

VCE Student Profile: Dasha

Question 1

Please state your name.

Dasha

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).

Yes, History (Revolutions) and Mathematical Methods.

Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

McKinnon Secondary College

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
Maths Methods	37	Approx 43
French	38	48
English	44	Approx 43
History	45	46
Psychology	50	50
Biology	50	50

Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

99.75

Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Bachelor of Behavioural Science

Question 8

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

Monash University



The following questions relate to a typical week where there were no major examinations forthcoming:

Question 9

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

I usually studied anywhere between 2 and 6 hours on a weekday (as I had many free periods due to only studying 4 subjects in year 12), depending on the amount set for that night and the number of SACs coming up. The morning before a SAC I usually studied for an hour in the morning in addition to many hours the night before! I typically studied at least a small amount each day, even on weekends. I did not study at all on Friday and Saturday nights, but I studied in the mornings so that the rest of the day was free! I would estimate that I studied, on average, 20- 25 hours per week outside of school. However, this does not include free periods, during which I usually studied as well.

Question 10

What was your typical weekday routine?

*Wake- 7:30 am (or 6 am if a SAC that day to study for an hour and a half)
Leave for school – 8:30 am
Arrive at school – 8: 45 am
Finish school- 3:10 pm
Arrive at home – 3:30 pm
Study- 4:30- 6 pm
Relax- 6- 7:30 pm
Study – 7:30- 10:30 pm*

However, this varied greatly as some days I had work, some days I finished school at midday and was therefore able to study for much longer. Some days I was lazy and did nothing! No set routine

Question 11

Where did you engage in the bulk of your study on a day to day basis?
(eg. bedroom, school library etc).

Bedroom and school library, sometimes staying after school in the Yr 12 study centre so I would not be distracted

Question 12

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

Best advice is to do as many hours as you can! I studied almost every day, approximately 2-5 hours per day and completed at least two practice exams per day. I typically went out with friends on Friday or Saturday nights, and studied in the mornings. During weekdays, I studied as much as I felt I could, usually approximately 5 hours but with regular breaks (every 30 minutes sometimes!)My routine varied greatly and I allowed myself to take time off if I felt I needed it, as long as I caught up with my study the next 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.

*Volunteering for Riding for the Disabled (only half the year)- 4 hours per week
Horse riding lessons – 1 hour per week
Part time work (half the year) 4-8 hours per week
Tutoring younger students in French- 1 hour per week
Sports- 3 hours per week*

Question 14

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

I made a detailed list each and every day of the tasks I wanted to accomplish that day. For example, "write an English essay, make biology notes for this topic, make 20 cue cards for psychology".

Thus, I had an idea of how long I would need to spend studying that day. As a result, I had much more spare time on my hands than others who would spend hours studying with no real direction, as I would complete my task, cross it off my list, and then spend some time relaxing, usually on the phone with my boyfriend! Even if I, for example, visited friends on a weeknight, I would stay up later than usual to complete the tasks I had set for myself. This motivation to complete them ensured that I did not waste time in front of the television, for instance.

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).

I compiled comprehensive notes for biology from a variety of sources, such as my textbook, other textbooks in the library, my TSFX notes and notes taken in class. As a result, I had extremely detailed information. Then, each night, I would read a section of these notes to familiarise myself with the material. Next, I would attempt to explain the material, in my own words, to an unfortunate family member, friend, or boyfriend. I found that explaining the material allowed me to come to a much deeper understanding, due to the questions asked by the friend, and consolidated it in my mind. Furthermore, I listened to Douchy's Biology Podcasts, available free online, which were extremely helpful and fun to listen to on the train or while walking to school. In fact, one of the questions in last year's exam tested material we had not covered in class but which I had fortunately listened to the night before! Finally, I completed many, many practice exams (approximately 30 in total), some of them twice. Only a few were timed, however. Most of the VCAA exams I completed twice so that I was sure I was comfortable with all the material. Practice exams are the best way to realise what you do and don't know before an exam. I also rewrote the answers to the questions which I answered incorrectly.

Question 16

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

Approximately 5 hours per night on a weekday, and 2 hours on a Friday. I studied all day on weekends (with frequent breaks) but went out every Saturday night to relax and unwind. After studying for long periods, it becomes increasingly difficult to concentrate, so breaks are crucial.

Question 17

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

Study for an hour before school, use all free periods to study, stay after school to complete a practice exam and to ask teachers for guidance, complete further exams at home. Then I would add to my notes the information I had learned while completing an exam.

