person. In such a case, the VCE Coordinator and teacher shall determine the assessment result (S/N).

Authentication of Work

All students must submit work which is clearly their own. No part of a student's work may be copied from any other person's work and undue assistance from any other person must not be given to the student. The student must acknowledge all resources used, including texts and source material. You are encouraged to notify your teacher if you are receiving help from a tutor.

Unacceptable Levels Of Assistance Include:

- Use of or copying of another person's work or other resources without acknowledgment;
- Actual corrections or improvements made by another person;
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Any work completed outside of class must be authenticated by the teacher. In the case of SATs, the subject teacher will complete an 'Authentication Record for School Assessed Tasks' which monitors the development of the work and records at least three sightings during class time. On completion, a 'Declaration of Authenticity' form will be signed by the teacher and the student. This declaration states that all unacknowledged work is the student's own.

Should any teacher suspect that work is not authentic, it will be reported to the VCE Coordinator who will set up an interview with the student, the Coordinator of Assessment & Reporting and/or the Deputy Principal-Head of Senior School and appropriate staff members. The student will be asked to demonstrate that the work is his/her own.

Where a breach of authenticity is established, the VCAA empowers the school to impose penalties, ranging from making other arrangements for completion of the work to cancellation of the result. Any breach of rules will be reported to the VCAA. Students who knowingly assist other students in the breach of rules may also be penalised.

Students have the right of appeal to the VCAA if the work has not been authenticated by the teacher, but only if plans or drafts of the work have been sighted and recorded during the period when the work was being undertaken.

The use of Artificial Intelligence is discouraged for work that will be graded. If a student uses AI for work that contributes to a SAC, this will be deemed to be not the student's own work.

General Assessment Test (GAT)

Every year all students undertaking a Unit 3&4 sequence of VCE or VCE VET are required to complete the General Assessment Test. This is generally run in mid-June.

This test is broken into two sections:

- Section A: Basic Literacy and Numeracy test
- Section B: General Knowledge test

This test is not able to be studied for, but it is important that students try their best as the student's individual results are used by the VCAA for moderation of results as well as gaining and Derived Examination Score (DES). It is also used to measure literacy and numeracy skills against the Victorian standards.

Results for the GAT will be communicated to the student as part of their overall results package at the end of the year.

Special Provision and Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)

Where a student has legitimate grounds through illness or other special circumstances, 'Special Provision' can be applied for to assist the student in completing Coursework School Assessed Tasks and examinations.

- For eligible students, this may result in:
- The student being able to undertake the task at another time;
- An extension of time being granted for completing the task;
- Access to the same Outcome/s by setting a substitute task of similar scope and demand;
- Allowing the use of special arrangements to complete an assessment such as the use of a computer, extra reading and/or writing time, rest breaks and separate room in SACs or examinations.

Coursework assessment offers teachers and schools the flexibility to make special arrangements for students who are unable to complete a scheduled coursework task or whose achievement on a coursework task is affected by illness or other factors.

VCAA SEA Applications

The closing date for application of SEAs for all VCAA external assessments (n.b. this applies only to students undertaking Units 3 and 4 subjects, who will be undertaking the GAT and the end of year external assessments) is usually in March each year.

The VCE Coordinator will coordinate all applications for Special Provision. Where appropriate, Parent Support Groups will be set up between the parent, teachers and the student through the Learning Enhancement Department.

Students Seeking EAL status

There are specific eligibility requirements outline by VCAA for students to enroll in English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Units 3&4.

For a student to complete EAL, they:

- Will not have resided in Australia or another predominately English-speaking country for a total period of more than 7 years before 1 January in the year the student will be undertaking Units 3 and 4 EAL AND
- Has been enrolled in schools where English has been the student's major language of instruction for a total period of 7 years or less over the period of their education.

A letter is sent out to parents at the end of Term 2 when students are in Year 11 in order to give enough time for parents to collect the required documentation. Documentation should be returned to the VCE coordinator by September before they start Year 12 for this to be submitted to VCAA by the due date.

