

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Examination Administration

This policy is important to:

- •
- Executive Deans, Directors Teaching Staff Faculty Administrators Educational Committees / Boards
- ouncil
- tudents

POLICY NUMBER: POS111114000

DATE APPROVED: 11 October 2011

POLICY CATEGORY: Student Services

POLICY OWNER: Principal Officer responsible for Students

1. CONTEXT

To provide a single, transparent and definitive policy for the University in relation to the administration of centralised onshore examinations and a framework for the conduct of said examinations.

The Examinations Unit, within the Student Connections Department, has administrative responsibility for: the delivery of centrally administered onshore Higher Education and Victorian Certificate of Education examinations; the publication and development of Onshore Education Examination Rules & Regulations, the publication of results and the development of examination forms.

The scope of this policy is formal onshore examinations (refer 2.4 p.2). The responsibility for the conduct of offshore examinations rests with Faculties.

This policy ensures the integrity of the examination process and encourages a culture considerate to students' needs as well as promoting best practice in University examination administration.

This policy ensures that all students who undertake centrally administered onshore examinations are treated in a non-discriminatory manner and that no unfair advantage is given to any student.

The Office of the Principal Officer responsible for Students is continually reviewing, introducing and updating all of its policies for transparency of operations. This policy has been reviewed and updates the policy established in 2005 to provide clear and transparent methodologies for the conduct of the Formal University onshore examinations

2. **DEFINITIONS**

2.1 Centrally Administered Examinations:

Formal University onshore examinations administered by the Examinations Unit, Student Connections.

2.2 Examinations Unit

The unit responsible for the conduct of the centrally administered Higher Education and Victorian Certificate of Education onshore examinations. It is located in the Assessment & Graduations Unit of the Student Connections Department within the portfolio of the Principal Officer responsible for Students.

Organisation Chart

PVC A & S Director Student Engagement Examinations Unit Exams Timetabler Student Systems and Reporting

2.3 Examination Venue

The venue in which a University examination will or is being conducted.

2.4 Formal University Exams

Examinations conducted at the end of each Teaching period, which includes:

- Formally scheduled Higher Education and VCE examinations;
- Examinations conducted for other universities at Victoria University;
- Examinations conducted on behalf of external organisations.

2.5 OFFSHORE EXAMINATIONS

All Victoria University examinations conducted at overseas partner institutions. As outlined in the context, the scope of this policy is for the conduct of onshore Victoria University Examinations.

2.6 Invigilator

A member of the University's academic or general staff or any other person authorised to assume responsibility for supervision and/or organisation of a University examination.

2.7 Student

Any person officially enrolled in a Unit of Study or course taught jointly between the University and any other institution.

3. STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy describes the arrangement for the conduct of centrally administered onshore examinations conducted by the Examinations Unit as well as the publication of results.

This policy is compliant with the relevant Victoria University Statutes, Regulations and the University Strategic Plan.

To achieve the desired outcomes of the policy the following Guiding Principles have been established:

3.1 Fairness and Equity

That every examinable student is treated fairly and equitably, so no student is advantaged or disadvantaged in the administration of the examinations.

3.2 Effective Administration

Every examination exercise is administered in an efficient and effective manner. This includes:

- Meeting or exceeding University statutory and regulatory timelines
- Providing a safe and secure area for the storage of examination papers
- Ensure the availability of appropriately trained staff for the supervision of the examinations
- Providing an appropriate examination venue to suit all student and staff needs
- Responding to the needs of students and staff requests relating to the administration of examinations, in a prompt and professional manner, and,
- Ensuring the prompt and accurate release of examination information.

3.3 Client Satisfaction

The Examinations Unit strives to meet or exceed student and staff expectations. A formal review of each examination exercise is conducted in an effort to continually improve its administration and to meet client expectations.

