



This handbook is designed for the Principal and key staff within a student's base school.

It provides a summary of the CHES vision, mission and values, CHES programs and delivery arrangements, and the expectations and requirements for students studying a subject through CHES.



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Welcome to CHES

CHES is a centre of excellence established to cultivate the potential of high-ability and high-achieving senior secondary school students. It is a direct response to the Victorian Government's intention that all students, regardless of their starting point, are supported to realise their full potential.

At CHES we offer **Higher Education Studies** (first year university subjects) through our university partnerships and we specialise in highly regarded VCE studies that are typically of great appeal to high-ability senior students: **VCE Algorithmics, Extended Investigation, English Language and Specialist Mathematics**. Students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20%), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

Our programs are available to high-achieving government school students across Victoria, including students in metropolitan, rural and regional areas and students with disadvantaged backgrounds. We're excited to be expanding access to Higher Education Studies, and these select VCE studies, to an even more diverse group of high-achieving students.

Through an innovative hybrid and flexible approach to teaching and learning, students are able to remain enrolled at their chosen government secondary school and undertake a VCE study or HES at CHES, as part of their overall VCE program. To accommodate as many eligible students as possible, these programs are available through our hy-flex approach, with opportunities to study online and on-site at CHES.

The partnership between CHES, base schools and university partners is crucial in fostering a safe and successful experience for students undertaking a program with CHES. We look forward to working with schools across Victoria to support the successful participation of students in CHES programs.

Together with base schools and partner universities we promote, monitor and respond to the academic, wellbeing, attendance, participation and engagement needs of students, including the development of an Individualised Achievement Plan (IAP) for each student.

This handbook provides an overview of our subjects and programs, our hy-flex delivery model of on-site and online learning options, funding arrangements for schools, and the guidelines and expectations for base schools, including the responsibilities of nominated base school supervisors and arrangements for assessments and exams for students enrolled in a CHES subject.

At CHES, our pillars are **Reach, Connection, Understanding**. Our aim is to **reach** as many high-ability students as possible and to engage them in the additional acceleration and enrichment opportunities CHES provides. Likewise, we aim to build enduring **connections** with government secondary schools across Victoria. I encourage you to read the information in this handbook and on our website, and to contact us with any questions or queries. We are also here to provide advice on 9063 1170 and at our school email:

ches@education.vic.gov.au

Stewart Milner
Foundation Principal
CHES

**We Reach; We Connect; We Understand.
We Think Ahead.**

www.ches.vic.edu.au



CHES Guidelines and Expectations for Base Schools

Context

The partnership between the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) and the base school is crucial in fostering a safe and successful experience for students undertaking a Higher Education Study (HES) with a partner university or a select VCE study through CHES. Together with base schools and partner universities, CHES will work to promote, monitor and respond to the academic, wellbeing, attendance, participation and engagement needs of students.

Nomination of a Base School Supervisor

It is expected that the base school will support their students undertaking study at CHES by assigning a member of staff to act as a base school supervisor. It is a requirement for a member of staff at the student's base school to be nominated as their school supervisor. Should the base school supervisor change during the course of the academic year, the base school must inform CHES as soon as possible. The school supervisor has a range of important responsibilities outlined in this handbook.

Students enrol with CHES in the following ways:

- Direct enrolment of students into a VCE subject delivered onsite and virtually
- Direct enrolment into a Higher Education Studies (HES) delivered onsite, either at CHES or the university campus and virtually by partner universities

Students participating in CHES programs remain enrolled at their chosen secondary school (base school) and are supported to undertake a course at CHES as part of their VCE program. Working in close partnership with students' base schools, students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20 per cent), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

CHES shares a joint responsibility with a student's base school to ensure social and emotional wellbeing is supported, and partners with universities and base schools to ensure academic needs are met. Upon enrolment and induction, individual student study arrangements are considered and agreed between the student, parent/carer, base school and CHES.



CHES subjects and programs

Higher Education Studies

In partnership with universities, CHES is a hub for Higher Education Studies (HES). These first-year university subjects are offered across a wide range of disciplines. HES can contribute ATAR points and potential university credits, while students complete VCE at school. This offers a valuable head start into university. The time requirement for a HES is equivalent to a VCE Unit 3&4 subject sequence and there may be pre-requisite (or co-requisite) VCE subjects related to the selected HES. More information can be found in the HES Handbook.

