

Transition Support Service

Studying with a chronic health condition/disability for young people

Introduction

If you have a health condition/disability, balancing high school with other aspects of life, may take a little more work. Prioritising your health might become tricky especially when demands at school increase. However, looking after yourself and knowing where you can access supports will help you to achieve your educational goals. This brochure contains handy hints and information about resources and supports.



Know your condition

It helps to know about your health condition and to be honest about how it affects you. This will help you to negotiate learning supports at school. You could prepare a short script or an information pack so that you know what to say to others, particularly if you are telling teachers or friends for the first time. Your healthcare team could assist you with this too.

Do I have to tell anyone at school about my condition?

Telling at least one trusted or key teacher/ coordinator at school about your health condition/disability helps them to better understand challenges that you may face at school and how it may impact upon your education. An overview of your condition will help to provide you with better support and outcomes at school.

Your friends could also be a great support for you if they have a general understanding of your condition too.

Attendances and absences

All VCE subjects require you to attend at least 50 hours of class time however individual schools set their own minimum attendance requirements. However, if you have a certified health related issue, schools are able to be more accommodating. If you are missing school due to health reasons, remember to:

- ✓ Request a medical certificate from your doctor
- ✓ Give your medical certificate to your year level coordinator when you return to school
- ✓ Access support from your teachers to catch up on missed work
- ✓ Let your teachers know in advance (if possible) if you will be absent from school

VCE and VCAL

What is the difference between VCE and VCAL?

VCE is designed for students who are looking for an academic program and who would like to attend university or a general course of study after secondary school.

VCAL is designed for students who want a vocational course of study as it combines two days at school (studying literacy, numeracy, work related skills and personal development), one day in a TAFE course and two days working.

It's best to speak to your VCE/VCAL coordinator about these options and consider which one would work best for you. You could even explore the opportunity to do a bit of both!

Special Provision – VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority)

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialprovision.aspx

If you have a chronic health condition/disability and are undertaking VCE, it is highly recommended that you apply for Special Provision through your VCE coordinator. You never know if your health condition/disability will affect you during exams. You will need to be organised because applications close at the start of March each year. Remember that the form will take time to complete because an impact report needs to be filled out by your doctor, a teacher and yourself so best to organise this well in advance! Your doctor will write a supporting letter for your application which provides details about your health condition/disability, how it impacts upon you, along with recommended educational supports.

Your VCE coordinator will also know of additional support arrangements, such as the 'derived exam score' if unexpected circumstances interrupt your studies or impact upon you during exam time.

Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) – VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre)

www.vtac.edu.au/who/seas.html

Applying for SEAS is recommended, particularly if you have experienced disadvantage, including having to manage your health condition/disability. SEAS is a special consideration program which allows selection officers at universities and TAFEs to consider educational disadvantage when making offers. This may not affect your course entry but it may help you if your score falls short of the required ATAR.

How do I apply for SEAS?

SEAS can be applied for directly through the VTAC website online after a course application has been submitted. Submit your application early. Remember you can update your application as often as you like before the closing date in early October of each year.

What are the SEAS categories?

You can apply under as many SEAS categories as you like, provided you are able to supply evidence to support your application. The categories are:

1. Personal information and location (ALL applicants should apply for this category. No documentation is needed for this just your consent to use the information in the application)
2. Difficult circumstances (e.g. disruption to living situation, death of a relative/friend, natural disaster, refugee status)—your Impact Statement and a Statement of Support from a relevant person will be required
3. Disadvantaged financial background—your Centrelink number or a hard copy of your family's Centrelink documents or an Impact Statement and Statement of Support will be required
4. Disability or medical condition—an Impact Statement and Statement of Support from your doctor/specialist will be required
5. Institution-specific schemes (e.g. under-represented schools)

How do I write a SEAS Impact Statement?

Your Impact Statement should include how your circumstances have affected you including:

- Your ability to study and meet the requirements of assessed tasks
- Your access to educational resources
- Your attendance at school

Be honest and open as possible in your Impact Statement and provide specific dates and details of the disadvantage to your studies if possible.

What is a SEAS Statement of Support?

This Statement of Support, which can be used for SEAS and scholarships, should provide information about the 'impact' of your health condition/disability. It can be submitted online or in hard copy and should include:

- A brief description of your condition
- Details of how long your doctor has known you
- An outline of how you have been impacted by your condition

If your doctor is providing this Statement of Support online:

- Enter your doctor's name and email address
- Your doctor receives an email with a link, login, name and password
- Your doctor completes the Statement of Support

If your doctor is providing a **hard copy** Statement of Support, download your personalised cover sheet from your VTAC user account and provide this to your doctor.

