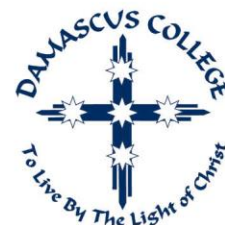


11<sup>th</sup> September 2020



Dear Unit 3-4 VCE and Unit 3-4 VCE-VET students and Parent/Guardian,

### Re: Damascus College Unit 3-4 VCE and VCE-VET Update

In light of the recent announcement from the Andrews Government on Sunday September 6, we feel it is important to keep you up to date on these announcements and their impact on the upcoming exams/assessments, and how your son/daughter will be supported for the remainder of the year.

Within the letter you will find the following information:-

1. [Update on Unit 3-4 Trial exams](#)
2. [Practice exam opportunities](#)
3. [Unit 3-4 English, English Language and Literature trial Exam information](#)
4. [GAT and GAT Preparation Workshop](#)
5. [Exam navigators link](#)
6. [VCAA external assessment timetable](#)
7. [Revision lecture program being offered at Damascus College](#)
8. [External Revision lecture opportunities](#)

#### 1. Update on Unit 3-4 Trial exams

Previously parents and students have received a Trial exam timetable with the exams to be held on **Friday, September 25 (First week of school holidays) and Monday, October 5 to Friday, October 9** in the first week of term 4, with the General Achievement Test (GAT) being rescheduled to Wednesday, October 7 and students not returning to on-site learning until Monday, October 12, the trial exams will have the following format:

It will be **compulsory** for all students undertaking Unit 3-4 English, English Language and Literature to undertake those respective trial exams remotely on **Friday, September 25**. Further information about how this will be done can be found in the timetable below:

Exam	Time
English	9:00am to 12:15pm
English Language	9:00am to 11:15am
Literature	9:00am to 11:15am

An expectation for students undertaking Literature and English is for them to complete the English Exam on Friday September 25. The Literature exam can be completed at another day and time throughout the week.

**DAMASCUS COLLEGE LTD ACN 609066775**

1412 Geelong Road, Mt. Clear 3350 P 03 5337 2222 F 03 5330 2366 E [info@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@damascus.vic.edu.au) [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

The rationale for all students undertaking the English exams is that all students will have an opportunity to experience an exam setting prior to the November exams. The exam duration of 2 hours 15 minutes and 3 hours 15 minutes respectively is something we would not be able to emulate during school hours. Students satisfactorily completing English also plays an important role in them obtaining their VCE Certificate, as well as the calculation of an ATAR score as it is a primary subject in the calculations. All these papers will be assessed by an external assessor and results and feedback will then be provided to students early Term 4.

We did consider running trial exams for other subjects over the holidays but felt it was important to give students an opportunity to rest, reflect and prepare for their final leg of the year leading up to their November Exams. By having English as the only exam in the holidays, this will allow students to prepare, have a break and then focus on their remaining subjects. Damascus encourages students to use the two weeks to start revision and exam preparation. We recognise that trial exams are vitally important for all subjects, so all other trial exams will be scheduled by teachers during class time throughout Term 4. We would also continue to encourage students to undertake practice exams at home. Practice exams form an essential part of a student's exam preparation as they assist students with working on timing and knowledge for each subject's exam. This allows students to continue to improve their knowledge in the lead up to the exam, therefore making them more relaxed prior to the end of year exams.

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## 2. Practice exam opportunities

If possible and to further support students, we will look to run practice exam opportunities in after school hours. These would occur on weeknights under exam conditions, with students allowed to bring along practice papers with them. Students will be able to provide these completed exams to their respective teachers for review. This will be confirmed in the weekly newsletter in early Term 4.

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## 3. Unit 3-4 English, English Language and Literature trial exam information

All English, English Language and Literature trial exams have been mailed this week in order for students to complete their respective papers on Friday, September 25. We ask that all students open the package when it arrives to confirm all exam materials have been provided within the package. Students are then asked to keep the package until the time the exam is to be completed at 9am on Friday, September 25. Students are asked to keep the envelope to return the completed exams.

If a student does not receive their exam package by Wednesday, September 23 or something is missing from the package, please contact Mr Matthew Hallowell so we can arrange for an alternate paper to be provided to students for completion.

**Submission Instructions:** We ask that the completed trial exam package is returned in the same envelope it was posted in to Damascus College. If students are dropping completed exams off on **Friday September 25 and or after hours**, we ask that they slide the envelope under the front glass door on the parent reception side (Front entrance) of the College Administration building.