ATAR increment

HES can **only** be used as a fifth or sixth subject in the calculation of the ATAR. Depending on a student's results, completion of the HES can contribute 3 to 5 points to the ATAR aggregate. The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) provides an ATAR increment for a HES as a fifth or sixth subject, provided that the student has:

- satisfactorily completed four VCE Unit 3 and 4 sequences for which study scores have been calculated, including one from the English group
- satisfactorily completed at least one VCE Unit 3 and 4 sequence in the same year as the HES
- satisfactorily completed the full year of the HES
- been awarded a pass result by the university.

The table below outlines the points students will receive, and the equivalent VCE study score value, for completion of a HES (accurate at time of publication).

You can find more detailed information about how the VTAC calculates the ATAR contribution at <https://www.vtac.edu.au/atar-scaling-guide-2024.html>

Note 1: International Baccalaureate (IB) students are not eligible to receive an ATAR increment upon successful completion of your HES.

Note 2: HES Subjects are included in study area groupings for calculations of ATAR. Students should ensure they read the information at <https://www.vtac.edu.au/atar-scaling-guide-2024.html> before selecting a HES.

ATAR Increment Conversions

Average mark for HES subject	HES ATAR aggregate contribution	Equivalent VCE study score
90 or more	5.0 points	50
80-89	4.5 points	45
70-79	4.0 points	40
60-69	3.5 points	35
50-59	3.0 points	30



VCE Studies

VCE Algorithmics: Although technically a VCE subject, Algorithmics is a first-year university subject (Higher Education Scored Study) that involves solving real-world problems using computational methods. Algorithmics provides the foundation for studying computer science and software engineering at tertiary level and, on completion, some universities may offer students an accelerated tertiary pathway.

VCE English Language: This subject explores the ways in which language is used and how it reflects our thinking and values. Understanding how language is used and develop allows us to enhance the skills for effective communication in all contexts. English Language is informed by linguistics and uses tools to understand and analyse language use, variation and change. Students will explore how spoken and written English is used to communicate, think, innovate, construct identities, interrogate assumptions and create or disrupt social cohesion.

VCE Extended Investigation: This exciting subject enables students to carry out extensive research in an area of choice based on their interests. Students will be supported to develop and refine research skills, critical thinking, academic writing and presentation capabilities, offering excellent preparation for university.

VCE Specialist Mathematics: The study of mathematics provides a framework for thinking and a means of symbolic communication that is powerful, logical, concise and precise. It allows people to understand and manage human and natural aspects of the world and interrelationships between these. The skills developed in the study of Specialist Mathematics provide background for advanced studies in mathematics and other STEM fields.

Student Enrichment Series

Students who undertake a HES study or a VCE subject through CHES also have access to our Student Enrichment Series which includes workshops, masterclasses, special events and mentoring opportunities with a range of universities and industry leaders.

Hy-flex delivery

The CHES virtual learning environment enables students to study a CHES program from home or from their base school. Students also have the option to study on-site to access and use the specialist facilities that CHES has to offer.

VCE students will attend hy-flex classes once a week, either in person or online. These classes will be scheduled outside of standard school hours to ensure students who wish to attend in person are able to. They will also have at least one online tutorial during school hours. The time of this will be negotiated between the student and the teacher but the base school should assist the student to find a suitable venue to attend these sessions.

HES students will attend an online or, in some cases, in person tutorial once a week with the other CHES students. They will also have access to recordings of lectures and resources through the university Learning Management System (LMS).

CHES staff liaise closely with base schools to support the wellbeing and engagement of all students, including those who are learning online.



Funding arrangements

Students undertaking a VCE study at CHES

Students undertaking a VCE subject at CHES should be counted by their base school as part-time students. Schools should use the table below to determine and claim the appropriate Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) time fraction for students undertaking combinations of Units studied at the base school and CHES.

VCE Units undertaken at CHES	1						2				
VCE Units undertaken at home school	6	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Time fraction FTE for home school	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.3

Source: Department of Education and Training 'Guidelines for Counting Students for School Census'

The Department of Education and Training provide 0.1 FTE to the student's time fraction at their base school, in recognition of the support provided to the student's CHES studies. For further information please see:

www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/CountingStudentsguidelines.pdf

Students undertaking a Higher Education Study (HES)

Students undertaking a HES through CHES should be counted by their base school as a full-time student with a time fraction 1.0FTE for the base school. This will see the base school retain all SRP funding for the student; the student will also appear on CHES records as a non-SRP funded student at CHES.

There are no enrolment costs for government school students studying a HES program at CHES.



Eligibility requirements

1. Enrolment at a Victorian government school

For students to be considered for a CHES program (HES or a VCE subject) current enrolment in a Victorian government school is required.