Applying for a Derived Examination Score (DES)

If a student becomes ill or experiences a traumatic event in the period leading up to the examinations, he / she may apply to have your examination result determined by the VCAA. A student cannot apply for a Derived Examination

Score on the basis of long term chronic illnesses (such as glandular fever) unless the condition worsens during the examination period.

The Derived Examination Score (DES) is calculated using the student's moderated school assessments, GAT scores and the Indicative Grades provided by the subject teacher (i.e. what the teacher thinks the student might achieve on the examination, based on class work and practice examinations). If the student is well enough to sit for the examination and the DES is higher than the actual examination score, then the DES will become the final score. Otherwise, the actual examination score will be used.

To apply for Special Provision and a DES, students must apply through the VCE Coordinator. All applications need to be supported by the relevant documentation and submitted as soon as possible. Applications must be substantiated with evidence from an independent professional, e.g. doctor, social worker, police officer or psychologist. The application will be forwarded to the VCAA who will consider if the student is eligible and will either approve or refuse the application.

Assisting your children to manage exam anxiety and stress

Preparing to tackle exam stress and anxiety is not just about learning strategies to use during an exam, it is also about the way students look after themselves during the lead-up to exam time.

What is stress?

- Stress is an emotional/bodily reaction to physical, psychological or emotional demands.
- Stress is a fact of life.
- Managed stress can become useful and healthy (viewing events as challenges).
- Unmanaged stress can become distressful and unhealthy (viewing events as threats).

What are some of the causes of stress?

- Expectations we place on ourselves.
- Expectations of others.
- Our physical environment — noise, movement, weather, season changes.
- Our internal environment — academic pressure, frustration, not enough time, decisions, social life.

What are some symptoms of unmanaged stress?

- Increased heart rate and blood pressure; feeling tense, irritable, fatigued, or depressed.
- Lack of interest and ability to concentrate, apathy.
- Avoidance behaviours: abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco.

What are ways to manage stress effectively?

- Add balance to life; don't overdo studies or play.
- Know and accept what kind of person you are: strengths and weaknesses.
- Get a thorough physical exam from your General Practitioner.
- Take 'circuit breakers', especially during study.
- Expand your support network, reinforce friendships.
- Exercise regularly.
- Watch your breathing.
- Walk loosely and walk more.
- Learn and practise relaxation skills.
- Study each subject regularly for moderate periods of time.
- Discuss problems with friends, family, or a counsellor.
- Prayer.

The Lead-Up to Exams

Under the stress of study and examinations, students often neglect their health. It is a common belief that in order to cope with the workload and 'cram' as much information in as possible, it is necessary to make temporary changes to, and sacrifices in, lifestyle. This includes not making time to prepare and eat proper meals, not sticking to usual exercise routines and leisure activities and altering sleeping patterns. As a result, many students find that they become drained, run-down, or ill, right in the middle of the exam period, precisely when they need to be at their best.

The aim should be to always maintain their physical efficiency, particularly around exam time. This requires:

- Regular nutritious meals.
- Regular sleep.
- Regular exercise.
- Regular 'rest and relaxation pauses' and leisure time.

These activities are beneficial for exams because they:

- Maintain their energy levels.
- Help them to stay well.
- Enhance their concentration.

Diet Hints

It is important that they set aside time to prepare and eat simple, nutritious meals as part of their study schedule.

Try to keep away from caffeine products (like coffee, tea and cola drinks). Encourage them to have a jug of water by their desk and try drinking herbal teas instead.

Avoid eating too much starchy or junk food. While quick and easy, they are low in energy and tend to make students sleepy.

Sleep Hints

Try to maintain their usual sleep schedule during the lead-up to exams and the exam period itself. Depriving themselves of sleep during this time with the intention of catching up after the exams does not help. If anything, this is a time when they will need more sleep, not less.

Towards the end of the day, encourage them to wind down slowly so that their mind and body can adjust to a slower pace. They should finish their study period with re-reading of notes rather than intense revision.

Exercise Hints

Students can't hope to study effectively or do their best in exams if they spend too much time locked away in a room behind a desk. Far from taking valuable time away from their studies, exercise will actually enhance their effectiveness as well as give them a much-needed break from 'the grind'.

