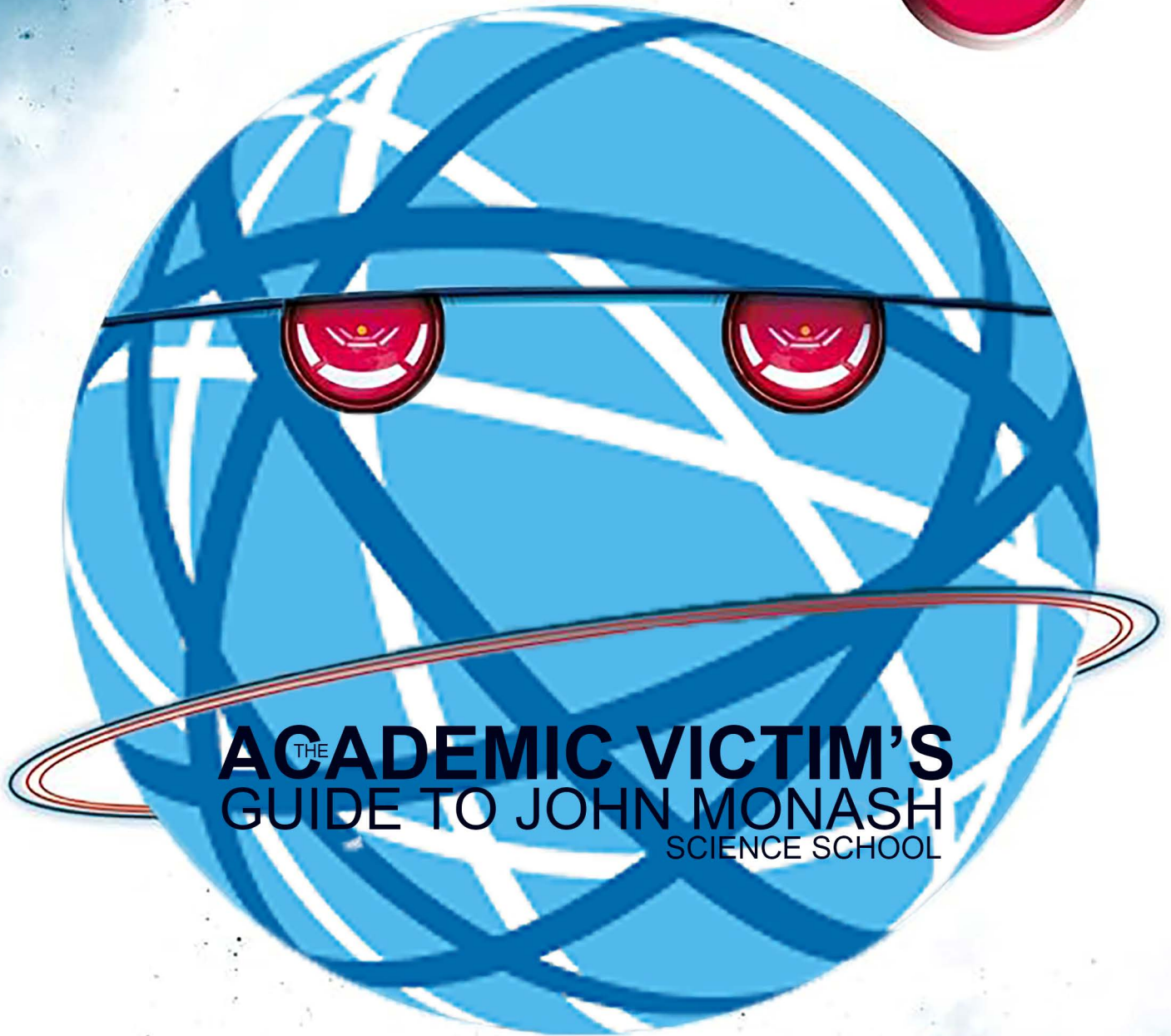


A COMPLETELY INCOHERENT COLLECTION OF FIVE



THE ACADEMIC VICTIM'S
GUIDE TO JOHN MONASH
SCIENCE SCHOOL

SELECT MEMBERS OF THE 2024 COHORT

NO COPIES SOLD!

