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Health & Human Development

How to get a 50 in HHD (without a tutor!)



By **Martina**

Martina graduated from VCE with a study score of 50 in Health & Human Development. She's currently studying Radiography & Medical Imaging (Hons.) at Monash University. Here's what she learnt throughout her VCE journey.

As you probably would've heard from your peers, HHD is a subject that is regarded to be the 'easier' subject. You may have heard those bio or chem kids say that it's a subject that can allow you to get that raw 50 easily, as it is just a matter of 'rote learning' the content. However, once you immerse yourself in the subject, you will realise that HHD is one of the most engaging VCE subjects, which really opens your mind to current social justice, health and environmental issues around the world. If you love delving into the complexities of global health issues, then with these few simple steps and your hard work, you will be able to confidently apply your knowledge and ace the exam!

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How do I study for SACs?

Although you may be aware that exams are worth more than SACs, it is important not to look over SACs, as they are important in determining your rank within your cohort. Doing your best in SACs will not only help boost your overall marks, but it will also help lift the performance of your entire cohort. Here are some of the methods I used to study for my SACs.

1. Rely on the study design & act as the examiner

Throughout the year, I relied heavily on each dot point on the study design to make my notes. Under each dot point in the study design, I thought of questions relating to that specific dot point that could appear in the SAC or exam. **For example**, if the dot point is Benefits of optimal health and wellbeing and its importance as a resource individually, nationally and globally, I would write the questions 'Describe how health acts as a resource individually' or 'Explain health as a resource nationally' under the dot point. Then, I would assign marks for each of the questions that I come up with, as if I were the examiner, and I would then answer the question as I would in the SAC or exam. In doing this, you would be putting yourself into a position where you are able to think deeply about what type of questions would appear on the exam or the SAC, and thus, boost your confidence in answering questions.



2. Practice quizzes & past SACs

Completing whole practice exams could be tedious, so around 2 weeks before any SAC, I would start doing topic quizzes and multiple choice questions to establish a strong understanding on the topic that the SAC was going to be on. The **subject quizzes and videos on Studyclix** are a quick and fun way to revise for the topics, as they will motivate you to consolidate your knowledge on the particular topic. I found it helpful to alternate between doing such quiz questions and past extended response questions in order to also apply the knowledge that I had consolidated into coherent answers.

3. Keeping up to date with the news

After a long day at school, it is natural for you to want to relax on the couch and watch your favourite tv show on Netflix. While this is a fantastic way to wind down and de-stress, what I did throughout the year to prepare for my SACs and exam was I watched the news and read online articles relating to healthcare in Australia and around the world. For example, reading up about new disease outbreaks or personal stories about people battling illnesses. In doing so, you will be able to apply the content you have learnt in health to real-life situations, and by relating it to such scenarios, you will find that retaining information will be much easier. Watching the news instead of your favourite tv show can be



tedious, but I always watched it together with my family and we would always discuss what was happening. By **engaging in a discussion** with other people, you will also find that you are consolidating what you have been taught in class, as you are able to articulate your ideas to other people.



How do I study for the exam?

The HHD exam is different to any of the other science exams, as it contains no multiple choice questions, and consists of mainly short answer and extended response questions. This means that there is a strong emphasis on being able to apply your knowledge to the questions. Here are some handy tips on how you can tackle certain questions on the exam.

► **Learn your Command Terms!**

A lot of you may underestimate the importance of words such as ‘Describe’ or ‘Explain’ that begin many of the questions on the exam. My biggest advice to you is that these words are the most important words in the question you are being given. They will tell you how to answer the question, and thus, direct you on how you could approach the question. I highly recommend using online forums such as Quizlet or Studyclix to familiarise yourselves with these terms to make tackling questions in the exam a lot easier.

► **Do Some Practice Exams**

You are probably aware that one of the most important ways to prepare for an exam is to practice doing questions. However, the questions that I got asked a lot were ‘How many exams did you do?’ or ‘When did you start doing exams?’. My advice to you is that there is no set number of exams that you should do, but



what you should keep in mind is **you should study smarter, not harder**. Before the exam, I did a total of 3 practice exams, but I really focused on the extended response questions that were more ambiguous to answer. I also did these questions under timed-conditions, in order to put myself in an environment similar to that in the exam. I recommend going over some old VCAA exams and doing questions that are relevant to the current study design. It is also helpful to look at the examiner's report after completing a past VCAA exam to gain an insight into what the examiners are looking for in certain questions, and to also get an idea of how to answer some of the extended response questions.

- **Short Answer**

There is always a structure to answering short answer questions, so my suggestion in tackling these questions is to look at the marks allocated to the questions to give you an indication of how many points you should raise in your answer. It is also important to look at the command term (i.e. Describe, Identify etc) in order to get an idea of how much information you should include in your answer.