What happens when I have submitted my SEAS application?

Once your SEAS application is submitted online, you will receive confirmation by email and check this in your VTAC user account. You won't be advised of the outcome of your application or ATAR/aggregate bonus, as the university or TAFE will make its own assessment of your application.

Scholarships

There are many different scholarships available, including those for academic performance and other. You can apply for many of these scholarships through VTAC and list of these are available on their website. You only need to submit one scholarship application which is then sent to multiple institutions depending on your preferences.

More information about other scholarships are available through the Department of Education and Training website <https://education.gov.au/search/site/scholarship> or through the websites of individual universities and TAFE institutions.

Some other useful sites containing information about scholarships include:

www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships

www.myfuture.edu.au

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/financial-support/scholarships

Tutoring and other educational supports

Speaking to your VCE/VCAL coordinator or trusted teacher about additional support is helpful. Often individual teachers are happy to spend extra time with you and the school may have special programs that could assist. Ideally, ask your VCE coordinator about setting up a Student Support Group meeting before you tackle VCE/VCAL to plan for your learning needs taking into consideration your health condition/disability. In preparation for this meeting, write down a list of points that you would like to raise with your teachers and let them know how they can support you and your learning needs.

Some educational support programs available to assist young people with health conditions/disabilities include:

Ronald McDonald Learning Program

This is for students with chronic and serious illnesses. The Program can fund:

- 40 sessions of tutoring
- An individualised educational assessment (including a feedback session)

- Ten sessions of speech therapy
- Ten sessions of occupational therapy
- Online support program for VCE students in a range of subjects

Red Kite (www.redkite.org.au/support/education-and-career)

Provides educational grants and other related supports for young people with cancer up to the age of 24.

Visiting Teachers (Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Office)

Provides additional assistance in getting back on track with your learning particularly if you have experienced extended absences from school due to your illness/disability. Your school can assist you in applying for a visiting teacher.

Disability funding

If you have a serious illness or disability, you may be able to access additional funding so that you are able to access greater support through the school, such as individualised support through an Education Support Officer or therapies like physiotherapy or occupational therapy.

This funding is applied for through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) if you attend a government school or the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs program (LNSLN) if you attend a Catholic school. The PSD has six levels of funding and the amount of funding awarded will vary each year depending on the nature and severity of your condition/disability. Your school will have more information about this and will be able to guide and assist you with this process if you are eligible to apply for PSD or LNSLN funding.

More information is available on the following sites and through your school:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/srpref015.aspx (for government school students applying for PSD funding)

www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/resources/LNSLN/2015/LNSLN_Guidelines.pdf (for Catholic school students applying for LNSLN funding)

If you attend an Independent (private) school, you may be able to access additional learning supports through a yearly allocation of funds to support students with serious health conditions and/or disabilities provided by the Commonwealth government to your school. To find out more about this, speak to your school or Independent Schools Victoria.

Planning for University or TAFE

VTAC course preferences

www.vtac.edu.au/applying/courses

Talk to your doctor about your preferred VTAC courses or career options so that they can guide you through potential challenges associated with your condition. It's best to do this before you complete your VTAC preferences form. Whilst you may have your heart set on a particular career path, it may not always be the most beneficial for you in terms of your health or vice versa.

Tertiary Education

There are many resources and programs available in universities and TAFEs to help you with your learning and wellbeing on campus. This information will be available on their individual websites. Every institution will have a Student Equity and Support Coordinator (SESC) or Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to support students with health conditions and/or disabilities. They can link you in to a range of different supports including assistive technology, academic support workers, accessible formatting for your learning materials, equipment loans and alternative exam arrangements. You could make an appointment with the SESC or DLO prior to commencing your course to discuss your options.