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Chapter 1

The Academic Victim's Guide to John Monash Science School

John Monash Science School

John Monash Science School is a wholly remarkable establishment.

It looks rather like a single large building because it is one. It has four different houses:

Blackburn

- Colour: Purple
- Animal: Phoenix

Doherty

- Colour: Blue
- Animal: Dragon

Wood

- Colour: Silver
- Animal: Wolf

Flannery

- Colour: Green
- Animal: Frog or hippogriff or tree– no one really knows.



Fig 1. The entrance to John Monash Science School

The room naming system is incredibly complicated, and this is one of the reasons why there are maps and room number plaques all around the school. The other reason was that someone felt the need to attach QR codes around the school. The reason why it was built in the form of a singular building to keep over 700 students is that if it were built to a more appropriate size, an interstellar academic victim would be required to pay extra taxes to maintain it.

It is not a regular school, at least that's what many applicants are convinced of.

In fact it was probably the most remarkable school ever to come out of the great education department of Victoria.

Not only is it a wholly remarkable school, it is also a highly unique one– opting for an open plan classroom setting. The school has found new ways to increase productivity by allowing students to take two classes at once! Students are able to hear information from the class they're currently sitting in as well as the class in the neighbouring bridge space! Why not make use of time by being able to hear the ramblings of the Methods teacher in the neighbouring bridge space whilst also doing a SAC?

In many of the more academic civilisations in many areas of Australia, John Monash Science School has already supplanted Elizabeth Blackburn School of Science and Nossal High School as the superior school of all knowledge and wisdom, for though it has an inappropriate amount of space for the amount of students, and contains drink taps that serve no function apart from being decorative, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects.

First, it has the annual lip-sync competition; and secondly, students are able to frequently visit Monash University's Campus Center ~~during~~ after school.

The John Monash Student

The John Monash student is tired, blue and often nerd-like, and probably the oddest thing in the universe. It feeds on caffeine received not from its own resources, but from those around it. It inhales all unattended caffeinated items to nourish itself with. It then excretes into the assessments of John Monash a collection of words formed by combining the conscious thought frequencies with nerve signals picked up from the neurons of the brain that it possesses.

The practical upshot of all this is that if you stick a JMSS student in an Olympiad, you can instantly increase the school's chances of sending a student beyond the confines of Australia. The problems provided to the student are quickly decoded by the student/s which has been fed the question/s. (See: $SIMC^2$).

Now it is such a bizarrely improbable coincidence that anything so mind-bogglingly "useful" could have evolved purely by chance that some thinkers have chosen to see it as a final and clinching proof of the non-existence of God.

The argument goes something like this: 'I refuse to prove I exist,' says God, 'for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing.'

'But,' says Man, 'the JMSS student is a dead giveaway, isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves you exist, and so therefore, by your own arguments, you don't. QED.'

'Oh dear,' says God, 'I hadn't thought of that,' and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic.

'Oh, that was easy,' says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that $1+1=2$ and gets himself killed on the next zebra crossing.

Most leading theologians claim that this argument is a load of dingo's kidneys, but that didn't stop Oolan Colluphid from making a small fortune when he used it as the central theme of his best-selling book *Well That About Wraps It Up For God*.

Meanwhile the poor JMSS student, by effectively removing all barriers to communication between different schools and cultures, has caused more and bloodier (academic) wars than anything else in the history of creation.

The Restaurant at the End of Year 12

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. VCAA. The dreaded, goddamn, VCAA.

At the end of 13 long, gruelling years of having information stuffed into your brain, there lies a void, awaiting you.

This void is a hellish three weeks, give or take, of being placed in a seat with a small desk in front of you and a booklet that supposedly determines your career, and subsequently your life. (However, many argue this is not necessarily the case. A conclusion is yet to be reached.)

Now, dear Reader, you may ask “What does this have to do with restaurants?”. You see, this void is often treated as a restaurant. Let’s look at some of the reviews.

Ah, VCAA, you promised a feast of knowledge, a skewer of learning delights, but all I got was a soggy, underwhelming kebab. The pita was stale, the filling sparse, and the taste? Bland at best.

First bite, the content was dry, lacking any juicy insights. The sauce of engagement? Non-existent. I was left chewing on tough, uninspired material that failed to nourish my academic hunger.

