

VCE Student Profile: Andrew Long

Question 1

Please state your name.

Andrew

Question 2

Which year did you complete your VCE?

2009

Question 3

Did you study any Unit 3/4 subjects in Year 11? If yes, please list the subject(s).

Biology

Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

Melbourne High School

Question 5

What scores did you obtain for each of your Unit 3/4 studies? Please indicate both the raw scores and scaled scores.

| Subject | Raw Score | Scaled Score |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Biology | 43 | 43.93 |
| English | 44 | 43.99 |
| Chemistry | 50 | 50.00 |
| Mathematical Methods | 50 | 50.00 |
| Specialist Mathematics | 40 | 47.12 |
| Physical Education | 43 | 41.57 |

Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

99.65

Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery

Question 8

Which university/tertiary institution are you enrolled in/planning to attend?

Monash University



The following questions relate to a typical week in which there were NO major examinations forthcoming:

Question 9

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside school) across a typical week?

On an average weekday, I would probably have solidly studied for around 3-4 hours. However this changed depending on the day and week. I never really studied on a Friday night. I also tended to take the night off after a SAC or major assessment if I didn't have anything else too important on the next day. Weekends were very different, I liked to see some friends, or go out at night, so I probably only did around 6-7 hours across the weekend.

Question 10

What was your typical weekday routine?

Wake up at 7:00, take the train to school at 8:00, and arrive at school around 8:40 in time for form assembly. Then finish school at 3:20 (some days 1:00 if the double was cancelled or it was a Wednesday) and get on the train back home, arriving around 4:10. I normally took a break for about an hour to eat etc. Then I studied solidly until dinner which was between 5:00 and 6:30, and then studied again after dinner (7:00) right up until bedtime which was around 9:00 or 10:00.

Question 11

Where did you engage in the bulk of your study on a day to day basis?

In my bedroom, but in the school library during free periods (this was mostly unsuccessful due to procrastination with friends!)

Question 12

How many hours did you dedicate to study across school holidays?

Barely any study in the first and third term breaks, I pretty much only did Maths in this time because I enjoy it, or I read the English books. Even then, this was around only 1 hour per day, on weekends and weekdays. Second term and final holidays were different as exams loomed, in this time I went "study-crazy" and racked up 6-10 hours of study a day, regardless of the day.

Question 13

Did you engage in any extra curricular activities across Year 12? If yes, please indicate the activities and how much time was dedicated to each activity.

I was the captain of volleyball at school which took 2 mornings per week (arriving at school at 7:30, which meant a 6:00 wake up) for most of the year, plenty of lunch time organisation time, and around 10 days off for competition. I also participated in a sporting exchange with Adelaide High School for which I took a week off school. I played the piano which constituted about 2 hours of practice a week, and a half hour lesson.

Question 14

How did you balance/organise your study with other commitments like work or sport or family?

My girlfriend and family always took precedence over study whenever they needed me. Also, sport and piano are important to me for clearing my head and making it easier to study, so these activities were essential and also took precedence. I didn't really believe in "free time" during year 12 so all other time was devoted to study. I did hold down a job for around 6 months of year 12, but it was around 4-5 hours a week, and study always came first.

The following questions relate to a typical week where there were major examinations forthcoming:

Question 15

How did you approach the task of preparing for the exam? (For example, would you start the process by writing notes? If so, which resources did you use to compile materials etc).

Leading up to an exam, I made sure I understand and had worked through the entire course. To validate this process I often worked through a study guide, doing all the questions, making sure I answered them all correctly and understood all the material. After this, I just worked at practice exams, focussing on the marking and critiquing process that came after. I made an "error book" for each subject that described my common errors in each subject in point form, and I read this before practise, and real exams to ensure I did not make these mistakes.

Question 16

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside of school) in the weeks leading up to the exams?

Every single hour I could manage, after school I would only stop studying for dinner, and to go to bed around 9 or 10, depending on the day. On days off, I would study all day at home, but stop for about 20 minutes every couple of hours. Sometimes a general day off was required to stop myself from burning out, this probably happened every 3-5 days.

Question 17

What was your typical day to day routine when studying for the exams?

I would study all day, and stop for meals and breaks, usually going outside for a walk or a run during these breaks.

Question 18

Did you continue your extracurricular activities in the weeks leading up to the exams?

No, I stopped all extracurricular activities, including work to make way for study.

Question 19

Which technique(s) did you use to learn materials "off by heart"? (eg. writing notes, re-writing, reading texts etc).

Copying out notes and reading/re-reading them over and over. Then to ensure I had memorised the material, I would give definitions or material to a friend/family member and say it out loud to make sure I had it perfect.

