

How a review works

Regardless of the review method chosen (desktop, telephone, visit), essentially, you need to explain *how you educate your child*.

The VRQA then assess whether:

- instruction is regular and efficient
- you're substantially addressing the learning areas
- the education is consistent with the principles and practice of Australian democracy.

You can choose how to provide evidence that your program meets the three requirements above.

Regular and efficient: This can be demonstrated with dates or by indicating how often you do things. e.g. referring to weekly activities, occasional museum visits etc.

Learning areas: Your legal obligation is to substantially cover the 8 KLAs as a whole, not to cover every one of them. If you're worried that you might need an exemption—e.g. for a child with specific needs or for a teenager who is specialising—you can talk to the VRQA about whether that is necessary.

Democratic principles: In practice, this requirement will be deemed to have been met unless your review materials suggest otherwise, so concentrate on demonstrating the first two requirements.

What you don't have to do

- You DON'T have to cover all eight learning areas if overall coverage is substantial.
- You DON'T have to report against the Aus or Vic Curriculum.
- You DON'T have to report against year levels.
- You DON'T have to demonstrate your child's academic level or educational progress.
- You DON'T have to produce a year's worth of records.
- You DON'T have to pretend to be more school-like than you are.

Types of evidence

If you have records and other evidence, you'll be able to use those. If not, look at the list below to decide which evidence you can collate between now and your review.

Records don't have to look like school work to be valid! Evidence can include (but is not limited to):

- photos of activities (pics don't have to include the child)
- work samples
- journals
- writing samples
- notes you have taken
- finished projects such as film, woodwork, sewing projects etc
- scrapbook
- report from recording app
- a blog, Twitter/Facebook/Instagram account
- calendar notes
- spreadsheet
- competition/participation certificates
- results from assessments
- anything your child has written/typed including emails, stories, games
- evidence of their research on areas of interest e.g. motorbikes, Minecraft etc.
- etc... etc.... the possibilities are endless

Help for Members

For individualised help: email review.support@home-ed.vic.edu.au quoting your membership name or number.

Remember you don't need ALL these, use what you have or choose one/more that best illustrates the education you provide and which, between them, demonstrate you are meeting the requirements.

Whatever form of evidence you choose, review materials do not have to be voluminous.



How to use your evidence

Overall evidence advice:

- You don't necessarily have to create something new, your materials may be ready to submit as is.
- There is no set time period for evidence. It can come from a week, a fortnight, a month or excerpts spread throughout the year. Choose a time period or excerpts that indicate good coverage of most of the learning areas (not necessarily in the month in which you are being reviewed). Whatever time period you choose, you don't need to submit reams of paper. If the VRQA need more, they'll let you know.
- Your combination of evidence needs to demonstrate you meet the requirements.
- If you are submitting materials, keep your originals.

How to use your records depends on what you have:

Journal, blog, spreadsheet or scrapbook: You can submit excerpts. Alternatively, you can use them in an interview or report. For a blog, you could also submit a link saying the blog constitutes your evidence. Examples are here:

- [Journal over a month with photos](#)
- [Weekly blog entries for a month](#)
- [Weekly spreadsheet](#)

Samples of writing/work, projects, certificates, assessments, notes: Try to choose rich, deep samples that cover multiple learning areas and enough samples to demonstrate substantial coverage. The VRQA have an [optional cover sheet](#) to help you prepare these. Your samples will need to be accompanied by something that demonstrates the education is regular e.g. a weekly planner/calendar/[record sheet](#). Alternatively, you can use your portfolio at an interview or to write a report.

If you use a recording app: There are many phone apps (e.g. GoogleKeep, KeptMe) that enable you to snap a photo, enter a sentence or two about the subject and export a report arranged by learning area. If you aren't used to keeping records but are a phone person, this could be a way to do so on the go. As well as producing a report, you can submit excerpts/screenshots or refer to the app records during an interview.

Photos: You can submit annotated photos i.e. explain the activities or projects in them. You can use the [VRQA cover sheet](#) to help elaborate on what's in the photos. You may also need a weekly planner/calendar/[record sheet](#) to demonstrate regular instruction. Alternatively, you can use photos in a report or have them on hand for an interview.

Videos: You could submit a video report, a collage of video evidence. It may need to be accompanied by something like a weekly planner/calendar/[record sheet](#). Videos made by the child could also be submitted as a work sample. Alternatively, you can refer to a video in an interview.



Prepare an interview or report

Overall instructions for interviews:

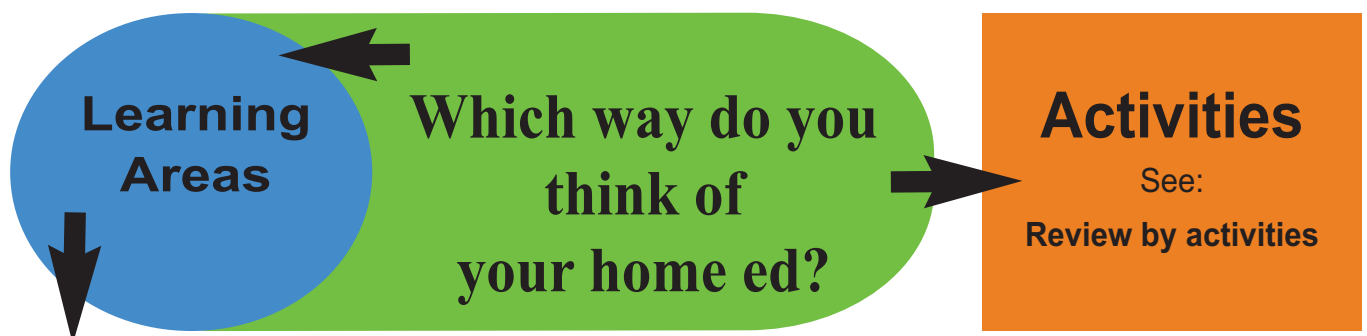
Allow an hour for the interview. Be prepared to mention resources and how often you do things.