The review is published annually and is available on the University Intranet at: http://intranet.vu.edu.au/studentservices/resources/Reports.asp

4. PROCEDURES

Attached

5. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

POLICY HISTORY

Version approval date	Summary of changes
20 October 2010 (POS111114000)	Major review
21 February 2005 (POS041213002)	New policy

6. APPENDICES

Attachment One – Victoria University Examination Rules

These rules apply to all formal Victoria University Examinations

Any breach of the following requirements relating to examinations and assessments, whether committed intentionally or unintentionally may be regarded as "misconduct", and be dealt with under the Discipline Regulation of the University

The word "student" when appearing in the following clauses means any person officially enrolled in a unit of study or course taught jointly between the University and any other institution

The word "invigilator" when appearing in the following clauses means members of the University's academic or general staff or any other person authorised to assume responsibility for supervision and/or organisation of a University examination

The words "examination room" when appearing in the following clauses mean any place in which a University examination shall be or is being conducted

The term "during an examination" when appearing in the following clauses means the period of time from the start of an examination until its conclusion, and includes any time allowed for reading an examination paper. The rules and regulations where appropriate, will also apply outside an examination room

The term "good cause" when applied to exclusion from an examination in the following text will mean any breach of the requirements or any conduct on the part of a student which can be classified as "misconduct" under the University Discipline Statutes or Regulations

SEAT NUMBERS

Examination seat numbers will be published on the Internet (myVU Portal) and official notice boards at the exam venues. Students must know their seat number before entering the examination room. Any student who has not been allocated a seat number should contact Examination Administration.

ENTERING AND LEAVING TIME

Students are not permitted to enter the examination room more than half an hour after the commencement of the session.

Students are not permitted to leave the examination room until half an hour after the start of the session or during the last 15 minutes of the session except, with the special permission of the invigilator in charge of the examination who report on the circumstances to Examination Administration

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

For all Victoria University examinations students must bring photographic identification with them to their exam. Acceptable photographic identification includes Student ID card, Drivers Licence or Passport.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION

If you have a disability or chronic medical condition requests for special examination arrangements will be considered. Students must:

Apply for consideration as soon as possible after the start of semester

- Register for disability support with the Disability Services (it is solely the student's responsibility to
 ensure you are registered for this support)
- Provide supporting evidence substantiating your disability or disadvantage
- Register for disability support at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the examination period.

READING & WRITING TIME

Examiners normally provide reading time prior to each exam. This time is allocated at the discretion of the examiners.

Reading time usually commences at the scheduled examination start time as indicated on the examination timetable. Students are not permitted to write anything during this time including marking, scratching with pen, pencil, finger, thumbnail, spit, rings, bangles or any other material. Students are also not permitted to fold or crease the exam paper to mark answers or the use of any other equipment e.g. calculators to calculate or document anything during this time.

ALLOWABLE MATERIALS

The allowable materials of each unit of study is displayed on the Examination timetable and on the Examination paper

It is the students' responsibility to ensure they are aware of the allowable materials for each exam.

Students should bring their own pens, pencils, rulers & erasers with them to their exam

UNAUTHORISED MATERIAL

Students must not take into the examination room any books, writing paper, notes, manuscripts, electronic media (including electronic dictionaries), pagers, any form of stored or recorded information, or any other material except with the special permission of the invigilator in charge and where they are specifically required for an examination and expressly authorised by the examiners

Religious materials such as Prayer Books, Korans, and Bibles etc are not permitted to be taken into the examination venue, as they are not considered to be authorised materials

MOBILE PHONES/OTHER ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Mobile phones are not permitted in the exam venue unless they are switched off and placed underneath the student's desk.

Invigilators will advise students during the amnesty period of this procedure before commencement of each examination.

If a mobile phone is found switched on in a student's possession after the amnesty period in the examination venue, it will be deemed as a **Breach of Examination Rules**. This may result in the matter being referred to the Head of School for further action in accordance with the Discipline Regulations.

Invigilators will advise the student that the phone will be held as unauthorised material and returned to the student at the end of that examination

Palm pilots, pagers, PDA's and similar electronic media are not permitted into the examination venue

EXAMINATION ANSWER BOOKLETS & NOTES

All examination answer booklets must be submitted intact. Remember students must:

• not deface, remove or destroy any part of the examination booklet

do all notes, rough work and calculations in the examination answer booklet

BEHAVIOUR DURING AN EXAMINATION

Students must not communicate in any way with any other person other than an examiner or any invigilator during an examination. Any other communication will be deemed as a **Breach of Examination Rules**.