Students should include a brisk walk, or other exercise that they prefer, in their study program at least three times per week.

Students should schedule hourly breaks away from their desk — the average attention span is only about 40-50 minutes. Encourage students to use their breaks to move around and get their blood circulating. This increases the oxygen flow to the brain and will help them to stay alert. Simple exercises such as stretching arms and legs, bending upper body and twisting torso will help achieve this.

Students should do some regular tension-relieving stretches, especially for the neck, arms, shoulders and back.

Leisure Hints

Students should decide on the activities which they find most enjoyable and rewarding and include these in their study program. Dropping these things in favour of increased study time can make students feel resentful and may negatively impact their motivation to sit down and work.

Be realistic — students won't be able to do everything they enjoy during exams but at the same time they won't be able to just study, study, study. Try to find a manageable balance.

Advice You Can Pass On To Your Child

It is not events themselves that create anxiety or stress, it is our reaction to the events. Our thoughts or perceptions about a situation and our ability to handle it trigger responses in our body, responses which lead to us feeling anxious and stressed. The positive aspect about this is that just as we can 'create' a stress response, we can also learn to turn it off.

You can reduce your stress and anxiety either by addressing the situation or event that the stress is a response to, or by dealing with the symptoms of stress directly.

Consider this question: *"Is my anxiety/stress realistic and in proportion to what is going on?":*

That is, do you really have something to be anxious about? For example, if you have an exam tomorrow, it's worth 70% of the year's marks and you have not started to study yet, then you have every reason to be anxious and stressed. If, however, you have been studying steadily over the year for this exam and are basically up-to-date with the work, then anything more than a certain amount of nervousness might be a bit unrealistic.

If the answer to the question is *"yes":*

You need to focus on the task at hand and put all your effort into getting things done. Until you have done the necessary work, or the exam is over, there will be little that you can do to relieve the symptoms of anxiety. After all, there is good reason for you to feel that way.

Try to avoid being afraid of the stress and anxiety. Instead put it to use in your favour. Anxiety and stress feel uncomfortable; hence the desire to get rid of these symptoms can be just the motivation you need to do the work that you have been putting off or avoiding. Anxiety often provides the impetus and the energy for us to do tasks that we otherwise would not undertake.

Break the task that you are anxious about into smaller components so that you can focus on achieving small goals rather than feeling overwhelmed by the idea that you have to conquer the whole mountain all at once.

If the answer to the question is *"no":*

You can then confront the anxiety as a problem in itself and look at what you can do to relieve the symptoms.

Recognise that a certain amount of anxiety and stress is to be expected and has a functional role to play. It forces us to be focused on the task at hand and helps to produce optimal performance.

Try to notice what thoughts you are having about the upcoming exam/s. Very often the thoughts which are producing the anxiety will be very self-defeating, critical and pessimistic in nature. Once you have identified what these are, try to catch yourself whenever you start focusing on one of these negative thoughts and replace them with positive 'self-talk'. This is not easy to do, especially at first, but with some determination and practice you will find that changing your self-talk about the exam/s can make all the difference.

Anxiety and stress often has a lot to do with how the people around you react and support you. If you feel that people could be more helpful or constructive, discuss this with them and let them know how you would like them to respond instead.

Keep reminding yourself of the following points:

- Exams are not set with the aim of making people fail – they are designed to test what you know, not what you don't know.
- Considering that most people end up passing, exams can't be as unmanageable as you might perceive them to be.
- You will never know everything – focus on knowing the main points and ideas.
- You will never feel totally prepared. Make an honest attempt to do your best and accept that you do not have to (and can't) give perfection.

Notes:

oxley.vic.edu.au

15-49 Old Melbourne Road, Chirnside Park VIC 3116
Phone: +61 3 9727 9900 | Absence Line: +61 3 9727 9922 | office@oxley.vic.edu.au

Life Ministry Centre Ltd, trading as Oxley Christian College
ABN: 25 005 670 682 / 008
CRICOS Provider Code: 00331 C
CRICOS Course Codes: 016943K Primary Years 1–6 | 016944J Secondary Years 7–12