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Arts college in scores row

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BUDDING performers, musicians and artists who want to attend the Victorian College of Arts may have to hit the textbooks if a proposal to consider applicants' VCE ENTER scores is approved.

The college's academic board has voted by 10 to nine that high school academic scores be considered for admission to the talent-based arts training school.

Although the proposal has not yet been approved by the University of Melbourne's academic board, it has alarmed opponents of the VCA's restructure, which could place greater emphasis on academic courses than practical ones in the performing arts.

Scott Dawkins, a 2006 VCA graduate and industry representative for the Save the VCA campaign, said this proposal was part of pushing VCA into the Melbourne Model's academic requirements when its sole focus should be on the talent of applicants.

"VCA [students] should be the best of the best. You don't see the Australian Institute of Sport telling future Olympians 'You just broke a world record but we're a little worried about your ENTER score'," he said.

Historically, applicants to VCA have either auditioned or submitted a portfolio of their work. After the college merged with the University of Melbourne in 2007, applicants were also expected to have completed year 12 or equivalent (which could be disregarded if an applicant had appropriate work experience in their chosen field).

University spokeswoman Christina Buckridge said it would be "quite wrong" to deduce the VCA was now setting a predetermined minimum ENTER score for admission.

"This decision will simply allow for an applicant's ENTER score to be a factor for consideration should the selection committee see this information as enhancing the range of information available about the applicant," Ms Buckridge said. "Selection is based on audition or portfolio but there are other factors to be taken into account."

She said the college could perhaps use academic reports to make allowances for those from disadvantaged schools or families.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/arts-college-in-scores-row-20100405-rmzs.html>