Further, where a student may already have a dual enrolment that reaches across the government, Catholic or independent school sectors, the student must be undertaking the majority of their studies at the government school. For example, if a student is currently enrolled in an independent school where the majority of their VCE studies are being completed but is also undertaking a subject through Virtual School Victoria or the Victorian School of Languages, this student would not be considered eligible for participation in a CHES program.

Students must maintain their enrolment in a Victorian government school (as their main school) for the duration of their course at CHES. Students who do not maintain their enrolment in a Victorian government school may be ineligible to continue their studies, or additional payment may be sought to fund their participation. The CHES principal will determine the most suitable approach in such a situation.

2. Principal's approval

For students to be considered for a CHES program, the express support of their base school principal (or delegate) must be provided at the time of application. Students will not be considered eligible for consideration without this confirmation. This confirmation is captured in the submission of the student's application on the part of the school.

3. Nominated School Supervisor

A member of staff at the student's base school must be nominated as their school supervisor. The name and contact details of the school supervisor must be provided at the time of application.

4. Maximum subject enrolments

Students are not prohibited from participating in more than one CHES course per year, however this is not usually recommended.

Students interested in undertaking a VCE subject and a Higher Education Studies course through CHES must submit in writing a request to the CHES principal to outline their reasons for doing so. This should accompany their application.

To ensure equity of opportunities, students will not be permitted to undertake more than one Higher Education Studies unit per semester through CHES. Only one HES subject will be used in ATAR calculations.

5. International and Home-Schooled students

At this point in time, international and home schooled students are not eligible to enrol in a CHES program. This may change in the future.

Eligibility of Year 10 students and below

Year 10 students are eligible to apply for Year 10 Enrichment Electives, with base school support. CHES VCE courses are designed for senior secondary students. Applications to undertake a CHES VCE course from students in Year 10 or below will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To grant an admission for a student in Year 10 or below, the CHES principal will need to be of the opinion that the student's base school fully supports the application and has taken all reasonable measures to provide the student with a pathway and learning opportunities within or through the school.

Year 10 students are not eligible to apply for HES program.



Responsibilities - Base School Supervisor

There are five key responsibilities of the base school supervisors.

1. Enable access to the CHES network and distribute hard-copy materials

Base school supervisors must ensure students have access to the internet during designated times at school for live video-conferencing lessons, for accessing materials in the CHES LMS, and for communication with their CHES teachers. In addition, any supplementary printed materials posted to the school must be promptly passed onto each student. Any completed assessments need to be promptly emailed back to CHES.

2. Administer and supervise assessments

The base school supervisor must:

- administer and supervise assessment tasks
- in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with the assessment process set out by the CHES teacher (in line with VCAA assessment requirements);
- keep a hard copy of all completed assessments before returning by email;
- liaise with their school's VCE Exam Coordinator to confirm the time, location and any special conditions under which VCE exams are to be held;
- ensure students are aware of the details and requirements of their VCE exams, including the General Achievement Test (GAT) and the VCAA Critical Thinking Test for students studying VCE Extended Investigation.

3. Liaise with CHES staff and contribute to the Individual Achievement Plan (IAP)

CHES provides the base school supervisors with information on student progress and engagement in CHES programs. Base school supervisors will liaise with CHES to keep the school up to date regarding health and wellbeing issues and circumstances that might impact upon a student's ability to engage with their CHES studies. Supervisors must let CHES know if a student has been absent from their base school for

an extended period of time or if their contact details (or that of the school) have changed. Base school supervisors need to regularly check their emails for communication from CHES, including updates on the progress of students.

Special provision arrangements for assessment tasks must be communicated via email addressed to CHES at ches@education.vic.edu.au.

Base school supervisors should respond to requests for information from the HES program coordinator as needed and keep abreast of student progress in their HES.

4. Encourage and support

Undertaking a CHES program, including Higher Education Studies, requires considerable initiative and independence on the part of students. It is important that supervisors take an interest in the CHES studies and progress of students. Regular encouragement is key in supporting students to navigate the workload demands and submit their completed learning tasks and assessments to their CHES teacher, according to the submission calendar.

Independent study-time for CHES subjects must be integrated within the weekly timetable of students enrolled at CHES. Supervisors should support students to make regular personal contact with their CHES teacher during those scheduled independent study times.

CHES strongly suggests that students reduce their subject load at their base school when undertaking either a VCE or HES subject. The workload of a HES subject is equivalent to a VCE subject and students may not be successful if they study a full load at their base school as well as their CHES subject on top of that already full-time load.

5. Induction session

Base school supervisors are required to attend an annual induction session each year. Delivered online base school supervisors will be provided a summary of key policies, expectations, and processes that they will need to be familiar with.