Question 20

If applicable, when did you start preparing for your Unit 3 exams?

When did you start preparing for your Unit 4 exams?

I started doing practise exams for my one midyear exam around 5 weeks before the exam, and I make sure I understood all material by about 7 weeks from the exam.

I started preparing for unit 4 exams with a similar time frame in mind, but slightly earlier to compensate for the number of exams I had to prepare for (7).

Question 21

Did you suffer from anxiety attacks or mind blocks in any of your exams? What did you do to alleviate or get through these situations?

No I didn't, but if I did I promised myself I would finish the rest of the exam, and then come back to it and hope that I remembered anything. If I didn't, I would have written anything that I thought would give me some of the available marks.

Question 22

Did you throw yourself back into study after the mid-year exams, or did you take a significant study break?

I had a significant break, I barely studied after my exams. I began to study a couple of days before term 3 started because I had a SAC in the first week back.

Question 23

Did you study across the Term 2 school holidays? If yes, what did you spend the bulk of your time doing?

Not really, I just studied for the SAC I had in the first week back and did a little bit more of the Maths Methods course. I believe I also spent some time re-reading the English text "Hard Times" because I was struggling with it and had decided to write on this for the exam.

Question 24

If you did not study across the Term 2 school holidays, do you believe that your workload and stress levels would have been reduced if you did engage in some study?

I truly believe that a study break across this time is essential, I don't think my lack of study increased my workload in the first couple of weeks, and it probably contributed to lower stress levels as I had time to relax. I had worked very hard during term 2 and in the lead up to exams; I felt I deserved a break.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO WRITE ABOUT

Question 1

Which subject does this report relate to?

Chemistry

Question 2

What sort of marks did you get in this subject across the year? (Please detail the marks you obtained for each SAC and exam).

I got around 95% for all SACs, on the first exam I scored a 68.5/73, and I did not get my statement of marks for the final year, but by looking at the answers on the vcaa site, I believe I scored between 73 and 74/76.

Question 3

Based on your results and performance throughout the year, were you confident that you would obtain a perfect Study Score? If not, what Scaled Score were you anticipating/hoping to receive?

No, I thought I would get around a 47, but definitely a 45+ score.

Question 4

Which section/topic from Unit 3 and 4 did you find most challenging?

*For unit 3, memorising everything to do with Spectroscopy and Chromatography was the most challenging
For unit 4, I struggled with galvanic and electrolytic cells the most.*

Question 5

How much time did you spend preparing/working on SACS?

I devoted complete study to it for atleast the night before and all the morning before it, but sometimes a couple of nights before if it was a big one.

Question 6

What was the best source of help/information for the SACS? (Text book, teacher, friends, lectures, tutorial programs, private tutors, internet, own research etc).

The internet, friends and my own research

Question 7

Did you regularly use a private tutor in this subject? If so, did you find this assistance beneficial?

No

Question 8

Did you attend a tuition college/tutorial classes/lectures to assist in this subject? Did you find this assistance beneficial?

No

Question 9

If applicable, do you feel that you would have obtained the same score if you did not use tutors/coaches/lectures/tuition programs?

N/A

Question 10

What was your best source of help across the year (teacher, tutor, lecture program etc)?

Study guide materials and friends who had been through year 12 already with impressive scores who gave me advice.

Question 11

Did you do anything differently study wise in comparison to your peers at school?

I genuinely believe I worked a lot harder and for longer than most other people at my school in chemistry.

Question 12

Do you feel that you had an advantage over other students in this subject? If so, what was this advantage?

No, but I did enjoy year 12 chemistry a lot so I guess it was easier for me to study a lot for it.

Question 13

Compare the subjects for which you obtained your lowest and highest Subject Study Scores.

Detail what you did differently between the two subjects and if applicable, provide your opinion on why you obtained such different scores.

After scaling, my lowest study score was PE, and my highest two were methods and chemistry. In most of my PE classes I did my homework and study for maths and chemistry, and just studied the night before sacs, and just before the exam. Therefore, the disparity in study scores most likely arose from the differences in how much study I did, and how much I listened in class for each subject.

Question 14

As part of your exam preparation for this subject, did you spend time writing up a comprehensive set of notes from which to learn? If yes, how many hours do you believe you invested into this task?

No, I utilised a study notes book that had all the notes written up for me, and I worked through that. However I did create an "error book" that had all my errors listed in it, and probably upwards of 8 hours went into this task (around 10-15 minutes after each practice exam).

Question 15

Did you purchase/acquire quality notes to assist in your examination preparation? If yes, did you find this acquisition beneficial? Why/why/not?