Smoking is not permitted in an examination room, and food and/or drink will not be permitted in an examination room without the special permission of the invigilator in charge

EXCLUSION, ABSENCE OF FAILURE TO ATTEND AN EXAMINATION

Exclusion

An invigilator has the power to exclude a student from an examination for good cause. The invigilator willl submit a written report to VU immediately after the conclusion of the examination

Absence

Any student needing to leave an examination room during the exam and return to the room later must obtain permission from an invigilator. Such students will be kept under supervision and be accompanied by an invigilator during their absence from the examination venue

Failure to attend

A student who fails to attend an examination at the time and place published on the final timetable, except where prevented from doing so by illness or other acceptable reason, will be deemed to have failed that part of the assessment

EXAMINATION CLASHES

Students who are timetabled to sit two examinations on the same day and time must complete a Clash of Examinations advice form and lodge it at a Student Service Centre at least one (1) week prior to the commencement of the examination period. Students will then:

- receive a letter confirming their exam details, including new seat numbers (disregard seat numbers displayed on the web)
- be required to sit both examinations on the same day (morning and afternoon) sessions
- be supervised throughout the lunch period
- need to be bring your own lunch as they will not be permitted to leave the examination room during the lunch period

The forms are available on the Internet, from Faculty Offices or Student Service Centres

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION & SPECIAL EXAMINATION

Students whose performance at an examination is seriously affected by illness or other special causes should complete a *Special Consideration Application*

Students who are prevented from attending an examination by illness or other special causes should complete a *Special Examination Application*

Students will need to:

 contact their Medical Practitioner or an external Counsellor to have them complete the relevant section of the form

- or see a VU Student Counsellor from the Student Engagement Department to discuss support for their application and what additional evidence may need to be lodged with their form
- submit the form to your Faculty Office within three working days of the examination.

The forms are available on the Internet, from Faculty Offices or Student Service Centres

ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATION

Students are expected to be available for the duration of the published examination periods

In exceptional circumstances, a student can apply to sit an exam at an alternative during the examination period

A separate form is required for each unit of study in which an alternative exam time is requested and can only be used for the current exam period. The completed form must be lodged at a Student Service Centre at least 7 days prior to the commencement of the examination period.

Alternative Examinations will only be approved if the following circumstances:

- Medical or compassionate grounds, such as confinement, surgery or illness (supporting documentary evidence must be attached to the application form)
- Military service, supporting documentary evidence must be attached to the application form
- Work commitments, beyond your control (a letter on company letterhead from your employer confirming this must be attached to the application form)
- Competitive sporting events, at state national or international level (a letter on company letterhead from the sporting body confirming this must be attached to the application form)
- Wedding, only student's own or that of a close relative (a Statutory Declaration must accompany the application)
- Religious convictions, a letter from a religious leader must accompany the application
- Other exceptional circumstances (e.g. jury service, a students' exam timetable falls outside the timetabling guidelines), a statutory declaration should accompany this application

Applications for alternative examinations will not be approved unless they fall within one of the above categories or in exceptional circumstances beyond the students control and supporting documentation is provided

Applications for alternative examinations will not be approved where students wish to return home early, except on compassionate grounds and supporting documentation is provided

Booking a plane/train/boat ticket for overseas or domestic travel is not considered an adequate reason for an alternative examination

The forms are available on the Internet, from Faculty Offices or Student Service Centres

STUDENTS FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

EXTENSION OF EXAM TIME

Extension of time may be granted to students from a non-English speaking background in the first two years of their enrolment at Victoria University

Recommendation of extension of time in an exam is solely at the discretion of the Unit of Study Lecturer & Course Co-Ordinator, on the basis of the provision of documentary evidence supporting a valid reason for extension of time.

Students will need to provide documentary evidence that:

- They arrived in Australia within the last five years from a non-English speaking country
- The immediate prior course of study was in a language other than English
- In addition, co-ordinators may require students to provide their ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) results that were submitted with their application for entry into their course, as an indicator of their English language proficiency

The recommended maximum additional time in an exam is 15 minutes

Students who have a disability or medical condition should register with Disability Services

The forms are available on the Internet, from Faculty Offices or Student Service Centres

USING OF DICTIONARIES IN EXAMS

Students whose first language is other than English (NESB – non English speaking background) can apply to use an **English - Foreign language translation dictionary**, without annotations, illustrations or tables in an examination. **Electronic dictionaries will not be approved**.