The structure of the kebab, or should I say, the course? Falling apart with each bite. No coherence, no zest. Just a mishmash of poorly seasoned topics thrown together.

And the service? Slow and unhelpful, much like trying to get feedback or clarification from VCAA. Overall, a disappointing experience. If you’re looking for a satisfying educational meal, I’d suggest you look elsewhere.

(One star)

Oh dear, not off to a good start. Let’s look at a few more.

Completely appalled at the quality of food that was brought out to me. Biology 3/4 might have been the worst tasting appetiser I've ever had, the fact that the waitress was breathing down my neck with a gun to my head telling me to use more key words did not add to the experience. The choice to install solar-powered smart benches in place of the barbecue area was probably the worst choice an Australian restaurant has made since fast food is no longer 24 hours

(One star)

—

As a frequent customer to this restaurant, I must say, the food this time around was NOT up to par. My first course, the specialist maths was bland. Not to mention the second course, English, the themes in this dish was not giving. My final course was the Chemistry dish. I have nothing to say about it. It was disappointing. Expect better from the most HIGHLY regarded establishment of the 21st century.

Ps: I want my money and my 2 years of commitment to this restaurant back : ((

(One star)

This is quite tragic isn't it? Here are some more:

Had received repeated bad service over my numerous trips.

Last year, when choosing from their 'Psychology' menu, I had ordered a 10-marker on mental health, only to instead be given research methods. How could they screw up a simple order like that?

This year, I somehow had higher expectations for such an 'esteemed' establishment. Of course, my Further meal was not only cooked, it was burnt beyond recognition. I wouldn't even feed that to my dog.

Raw score: 25/99.95

Scaled score: 10/99.95

(One star)

—

I did not have a pleasant dining experience at VCAA's famed restaurant despite all the amazing things I heard. The waiters who served me my food were very kind but none of them would tell me where the bathroom was, and brought me a half empty can of Diet Coke instead of the Music Styles and Composition cocktail I ordered. The main course was a decently prepared platter of chicken nuggets but when I bit into them I was greeted with the overwhelming taste of pain, suffering, and a hint of regret, the taste that I am yet to wash out of my mouth. When I requested to speak to the chef and asked if they would consider changing the menu to add more palatable options, I was instead served an apology entree which was just a ketchup drawing of Scott Morrison with his thumbs up. They then kicked me out of the restaurant, and I later took a RAT test that found me COVID positive. Hmmm. Overall, would not recommend. 2/5 but scaled down to 1/5 due to competition from the McDonalds that was across the road.

(One star)

—

Went here last week and must I say, will never return. I ordered the spicy chicken wrap only to find it was dryer than the Saharan desert :/

Dessert wasn't any better, i ordered a sweet atar, however the waiter came back with a list of ways that sugar can cause CVD.

The overall vibe in the restaurant was sketchy, I asked to speak to the manager and was ordered to run five laps of the entire establishment and recite the World Health Organization's priority areas.

My mental health has never been the same since, significantly increasing my stress and anxiety levels and making me question whether life is worth living.

I rate this restaurant a 45/50 scaled down to a 2.5.

(One star)

I get the feeling that this restaurant is not well-liked.

For further
reading, scan
the QR code



Life, the Universe-ity and Everything

A day in the life of a JMSS student.

1. Wake up
2. See other students studying on the bus and contemplate if you should be doing the same
3. Decide that you'll be okay
4. Get to school
5. Grab some fruit (if available)
6. Get told off by Mr MacKinnon for a uniform infringement you weren't even aware existed
7. Go to class
8. Learn more from the class across the bridge than in your own class
9. Hear someone yelling (Probably Mr Kermond)
10. Go to period two
11. Realise you have a test in period 4 and that's why people were studying on the bus
12. Rapidly cram study in the last 30 minutes of the period
13. Get kicked out from upstairs because it's recess
14. Go to mentor
15. Complain that you have a $\frac{1}{2}$ SAC during mentor to get told by year 12s that it's "Not a SAC"
 - a. Alternatively - inform a year 11 that their $\frac{1}{2}$ SAC is "not a SAC", thereby continuing the cycle
16. Go to period three
17. Resume cram study for that test in period 4
18. Realise it's a prac so you can't actually study
19. Due to being distracted by the test, have no idea what to do during the prac
20. Ask your friend, they have no idea either
21. Check OneNote, thankfully finding the prac instructions
22. Attempt to do the prac but get distracted and collect some meagre data
23. Go to the test
24. Get cooked because who let Mr Kermond write it
25. Exit the test realising that there are other pathways that don't require an ATAR
26. Lunch
27. Complain about the test with friends
28. Realise that period five started 2 minutes ago and run to class
29. Have Mr Kermond yell at people who are also late
30. Use your Mathematical Acumen
31. Tetris
32. Get handed a worksheet that you know you'll never do
33. Class end
34. Get stuck behind the person with the locker above you
35. Go to Campus Center with your friends
36. GYG
37. Go to Matheson library
38. Annoy the uni students
39. Go home except the bus is late so you get back 30 minutes later than planned
40. Look at the methods SUP
41. Close the methods SUP and decide you have better things to do
42. Sleep