Yes I did, and they proved to be extremely useful. I mainly used "Chem notes" by A+, who release a book for both unit 3 and unit 4 with an appropriate number of questions for each segment. I also obtained a couple of other books with questions in them, but found these less useful. These included NEAP and Insight notes.

Question 16

How many examination papers did you work through as part of your exam preparation?

Approximately 40-50 exam papers for the unit 3 exam. Around 30 for the Unit 4 exam.

Question 17

Which exam papers did you work through?

NEAP, STAV, TSFX, TSSM, VCAA, Insight, Chemolgy, Lisachem, and MHS trial exam papers.

Question 18

Did you work through any exam papers under exam conditions? If yes, how many?

I worked through the VCAA exam from 2008, and the 2008 example paper in exam conditions. I also did the 2009 MHS trial exam under exam conditions, at school, in the room where my actual exams were held.

Question 19

If applicable, how much time was invested into preparing for the Unit 3 examination?

How much time was invested into preparing for the Unit 4 examination?

Which examination did you find more difficult and why?

Probably around 60 hours for the unit 3 exam, and around 35-40 hours for the unit 4 exam. The unit 3 exam was definitely the most difficult of the two exams as it required larger leaps in logic to understand and answer questions. The exam was also a lot longer, with very large and confusing question stems for a couple of questions.

Question 20

Had you previously covered all the questions/concepts that appeared in the exams or did the exam paper contain materials that you had never seen before? If so, did this make you panic in the exams?

No, but it required you to apply the concepts that you had learnt in a new one for a couple of questions. (Especially the double bonds question from the unit 3 exam).

Question 21

If applicable, did you complete every question in the Unit 3 exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

Yes

Question 22

If applicable, did you complete every question in the Unit 4 exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

Yes

Question 23

Did you use any special exam techniques when working through the actual exams?

I complete the multiple choice first, then I answer the short answer questions start to finish. I then hide all my answers, and complete the questions again on the data sheet, and then compare my answers. If there is a disparity, I answer the question a third time, and critique all answers and choose the best one.

Question 24

If applicable, what mistakes did you make when preparing for the Unit 3 exams?
Did you do anything differently when preparing for the Unit 4 examinations?

My preparation for the unit 3 chemistry exam was the most successful out of any exam preparation I have ever done. It went perfectly in my opinion. I tried to copy my approach to this exam in all my end of year exams, but it did not work as there just wasn't enough time at the end of the year.

Question 25

Which resources did you find most helpful when preparing for the exams?

Friends who had completed VCE before, and study guides/internet. Youtube was also a good way to memorise spectroscopic and chromatographic techniques.

Question 26

What advice would you provide to those students aiming for a 50 in this subject?

I would advise students to work work work. VCE is centred on rewarding students who work hard, and not those who are naturally gifted. Be prepared to work ridiculous hours, and to drop all other extra-curricular activities when you really have to. However, it is still important to reward yourself, and have some time out. Make sure you go to parties on weekends, and have a lot of fun in your final year. Exercise is also a brilliant way to refresh yourself.

GENERAL ADVICE

Question 1

What was the most difficult aspect of completing your VCE studies and how did you overcome this?

It was very difficult to try and balance the rest of your life while still concentrating "solely" on VCE. Sometimes other things get in the way of study, and you just have to deal with other things before you can get back to study. It is important to just let these things go, and just do what you have to, otherwise you can get caught up in it all, and cause yourself unnecessary stress that will impact poorly on your VCE results.

Question 2

If you had your time over again, would you do anything differently across Year 11 and/or 12?
Why/Why Not?

I would probably reconsider doing so many extracurricular activities, or just pull out of roles of responsibility so I could participate without having to spend a lot of time organising things.

Question 3

Is there anything that you wish you had known about before entering the VCE?

How much work was required to do well. I knew it was going to be a lot, but to achieve a score in the high 99s, it takes up a ridiculous amount of your life. I also wish I had been warned of the stress that so many hours of work, and so much worrying about results, would create. Also the subsequent impact this would have on your mental and physical health.

Question 4

Are there any resources/services/products that would have assisted you in your studies had they been available?

Probably somewhere that high scoring students could just brag about their scores, or whinge about petty marks that were taken off them so I could vent and stop stress building up on me.

Question 5

If you had one piece of advice to give future students, what would it be?

Work hard

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

If you can think of anything else that may help future students, please detail your thoughts/comments below:

Make sure you talk to people who have been through VCE and have done well. Try to use their strategies for overcoming difficulties in the VCE to overcome your own. Use and talk to teachers as they are often more than happy to help, or give you extensions when you need them. Also, try to let the outcome of SACs, exams, and subjects go while you concentrate on other SACs, exams, and subjects. Worrying about things you can't change will only lead to disaster.