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ASSESSMENT & SPECIAL PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

**Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf
(Victorian Branch) Inc.**



ASSESSMENT & SPECIAL PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

This publication is intended for:

- *Teachers of the Deaf who are school-based, or Visiting Teachers from across all sectors*
- *Teachers of students with hearing loss in mainstream schools*
- *Teachers responsible for the administration of both school-based and external assessments*
- *VCE/VET providers*

Terms used throughout this publication:

Students with hearing loss refers to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, whether their loss is sensorineural, conductive, mixed, or auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANSO). It includes bilateral and unilateral single sided, permanent, or fluctuating, and encompasses all degrees of hearing loss.

Students with hearing loss includes students who use spoken language, and students who use Australian Sign Language (Auslan).

Teachers of the Deaf includes teachers from the Department of Education (DE) - who are based in Schools for the Deaf, Deaf Facilities in mainstream schools, and Visiting Teachers who visit children with hearing loss in their local school. In the Catholic education system, Teachers of the Deaf may be based in a campus of a School for the Deaf or be a Visiting Teacher/Learning Consultant (Hearing Impaired). Teachers of the Deaf also includes teachers based in independent schools and independent school Deaf Facilities (also known as Deaf Integration Units or Hearing Units), and those who provide a private Visiting Teacher service.

Information in this booklet has been compiled from official documentation by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and from recommendations by Teachers of the Deaf.

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CONTENTS

ASSESSMENT & SPECIAL PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS	I
Terms used throughout this publication:	i
CONTENTS	II
INTRODUCTION	1
Special Provision	1
Evidence for adjustments	3
WHY ARE ADJUSTMENTS NECESSARY?	4
Impact of Hearing Loss on Receptive Language - Listening	4
Eligibility for EAL English	6
Students who are deaf or hard of hearing	6
Impact of Hearing Loss on Receptive Language - Auslan	6
SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM, SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENTS, VCE, VCE VET, VCE VOCATIONAL MAJOR (VCE VM) AND VPC	9
Eligibility	9
Strategies	9
Course Completion	9
SPECIAL PROVISION IN THE VICTORIAN PATHWAY CERTIFICATE (VPC)	11
Special Provision for classroom learning and school-based assessment	11
Supporting students with additional needs	11
Classroom Learning	12
School-based Assessments	13
Resources	14
Assessments in Music	14
SPECIAL PROVISION IN EXTERNAL EXAMS	16
VCE Listening Exams, including Languages, Music, Dance, Theatre Studies & VCE VET Sound Production	16
Preparation for the Exam	16
During the Exam	17
Panel Assessments (e.g. for live assessments in Languages, Dance, Drama, Music, Theatre Studies & VET Sound Production)	17
VCE, VCE VET, & GAT Written Exams	18
Clarifiers	18
Role of the Clarifier	20
Clarifier Examination Notes	20
Auslan Interpreters	21
Separate Room	23
Extra Working Time	23
Rest Breaks	23
Assistive technology in VCE, VCE VET and VM exams	24
APPLYING FOR SPECIAL PROVISION	25
Possible Adjustments	25
Providing Evidence	25
Recommendations and supporting information from Specialist Teacher	26
Listening Exams	26
Clarifier	27
Auslan Interpreter	27
Extra Time	28
Rest Breaks	28
Separate room	28

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	29
Early engagement.....	29
NAPLAN 2025	30
Disability Adjustment Codes (DAC).....	30
NAPLAN Support Person.....	31
Oral/Sign Support.....	31
Assistive Technology	31
Extra Time	32
Rest Breaks.....	32
Alternative Items (audio and visual) (school approved).....	32
Audio.....	32
Principals' Responsibilities	33
CONTACTS	34
REFERENCES	36

INTRODUCTION

Students with hearing loss may require adjustments and/or special provision to be put in place so that they can access learning and demonstrate their knowledge in assessments. These assessments include school-based tests throughout their school years, School Assessed Coursework (SAC), and other assessment as part of the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and some parts of the VCE Vocational Major (VCEVM) which do not require approval by VCAA.

External exams such as NAPLAN, VCE, VCE VET, VET National, and the GAT do require formal applications for special provision and are detailed in this document.

Some adjustments may be as simple as sitting at the front to enable the student to access instructions accurately and be able to hear announcements such as how much time is remaining. Alternatively, the student may require a separate room with good acoustics to effectively utilise their hearing technology for a listening task. Some students may also require additional time, or additional support to access and process assessment tasks.