So Long, and Thanks for All the Trauma

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

VCAA is very much like many other authority figures- it does wield real power (to a certain extent), but really should not. It is apparently chosen by the government, but the qualities it tends to, and is seemingly required to, display are not those of leadership but those of carelessness.

This is demonstrated in infinitely accelerating cars, rapidly quick coffee machines, senseless and incorrect facts, poorly formed questions, and MCQs with no correct answer (though they try to cover their asses with the addition of “closest to”). For this reason, VCAA is always a controversial topic, always an infuriating but fascinating character. Their job is to screw over students and cause them unnecessary stress upon teenagers, under the guise of “education”. A range of standardised tests is what the Authority traditionally employs. On those criteria, VCAA is one of the most successful Education Authorities Australia has ever had. It has spent many, *many* of its 37 years attempting to messily cover up its many, *many* mistakes, pretending they’ve not cheated many students out of opportunities.

Very very few people truly understand how VCAA calculates the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) provided at the conclusion of VCE, and of these very few people, only six know exactly the intricate details of how it is determined. Most of the others secretly believe that the ultimate decision-making process is handled by nothing more than a simple ranking. They couldn't be more wrong.



Scan for a more detailed insight into VCAA's many shortcomings.

School Assessed Coursework (SAC)

Just about the most massively useful thing VCAA was able to come up with (which is to say, quite a bit pointless).

For one thing, it has great practical value - it can cause high levels of stress, help grow the mental health sector by increasing the need for adolescent therapy, teachers can use it to rank you amongst your peers, VCAA can use it for some confusing moderation process which means you might not end up with *your* exam grade, chew on it for when you get a bit peckish during study, *really* challenge students (i.e. Mathman 2022) to the extent of a public mental breakdown, and even use it to prepare for the final exams if it hasn't yet conditioned a trauma response. More importantly, a SAC has immense value to one's sense of esteem. For some reason, if another student discovers that a peer has achieved above them on a SAC, they will automatically assume that they are in possession of a lesser amount of knowledge than them. This student will then quickly decide the impact, often negative, this information has on their self-esteem. What the student will often think is that they are lesser and less deserving than the higher scoring student.

Many students gain academic validation by comparing their SAC grade to their peers' SAC grades, using it to approximate rankings, some going to the extent of coding programs to allow students to more efficiently do this.

Hence a phrase that has passed into JMSS slang, as in "Hey, what did you get on that last SAC? If you don't mind me asking..." (What did you get on that last SAC: I want to know how I did compared to you; if you don't mind me asking: Sorry if this is a sensitive topic)

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

An elitist admission system proposed by then Federal Minister for Education Julia Gillard. It was the first to unify the university entrance system in Australia, where previously each state or territory had its own individual system (UAI in ACT/NSW, TER in SA/NT/WA/TAS, ENTER in Victoria).

In 2020, the state of Queensland, being the only state not yet using the ATAR system (only possessing one university– The University of Queensland– which consequently meant that their university admissions were self-governed by UoQ) decided enough was enough, and switched to ATAR from Overall Position (OP). "What was," asked the rest of Australia, "Overall Position?"

To which the Queensland government said, "Read a bloody dictionary," and made the change.