Allocation of Responsibilities

CHES

CHES will monitor and record the attendance of each CHES student and notify the student's base school when a student is absent from CHES or if there is disengagement from CHES programs or concerns about their academic progress.

Issues will be communicated within 24-48 hours of the CHES teacher becoming aware of concerns about academic progress, engagement, participation or attendance. In instances where students may be at risk of harm, immediate action is taken.

CHES will liaise with base school supervisors to discuss a student's Health Support Plan. CHES may invite parents and carers to attend a Student Support Group meeting to discuss the contents of a student's Health Support Plan, as required, and determine the assistance that the student may need while at the centre or during CHES activities.

CHES staff use differentiation and intervention to meet the needs of all students including at-risk students when learning on-site and remotely in a virtual environment.

Base School

Base schools are responsible for communicating issues relating to academic progress, engagement, wellbeing or attendance to CHES within 24-48 hours of the base school becoming aware.

Where wellbeing related concerns arise, given the base school's familiarity with the student, responses are expected to be led by the base school, with the support of and in collaboration with CHES staff. This includes arranging access to Student Support Services (SSS) and other resources, with the support of and in collaboration with CHES.

The base school must share relevant information with CHES so that CHES has the same information about the student as the student's base school to support their wellbeing and learning. This may include access to students' health information, any wellbeing concerns or particular risk factors for a student and supports in place at the student's base school as well as their academic records.

The base school is responsible for the care and supervision of students while they are traveling to and from home or their base school and CHES.



Student supervision

Whilst students are engaging in CHES programs from their school, it is expected that standard principles of supervision apply.

Students are responsible for organising their own transport (e.g. on public transport) when attending CHES onsite or when attending any other physical site (e.g. a university partner site) for the purposes of a CHES class.

CHES will ensure that appropriate consent has been given by a student's parent or carer to enable them to travel to and from CHES (or other required learning sites) as an 'unsupervised excursion' which is permitted for senior students, in some circumstances, under Department policy: Excursions: Supervision.

Any excursion that falls during the school day will require formal permission from the parents and the base school.

Responsibility summary:

- When a student is attending a CHES program onsite, CHES has supervision responsibilities as well as responsibilities for a safe physical learning environment.
- When a student is attending a CHES program virtually from their base school, CHES has responsibilities for a safe online classroom environment and the student's base school has responsibilities for a safe physical environment where the student is located.
- When a student is attending a CHES program virtually from home, CHES has responsibilities for a safe online classroom environment and parents have a responsibility for a safe physical environment at home where the student is located.
- When a student is attending a university partner location (e.g. on campus at a university), the university has responsibilities for providing a safe physical learning environment and CHES has responsibilities for taking appropriate steps to follow up on any concerns students (or their parents) have raised relating to their safety or welfare when attending the campus.

Examination and assessment arrangements

For students undertaking a VCE subject through CHES the student's base school is responsible for:

- All VCAA examination arrangements, including supervision of School Assessed Coursework (SACs) or School Assessed Tasks (SATs), including subjects taught by CHES.
- Ensuring all students studying a Unit 3&4 subject through CHES sits the VCAA General Achievement Test (GAT).
- Liaising with CHES to determine the location for the VCAA Extended Investigation Critical Thinking Test.
- Informing students of the location of any oral or performance exams for CHES subjects and supporting students to attend.
- Hosting students for the end of year VCAA external exams, or for making alternative arrangements with the student(s)
- Setting up Special Provisions for students and informing CHES of these arrangements
- Applying for Special Exam Arrangements and informing CHES of the outcome of these applications.

For students undertaking a HES, examination arrangements will be determined by the relevant university each year and communicated to the school via CHES. Students may be required to attend a university campus for the purposes of assessment.



VCE Data Entry

It is the base school's responsibility to ensure students VCE programs are entered into VASS. Advice and support will be provided by CHES to ensure students are enrolled in their VCE program.

HES enrolment into VASS is managed by the universities and will be entered by the VCAA deadline each year. Schools will be able to see enrolments in HES subjects through the full details report. The universities are also responsible for withdrawing students from HES subjects and entering results. Deadlines for these are set by VCAA each year and can be found on the VCE Key Dates page on the VCAA website.

Non-scored VCE

Students who are enrolled in a non-scored VCE will need to have their base school supervisor confirm this in writing to CHES.

We look forward to working collaboratively with you in support of students who are enrolled in CHES subjects and courses.

For further advice please visit the school website www.ches.vic.edu.au or contact CHES via email: ches@education.vic.gov.au