To register a dictionary students must:

- take it to a Student Service Centre and complete a *Dictionary Use in an Examination Application*
- fill out a separate form for each exam they are sitting every semester
- present the registration form at the examination with the Dictionary

No other type of dictionaries (English, Medical, Accounting etc) are allowed to be used in an examination unless specified in the allowable materials for the relevant exam

This form is available only from your campus Student Service Centres.



PROCEDURES

TITLE: Examination Administration Procedures (onshore)

DATE APPROVED (if different to the policy):

POLICY RELATED TO: Examination Administration

MANAGER(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION,

COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW: Director, Student Connections

1.0 DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC TO THE PROCEDURE (If any)

Centrally Administered Examinations: formal University onshore examinations administered by the Examinations Unit, Student Connections.

Examinations Unit: the unit responsible for the conduct of the centrally administered Higher Education and Victorian Certificate of Education onshore examinations. It is located in the Assessment & Graduations Unit of the Student Connections Department within the portfolio of the Principal Officer responsible for Students.

Examination Venue: the venue in which a University examination will or is being conducted.

Formal University Exams: examinations conducted at the end of each Teaching period, which includes:

- Formally scheduled Higher Education and VCE examinations;
- Examinations conducted for other universities at Victoria University;
- Examinations conducted on behalf of external organisations.

Invigilator: a member of the University's academic or general staff or any other person authorised to assume responsibility for supervision and/or organisation of a University examination.

Student: any person officially enrolled in a Unit of Study or course taught jointly between the University and any other institution.

2.0 PROCEDURES ADVISOR

Examinations Coordinator – Assessment & Graduations Unit Manager – Assessment & Graduations Unit

3.0 THE PROCEDURES

Examination exercises are large-scale events that require considerable involvement outside the examination times. To best address this, different activities that are core to delivering each and every examination session are categorised below.

3.1 Publication of Information

All relevant examination information, including examination dates, rules & regulations, timetables, venue details, start times, transport details, results etc are published and kept up to date on the examinations page of the University's web site. This information can be found at www.vu.edu.au/exams

3.1.1 Examination Timetables

The Exams Unit produces onshore examination timetables for each of the Higher Education teaching periods (i.e. for Semester One and Two including Special & Supplementary Examinations, the Summer and Winter sessions) after consulting with the respective Faculties. Different publication requirements exist depending on the teaching period, and are:

Teaching Period	Examination Type	Latest Publication date
Semester One & Two*	Scheduled Exams	Five weeks prior to the start of examination period
	Special & Supplementary Exams	The Wednesday preceding the start of the examination period
Winter#	Scheduled Exams	The Wednesday preceding the start of the examination period
Summer#	Scheduled Exams	Two weeks prior to the start of the examination period

^{*} Some Faculties elect to offer Special & Supplementary Examinations from the Semester One & Two exams during the Summer and Winter exam periods.

3.1.2 Seating Plans

The publication of seating plans is dependent on the teaching period. The following table confirms the latest possible date for publication onto the appropriate University Internet site.

Teaching Period	Examination Type	Latest Publication date	
Semester One & Two	Scheduled Exams	Two weeks prior to the start of the examination period	
	Special & Supplementary Exams	The Wednesday preceding the start of the examination period	
Winter	Scheduled Exams	The Wednesday preceding the start of the examination period	
Summer	Scheduled Exams	Two weeks prior to the start of the examination period	

Seating lists are displayed prominently at the examination venues on the day of the examinations.

3.1.3 Results

The Examinations Unit has responsibility for the publication of onshore results for the university (i.e. both TAFE and Higher Education students) under Statute. Publication is required in writing and occurs on the University Internet.

[#] Special & Supplementary examinations are not formally conducted for the Winter and Summer exams. A Faculty may choose to offer special & supplementary examinations for these exams, in which case administrative responsibility rests with the Faculty.