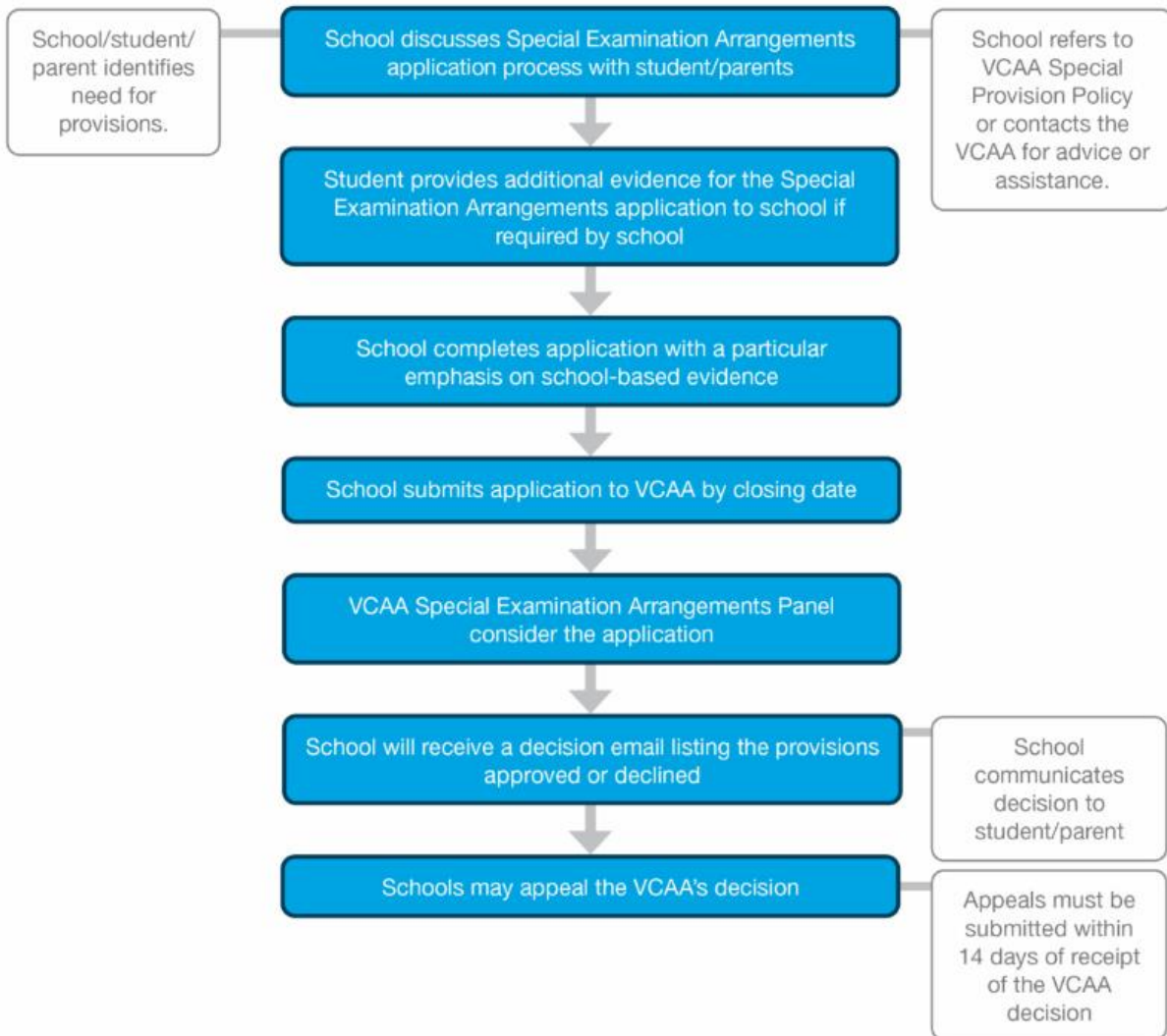
Special Provision

Procedures must be established to identify students who may require special provision to ensure consistent and fair decisions are made about appropriate assistance. Application procedures for special provision must be given in writing to all students and the school must retain the necessary documentation used to support decisions.

Students may apply to their school for special provision for classroom learning and school-based assessment. If a student's application for special provision for classroom learning is rejected in full or in part, the student should be advised in writing of the reasons for the decision within 14 days. The student can appeal the decision within 14 days of receiving the advice.

The application process is outlined in the graphic below:

How to apply



(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a)

Special provision in external exams should reflect existing adjustments and supports used in the classroom. These adjustments for external examinations should be trialed and used at the school prior to submitting any application and are recommended for the support of a student with hearing loss throughout their education. Records should be kept of all these adjustments.

Special provision for exams is an example of substantial adjustments for students with a hearing loss.

Evidence for adjustments

VCAA requires evidence from a qualified practitioner indicating the type of hearing loss including:

- an unaided audiogram and report
- supporting information and recommendations from a specialist teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service or school for hearing-impaired students (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a)

Students with hearing loss may have difficulties with access to, and accuracy in, hearing the following parts of assessments:

- general examination instructions and finish times of exams
- exams that have elements requiring listening
- reading or understanding the language of the questions
- completing tests within time limits

The Disability Standards for Education (2005) outline an obligation for education providers to make reasonable adjustments.

“Adjustments are actions taken to enable a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as other students. This is fundamental to ensuring that students with disability do not experience discrimination. Depending on the circumstances, adjustments can be made to practices, services, policies, or procedures in Australian educational settings” (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2021).

WHY ARE ADJUSTMENTS NECESSARY?

Impact of Hearing Loss on Receptive Language - Listening

“Listening” can be thought of as involving one’s ears but it also has the broader meaning of “receptive language.” With this second meaning, language is received through listening and speechreading.

The nature of hearing loss is that not all sounds will be heard clearly, even with assistive listening devices, and there is frequently distortion of sounds. Hearing aids/cochlear implants do not overcome this. Instead, they only amplify what a student can hear; they do not restore hearing. Speech may be soft, some sounds such as those with a higher frequency e.g., “s” or “t” sounds that appear in the weaker syllables of words may not be detected. The result is that information can be fragmented and children may experience a listening gap (Anderson, 2014).

There are many impacts associated with reduced sound discrimination. Any degree of hearing loss, with or without amplification, results in the need for greater effort in listening. This continual increased effort contributes to listening fatigue. Students with hearing loss expend additional concentration and cognitive engagement to access information.

This leaves them with fewer cognitive resources for completing other important mental tasks, like remembering what was just said in a sentence, maintain attention on the teacher and ignoring classroom distractions. (Davis et al., 2021).

Children with a hearing loss have to exert greater listening effort than children with normal hearing, potentially leading to poorer sentence recognition and lower processing speed in listening tasks. Moreover, children are more affected by unfavourable noise conditions than adults as classroom teaching often takes place in a reverberant and noisy environment, requiring considerable listening effort. (Adams et al., 2023).

For children with hearing loss, the high level of listening effort required to remain engaged and attentive may increase their risk for developing listening-related fatigue. The modern-day classroom with fast-paced instruction, use of multimedia, and small group interactions, can be mentally challenging for all children – but especially for children with hearing loss who, in addition to reduced audibility, may also present with language delays (Camarata et al., 2018; Tomblin et al., 2015) or other disabilities (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2014) that have the potential to affect their ability to process spoken language (Davis et al., 2021).

Higher cognitive engagement is required to process both auditory and visual cues, especially in noisy classrooms. Information needs to be mentally rehearsed so it can be stored in short- and long-term memory. The ability to watch the speaker improves speech understanding and may reduce some listening effort, but many other factors impact on this access. Listeners who are better speechreaders/lipreaders benefit from visual clues, however these do not provide clear information on all sounds/words. The processing of visual clues requires more cognitive resources;

effort levels increase and speech recognition is slower. Students need to have typical or better working memory capacity to do this successfully.

Listening and speechreading/lipreading assumes knowledge of language and vocabulary. It is difficult to speechread/lipread language or vocabulary that you don't already know. Acquisition of vocabulary is challenging and often negatively impacted by hearing loss. It is common for students with hearing loss to be unable to hear conversations or other students' questions or comments consistently. Students are required to constantly utilise semantic and syntactic clues to make sense of what they hear and fill in the gaps of their fragmented signal. This is more challenging if language levels do not match those of their peers.

A range of factors can influence speechreading/lipreading effectiveness. Some of these are:

Speaker

- *facial expressions*
- *diction*
- *body language*
- *speech rate*
- *familiarity to the speechreader/lipreader (the student)*
- *accent*
- *facial characteristics (e.g., beard, moustache)*
- *speech prosody (intonation, stress and rhythm)*
- *objects in or over the mouth (e.g., tongue studs, food, pens/pencils)*

Message

- *length*
- *syntactic complexity*
- *frequency of word usage*
- *shared homophones (words which are spelled and articulated the same)*
- *heteronyms (words which are spelled the same but articulated differently)*
- *context*
- *words borrowed from other languages*

Environment

- *viewing angle (It is difficult to speechread/lipread from the side.)*
- *lighting*
- *distance*
- *background noise*
- *room acoustics*
- *distractions*

Speechreader/lipreader (the student)

- *speechreading/lipreading skill*
- *residual hearing*
- *use of appropriate amplification*
- *stress profile (level of confidence)*

- *attentiveness*
- *fatigue*
- *motivation to understand*
- *knowledge of cultural and social conventions*
- *language skills*
- *prior knowledge*
- *uncorrected vision impairment (Adapted from Tye-Murray, 2015, p. 211)*

Eligibility for EAL English

One of the adjustments for students with hearing loss is eligibility to complete VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing

“Students seeking EAL status on the grounds of being deaf or hard of hearing must produce evidence of a hearing test administered by the Australian Government Hearing Services Program or an equivalent body no more than 2 calendar years before the year of enrolment in a Unit 3–4 sequence. The audiogram and accompanying report submitted must show that the student has a hearing loss of 60 decibels or greater in their better ear. Other aspects of hearing loss, such as issues relating to sound frequencies, should be noted in the report. The report should be written in an accessible language, with the implications of the audiogram results clearly explained” (VCE Administrative Handbook 2025b, p.54).