Question 18

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

No, I focused solely on my exams during this time

Question 19

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

- *Explaining the information to a non- biology-studying friend*
- *Writing notes (I never re-wrote them as I found that this did nothing to help me remember the information)*
- *Doing questions*
- *Trying to explain the information to myself in my own words*
- *More questions!*

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 began preparing as soon as the course started! I completed biology practice questions as we went through the course instead of waiting until a few weeks before exams. My study timetable prior to exams did not differ significantly to that months prior to the exam, apart from doing more practice exams. I did not rewrite notes as I had already compiled them steadily throughout the year. However, I started completing timed exams approximately 2- 3 weeks prior to both exams. I believe that the key is to study steadily throughout the entire year rather than cramming and stressing right before exams.

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 was not overly anxious as I knew I had done a lot of preparation- that's the best way to ensure less stress!

Question 22

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

I didn't take a significant break as we still had a SAC after our exams. After this was completed, however, I took approximately a week off.

Question 23

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

Yes, I started looking at the material for the next semester, but most of the holidays were spent simply relaxing with friends

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?

Despite the fact that I didn't do a great deal of study during the holidays, I did begin to study and revise as soon as semester 3 began, so by the time exams came along I wasn't stressed at all. The best way to do it is to be consistent across the whole year rather than cramming.

Questions Relating to the Subject You Have Been Asked to Write About

Question 1

Which subject does this report relate to?

Biology

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).

A, A+, A+, A, B+, B.

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?

I had no idea I would obtain this score! I was hoping for anything above 40.

Question 4

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

Diseases

Question 5

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

Approximately 5 hours over the course of a few days

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).

A combination. Asking teachers questions is important, but the TSFX notes helped immeasurably! If I had a question that was not covered in class, I would usually google it and quickly find the answer.

Question 7

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

No, I did not have a tutor.

Question 8

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

I attended weekly TSFX lectures and found that they consolidated information learned in class. So for me, they were a good way to revise.

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?

I believe that I would have received a slightly lower score as I used the notes provided by TSFX almost every day

Question 10

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

My teacher was extremely helpful and I emailed her regularly with questions

Question 11

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

I explained concepts which I felt was the best study technique, whereas my peers spent hours re writing notes, which I don't believe aids retention of information.

Question 12

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

No, I was simply very hard working and motivated to achieve a great ENTER

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.

I achieved my lowest score for Maths Methods and my highest for Biology and Psychology. Maths is generally my weak point and I did not study enough for this subject. Being in year 11, I did not realise the amount of work needed to do well and I crammed before exams rather than studying steadily throughout the year. As a result, I often fell behind and thus did not understand what was being explained in class. Furthermore, I did not enjoy the subject and thus regularly failed to complete set homework! Conversely, I loved Biology and Psychology and thus put in a lot of work for these subjects.

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?

Yes, however, I compiled these notes throughout the year, adding to them each week, rather than making them before the exam. This took an estimated 20 – 30 hours.

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?

I made extensive use of the notes provided by TSFX but did not buy any additional notes. However, I did use other biology textbooks found in our school library

Question 16

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

Approximately 30.

Question 17

Which exam papers did you work through?

(List the names of the entities/organisations that produced the exam papers).

Neap, VCAA, TSSM, TSFX, Lisa Chem, Leading Edge and others.

Question 18

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

Approximately 8.

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?

I did not make a conscious decision to start preparing for an exam as I had been preparing the whole year, doing exam questions each week. I found the Unit 3 exam more difficult as I did not know what to expect.

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?

Some of the types of questions present in the exam were unlike any I had seen before, but I just tried to work through them logically and not panic. I thought after the exam that I had done much worse than I actually did. In fact, I was really disappointed after both exams. So the key lesson is not to stress out because you will probably do much better than you expect.

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, I attempted to answer each question as best I could, adding as much detail as possible

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, I attempted to answer each question as best I could, adding as much detail as possible

Question 23

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

I read the multiple choice questions first, then skimmed over the short answer questions. I answered the short answer questions first, then the MCQ, to ensure all the short answers were completed as they were worth more marks

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?

No, I didn't change anything; I was just less stressed for Unit 4 as I knew that hard work would pay off!

Question 25

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

Teachers, TSFX notes.

Question 26

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

Do as many practice exams as possible and make sure to write out the questions you get wrong to ensure you know how to answer any similar questions. Be familiar with the study design and don't stress as the examiners can't test you on anything that's not on the design. Best study technique is to explain the concepts aloud.

General Advice

Question 1

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

Stress was sometimes hard to deal with but I knew students all over the state were experiencing the same thing. I made sure I spent a lot of time with friends to take a break from study.

Question 2

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

No, I'm very happy with my scores so I think my study went quite well

Question 3

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

VCE is not that scary and ENTER is not critical to getting into uni.

Question 4

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

No.

Question 5

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

Study smart and study hard. It's not the time spent studying that matters, it's the quality of study done in that period