These results are required to be printed by:

Teaching Period	Sector	Assessment Type	Latest Publication date
Semester One	• HED	 Scheduled Exams & Semester Assessment Special & Supplementary Exams Semester Assessment 	 The first Monday two weeks after the completion of the scheduled examination period As soon as practical after the examinations have been sat
	• TAFE	 Scheduled Exams & Semester Assessment 	Two weeks after HED results are published
Semester Two	• HED	Semester Assessment	The first Monday one week after the completion of the scheduled examination period
	• TAFE		Two weeks after HED results are published
Winter	• HED	Scheduled Exams	The first Monday two weeks after the completion of the scheduled examination period
Summer	• HED	Scheduled Exams	The first Friday one week after the completion of the examination period
Year Based Units (Semester 5 – TAFE)	• TAFE	Semester Assessment	At the same time as Semester 2 TAFE results

Responsibility for entering results onto the University's Student Management System rests with the relevant Faculty Office.

Responsibility for providing students results to the Faculty Office rests with the relevant Academic.

3.1.4 Academic Transcripts

Students can obtain Academic Transcripts in accordance with the instructions detailed on the University's web site at:

http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/examinations/academic-transcripts

3.1.5 Examination Rules & Regulations

The Examinations Unit is responsible for the development and publication of current Examination Rules & Regulations at examination venues and on the appropriate University Internet site. The current Examination Rules & Regulations are located in Attachment One.

3.1.6 Examination Forms

The Examinations Unit is responsible for the development of all forms associated with the University examinations.

Student Connections is responsible for ensuring that all forms are 'On brand' and published on the appropriate University Internet site/s

3.2 Students with a Disability or Medical Condition

Disability Services aims to ensure that people with a disability or medical condition are able to actively participate in all aspects of university life and community. Students can register for disability support and a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) will meet with the student to discuss how their medical condition may affect their studies. They will tailor services to meet the individual needs within the context of the student's course and the university environment.

The Examinations Unit is responsible for the examination arrangements for the students who register for Disability Support, ensuring that individual needs are met consistent with their Disability Support Advice (DSA).

Staff from the Examinations Unit meet with the DLO and the Disability Contact Officer (DCO) from the student's Faculty prior to each examination period to ensure registered student's exam requirements are met in accordance with their DSA.

3.3 Collection and Distribution of Examination Papers

The Examinations Unit has the following responsibilities with examination papers:

- All examination papers have been received for the scheduled examination periods
- Each examination paper is correctly formatted and readable for students
- That there are adequate quantities of examination papers prepared ahead of the examination period
- All examination papers are securely stored, prior to and, during the examination period to ensure no authorised access can occur
- The examination papers are securely transported to the examination venue
- All completed examination papers are accounted for
- The examiners (or their nominee) are able to collect completed examinations papers in a timely manner
- Prior to each examination period, a day is made available where the Examination Unit collects exam papers from the various University campuses, except the campus where the Examinations Unit is based
- 6 Calendarised days are allocated for the main Semester One & Two examinations for the delivery of completed examination papers to the various University campuses, excepting the campus where the Examinations Unit is based
- For the other examination periods, the Wednesday of, and the Monday following the exam period examination papers, if requested, are delivered to the various University campuses, excepting the campus where the Examinations Unit is based.

The Examinations Unit has no responsibility for the content of examination papers.

3.4 Venue Management

The Examinations Unit has responsibility for the preparation and management of examination venues used for the scheduled examination periods. This level of responsibility varies depending on the examination being conducted (for example, practical examinations that require a laboratory are generally organised by the relevant faculty. In some instances, the Examinations Unit provides only invigilation support), however, it has responsibility for the major examination venue (e.g. The Melbourne Showgrounds).

The extent of this management includes (but is not limited to):

Acquiring and booking of the examination venue

The logistics management surrounding the set up and set down of the examination venue, which includes:

- Provision and removal of all examination furniture
- Provision of First Aid
- IT support
- Signage
- Heating, Lighting, Partitions, PA Systems, Clocks
- Toilets, Staff Room, Prayer Room, Study Room, Cloak Room, Parking, Cleaning
- All necessary examination materials (e.g. answer booklets, multiple choice answer sheets)

- Invigilators
- Administration of Examination Breaches

3.5 Invigilation Management

The Examinations Unit has responsibility for the recruitment, rostering, training and supervision of invigilators. A hierarchy of invigilation support is provided for the larger centrally administered examinations. In these instances, the following approach is used:

Chief Invigilator: The role of this officer includes the overall operational responsibility and supervision of an individual section or room at an examination venue.