The Visiting Teacher Service must also ascertain a student’s EAL status and eligibility for assistance based on the grounds of being deaf or hard of hearing or being enrolled in a school for the deaf or hard of hearing or a recognised unit or facility for the deaf or hard of hearing attached to a registered school. (VCE Administrative Handbook 2025b, p.55).

Impact of Hearing Loss on Receptive Language - Auslan

Auslan is the term for **Australian Sign Language**. It was coined by Trevor Johnston, the compiler of the first Auslan dictionary. Auslan is the sign language of the Australian Deaf community. It is a complete, natural, visual, spatial language that has linguistic properties and grammar that are different from English.

Students may receive Auslan directly from a teacher who uses Auslan or their education may be mediated through an Auslan interpreter. The use of an Auslan interpreter requires increased effort and contributes to fatigue. Students using an interpreter expend additional concentration and cognitive engagement to access information while also needing to pay attention to what is happening around them. Auslan interpreting occurs simultaneously, unlike the usual practice of spoken language interpreting, where one language is interpreted following the other language, i.e., sequentially. Interpreting in Auslan is not a word-by-word translation due to the different grammatical structures of Auslan and English. It cannot be voiced as this changes the integrity of Auslan. There is a time lag as the interpreter

processes the information, provides the visual language and vocabulary, and so will typically be signing one to two sentences behind a speaker. Therefore, students sometimes don't get the opportunity to answer questions unless the teacher is familiar with how to use an interpreter appropriately.

"The teacher is often speaking at the language and cognitive level of the hearing students. For many deaf and hard of hearing students, this may be an appropriate level. However, some deaf students have language and vocabulary skills that are delayed compared with their hearing peers" (Schick, n.d.).

In the classroom, students may need scaffolding. "By scaffolding, the interpreter provides the necessary vocabulary, definitions and background information to expand on previously learned concepts and clarify new concepts and terminology..." (Schick, n.d.).

Receptive language (Auslan) can be influenced by a range of factors. Some of these are:

Message

- *length*
- *syntactic complexity*
- *frequency of word usage*
- *context*
- *words borrowed from other languages*
- *using signs unfamiliar to the student*
- *a delay between the spoken message and the signed interpretation*

Environment

- *viewing angle (It's difficult to read fingerspelling from the back or side.)*
- *lighting*
- *distance*
- *visual distractors*
-

Signer (Student)

- *Auslan competency*
 - age of language acquisition
 - access to Auslan outside of the school environment
 - access to appropriate language models(There will be a difference between a student who has parents who are fluent in the language and is exposed to many and varied signing deaf people – compared with a student who acquired Auslan at a later age and has no one outside of the school environment who uses Auslan with them. These two students would be very different and therefore their adjustments needed might be different.)
- *stress profile (level of confidence)*
- *attentiveness*
- *fatigue*
- *motivation to understand*
- *knowledge of cultural and social conventions*

- *language skills*
- *prior knowledge*
- *uncorrected vision impairment*
- *cultural background*

Auslan Interpreter

- *training, qualifications, and experience*
- *interpreter's understanding of the subject material*
- *familiarity to the student*
- *diverse language knowledge*
- *clarity of sign*
- *use of facial expressions and body language*
- *signing space*
- *pace of signing*
- *use of non-manual markers such as eye gaze, eyebrow movement and head and body positioning*
- *facial characteristics (e.g., beard, moustache)*
- *regional sign variations*

(Adapted from Tye-Murray, 2015, p. 211)

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM, SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENTS, VCE, VCE VET, VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM) and VPC

Eligibility

Students may be eligible for special provision for classroom learning **and** school-based assessment if their ability to engage and/or demonstrate achievement is adversely affected by:

- an acute or chronic illness
- an impairment or disability
- factors relating to personal circumstance.

The decision on whether to approve special provision for classroom learning or school-based assessment **is a school decision**. It must be evidence-based and made using a range of appropriate sources including teacher observations, professional testing and reports or educational assessments.

Schools are encouraged to regularly review a student's special provision for classroom learning and School-based Assessment. This helps to ensure that the provisions remain appropriate to meet the needs of the student. Schools should maintain records of any changes to a student's circumstances and their approved provisions for classroom learning and School-based Assessment and the reasons for those changes.

Strategies

Course Completion

"There are a number of ways in which schools can make alternative arrangements to assist students with their learning and to enable them to be assessed against the unit outcomes.

Decisions made by the school need to reflect the best interest of the student and should be based on the available evidence. Strategies include:

- rescheduling classroom activities and/or an assessment task
- allowing the student extra time to complete work or an assessment task
- setting a substitute task of the same type
- replacing a task with a different type
- using a planned task to assess more outcomes, or aspects of outcomes, than originally intended

- using assistive technology, aides or other special arrangements to complete classroom learning and/or undertake assessment tasks
- deriving satisfactory completion of outcomes from other assessments or work completed by the student
- deriving scores from other assessments or work completed by the student” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025c)

Note: Each of these strategies is further expanded in the above reference.

SPECIAL PROVISION IN THE VICTORIAN PATHWAY CERTIFICATE (VPC)

Special Provision for classroom learning and school-based assessment

“Individual students may need special provision in their learning program to achieve the learning outcomes. Students who have been granted special provision are not exempt from meeting the requirements for satisfactory completion of the VPC, or from being assessed against the learning outcomes for a study. Students are still required to demonstrate their achievement by meeting the learning goals in the curriculum designs.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025c)

“Schools must decide on whether to approve school-based provisions. The VCAA recognises that school personnel, due to their knowledge of individual students and their circumstances, can sensitively vary the school assessment programs and learning activities to accommodate student circumstances.

Schools should consult the VCAA if they are unsure about evidence and/or appropriate arrangements.