On **Monday September 28<sup>th</sup>**, Students will find a drop box at student reception to return the package during school hours

We ask that the papers please be returned by **12pm, Monday, September 28**. Papers will then be distributed to external markers so students receive a realistic impression of their performance in the trial examination task.

**Note:** If students/families are personally unable to return the paper, we ask you to please liaise with another student or family to return to paper on the students' behalf. If this is not an option, please contact Mr Matthew Hallowell by Tuesday, September 22 and we will attempt to organise alternate means for your exam package to be returned.

Below is a summary of the instructions that can be found in each package for each respective exam.

Within the package you will find the following;

***English Package***

- 2020 English Trial Examination Paper Task Book (accidentally called question and answer booklet)
- 3 Answer Booklets (blue, green and orange cover pages)
- Declaration of Authenticity
- Examiner's Assessment Criteria
- Instructions to submit Trial Exam Paper

***English Language Package***

- 2020 English Language Question and Answer booklet
- Declaration of Authenticity
- Examiners Assessment Criteria
- Instructions to submit Trial Exam Paper

***Literature Package***

Within this package you will find the following;

- 2020 Literature Trial exam paper task book
- Literature Answer booklet
- Declaration of Authenticity
- Examiners Assessment Criteria
- Instructions to submit Trial Exam Paper

**Please do not remove the staples or attempt to view the Trial Exam paper until the time of the Trial Exam**

**Instructions for completing assessment:**

***English***

**Trial exam Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020

**Time: Log in to Teams:** 8:55am "Thursday Afternoon English Tutoring" Team

**Reading time:** 9:00am to 9:15am

**Writing time:** 9:15am to 12:15pm

**Examination Paper:** Damascus College 2020 Trial Examination Paper - English

**Answer booklet:** This package includes three hard copy answer booklets. Each booklet is for a different section of the Examination. Please make sure the respective sections are completed within the correct booklet. Below outlines what needs to be completed in its respective booklet.

**Section A** to be completed in the **blue** booklet

**Section B** to be completed in the **green** booklet

**Section C** to be completed in the **orange** booklet

### ***English Language***

**Trial exam Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020

**Time: Log in to Teams:** 8:55am Meeting request will be created

**Reading time:** 9:00am to 9:15am

**Writing time:** 9:15am to 11:15am

**Examination Paper:** Damascus College 2020 Trial Exam Paper – English Language

### ***Literature***

**Trial exam Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020

**Time: Log in to Teams:** 8:55am Meeting request will be created

**Reading time:** 9:00am to 9:15am

**Writing time:** 9:15am to 11:15am

**Examination Paper:** Damascus College 2020 Trial Exam Paper – Literature (Task book)

**Answer booklet:** This package includes one hard copy answer booklet. All responses are to be completed in this booklet.

***The below conditions are the same for all three exams***

***Write your VCAA student number on the cover of each answer booklet***

**Assessment Criteria:** Students' responses will be assessed against the Examiner's Assessment Criteria, a copy is included within the package.

#### **Expectations:**

- *You will be required to keep your Microsoft Teams open for the duration of the trial exam.*
- *All students undertaking VCE English, English Language and Literature are required to complete the respective trial paper.*
- *Ensure you have a quiet space at home to be able to complete this paper under exam conditions for the duration of the exam.*
- *Adhere to the instructions on the Task book and the VCAA Exam rules found on the Declaration of Authenticity.*

#### **Instructions for submitting Trial Examination:**

**Please reuse the Envelope you received the Trial exam in to return the trial exam.**

**What needs to be returned for each exam;**

#### ***English***

- **Section A:** **blue** answer booklet
- **Section B:** **green** answer booklet
- **Section C:** **orange** answer booklet
- Declaration of Authenticity

### **English Language**

- English Language Question and Answer Booklet
- Declaration of Authenticity

### **Literature**

- Literature Answer booklet
- Declaration of Authenticity

What does **not** need to be returned for each exam:

### **English**

- 2020 English Trial exam paper task book
- Examiners Assessment Criteria

### **English Language**

- Examiners Assessment Criteria

### **Literature**

- 2020 Literature Trial exam paper task book
- Examiners Assessment Criteria

**Submission instructions:** Are also outlined in the package sent to students, however, they are the same as the information mentioned above.

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## **4. GAT and GAT Preparation Workshop**

The VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) has scheduled the General Achievement Test (GAT) for **Wednesday, October 7, 2020, between 10:00am and 1:15pm**. The GAT is **compulsory** for any student undertaking at least one Unit 3-4 sequence, this includes some students doing a second year VET program. (If you have received this letter your son/daughter is required to complete the GAT.) The GAT will be held at Damascus College, the venue within the College will be confirmed closer to the date. We are currently awaiting clarification from VCAA as to the safety procedures required to administer the GAT, once we have this information we will inform students and families to the process on the day of the GAT. Please note it will be important that your son/daughter arrives well before the start time of the GAT in order to make a smooth and stress free entry into the exam venue. Students will be granted entry into the exam venue at approximately 9.45am.

