

Q&As – COVID-19 test arrangements for students undertaking the GAT on Tuesday 5 October 2021

- 1. Are some students sitting the General Achievement Test (GAT) on Tuesday 5 October 2021 being asked to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to the GAT?**

Yes. The Department of Health has strongly recommended that students who currently live in areas with high numbers of COVID-19 positive cases undertake a COVID-19 test prior to sitting the GAT.

- 2. Are all students sitting the GAT being asked to undertake a COVID-19 test?**

No. Only students who currently live in Department of Health identified postcode areas with high numbers of COVID-19 positive cases are strongly recommended to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to sitting the GAT.

- 3. Which students are being asked to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to sitting the GAT?**

Students who will be undertaking the GAT on Tuesday 5 October 2021, and live in the following postcodes in the LGAs of Brimbank, Casey, Darebin, Hume, Melton, Moreland, Whittlesea and Wyndham, are strongly recommended by the Department of Health to undertake a COVID-19 test:

3021; 3023; 3029; 3030; 3037; 3046; 3047; 3048; 3059; 3060; 3061; 3064; 3073; 3074; 3075; 3076; 3082; 3338; 3750; 3752; 3754; 3977

- 4. Why are students sitting the GAT and living in these postcodes being asked to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to sitting the GAT?**

The Department of Health has determined that given the higher numbers of COVID-19 positive cases in these postcodes, it is more likely that students currently living in these postcodes could be exposed to COVID-19. Given this, and the higher risk of transmission when larger numbers of people congregate for events, the Department of Health has determined that as an extra precaution, students living in these postcodes who will sit the GAT are strongly recommended to undertake a COVID-19 test to identify any new positive cases and prevent the chances of transmission while sitting the GAT.

- 5. Is it compulsory for students sitting the GAT to undertake a COVID-19 test?**

Students will still be able to sit the GAT if they have not been tested, but all students who live in one of the identified postcodes are strongly recommended to undertake a COVID-19 test as an important safety measure

- 6. Will a student be able to sit the GAT if they have not undertaken the test?**

Yes. The Department of Health has determined that undertaking a COVID-19 test for all students living in identified postcodes and sitting the GAT is an important public health measure to prevent further transmission of COVID-19. However, students will still be able to sit the GAT if they have not undertaken a COVID-19 test.

- 7. On what dates are students sitting the GAT strongly recommended to undertake a COVID-19 test?**

Students are strongly recommended to undertake their COVID-19 test on either Saturday 2 October or Sunday 3 October 2021.

8. Can a student sit the GAT if their COVID-19 test result has not been received by the day of the GAT?

Yes. However, they cannot attend if have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or have been directed to isolate by the Department of Health due to having attended an exposure site.

9. Does a student sitting the GAT have to isolate at home after the test until they receive a negative result for their COVID-19 test?

No. The Department of Health has determined that this type of testing is primarily for surveillance and given it is not based on the existence of symptoms consistent with COVID-19, having attended an exposure site or as a result of being directed by the Department of Health, the student does not need to isolate after the COVID-19 test, unless the student had symptoms at the time of the test consistent with COVID-19 or developed symptoms immediately after the test.

10. How and when will students sitting the GAT be advised that they are strongly recommended to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to the GAT?

The VCAA has advised schools of the request for all students who currently live in identified postcode areas with high numbers of COVID-19 positive cases undertaking the GAT to undertake a COVID-19 test. Schools will communicate with students living in those postcodes advising them of the Department of Health's strongly recommendation for them to be tested prior to the GAT.

11. What arrangements have been put in place for students sitting the GAT to be tested?

The advice to students outlined that they should check the Department of Health COVID-19 Testing website <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19> for their closest testing location and to view current waiting times. Students sitting the GAT are able to be tested at any COVID-19 testing site.

Two testing sites have established extended hours and dedicated lanes for GAT students:

Melbourne Showgrounds - Drive Through Site – Gate 3, Langs Road, Ascot Vale

Old Master Site Coolaroo - Drive Through Site – 1550 Pascoe Vale Road, Coolaroo

Students have been advised to inform the testing site that they are a GAT student and this will ensure their test is given the appropriate priority. Students can pre-register prior to attending the site for testing using the [testing registration form](#).

12. How will a student be advised of their test result?

If the student's test result is negative, they will be advised via text message. If the student's test result is positive, they will be advised via text message and contacted by the Department of Health, who will provide instructions for the student and their family.

13. If the student's test result is positive, should they attend the GAT?

No. The student should follow the instructions provided by the Department of Health, but the student should not attend the GAT as they will be required to isolate to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

14. What happens if a student is not able to sit the GAT due to a positive COVID-19 test?

If a student is not able to sit the GAT due to COVID-19, they will be eligible for an exemption from the GAT. While the GAT plays an important part in determining final results for the VCE, if a student is unable to complete the GAT because of COVID-19, their final VCE results will be determined based on their school-based assessment and examination results as well as a range of additional data provided by the school to assist the VCAA to ensure all students receive fair and reliable results in 2021. There are established processes to ensure students receive fair results based on all assessments.

15. Should a student sitting the GAT but doesn't live in an identified postcode undertake a COVID-19 test?

No. A student need only be tested if they live in one of the identified postcodes. If, however, the student has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of where they live, they should undertake a test immediately and isolate until they receive a negative result.

16. Do students have to undertake a COVID-19 test for any other VCE exams?

No. There is currently no requirement for students to undertake a COVID-19 test for any other exam.

17. Has the GAT Operational Guidance, dated 7 September provided to all schools by the CEO of the VCAA on 10 September changed?

*No. The **Operational guidance for COVID-safe delivery of the 2021 General Achievement Test – Update 7 September 2021** has not changed and is the appropriate guidance for schools to follow in administering the GAT on Tuesday 5 October 2021.*

18. If students have any questions relating to the GAT, what is the quickest way to obtain answers to their questions?

The Department of Education and Training and the VCAA have established a hotline for all issues relating to the GAT. The hotline number is 1800 338 663 (8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm Saturday and Sunday)

Guidance for students completing the 2021 General Achievement Test (GAT) is also available on the [VCAA website](#).