Special provision for classroom learning and/or school-based assessments can take a range of forms including:

- completing classroom activities and assessment tasks at a different time
- being given extra time to complete work or assessment tasks
- completing a different assessment task or a different type of task
- using technology, aides or other special arrangements to assist with classroom learning or assessment tasks – also referred to as Reasonable Adjustments.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025c)

Supporting students with additional needs

There are several ways in which schools can make adjustments to assist students with their learning and enable them to be assessed against learning goals. The level of support can include, but is not limited to:

- the provision of highly structured guides, templates, rubrics, and exemplars
- students may require assistance from an aide to effectively engage in the process of learning. If this is required, other assessment provisions, such as additional time to complete tasks, may be required. Assistance from aides may take the form of working alongside the student when learning or undertaking a task, adjustment of delivery modes accordingly and explaining and prompting as they work

- encouraging and supporting students to learn through interaction and cooperation via discussion, asking questions, giving explanations and presentations, and working cooperatively in pairs or small groups
- prompting or questioning to help guide the student when they are checking the reasonableness, appropriateness, or feasibility of their work/plan/communication/response
- encouraging students to document and report their work in a way they feel most comfortable: orally, in writing, using an audio or video recording, an image or a graphic representation
- providing a variety of flexible, alternative communication modes and alternative methods and mechanisms to demonstrate learning, i.e. students who are hearing impaired may sign their response or for students who require the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) other means of communication such as a communication book with pictographs might be used.
- providing additional time for students to demonstrate learning in addition to the nominal hours suggested if required
- use of assistive technology to support students to learn and demonstrate skills and understanding
- provide a variety of alternative tasks for students to experience success (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025c)

Classroom Learning

The following is a **checklist** for all classroom learning situations in the VCE, VCE VET, VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM) and VPC:

- ✓ *Ensure all personal and school-based hearing technology is working well.*
- ✓ *Ensure the student is seated towards the front near the speaker so that they are able to hear instructions more clearly and have access to speechreading/lipreading.*
- ✓ *Consult with the interpreter and the student to ensure the interpreter is positioned appropriately prior to any instructions or information being delivered.*
- ✓ *Check with the student regarding seating position in relation to any internal background noise such as heaters, fans or clocks.*
- ✓ *Check the student has heard and understood all information/instructions by asking open ended questions.*
- ✓ *Ensure general instructions and due dates are written where they can be easily seen.*
- ✓ *Ensure that documentation exists that shows adjustments have been made throughout Primary/Secondary education.*

School-based Assessments

In order to provide equal access for students with hearing loss, many school-based assessments involving listening will require adjustments. These include listening tasks such as spelling, music, mental maths, watching multimedia presentations in all subject areas, and learning another language.

These adjustments may include:

- Conducting assessment tasks in a **separate room** with good acoustics and minimal reverberation. Consult your Teacher of the Deaf for advice regarding the proposed assessment space.
- If using a pre-recorded audio source as part of the assessment, students should be able to **trial different ways to access the audio** prior to the actual assessment, to ensure that they can effectively/accurately access the material. These could include laptop, tablet, whiteboard, amplifier, and/or TV. This will enable them to determine the equipment that provides the best sound quality for their needs.
- Throughout the task, **students should be able to change** the volume and balance of the sound on the recording themselves. Students may need to connect their hearing aid/cochlear implant or other hearing technology to the audio source using a purpose made audio cable. If the student uses Bluetooth or streaming to access the audio, this must also be trialled prior to the assessment. Ensure that the pre-recorded audio only, or audio-visual assessment, is obtained well in advance so that necessary access checks can be done prior to the assessment.
- Some students may struggle to comprehend the audio source without access to **visual clues**. Speechreading/lipreading can provide clarification if similar sounds are confused. **Speechreading/lipreading** requires access to facial expression and whole body reading, so the audio/visual presentation needs to show the whole face and upper body in good light. Practice audio/visual presentations should be trialled beforehand to determine if they provide this access to clarification.
- Students may require **additional repetition** to better process the information and take into account the impact of listening fatigue.
- All audio/visual material should be **captioned** in line with the Accessibility Guidelines (World Wide Web Consortium, 2018) to allow for full access.
- If a student is still not able to access all of the information, a **live speaker** who reads from a transcript could be used. This would enable the student to access lip-reading for clarification and repetition. If there is more than one speaker then this should be reflected in the use of a live speaker/s e.g., two speakers/male/female voices.

- If a student is unable to access the auditory assessment with any of the above adjustments, then an **alternative task** should be used.
- If there is no alternate task available an exemption from the listening task may be required.
- **Extra time and rest breaks** will be required if there is a live speaker or if audio/visual material needs to be reviewed.
- For assessment that involves watching **multimedia**, both **captions and a transcript** should be provided. Contact the Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) Caption Centre to submit a request at: https://form.asana.com/?k=ey9LFulz0x4XLMN_u_97tA&d=1107548014066186
- To view resources which have already been captioned, view the VDEI Caption Centre library at <https://www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au/services/caption-library>
- In assessments for students who use **Auslan**, an **Auslan interpreter** should be used or an alternative task provided.

Resources

There is no longer a listening requirement in EAL but should listening practice be sought for other reasons, EAL practice audio-visual materials are available at: <https://www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au/services/caption-library>

Assessments in Music

“Both modern hearing aids and cochlear implants are programmed primarily to make speech clearer. Speech and music have many differences including intensity, different frequencies, and frequency emphasis. Musical instruments typically have a much greater dynamic range and frequency range than speech.

This means that hearing aids and cochlear implants do not reproduce music exactly, and that a deaf or hard of hearing person may not experience music in the same way as a hearing person.

A single talker, singer or instrument is often easier for hearing aid or cochlear implant wearers to follow. Due to the limitations of hearing devices, it is more difficult for wearers to follow multiple instruments.

Modern hearing aids have multiple program capability and it is possible to add a program for music which alters the gain and output of the hearing aid, ensuring the volume of the device remains comfortable and therefore improving the listener’s experience of music” (National Deaf Children’s Society, n.d.).

Students may struggle to distinguish between instruments that are playing solo, or concurrently. Some instruments may be inaudible if presented at low volumes.

Students should check with their audiologist whether adjustments can be made to the programming of their assistive technology.

For cochlear implant users, sound interpretation is different. Thousands of tiny hair cells, which detect sound and are crucial in conveying messages to the brain, are replaced by an electrode inserted into the cochlea. This electrode transfers information to the brain, but frequencies need to be compressed to fit the limited 22 channels of the electrode array. Frequencies are adjusted and distortions usually occur. A cochlear implant wearer has considerably less than perfect hearing, and will require access to special provision.

Audio recordings can lose information with the sound quality of speech and instrumental sounds being distorted. This makes it difficult for students using assistive technology to access audio, especially during assessments.

Where the examination requires fine discrimination between sounds, students with a hearing loss are at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers. Students are asked to discriminate between semi-notes to identify which type of scale/mode a scale is written in, be able listen to a piece and complete notation, identify the size and quality of an interval, identify the bass note and quality of chords and complete rhythm notation.

Without the ability to repeat the music phrase as needed they are unable to adequately access this part of the exam equally with normally hearing peers and therefore are not able to show what they know or have learnt.