- **Scenario Questions**

Sometimes, you will be given a scenario which involves an excerpt from an article or some background information relating to a certain topic. For these types of questions, it is important to refer to some of the



information given in the scenario into your answer in order to maximise your marks. This will also show the examiner that you know how to incorporate your general knowledge of the content, as well as apply it to any scenario that you are given.

- **Interpreting Graphs**

Some short answer questions will require you to analyse a graph which displays a trend. Typically, graphs would relate to questions regarding health status indicators, and would ask you to describe the trend that you see. Throughout the year, I learnt an easy method to interpret graphs that you can apply to all questions involving graphs. The steps are as follows:

1. Title:

The title of the graph shows you what you are measuring. For example, 'The prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults, by region', gives you an overview of what the graph shows.

2. Axis:

The horizontal axis will give you an indication of what you are comparing (e.g. the different regions of the world) while the vertical axis will provide you information on the units used to convey the information (e.g. the percentage of people who are overweight or



obese). It is helpful to look at the axis and include the units in your answer.

3. Trend:

This is the pattern that you see on the graph. For example, is the percentage of people who are obese increasing/decreasing? State the obvious- look for the trend that is staring at you right in the face.

4. Example:

When answering the question, include some numbers from the graph in order to prove your point.

► Extended Response

The new HHD study design involves an 8-10 mark application question on the exam. You will be given a series of diagrams, statistics or graphs and you will be asked to collate all the information you are given and answer an extended response question. At first this may seem daunting, as you may be unsure as to what to write for 8-10 marks, and this part is probably the hardest part on the exam for most students. I would say don't stress and practice as many of these questions as you can and get your teacher to correct your answers for you. During the exam, read the question carefully, highlighting the command term so you know what you are being asked, then make sure you mix your general knowledge on the subject with some of the data you have been given to help you answer the question. These extended



response questions are a great way for you to show the examiner what you know so feel free to show your passion for the subject, while also being relevant to the question!

How do I handle the exam?

Reading Time

The importance of reading time is overlooked by a lot of people and personally, I found this the most helpful part of the exam.

The 15 minutes that you are given at the start of the exam to study the material is really important for you to plan out what you could write for each of the questions and plan out which questions you are more confident in answering first. That way, when reading time is over, you can immediately start getting into the flow of writing your answers to some of the questions without wasting any time.

During reading time, my personal strategy was reading through all the scenarios given in the exam, picking out **key points** in each scenario then reading the questions associated with them. I also studied the material given for the extended 8-10 mark question and planned some of the points I would raise in my answer.

Time Management

Like any exam, being able to manage your time well so that you are able to complete every segment of the exam to the best of your ability plays a huge part in doing well.



When reading time was over, I would immediately complete the 'easier' questions first, such as the 1-2 mark questions or the questions I felt confident answering. While answering these questions, it's important to be concise in your answers, to avoid writing too much and spending more time than you need to for one question.

→ The marks allocated should give you an idea of how long you should spend on the question.

For example, if a question is worth 2 marks, spend no more than 2 minutes on the question.

→ If time is running out and you have not attempted the extended 8-10 mark question, I would **prioritise** that question over a short answer question that you haven't completed.

→ **Don't stress** if your answer isn't the best due to being short for time, but it is always important to write something for those 8-10 mark questions, as drawing from your general knowledge and writing down what you already know would already guarantee you some marks.

→ If you have enough time at the end of the exam, **proof-read** your answers to make sure that your answers are relevant to the questions you have been asked.



Some Final Tips

❖ Use Your Teacher

Your teacher is your number 1 resource. Whenever I was unclear on something and needed clarification on what was taught in class, I would always arrange a meeting with my teacher to go over what I was unsure about. I also tried answering some extended response questions that I struggled with and got her to correct it for me and give me tips on how to improve my answers in the lead-up to the exam. Your teacher is there to support you in your learning, so it is important to communicate your concerns with them whenever you are in doubt.

❖ Establish Study Groups

I found it extremely helpful to study with a group of friends who were also doing HHD. We would often get together before SACs to discuss anything we weren't sure of and work it out together. I also found it useful to discuss certain topics with other people, as this would further consolidate your understanding of some of the content, and at the same time, you are also helping your peers.

❖ Be Organised

Before the year started, I downloaded the study design and had a quick read through of what the content was going to be like. I also summarised my notes immediately after they were being taught in class just so that I would have a set of notes for that



topic ready before my first SAC and I wouldn't have to stress about making notes a few weeks before the SAC and instead, focus on doing more practice questions. I took most of my notes on Google Drive, but what I did was I organised each of my notes into separate folders (e.g. Unit 3 AOS 1, Unit 3 AOS 2 etc) so they would be easier to find.

❖ Enjoy the Subject!

Enjoying what you're learning is the only way to motivate you to work harder for the subject. Always try and apply the content you are learning to real-life scenarios to revise the content. You may watch something on the news and remember something you were taught in class and revise it in the moment. You can talk to your peers about the subject. Remember, having a passion for the subject and having fun with what you're learning are keys for success!





Best of luck in the exam! You will be great. 😊

