

# VCE Student Profile: Sarah Calvert

## Question 1

Please state your name.

*Sarah*

## Question 2

Which year did you complete your VCE?

*2010*

## Question 3

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

*Yes, Biology and Mathematical Methods*

## Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

*Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar 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
<i>Biology</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Mathematical Methods</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>Unknown</i>

## Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

*Unknown as yet, as completing year 12 this year.*

## Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

*None so far, as completing year 12 this year.*

## Question 8

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

*I'm planning to put down the University of Melbourne as my first preference.*

*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 would usually study around 13 hours from Monday to Thursday and a total of 6 hours on Saturday and Sunday. I would normally take off Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday during the day.*

**Question 10**

What was your typical weekday routine?

*7:15 wakeup*

*7:55 leave for school*

*8:10 arrive at school*

*8:30 School*

*3:40 extra co-curricular activity most weeknights (sport or music rehearsal)*

*5:50 arrive home*

*6:00 homework*

*7:00dinner*

*7:30 homework*

*9:30 leisure time*

*10:00 get ready for bed*

*10:15 go to bed (sometimes read for 20 minutes)*

**Question 11**

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

*At my desk in my bedroom.*

**Question 12**

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

*Term 1 and 2 holidays: 8 hours each (in evenings).*

*Term 3 holidays: Usually studied Mon-Wed for 6 hours each during the day and took evenings off. Thurs 4 hours in the evenings and took the day off on Fridays. 6 hours over the weekend.*

**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.

*In year 11, I played interschool sport (2-3 hours a week), X-country training (2 hours), Music Rehearsals (3 hours).*

**Question 14**

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

*I decided in year 10, I could no longer keep a part-time job as I didn't have enough time to relax on the weekends. I would plan ahead if I knew I would have a lot of time to study the night before a SAC and wrote out a timetable of when I would do my homework if I was particularly busy that week.*

*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 started by writing notes and making posters all prepared in the way I find clearest for me to read (plain white paper with pen and lots of highlighting) compiled from my textbook, class notes, podcasts, Jacaranda flashcards and TSFX lecture notes. I would then do as many practise questions as possible from Checkpoints, A+ Exam Guide and practise exam papers.*

**Question 16**

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

*4 hours each weeknight with Friday nights off. Saturdays and Sundays, I would study up to 8 hours a day and take the nights off.*

**Question 17**

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

*8:30 wake up, shower and eat breakfast  
9:00-11:00 prepare notes  
11:30-1:00 practise questions  
1:00 lunch break  
1:45 practise exam  
3:30 break  
3:45 Go over difficult concepts and read over notes/flashcards  
4:30 read textbook and do more practise questions  
5:00 leisure time  
6:30 dinner  
7:00 TV  
8:00 leisure time  
9:30 bed*

**Question 18**

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

*They tended to finish by themselves a few weeks before exams, but I would continue attending those extracurricular activities that were compulsory. I usually found I did less sport in my spare time in the weeks leading up to exams.*

**Question 19**

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

*Making notes and posters were the most useful way for me to remember material “off by heart” and then I would put them up in my bedroom or in the bathroom so I could read them if I needed quick clarification when doing practice questions. I would also draw stars next to the bits I had trouble remembering so I knew to look over those areas more often, quiz myself and write things out over again until I could do it all easily by memory. I would read over these notes slowly and thoroughly trying to understand as much as possible, so it would be easier to recall it as I could understand the reasoning behind it. I also found mnemonics (like rhymes) really useful to remember difficult things.*

**Question 20**

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

When did you start preparing for your Unit 4 exams?

*Unit 3 exams: Week 3 of term 2*

*Unit 4 exams: second last week of term 3*

**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?

*Occasionally, I couldn't remember how to do a question at first, so I would leave it, not worry about it and believe that when I next looked at it, the answer would come to me.*

**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?

*I did not study tirelessly throughout the holidays in Year 11 as I wanted to ensure I was feeling fresh and ready to start a new term. However, I made sure I still did some study to make sure when school started back I was up to date with all my work.*

**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?

*Looking back, it would have been beneficial if I'd studied a bit more regularly throughout the holidays, just a little bit every now and again would have been good to give me a head start when school went back. The holidays would have been a great opportunity to make sure my study notes were up to date and so decrease the time I spent on them in the lead up to the exams.*