Special Provision in External Exams

VCE Listening Exams, including Languages, Music, Dance, Theatre Studies & VCE VET Sound Production

For these assessments, the following provisions are recommended and need to be requested in the application form:

Preparation for the Exam

- Students should be given the opportunity to **trial the equipment** that will be used to play the audio/visual presentation with captioning in the relevant language e.g., laptop, tablet, whiteboard, TV, amplifier. They should be provided with alternatives so they can decide which equipment provides the best sound for them.
- If a music program has been added to the student's personal assistive technology, the student should have an opportunity to **ensure the program is providing improved access**.
- Students should be able to **practise** for the exam using this equipment.
- If the student **cannot** consistently and accurately access the listening exam, or components of the listening assessment, access to a live speaker, or an audio/visual presentation with **captions** and **Auslan interpreters** (if appropriate) should be requested well in advance.
- Identify a **separate room** with appropriate lighting, good acoustics and minimal reverberation, away from other classrooms and noise sources.
- Schools should ensure that they request **an additional recording** for the student with hearing loss, working in a separate room.
- **Backup** equipment should be readily accessible.
- **Supervisors** should be identified well before the exam and have contact with the Teacher of the Deaf in order to **familiarise** themselves with the approved provisions before the exam.
- If an Auslan **interpreter** is used, this person will require **prior access** to preview the material.
- If a Roger system is used, a splitter with multiple inputs and extra sets of headphones are required for the supervisor and clarifier.
- Students will need to **enter the exam room early** to ensure that the equipment is set to their specific needs.

During the Exam

The student should be permitted to:

- **change the volume** and the balance of the sound on the equipment being used
- **use additional** appropriate personal listening **technology** preferred by the student, apart from hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bone anchored hearing aids (BAHAs)
- **choose when to use their extra time** as requested (e.g., for reading, writing, listening and/or for processing segments of the audio/visual presentation)
- **pause the listening task** when required, to process what they have heard and take notes
- **replay sections** of the audio/visual presentation as often as needed

Note: currently language examination papers state: “Each text will be played twice. There will be a short break between the first and second playings of each text. You may make notes at any time. Listen carefully to each text and then answer the following question.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025c)

- determine when **rest breaks** occur

Panel Assessments (e.g. for live assessments in Languages, Dance, Drama, Music, Theatre Studies & VET Sound Production)

- **Panel members** must be informed of a student’s hearing loss and mode of communication, and made aware the student may be unfamiliar with the voices of panel members. This can make listening and speechreading/lipreading more challenging.
- The student may ask to have **questions repeated and/or rephrased**. There should be no penalty if it is necessary for the student to ask clarifying questions or confirm what is heard.
- Rephrasing the statement or question may be necessary as certain words contain sounds that are not visible by lipreading or accessible with their particular hearing profile.
- Students with hearing loss may be unfamiliar with non-subject specific vocabulary. By **substituting different words**, the intended meaning may be more readily conveyed.

- Panel members will need to **face the student** when they are asking questions and speak at an appropriate pace.
- Panel members should provide **visual cues** prior to a new or different panel member speaking, as the student may lose vital visual cues as they attempt to localise the speaker.
- The student may use their assistive listening device/s throughout the assessment. It is important to be aware that hearing devices amplify all sounds. It is essential to ensure that **background noise** is limited.
- Allow the student to select the **optimum seating position** for seeing all panel members clearly and for listening.
- Ensure that the student can clearly see both **the interpreter** and panel members.

VCE, VCE VET, & GAT Written Exams

For these assessments, the following provisions may be recommended by the Teacher of the Deaf:

- Clarifiers
- Auslan interpreters
- Separate room
- Extra time
- Rest breaks
- Assistive technology

Students with a scribe or a clarifier need to use a separate room. If a separate room is required for another reason, an application is required.

“It is the school’s responsibility to plan appropriate **seating arrangements** in an external assessment so a student who is deaf or hard of hearing can clearly see the chief supervisor and follow any communications and messages during an external assessment” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2025a).

Clarifiers

Clarifiers should complete a training session to ensure the process is robust and equitable.

Compared to typically hearing peers, students with hearing loss are impacted by the cumulative long-term effects of missed language exposure. They often do not have the same access to explicit language (explanations, questions, directions), incidental language learning and knowledge acquisition that underpins the language learning of other students. This is due to the limitations of their hearing and technology when distance, background noise, reverberation or multiple conversations occur at the same time.

Students with hearing loss often need support to comprehend the language of the curriculum and the formal language of exams, especially when they are required to access and/or demonstrate their learning. This language needs to be explicitly taught but students with hearing loss will need greater exposure to this language than their hearing peers.

Students need to be taught how to work with a clarifier and practise this regularly in the classroom. This knowledge is essential to be able to effectively utilise a clarifier in assessment situations.

Clarifying may take the form of repeating, rephrasing, explaining, and/or simplifying complex language in questions and passages that require decoding, to enable the student to respond to the assessment. Clarifying may be presented orally or in Auslan, depending on the student's mode of communication. In order to demonstrate knowledge of the subject, e.g., historical concepts, scientific variables, or mathematical processes, the carrier language of the question should not cloud or confuse the student. Carrier language refers to the specific vocabulary, grammatical structures, figurative and/or colloquial expressions used to ask or pose the assessment question. It is the language used to frame the question.

Example of exam question clarification:

Complex Sentences

Exam question If a student were provided with three painted metal rods, one of which was known to be made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel, describe how, without scratching the paint, the student could identify each of the rods?	Redraft A student has three painted metal rods. One is made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel. Describe how the student could find out which rod is which, without scratching the paint?
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Can the redraft be improved?

A student has three painted metal rods.

- One is made from brass
- One is made from magnetised steel
- One is made from non-magnetised steel

The student is not allowed to scratch the paint on the rods.

Explain how the student could find out what each rod is made of

18

(Adapted from Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, 2019, p. 5)

To ensure the student is confident to ask for clarification and is not disadvantaged by being unfamiliar with the lip patterns and intonation or signing of the clarifier, the person should be known to the student. The clarifier should be a familiar communication partner with the student, for example the support teacher or Visiting Teacher. This standard should also be applied to readers and scribes.

A person appointed as a clarifier should be fluent in English and be familiar with the VCE study being examined. To create consistency across provisions, the clarifier should also be familiar with the specific language of the subject being examined. This is to ensure that subject-specific vocabulary is not clarified.

The clarifier should be permitted to access the examination paper up to one hour prior to the start of the examination to enable identification of subject specific language and consider where clarification may be necessary.

Role of the Clarifier

“For students who are deaf or hard of hearing, clarification is restricted to:

- definition of one or more words in a question. The clarifier must not define any words or terms that are ‘study specific’ or subject-related
- provision of alternative words to those words in the question. The clarifier must not offer alternatives for ‘study specific’ words or terms
- breaking complex sentences down into more manageable parts”
(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

“Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may be eligible for a clarifier to assist with their external assessments. A request for a clarifier for a student who is Deaf or hard of hearing will be approved if the student regularly uses a clarifier and/or is enrolled with the Visiting Teacher Service or a deaf and hard of hearing facility or school.”
(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

If a Clarifier is approved, “the appointed clarifier may work with the student during any practice examinations (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Clarifier Examination Notes

To be given to the clarifier and the supervisor at the beginning of the exam

- “Clarification can occur during reading and writing time” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).
- During reading and writing time “the student and clarifier are permitted to write the clarification on the examination question or task book” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).
- “...the clarifier must not define any words or terms that are study-specific or subject-related” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).
- Clarifiers may only clarify English sections of a language written examination” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).
- Ensure that the approved adjustments are clearly understood by the student, clarifier and supervisor.
- Ensure that the exam times and rest breaks are clearly written/displayed.