The 3 hour GAT, along with an additional 15 minutes reading time, has three components:

- Written communication
- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Humanities, the Arts and Social Sciences.

Your son / daughter will be mailed the GAT brochure (which is a part of the exam navigator) over the holidays. This will explain in some detail, the structure of the GAT and the way it may be used in terms of their assessment. The GAT can be viewed as an insurance policy in that it is used to verify the reliability of a student's school based work and end of year exams. It is also used in the case of a student being unable to sit for an exam and still wanting a score for that subject. There is a greater emphasis on the GAT this year, so Damascus College is going to hold a GAT sessions with students on Monday September 14. The following information has been emailed to students;

Dear Unit 3-4 VCE, VCE-VET students,

If you are receiving this email is it because you are currently undertaking either a Unit 3-4 VCE subject or a Unit 3-4 VCE-VET subject. As you would be aware, this means you will be required to undertake the GAT on Wednesday October 7 from 10:00am to 1:15pm.

Below are the items that will be discussed regarding the GAT:

1. Why the GAT?
2. How will we support you?
3. What needs to be done prior to the EXCEL time on Monday September 14?

### **1. Why the GAT?**

This year the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) have put a greater emphasis on the GAT than they may have in the past. This means it is going to be important for all students to do the best they can, as it could play a really important role in your study score and ATAR calculations.

### **2. How will we support you?**

To support Damascus College students, during EXCEL time on Monday September 14 (11:15am – 12:50pm), we are going to run a GAT workshop. This will be **compulsory** for all students required to undertake the GAT. For students who are not in the usual EXCEL class, we will let your teachers know you are attending this workshop.

The workshop will focus on giving students exposure to the GAT, so you have some familiarity with it as well as strategies on how to approach the GAT.

To give you an idea the GAT is formatted as follows;

**Writing task 1:** 30 minutes

**Writing task 2:** 30 minutes

**Multiple Choice (70 questions):** 2 hours

Students will also have access to the 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 GAT papers. These papers can be accessed through this link. [Past GAT Papers Link](#)

### **3. What needs to be done prior to the EXCEL time on Monday, September 14?**

Prior to the workshop, we ask that you have a go at the following from the 2016 GAT:

- Writing task 1
- Multiple choice questions (minimum of 15 questions)
- The 2016 GAT Paper is attached but can be accessed here using this link. [GAT 2016 Link](#)

On Monday we will discuss all writing tasks on the GAT and how to approach the multiple-choice questions. By doing some prior will assist you in your understanding of the session.

**Year 12 VCAL** students undertaking a VCE-VET subject will be sent a link prior to the Monday September 14 to a series of videos that will explain the components of the GAT and a detailed explanation to responses. Students will need to complete the sections mentioned above prior to watching these videos. Belinda Dwyer (Applied Learning Leader) will cover the components covered in the EXCEL time with all eligible VCAL students.

Please note; VCAA outlines that no special study is required for the GAT. Past study of subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and History prepares students for the GAT by building their



general knowledge and skills in writing, numeracy and reasoning. Students are strongly encouraged to attempt the GAT to the best of their ability. Students are encouraged to look at past GAT papers so they can familiarise themselves with the style and format of the paper. Samples of GAT papers from past years, with solutions, are available from the VCAA website; [Past GAT Papers](#)

The GAT is structured as follows;

The GAT takes place in a single three-hour session. There are two writing tasks and 70 multiple-choice questions.

Students may complete the tasks in any order. We advise they complete the writing tasks first. It is suggested that students divide the three hours into the following approximate time allocations:

Writing task 1	30 minutes
Writing task 2	30 minutes
Multiple-choice questions	2 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 hours</b>

Further information on how to complete the GAT can be found on the VCAA website through the following link: [How to complete the GAT](#)

Students are required to stay in the exam hall for the duration of the GAT. Therefore students should utilise their time appropriately and complete the GAT to the best of their ability.

There are a few rules to be mindful of in the GAT. A clear, plastic, label-free water bottle, no larger than 1.5 litres, is permitted in the exam room. A printed dictionary is allowed and students are asked to bring a pen, pencil and eraser. Food is not allowed nor are any electronic devices **including smart watches**. All devices will be collected prior to entry into the GAT room.

