



VICTORIAN TERTIARY ADMISSIONS CENTRE

40 Park Street South Melbourne, VIC 3205

T: +61 3 99261020

www.vtac.edu.au

Twitter: @vtacguide • **Facebook:** facebook.com/vtacguide • **YouTube:** youtube.com/vtacmedia

Media release: VTAC supports Victorian students' tertiary journey through the COVID-19 pandemic via the Special Entry Access Scheme

The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) has announced a streamlined process for year 12 students affected by remote learning who are completing a Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) application as part of their application for university, TAFE, and independent college courses in Victoria.

The Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) is an existing program used by 26 Victorian tertiary institutions to grant special consideration for factors causing educational disadvantage within various categories. The existing categories already include the impact of COVID-19 in various ways:

- **Category 2 (disadvantaged financial background)** – includes receipt of JobSeeker payment or any other financial disadvantage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Category 3 (disability or medical condition)** – includes the impact on a student of having COVID-19 disease and all mental health conditions including those diagnosed with COVID-19
- **Category 4 (difficult circumstances)** – includes all other impacts of the pandemic including remote learning issues, additional caring responsibilities for family members, family violence, and any other factors beyond the applicant's control

As part of Category 4, a **new simplified process** allows students to use checkboxes to rate their level of impact in five areas related to remote learning. This replaces the usual requirement for a written statement describing the impact on the student, making it easier than ever for students to apply for special consideration in relation to the impacts of remote learning. The process for supporting evidence has also been simplified, with schools providing information directly to VTAC to support the student's application.

The simplified remote learning process covers issues related to:

- Insufficient or unreliable internet access
- Lack of access to a laptop or tablet for remote learning, or having to share a device with a sibling
- Lack of access to practical materials needed for a specific subject
- Lack of a suitable or quiet study space at home

"All year 12 students have been affected by the requirement to learn from home throughout this year," said VTAC Director Catherine Wills. "However, VTAC understands that the impact of remote learning has not been the same for all students. Simply because of their home situation, many students have had a different remote learning experience to those who would normally sit next to them in the same classroom. That's why we've introduced a

simple way for students to let us know about the impact of remote learning on their specific circumstances via a streamlined process in the SEAS application.”

For impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic beyond remote learning, students can apply in the relevant category and provide written information as part of their application as they normally would.

The SEAS process does not include universal impacts of COVID-19, such as having to learn from home, having too much screen time, and social isolation. These factors affected all year 12 students, so are already reflected in the ATAR because it is a rank, comparing them to other students this year. The ATAR is not comparing this year's students to those who have completed the VCE in a year without a pandemic.

The announcements made today by the Minister for Education, the Hon. James Merlino, relate to adjustments to VCE study scores which will be made by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority prior to these scores being used by VTAC to calculate an ATAR. This is separate from consideration provided via VTAC's Special Entry Access Scheme, which is applied at the time of course entry, and not reflected in VCE Results and the ATAR.

Further information about the application process is available on the VTAC website. VTAC is also running a series of live webinars to support students and their parents with information about the application process: vtac.edu.au/events

Media queries: Tamara Barth, Director External Relations | tamara.barth@vtac.edu.au