### 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).

**Unit 3 :**

*SAC #1: 96%*

*SAC #2: 86%*

*SAC #3: 78%*

*SAC #4: 85%*

**Unit 4 :**

*SAC #1: 91%*

*SAC #2: 81%*

*SAC #3: 88%*

*SAC #4: 85%*

*Exam 1: A+*

*Exam 2: A+*

**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 never dreamed that I would get a perfect Study Score, but hoped to achieve a raw score of around 44-46.*

**Question 4**

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

*Immunity.*

**Question 5**

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

*6-7 hours for each*

**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).

*Podcasts, Nature of Biology text book and my teacher*

**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?

*I attended both the Unit 3 and Unit 4 TSFX revision lectures, and found these very beneficial as they were very in depth and supplied me with detailed notes.*

**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?

*If I'd studied a lot harder, I'm sure it still would have been possible without the lectures, but the lectures definitely gave me confidence and helped to put concepts into the bigger picture.*

**Question 10**

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

*My teacher.*

**Question 11**

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

*I listened to Douchy's Biology Podcasts which I subscribed to over iTunes and found very useful as I could go for a walk and still be studying. Also, I found I was less distracted by the internet and TV than many of my peers.*

**Question 12**

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

*No.*

**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 made really thorough notes and constantly looked over these. I also enjoyed Biology a lot more than Methods which meant I didn't mind setting aside more time to study for this 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?

*Yes, I completed my notes very slowly and carefully, so although it took a long time I was able to commit most of the material to memory as I was preparing these. I probably would have spent at least 30 hours preparing these notes for each unit.*

**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?

*When I attended the TSFX revision lectures, I received a comprehensive set of revision notes which were useful as it explained things in a different way.*

**Question 16**

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

*Approximately 24 before each exam.*

**Question 17**

Which exam papers did you work through?

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

*Lisa Chem, Insight, NEAP, STAV trial exam papers ranging from 2005-2010 and VCAA past papers from 2004.*

**Question 18**

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

*Yes, approximately 7 at home and 3 at school.*

**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 invested 40 hours to prepare for the unit 3 exam and 50 hours for the Unit 4 exam.*

*I found the Unit 4 exam more difficult as I had to prepare for my Unit 3/4 Methods exam at the same time and I seemed to find there were harder concepts.*

**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?

*There were a lot of new questions I'd never seen before. Initially, this was a bit worrying but when I read through the questions I realised I just needed to apply what I already knew to the situation.*

**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.

*I think there was only a question worth one mark that I ran out of time to complete.*

**Question 23**

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

*During reading time, I would decide which answer I would choose for all of my responses to the multiple choice questions, so that during writing time I could fill in the answers to the multiple choice questions really quickly and leave more time for the Short Answer questions which I found more challenging. I would also make a quick decision if I was going to leave a question and come back to it later, but tried to do this as little as possible.*

**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?

*I didn't manage to keep up to date with the textbook questions during the year, and regretted this when the exams were just a couple of weeks away. For the Unit 4 exam, I made sure I didn't leave these until a few weeks before the exam, so I had more time for the material to sink in. I also kept my folder more organised, so I knew where to find relevant notes when it came to exam preparation.*

**Question 25**

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

*Douchy's Biology podcasts, the Nature of Biology textbook, Biozone, and class notes.*

**Question 26**

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

*Be strict with how you study, make a plan of how long you're going to study for and stick to it.*

## General Advice

**Question 1**

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

*I found time-management my biggest challenge; finding the time to fit in all my co curricular activities, study and time to rest. To overcome this, I planned ahead if I knew I would not have much time to study later in the week.*

**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 try not to stress so much because this ended up making me not be able to remember the answer occasionally.*

**Question 3**

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

*Take more breaks because these help you to concentrate later in the day.*

**Question 4**

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

*I found there were many useful resources already available.*

**Question 5**

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

*If you feel you are taking too long to answer questions, take a break.*

*Don't try to understand complex ideas when you're tired, use that time to complete less mentally-demanding tasks like making a glossary.*

*Don't forget to ask your teachers for help if you need it, otherwise your questions will just accumulate and you will never end up finding out the answers.*

*Work out how you learn best (ie. with flashcards, mind maps, diagrams, detailed notes or by quizzing yourself).  
And stay healthy!*