In person interview: The interview does not have to be in your home - a library or cafe is a good option. Your child does not have to be present, but they can be if that works for you. Have materials available that show how you teach your child or facilitate their learning.

Telephone interview: A discussion may provide sufficient evidence in itself, but be prepared to back it up with other materials that demonstrate how you meet the requirements.

Overall instructions for reports:

It is a good idea to draft your report early so you can assess whether you need additional records. There are some sample reports available on our website. Mention resources, activities and how often you do things.



Review by learning areas

Overall: Articulate how you address each of the learning areas. Some of the questions listed under *Review by Activities* may help you extend your answers.

To write a report: There is an [optional report template](#), and also a [sample report by learning area](#). Alternatively, you can report in your own format.

To prepare for an interview: The above template may be useful.

Review by activities

Overall: Articulate how the education you provide meets the requirements.

The following questions are designed to prompt the content of your report or interview responses. They are available [in a worksheet format](#).

Think about how home ed happens for your child and jot down the answers:

- What are your child's interests?
- What are your child's learning needs?
- How does your child like to learn?
- What have they particularly enjoyed learning recently?
- Do they have specific learning needs or a disability that should be considered in assessing the review?
Note: No medical evidence is required but mentioning this helps to put their review in context. It is worth keeping in mind that a review checks you are providing an education, you are not required to be providing an age-for-grade education.
- Do you identify with any particular home ed style? Use any words that may help you summarise your philosophies e.g. eclectic, Steiner, Montessori, Charlotte Mason, faith-based, natural learning/unschooling, structured/unstructured, curriculum-based.
Note: you do not need to identify with any

- particular style for the purpose of your review. This is just a question to get your thoughts in order and help you decide how to proceed.
- What activities do you do out in the community regularly during the week e.g. sport, music, co-op, home ed group, classes of any kind, volunteering, paid work, etc? Think about what KLAs these activities cover.
- What activities do you like to attend or be involved in on an occasional basis? E.g. camping, excursions with a particular group, one-off workshops, etc. Think about what KLAs these activities cover.
- What activities is your child involved in regularly at home? Include everyday living skills e.g. shopping, cooking, reading to younger siblings, caring for pets, helping in the garden, growing vegetables, etc. Think about what KLAs these activities cover.
- Is there anything else your child is involved in that hasn't been mentioned above?
- Have you been on any holidays/excursions recently that have been rich experiences?

To write a report: A template: [Report by Learning Activity](#) and a [sample report with photos](#) are available. You are also free to report in your own style.

To prepare for an interview: The above template may provide useful prompts to get your thoughts in order beforehand.

What if my child has specific learning needs?

A review checks that your child is receiving an education, it doesn't have to be an age-for-grade education. You can mention your child's needs to provide context but no medical evidence is required.

What about Unschoolers?

Natural learning/unschooling is a valid form of education and the VRQA are prepared to accept that, so you don't need to worry about your education not looking like school. However, you do need to articulate how you facilitate your child's education to meet the requirements. The questions under *Review by Activities* will help you prepare and there are two examples available of how unschooling activities can be articulated.

What happens next?

While your materials are being assessed the assessor may contact you to ask for more information. This simply means they don't yet have enough information to pass you.

Failing a review results in deregistration, but there is recourse to appeal the decision through the VRQA or VCAT.

HEN is satisfied that review assessments will be conducted with an adequate knowledge of home education and—if you can demonstrate you are educating your child—you'll pass.

Overwhelmed? Use the Resources

VRQA:

- [Preparing for Review \(animation\)](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/home/Pages/reviewvideo.aspx) <<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/home/Pages/reviewvideo.aspx>>
- [FAQ](https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/hsReviewFAQs.pdf) <<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/hsReviewFAQs.pdf>>
- The VRQA welcome calls on 9637 2806 to discuss the best review option for your home education

Samples

- [Report by Activity \(with photos\)](https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Report-with-photos_VRQA.pdf) <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Report-with-photos_VRQA.pdf>
- [Report by learning area](https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Report-with-work-samples.pdf) <<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Report-with-work-samples.pdf>>
- [Spreadsheet](https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/spreadsheet.xlsx) <<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/spreadsheet.xlsx>>
- [Blog](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsReviewBlog.pdf) <<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsReviewBlog.pdf>>
- [Journal excerpt. Note: A week would be enough to submit if you had covered all the learning areas within it.](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsReviewWeeklyPlanner.pdf) <<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsReviewWeeklyPlanner.pdf>>

Optional report templates (can also be useful preparing for an interview)

- [Report by Activity](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsreviewtemplatebylearningarea.docx) <<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsreviewtemplatebylearningarea.docx>>
- [Report by Learning Area](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsreviewtemplatebylearningarea.doc) <<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/hsreviewtemplatebylearningarea.doc>>

Worksheet for reports & interviews by activity

- [Worksheet for reports & interviews by activity](https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Reviews-Workshop-Handout.pdf) <<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Reviews-Workshop-Handout.pdf>>