So the ATAR was implemented in 2010, excluding Queensland. It is a very, very stupid admission system that commercialises education and fails to adequately represent potential students to universities. How it's calculated varies across states and territories and generally involves complex scaling and moderation processes that consider how competitive a subject is, with each student being academically compared to other students in the same year level doing the subject. The higher the average of the school, the more favourable the process will be to that school– hence why students' ATARs are impacted by how their peers perform.

This, of course, is a deeply flawed and biased system that favours a certain "type" of student and fails to consider the intricacies of each student's skillsets (this is emphasised by the "scaling up" of math/science subjects, and the "scaling down" of art subjects). It places extreme stress on many students, as it effectively reduces 13+ years of education down to one number.

It has also been suggested that it's a "pay-to-win" system, with many high-fee schools are selective in entry and, thus have a higher school average which has a large impact on ATAR. People with more resources are able to afford additional tutoring and help which may also improve their resultant ATAR. In fact, a 2015 study suggested private schooling can add up to eight points to a student's ATAR.

There have been recommendations to replace the ATAR with a "learner profile" which provides a more comprehensive overview of a student– including information about interests, values and skills that aren't necessarily conveyed in a 4-figure number.

Despite this, many universities rely on the ATAR to determine admissions.

And students continue to overwork themselves to burnout and exhaustion for a number.

However, many students are rejecting the ATAR. More students are going ungraded, taking alternative pathways to universities that don't require one, or taking early entry pathways that rely on a more holistic view of the student.

In the end, there are many more pathways than ATAR, and a low ATAR is not the end of the world. There is always another way.

Mostly Boats

Some common phrases you may hear at JMSS.

“A rising tide lifts all boats.”

(From a fossil)

“Don’t forget to flush.”

(After a SAC)

“You bonehead!”

(Often from the direction of the classroom Mr Kermond is in)

“You gotta use your mathematical acumen!”

(Also often from the direction of the classroom Mr Kermond is in)

crying

(Often during or after a Specialist Math SAC)

“Skibidi rizz toilet”

(Typically from an Eng Lang class teacher trying to use teenspeak)

“Can you sign me in?”

(Commonly during Year 12 study periods)

“That’s not the right uniform.”

(Mr MacKinnon)

“I sing songs that expose my inner thoughts and feelings and many people find it easy to relate to.”

(Also Mr MacKinnon c. 2006)

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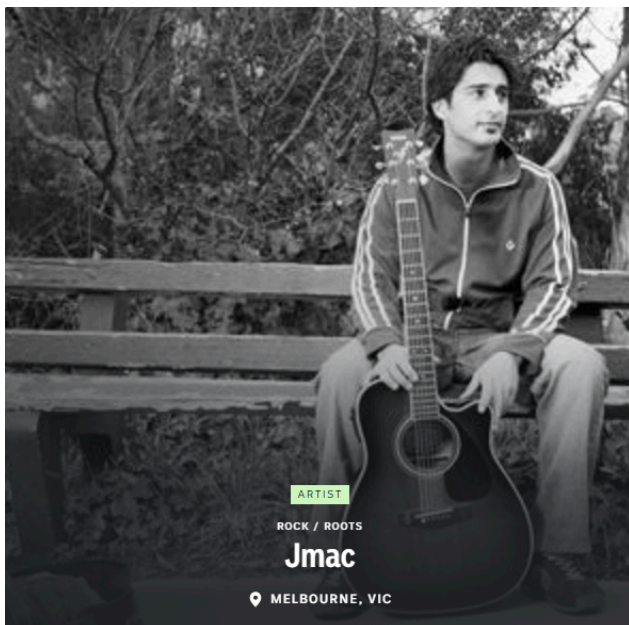
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Listen to some of Jmac's greatest hits

WITH MANY UNHELPFUL REMARKS FROM THE AUTHOR

Presenting
JMSS' wholly remarkably
incoherent student guide series in
one massively useful volume: the total
package for any Academic Victim.

One particular school in the Clayton vicinity
prides itself on a high quality education.

For the Academic Victim, deciding to
academically challenge themselves, (in which,
even more unexpectedly, finds themselves
academically challenged), this already seems
rather a lot to cope with. Unfortunately,
their journey has only just begun. JMSS may
offer a mind-boggling variety of ways
to be tested and insulted, but it's very
hard to get a sliver of academic validation.*

*Do remember to flush..