- Record the questions, phrases and rewording requested by the student – this is useful feedback to subject teachers.
- For the General Achievement test (GAT), English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) – an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary may be used including during reading time.
- Ensure that the clarifier’s Statutory Declaration is completed and provided to the school.

If a **Clarifier** is approved for the student, this person must be **familiar** with the **subject-specific language**.

“If approved the school must ensure that a copy of the clarifier instruction document (available on VASS) as indicated on the school copy of the special examination arrangements advice slip is given to the supervisor and the clarifier. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the instructions are followed.

The supervisor in addition to the clarifier must be present in the examination room and monitor all interactions between the clarifier and the student.

If the use of a clarifier is approved, extra working time at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of writing time will be approved” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Auslan Interpreters

Auslan interpreters are key components in education. “Accurate, competent and ethical interpretation ensures that deaf students are able to participate fully in education and that education providers are able to accurately evaluate student performance” (Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association, 2011, p. 5). Professional standards for educational interpreters can be found at <https://www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au/resources/profstandardseduint>

ASLIA is now ASLITA (Australian Sign Language Interpreters & Translators Association) and they have commenced a project. “This 18-month project has been designed to highlight the experience of signing Deaf students in education and educational interpreters. This project will see the production of a comprehensive report and the development of resources to inform government, parents and interpreter educators about the experience of the Deaf student and the interpreter workforce” (ASLITA, 2025).

Auslan interpreters provide communication that is vital to enable students, who use Auslan as their first or primary language, to understand instructions and have equal access to the exam.

“It is critical for the educational interpreter to understand the student’s language skills and modify the classroom language to ensure that the student understands the concepts while conveying the message accurately” (Schick, n.d.).

It is essential that the interpreter understand classroom objectives well...to support the educational team” (Schick, n.d.).

“A person appointed as an interpreter should:

- be fluent in both English and Auslan
- be familiar with the subject matter being examined
- be patient and sensitive to the student’s requirements
- be impartial, objective and respect confidentiality”
(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a)
- be a familiar communication partner with the student

Sometimes Auslan interpreters have acted as clarifiers. There should be a separate Auslan interpreter and clarifier provided as needed. Auslan interpreters must not be expected to voice at the same time as they are signing to the student. This results in English-like signing and therefore the adjustment of Auslan interpreting is negated. If the supervisor needs to know what the interpreter has signed, the conversation between the two must occur after the interpreter has finished working with the student.

The Auslan interpreter must not act in the role of a supervisor.

“The role of the Auslan interpreter is to facilitate communication between the student and the supervisor, or between the supervisor, the student, and the reader, scribe and/or clarifier” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

“Educational interpreters should convey the message and intent of the teacher at the language level which is appropriate and challenging for the student (Schick, n.d.).

The interpreter must sign in Auslan everything that is spoken and voice in English everything that is signed, so that the student is able to participate fully and equally in the test/examination.

“Auslan interpreters cannot add or omit information or modify the original message. Auslan interpreters cannot assist the student with their work, including advising or prompting for answers” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

The Auslan interpreter needs to be able to understand what a student is signing and communicate this to the clarifier and supervisor. Inability to accurately convey all communication will result in frustrations and stress, which will impact on the student’s confidence and ability to complete the exam.

In many subject areas there are no universally accepted Auslan signs. In some educational settings, interpreters and students agree upon signs for use in particular subjects to assist understanding. An Auslan interpreter unfamiliar with the student, the setting and/or the subject matter will be unfamiliar with these signs. Using fingerspelling rather than the sign may increase cognitive load for the student.

The Auslan interpreter should be permitted to access the examination paper up to one hour before the start of the examination in order to familiarise themselves with the content so extra copies of the examination paper need to be requested for this

purpose. During this time the Auslan interpreter must remain strictly supervised and may not communicate with the student or any other person.

If the student is using an Auslan interpreter, they should automatically be granted extra time.

Extra time is allowed for the time in which a student engages with the Auslan interpreter.

Separate Room

“If approval has been granted for the use of a scribe (or electronic scribe), reader (or electronic reader), clarifier and Auslan interpreter and/or assistive technology, a student must complete their external assessment in a separate examination room and a separate supervisor must be present.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Extra Working Time

Because of the high levels of fatigue deaf students may experience, they may also require extra time for reading, processing the language of the question and formulating a written response.

“Extra working time is typically approved at a rate of ten minutes per hour of the total examination writing time” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

For some students extra time should be requested for mathematics to allow for processing of the language of mathematics and text-based questions.

“If the use of a clarifier is approved, extra working time at a rate of ten minutes per hour of writing time will be approved.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

If an Auslan interpreter is requested, then extra time should be requested.

Timetabling should be carefully considered as students may struggle to do their best in exams and SACs that are run consecutively.

If a student with hearing loss has more than one VCE or VCE VET exam in a day with extra time allocated in the first exam, it is recommended that the VCAA is contacted to ensure that a sufficient break is scheduled between the exams.

Rest Breaks

Students with hearing loss need to work harder than their peers to process information and as a result can experience high levels of fatigue. Rest breaks mean that they are able to rest without using their extra time.

“Rest breaks are typically approved at a rate of 10 minutes per hour of the ‘total examination writing time’. (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a). Rest breaks are in addition to all reading or writing time.

“In specific circumstances, the VCAA may approve longer or untimed rest breaks to facilitate management of a significant medical or physical condition.

Students are responsible for managing how they use their rest break allocation, including when and how long each break will be, with the supervisor noting the start and end times on the Special Examination Arrangements Rest Break Log Sheet.

The rest break allocation displayed on the VASS Special Examination Arrangements Advice Slip should not be exceeded. Students must be offered the full allocation of reading and writing time, in addition to the time taken for rest breaks.

Students may take rest breaks at any point during the external assessment including during reading time

Students:

- are not permitted to leave their table or leave the examination room during rest breaks, except in special circumstances as approved by the VCAA
- are not permitted to read or write or access the examination/test questions or their responses during a rest break; papers must be turned facedown during a rest break
- may use their rest break to relax, rehearse previously learned coping strategies, focus their thoughts or reflect on their responses. (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Assistive technology in VCE, VCE VET and VM exams

Except for hearing aids and cochlear implants, an application to use assistive hearing technology in VCE exams should be made.

“If specific technological devices, such as Microlink assistive technology, are required, these should be requested in the application” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Requests can include, but are not limited to: Roger Touchscreen, Roger Pen, Roger On, Roger EasyPen, Miniclip, Roger Select, Roger On v2 or Phonak PartnerMic and an ear level receiver or streamer - Mylink, MiniTek, EasyTek, MiniMic, EduMic or the use of Bluetooth technology with a specific device.

If assistive technology is required to connect to audio equipment, then a backup is required in case of failure. Cables to connect equipment may be different so if a backup is in place, make sure you have the cable that matches the equipment.

Students need to practise connecting their usual and backup equipment with someone in the school who can be called upon in the event of difficulties during an exam.