Assistant Chief Invigilator: The role of this officer is to perform invigilation duties as well as assist the Chief Invigilator in supervising students in a section or room at an examination venue.

Invigilator: The role of this officer is to supervise students in an examination venue or room under the direction of the chief invigilator.

3.5.1 Invigilator responsibilities:

The responsibilities of an Invigilator include but are not limited to the following:

Duties	HEW	Description
Chief Invigilator	3	Provides overall operational supervision at the exam venue/room
Assistant Chief Invigilator	2	Provides exam supervision as well as assistance to the Chief Invigilator
Disability Students	2	Provide exam supervision for students who have registered with Disability Services. These students are generally required to sit in a room by themselves or in a room with a small number (max 5) other students.
Alternative Exam Arrangements	2	 Provides supervision of students who: Have a clash of examinations Are sitting their exam at an alternative exam time Are sitting an exam from another Teaching Institution
Toilet Monitor	1	Supervise students using toilet facilities during exam sessions.
Phone Monitor	1	Contacting Academics / Lecturers to clarify / answer questions students have on exam paper content.
Door Monitor	1	They ensure students do not enter the exam room with bags and similar personal belongings. They also ensure students do not enter or leave the exam room outside of specified times.
Bag Room Monitor	1	Provides a presence in the bag room. Students are not allowed to take bags & personal belongings with them into the exam room. These items must be left in the bag room at their own risk. The presence provided by the Invigilator ensures untoward activities such as rifling through bags does not occur.

Runner	1	Provides support to examination staff at the venue. Some duties include: Delivering answers to students received from the phone monitor Photocopying attendance rolls from the exam rooms Provide meal/tea breaks to bag room staff.
Driver / Courier	1	Delivers completed examination papers to:

3.6 Special & Supplementary Exams

Special examinations are granted to students who are unable to attend their scheduled exams due to illness or circumstances beyond their control. Eligible students are awarded an SPE grade.

Supplementary exams are granted to students who have been awarded an E grade, but have received a mark between 45 & 49 for the unit

3.7 Examination Breaches

The procedures to be followed in the event a student is suspected of breaching the University's Examination Rules & Regulations are:

- The Invigilator in charge of the exam venue, along with the Invigilator who has detected an alleged breach of exam rules, completes the Breach of Examination Rules form
- Once breach has been detected the student is encouraged to stay and complete their exam. At the end of the
 exam the student is provided with a notice of the breach and a Student Advisory notice with information they
 will need in seeking assistance with the alleged breach
- The Breach of Examination form is then given to the Examination Administration Staff who will contact the Lecturer responsible for the Unit of Study in which the alleged breach has been committed
- The Lecturer must complete their section of the Breach of Examination Rules form and return it to the Examinations Unit within four days of the alleged breach being committed
- The Examinations Unit will then forward the following documentation to the appropriate Head of School:
 - Breach of Examination Rules form
 - o Unauthorised material such as: notes, calculators, electronic dictionaries, books etc
 - o Pro forma letters to be sent to the student alledged to have breached one or more of the examination rules
- The Head of School must return all documentation to the Examinations Unit within ten business days of the breach documentation being received. The return documentation must include:
 - Signed Breach of Examination Rules form
 - o Unauthorised materials such as: notes; calculators; electronic dictionaries; books etc (If the matter is referred to the University Discipline Panel)
 - Copy of letter sent to the student advising the Head of Schools decision on the examination breach

- The Head of School can make either of the following decisions:
 - o Handle the matter within the School, or
 - o Refer the matter to the University Discipline Panel.
- If the matter is referred to the Discipline Panel the Examinations Unit must forward all breach material immediately to the Senior Policy Co-Ordinator, Governance Policy and Planning Services (GPPS)
- After the Discipline Panel has completed the investigation, the decision must be communicated promptly to the student and student advisor (if represented), and the relevant Faculty and the Student Connections Department.
- The Examinations Unit is required to maintain a record of all reports received and their outcome