

# Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education  
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## PUTTING SENIOR STUDENTS' LITERACY AND NUMERACY TO THE TEST

As part of the Andrews Labor Government's reform of the VCE and VCAL system, Victorian senior secondary students will have their literacy and numeracy skills measured against new standards in a reformed General Achievement Test (GAT) from this year.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the changes to the GAT – to be held on Wednesday, 7 September this year – which will explicitly report students' literacy and numeracy scores to bring the Victorian GAT in line with similar tests in other states and territories.

First announced in 2018 as part of a \$187 million package of support for the the broader review and reform of senior secondary pathways to be phased in over the coming years, the new standards will indicate whether students have demonstrated the literacy and numeracy skills expected of someone completing secondary school – giving another indication of their readiness to move onto further education, training or employment.

While the new standards will be reported on students' VCE or VCAL certificates, they will not contribute to a student's ATAR unless the GAT is required to calculate a score – for example, if a student requires a Derived Examination Score after missing an exam due to illness.

The slightly later test date provides the time required to ensure the revised GAT is valid and reliable and for teachers and students to understand the changes – with the test expected to return to its traditional June date from 2023.

The GAT will be split into two sections: Section A will assess literacy and numeracy skills; and Section B will assess skills in English, mathematics, science, technology, the arts and humanities, with an increased focus on critical and creative thinking skills.

As in all previous years, no special study will be required for the GAT. Past study of subjects like English, mathematics, science and history prepares students for the test by building their general knowledge and skills in writing, numeracy and reasoning.

Around 90,000 students will sit the GAT this year, including Senior VCAL students who will participate for the first time, along with all students enrolled in one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequence.

The change comes as Victoria prepares to transition to a new integrated senior secondary certificate from 2023, which will bring together VCE and VCAL within the *VCE Vocational Major* and *Victorian Pathways Certificate* options.

The new certificates will give all students better support and flexibility to study what they want, alongside the key academic skills to prepare them for the jobs of the future, further education or training.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"When Victorian students leave school, it's vital they are able to demonstrate basic literacy and numeracy skills – making sure they're ready for further education or to get straight into the workforce."*

*"We heard from employers that they wanted simple and clear indicators on the job readiness of young people – building on our changes to the VCE system that will give students the academic and vocational skills they need."*

### Quotes attributable to VCAA CEO Stephen Gniel

*"Literacy and numeracy skills are developed and assessed over the course of students' education, and the GAT will provide an additional measure of literacy and numeracy skills as students complete their senior school education."*

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