APPLYING FOR SPECIAL PROVISION

Possible Adjustments

The following adjustments *may* be required for your student:

- Rest breaks
- Extra working time
- Separate rooms for individual students - with appropriate acoustics (minimal reverberation and background noise)
- Use of computers, tablets and/or assistive technology including personal listening technology
- Readers
- Scribes
- Clarifiers
- Auslan interpreters

Exams that involve listening may require the following adjustments:

- A separate room with good acoustic conditions
- A separate copy of the recording
- Ability to alter volume of the recording if used
- Allow Replay of audio in music listening exams
- Request Audio/visual presentation of listening assessment (to provide visual cues)
- Ability to stop to make note of what was heard (without penalty)
- Request transcript for the use of a live speaker
- Alternative audio items for NAPLAN online

Providing Evidence

“Evidence from a qualified practitioner indicating the type of hearing loss including:

- an unaided audiogram and report
- supporting information and recommendations from a specialist teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service or school for hearing-impaired students” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

VCAA requires:

- “detailed ‘School-based evidence’, which comprehensively outlines:
 - the student’s condition (disability, illness, long-term injury or ongoing personal circumstance), including medical and educational history outlining the functional impact on learning and assessments

- history of provisions approved and used by the student over the period of the condition
- evidence used to make decisions (for example, health professional or teacher observations).” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Evidence used to make decisions needs to be specific to the student’s condition

- Previous reports and assessment results
- School based assessments
- Recommendations from a specialist teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service or school for deaf students including NAPLAN adjustments
- Special Examination Arrangements Online Application Medical Statement
- Audiological report

Recommendations and supporting information from Specialist Teacher

Listening Exams

If applying for special provision for listening exams, includes:

- the functional impact of hearing loss on listening
- sounds that the student is unable to discriminate in English because of their specific hearing loss
- the different conditions that have been trialled and the student’s preferred condition
- feedback from the student on their ability to access audio
- teacher feedback
- use of NAPLAN audio alternative

This could include:

- a functional listening evaluation e.g., Recorded Functional Listening Evaluation (FLE) (Johnson, C.D., 2010, rev.), BKB (Bench-Kowal-Bamford) sentences (Bench et al., 1987), AB word lists (Boothroyd, 1968)
- TAPS-4 (Test of Auditory Processing Skills 4th edition) auditory memory, auditory comprehension, auditory reasoning sections (Martin, Brownell & Hamaguchi, 2018)
- OWLS (Oral and Written Language Scales) Listening Comprehension section (Carrow-Woolfolk, 2011)

Clarifier

If applying for a clarifier include:

- why a student with hearing loss requires a clarifier
- evidence from language assessments or cognitive assessments
- classroom observations
- language modification of assessments in SACs
- a request for early opening of the exam paper for the clarifier which is also available for the clarifier to refer to during the exam. This would enable the clarifier to become familiar with the questions and prompts during times they were not clarifying, therefore clarifying a question more effectively and accurately

This could include:

- Examples of when clarifying has been needed at school and examples of the type of words and phrases clarified
- Reading comprehension assessment e.g., YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) (Snowling, Stothard Clarke, Bowyer-Crane, Harrington, Truelove, ... Hulme, 2012)
- Language assessments – OWLS – Listening Comprehension and Oral Expression), CASL (Comprehension Assessment of Spoken Language) Complex language sections (Carrow-Woolfolk, 2011)

Auslan Interpreter

If applying for an Auslan interpreter include:

- why the student requires an Auslan interpreter
- if an Auslan interpreter is used at school
- a request for early opening of the exam paper for the Auslan interpreter which is also available for the interpreter to refer to during the exam. This would enable the interpreter to become familiar with the questions and prompts during times they were not interpreting, therefore interpreting a question more effectively and accurately.

Extra Time

If applying for extra time include

- Why the student requires extra reading time or processing time
- Reports that show slow processing speed (cognitive assessments) or reading rate
- Evidence of reading comprehension skills are below average
- Evidence of use of extra time in NAPLAN and in school-based assessments
- If applying for more than 10 minutes per hour, evidence that additional extra time has been offered
- This could include:
 - Progressive Achievement Test in Reading (PAT-R) published by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Comprehension Booklet 10 (edition 4 or 5) (Stephanou, Anderson, & Urbach, 2008)
 - Reading comprehension assessment e.g., YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) (Snowling, Stothard Clarke, Bowyer-Crane, Harrington, Truelove, ... Hulme, 2012)

If **extra time is required for mathematics**

- examples of mathematics assessments completed at school by the student – with and/or without special provision, detailing any provisions utilised by the student and time taken
- teacher observations of student difficulties during assessments and in class

Rest Breaks

If applying for **rest breaks**,

- why the student has a higher level of fatigue than other students.
- Use of rest breaks in NAPLAN and school-based assessments

Separate room

If applying for a separate room without the use of a clarifier, Auslan interpreter, reader or scribe, include:

- Why the student should have a separate room
- Use of a separate room in school-based assessment including SACs

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

“Schools are responsible for identifying who may be eligible for special provision for classroom learning School-based Assessments and VCE external assessments.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

“Schools must determine the functional impact of a student’s condition on their ability to access and respond to timed assessments.

They should consider the individual student’s circumstances, any existing special provision for classroom learning and/or School-based Assessments, teacher observations and existing professional evidence when determining which Special Examination Arrangements to apply for.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Show the history of provisions, for example, what specific words or phrases have been clarified for the student. This could be tracked via a shared Google doc on each student. It is important to provide examples.

“Schools must ensure a copy of any approved Special Examination Arrangements are distributed to the student, relevant school personnel (that is VCE Coordinator) and the examination chief supervisor.

School personnel must ensure there is a common understanding between the school, student and supervisor as to precisely what any approved Special Examination Arrangements entail” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

Early engagement

“The VCAA encourages schools to engage with the VCAA as early as possible to discuss any issues relating to managing students completing secondary level studies (Years 7–12) who may require special provision.

Early engagement allows schools to discuss interventions and implement appropriate provisions for classroom learning and school-based assessments in the years preceding VCE.

Early engagement with the VCAA will provide schools and students clarity about the reasonable provisions that can be implemented throughout a student’s secondary education to assist in accessing classroom learning and assessments. These implemented provisions will then form the basis of the formal application for the student when enrolled in a senior secondary level program.

Any advice given by the VCAA in relation to early engagement will consider the National Protocols for Test Administration (NPTA), which covers rules and requirements for NAPLAN special provision (referred to as disability adjustments). Schools should contact VCAA Special Provision to discuss suitable provisions for students completing secondary level studies.” (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2025a).