Other educational and vocational pathways

You may be more interested in exploring other options such as:

1. Apprenticeships/traineeships—helpful organisations include:
 - Australian Apprenticeships www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au
 - Group Training Australia www.grouptraining.com.au

2. Employment or volunteer work—helpful organisations include:

- Disability Employment Services www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-employment-services
- Job Services Australia
www.employment.gov.au/news/job-services-australia-support-job-seekers-and-employers
- Volunteering Australia
www.volunteeringaustralia.org
- Willing and Able Mentoring Program
www.graduatecareers.com.au/CareerPlanningandResources/GraduateswithDisability/WillingandAbleMentoringProgram/index.htm

Other supports

There are other great organisations and sites which can provide useful information to help you achieve your educational and vocational potential. These include:

- National Disability Coordination Office
www.education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme
- My Skills
www.myskills.gov.au
- My University
www.myuniversity.gov.au
- Job Guide
www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au
- Fair Work guide for young workers
www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/young-workers-and-students

- Australian Apprenticeship Pathways
www.aapathways.com.au
- Capital City Local Learning and Employment Network
www.ccllen.org.au

Checklist

- ✓ I have spoken to my teacher or coordinator at school or my disability liaison officer at university/TAFE about my health condition/disability and discussed the supports I need
- ✓ I have spoken to my employer about my condition/disability at work
- ✓ I know what to do if I miss time from school, university, TAFE or work due to my condition/disability
- ✓ I know about the special considerations I can access for VCE/VCAL, exams and entry into the university or TAFE
- ✓ I know where and how I can access extra information about educational and vocational support options
- ✓ I know when my applications are due
- ✓ I have considered how (and if) my condition/disability is likely to affect my participation in further study or work
- ✓ I know what study or work options are available to me and where I can find support with this
- ✓ I know what help I need to overcome any challenges I may face in further study or work
- ✓ I am confident I can balance my healthcare needs with my learning or work

Important dates

Special Provision and Exams (VCAA)

- Special provision application period (March)
- General Achievement Task (GAT)—mid June
- Year 12 VCE Oral exams for languages and Music Performance exams (throughout Oct)
- Year 12 exam period (late Oct to mid Nov)
- Year 12 VCE exam results published (mid Dec)

Scholarships (VTAC)

- Scholarships application period (early Aug–mid Oct)

Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) (VTAC)

- SEAS application period (early Aug–early Oct)
- SEAS application for mid-year entry (mid April–early June the following year)

VTAC course preferences

- Submission date for early offers (Aug to early Oct)
- Submission date for supporting documentation for graduate entry courses (mid Nov)
- Submission date for all other offers (early Dec)
- Submission date for mid-year offers (early June the following year)
- Early course offers (Nov 20)
- International course offers (Jan 8)

- Round 1 offers (mid Jan)
- Round 2 offers (late Jan–early Feb)
- Round 3–5 offers (Feb)

PSD funding

- PSD funding application closing date (late Feb)

LNSLN funding

- Round 1 applications due for Ongoing, New and Review Applications (late Oct)
- Round 2 applications due for New Applications (early Feb the following year)

School term dates 2016

- Term 1: 28 January (school teachers start) to 27 March
- Term 2: 13 April to 26 June
- Term 3: 13 July to 18 September
- Term 4: 5 October to 18 December

Timeline

This is a general timeline based on some of the important VCAA and VTAC dates. These will change slightly from year to year so be sure to check specific dates on:

www.vtac.edu.au/dates

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Scholarships

Scholarships application period

Special provisions

Special provisions application period

SEAS

SEAS application period

School dates

School terms

Exam period

VCE exam results

Funding

PSD

LNSLN

VTAC course submissions

Early offers

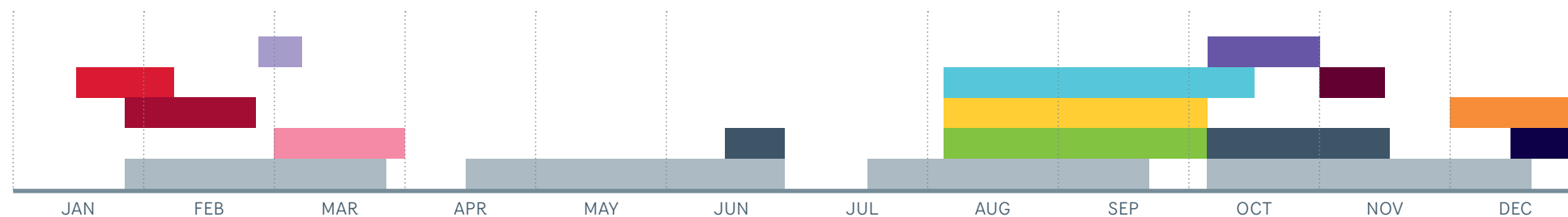
All other offers

Course offers

Early offers

Round 1

Round 2



Transition Support Service

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www.rch.org.au/transition

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