Students are expected to wear full uniform and adhere to all school and exam rules. As it is a student free day, students are permitted to leave the school at the conclusion of the GAT.

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## 5. [Exam navigators link](#)

VCAA has sent the Exam navigators to schools this week and these will be mailed out to students next week, along with their end of year exam timetable. This booklet has all the important information for students with regards to the GAT, end of year exams and the rules and expectations. All students are asked to read this document thoroughly so they are aware of the expectations for each external assessment. An electronic copy can be found through this link: [2020 VCAA Exam Navigators](#)

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## 6. VCAA external assessment timetable

VCAA has released the VCE end of year exam timetable.

Oral and performance exams will be held between Monday, October 12 and Friday, November 6.

This information has been emailed to the students undertaking these exams, if you have not received an email with this information, please contact Mr Matthew Hallowell.

The VCE External Assessments will be held from Tuesday, November 10 to Tuesday, December 1. The official timetable can be found through this link: [VCAA external assessment timetable](#)  
Copies of a student's individual timetable will be mailed with the exam navigators.

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## 7. Revision lecture program being offered at Damascus College

Damascus College has been fortunate enough to be able to engage Connect Education, who is a branch of Elevate Education, to run revision lectures for some subjects. Unfortunately, they do not have programs for all the subjects we offer at Damascus, but we have been able to engage them for the ones they do.

Damascus College is going to pay for these revision lectures and therefore it will be compulsory for all students to attend. All sessions will be a two hour revision lecture and tailored to the students' needs as identified by the subject teacher. Most revision lectures will be conducted during class time at school or will be delivered remotely if required.

In these instances to accommodate the 2 hour lecture, students will be asked to give up either TA time or an amount of lunch time to accommodate the lecture. A small handful of revision lectures will run afterschool from either 3:45pm to 5:45pm or 4pm to 6pm. We hope this will give students an opportunity to get home, otherwise space can be provided at Damascus College for students to participate in the lecture then head home at the conclusion.

We feel that these lectures will be a valuable opportunity for students with their exam preparation, hopefully assisting them in optimising their study scores on the end of year exams. Below is an outline of what students will be able to get out of the revision sessions;

- Presenters will tailor sessions to subject teachers requests of areas of focus.
- Session notes booklet provided.
- Full subject summaries are provided (approx. 100-150 pages depending on subject).
- Subject exam guides provided and given to students.
- Live Q&A sessions in the lead-up to exams across 18 subjects.
- Exam Planners.
- Lectures will be presented remotely through Microsoft Teams which means students can still attend if they are not on campus.

On the next page is the revision lecture timetable for term 4:



## Revision Lecture program

Date	Day	Class	Time
5/10/2020	Monday	Psychology Class 1	9:00am - 11:00am
5/10/2020	Monday	Psychology Class 2	1:20pm - 3:20pm
13/10/2020	Tuesday	Chemistry	1:20pm - 3:20pm
13/10/2020	Tuesday	English Language	1:20pm - 3:20pm
14/10/2020	Wednesday	Business Management Class 1	9:00am - 11:00am
14/10/2020	Wednesday	Business Management Class 2	11:15am - 1:15pm
14/10/2020	Wednesday	Legal Studies	3:45pm - 5:45pm
14/10/2020	Wednesday	History Revolutions	11:15am - 1:15pm
15/10/2020	Thursday	Media	1:20pm - 3:20pm
15/10/2020	Thursday	Physics	1:20pm - 3:20pm
16/10/2020	Friday	Mathematical Methods	9:00am - 11:00am
20/10/2020	Tuesday	Literature	1:20pm - 3:20pm
20/10/2020	Tuesday	Physical Education	4:00pm - 6:00pm
21/10/2020	Wednesday	Health and Human Development	4:00pm - 6:00pm
22/10/2020	Thursday	Studio Arts	9:00am - 11:00am
22/10/2020	Thursday	Visual Communications	1:20pm - 3:20pm
26/10/2020	Monday	Biology Class 1	1:20pm - 3:20pm
27/10/2020	Tuesday	Biology Class 2	1:20pm - 3:20pm

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### 8. External Revision lecture opportunities

Term 3 Holidays tend to have Exam revision sessions available through external providers. For students who may be interested in attending these, the following providers are offering sessions: Please note; some of these revision lectures will come at a cost to students. Information for the respective providers can be found through the links below.

[ACU](#) - Free

[ATAR notes](#) - Free

[TSSM](#)

[Access Education](#)

[TSFX](#)

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Yours sincerely,



Mr. Matthew Hallowell  
VCE Coordinator