NAPLAN 2025

The 2025 NAPLAN National Protocols for Test Administration states “Where disability impacts on access to and participation in the tests, reasonable adjustments may be granted to facilitate access to all or some of the tests.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 22)

“Adjustments should reflect the kind of support and assistance identified and documented in the student’s personalised learning and support plan, and normally required for assessment in the classroom. This will allow the student to demonstrate what they know and can do, noting that adjustments that are appropriate in a learning environment may not be appropriate in an assessment environment.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 22)

“A student may have access to more than one adjustment in any one test and different adjustments may be appropriate for different tests.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 22)

Adjustments available for students with hearing loss are:

- the use of a NAPLAN support person
- signed communication
- extra time
- rest breaks
- alternative audio items for NAPLAN online

Disability Adjustment Codes (DAC)

Schools will need to apply the relevant DAC codes to the platform before the testing period:

- the use of NAPLAN support person (DAC code SUP)
- rest breaks (DAC code RBK)
- extra time:
 - one minute for every six minutes of test time (DAC code ETA)
 - one minute for every three minutes of test time (DAC code ETB)
 - one minute for every two minutes of test time (DAC code ETC)
 - double total test time (DAC code ETD)
- oral/signed support (OSS)
- plus
- Alternative items – the audio platform will swap audio items for alternatives if alternative items are defined for this DAC (DAC code AIA)
- (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, pp. 24-26)

If students are sitting NAPLAN assessments in a separate room, ensure the support person has the ability to pause the assessment if needed for rest breaks or extra time as required.

NAPLAN Support Person

“A NAPLAN support person is permitted only for those students with disability (including a temporary disability such as a broken arm) who experience difficulty in using a computer (for example due to fine motor difficulty), or for students who experience difficulty in accessing any other adjustments available. This includes students whose usual assistive technology is not compatible with the platform, or who usually use such a support person to participate in classroom assessments” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 31).

A NAPLAN support person may:

- be permitted to assist students with disability with access to the reading, conventions of language and numeracy tests; for example, by clicking on, for dragging answers indicated by the student, typing short responses or answers dictated by the student or shading bubbles as indicated by the student in alternative format tests.
- provide access to the test by logging in for the student, only once the student is present in the test room.
- read aloud only those elements of the test that can be read to all students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 31).

“Prompting, interpreting, or paraphrasing is strictly prohibited” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 31).

Oral/Sign Support

Special provision should be discussed at student support meetings with parents, teachers, Visiting Teachers and other professionals involved with the student.

“Students who are deaf, or with limited hearing may access oral or signed support (for example, an Auslan interpreter).

The support person must be skilled in oral/signed communication and familiar with communicating with the particular student.

A support person is permitted to read or sign the instructions in all tests.

Signing is permitted only for those sections of the tests that can be read to all students.

For tests delivered in the platform audio alternative items are available” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, p. 31).

Assistive Technology

If headphones are required, students should use their Roger system with the transmitter connected via an audio cable to the headphone socket of the device they are using. If the AIA code is used, headphones are not needed.

Extra Time

“Extra time may be provided for students with disability who usually require additional time to complete assessment tasks.

Extra time may also be provided for students with disability who are accessing assistive technology where the logistics of use increase time taken and/or physical effort, to access test materials or interact with the platform.

Extra time is added to the student’s test in the platform prior to the test. The platform automatically allocates the extra time to the student’s test.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, p. 32)

“It is recommended that no more than one minute of extra time for every 6 minutes of test time be granted. However, depending on the level of disability or logistics involved with the use of assistive technology, a longer time may be needed. In each case the teacher and the school are best placed to make a final decision based on the specific circumstance of the student in question, in line with TAA requirements.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 32)

Rest Breaks

“Rest breaks may be provided for students with disability who need regular breaks when completing tasks.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p.32)

“For online tests, rest breaks are managed manually by the test administrator, who must pause and resume student’s test from the test administrator’s dashboard

Where relevant, rest breaks can be used as an alternative to extra time to avoid student fatigue, although there may be instances where both adjustments are necessary” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 32).

It is recommended that no more than 10 minutes of test time is granted per hour of test time. However, if it is normal practice for the student to have more rest time in normal classroom assessments, additional time may be provided. In each case the teacher and the school are best placed to make a final decision based on the specific circumstance of the student in question, in line with TAA requirements.” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 32)

Alternative Items (audio and visual) (school approved)

Audio

“Alternative items (audio and visual) are only available for students with disability completing online tests. Students should access the public demonstration to determine whether AIA and/or AIV are necessary for them prior to the test.

Audio alternative items (AIA) **must be** assigned to a student in the platform prior to the test and are only applicable for the conventions of language test. Audio

alternative items replace audio files for spelling with text passages for proofreading. The platform automatically provides the audio alternative items when the DAC is applied.

AIA test items are items that have been modified for students with hearing impairments. Most alternative items test the same skills or understandings at approximately the same difficulty level as the main item. When the skill or understanding being assessed cannot be demonstrated by a student with a hearing impairment, such as a spelling item that depends on listening to an audio file, the alternative item will test a different skill or understanding (such as proofreading) at approximately the same difficulty level. (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 34)

Principals' Responsibilities

“The principal must:

- ensure that test administrators are aware of the disability adjustments that students may need to access and any arrangements that must be in place for additional support” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p.38).
- “ensure documented plans and a range of strategies, including the student’s personalised learning and support plan and the NAPLAN public demonstration site, (for online tests), have been used to identify adjustments required by students with disability (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 23)
- ensure that parents/carers and the student are consulted about, and have agreed to, the nature of the adjustment(s) the student will receive (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 23)
- document all adjustment arrangements and ensure school approved adjustments codes (DACs) and/or TAA approved DACs are entered on the platform and keep a record of these for audit purposes (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 23)
- make arrangements at the school level to provide students with disability with the adjustments they require, including those who do not require TAA approval (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 23)
- comply with the TAA requirements for requesting and recording adjustments provided by the school
- ensure that the test administrator supervising the test has a thorough understanding of the students’ requirements, as well as protocols related to adjustments and their administration” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2025, p. 23).

CONTACTS

Department of Education and Training

The Visiting Teacher Service is now managed centrally.

Referrals to the service are made, by the school, through the Student Online Cases System (SOCS). SOCS is only available from computers on the Education Department's network. The student's parent or carer must give consent and fill out the consent form. The form can be found on SOCS and must be submitted with the referral. (<https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/visiting-teacher-service>).

For more information on supporting students with hearing loss, contact the Visiting Teacher Service Manager in your region call the central number and ask to be put through to the VT manager (<https://www.vic.gov.au/office-locations-department-education>)

Catholic Education Victoria

Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)
Head Office Phone: (03) 9267 0228

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL)
Phone: (03) 4344 4350

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited
Phone: (03) 5622 6600

Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited
Phone: (03) 5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria

For more information about Visiting Teacher services contact:
Manager, Student Services, Phone: (03) 9825 7200

For information about Special Provision for NAPLAN
contact: vcaa.naplan.help@education.vic.gov.au

For information about Special Provision for VCE
contact: vcaa.special.provision@education.vic.gov.au

For information about students with disability
See: www.education.gov.au/students-disability

For information regarding the Visiting Teacher Service, Deaf Facilities and Schools for the Deaf

See:

<https://www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au/resources/educational-programs>

<https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/visiting-teacher-service>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/support-school-hearing-loss>

<https://vden.vic.edu.au/>

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