

VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF APPLIED LEARNING



VCAL

The hands-on option
for Years 11 & 12 students

Information for students and parents

WHAT IS THE VCAL?

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a hands-on option for Years 11 and 12 students.

The VCAL gives you practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work. Like the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) the VCAL is a recognised senior secondary qualification.

Students who do the VCAL are likely to be interested in going on to training at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute, starting an apprenticeship, or getting a job after completing school. However, if you start your VCAL and then decide the VCE is the right option for you after all, it won't be too late to change your mind. In fact, any VCE units you complete as part of your VCAL will count towards your VCE should you decide to transfer between certificate courses.

The VCAL's flexibility enables you to undertake a study program that suits your interests and learning needs. Fully accredited modules and units are selected for the following four compulsory strands:

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Industry Specific Skills
- Personal Development Skills.

If you successfully complete your VCAL, you will receive a certificate and a Statement of Results that details the areas of study you have completed.

IN 2009 THERE WERE 430 SECONDARY SCHOOLS, TAFE INSTITUTES AND ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS DELIVERING THE VCAL TO MORE THAN 17 690 STUDENTS.



INDUSTRY TALK



A key priority of the industry is to attract work-ready students to technical pathways such as apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly in areas of skill shortages ■ The automotive pre-vocational model is designed to equip students with hands-on skills and knowledge in automotive technologies complemented by underpinning knowledge and employability skills in areas of industry workplace culture, communication, problem solving, and literacy and numeracy ■ The model also serves to attract students to full-time study pathways in higher education through TAFE or university ■ We believe that VCAL is designed to meet this need for work-readiness through an integrated approach to industry learning from Years 11 and 12 culminating in a recognised senior secondary qualification ■

GREG WALSH EXECUTIVE MANAGER, AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING VICTORIA

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW

Why would I choose to do the VCAL?

While the VCE is a good option for students who would like to go on to further education at university, you might feel that this is not the right option for you.

The VCAL is an accredited senior secondary qualification undertaken in Years 11 and 12. The VCAL is based on hands-on learning, also known as applied learning.

If you choose to do the VCAL, you will gain practical experience and employability skills, as well as the skills you will need to go on to further training in the workplace or at TAFE.



WHAT ARE THE VCAL LEVELS?

The VCAL has three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. Your teacher or careers counsellor will help you decide which level is most appropriate to your needs.

ARE THERE ANY ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

No. You begin the VCAL at a level suitable to your capabilities. Your teacher or careers counsellor will be able to help you decide which level is most suitable for you.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO COMPLETE THE VCAL?

The VCAL has been developed for Years 11 and 12 students. You can get a VCAL certificate and Statement of Results when you successfully complete your VCAL program for the level you have chosen. Many students complete a VCAL level in one year.

WHAT DO I GET AFTER SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE VCAL?

If you successfully complete your VCAL program you will receive a VCAL certificate at either the Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level, depending on the VCAL level you chose to complete. You will also get a Statement of Results listing all VCAL, VCE and Vocational Education and Training (VET) units.

WHERE CAN I STUDY THE VCAL?

The VCAL is being offered state-wide at schools, TAFE institutes and some Adult and Community Education centres. Visit <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au> and select 'Search for Schools and Study' for a list of all VCAL providers.

ANTHONY RYAN – MONBULK COLLEGE

CASE STUDY 1

For Anthony, undertaking VCAL was a way to finish school and kick-start a career in the landscaping industry.



As part of his VCAL program, Anthony secured a traineeship with Phillip Johnson Landscape Constructions. His employer was so impressed that it soon became a school-based apprenticeship (SBA).

'I go to TAFE on Mondays, school on Tuesdays and for the rest of the week I'm at work. It all counts towards my VCAL so I'll come out with a

VCAL certificate, Certificate III in Landscape Construction and a job in the landscaping industry.'

Thanks to his SBA, Anthony has gained invaluable skills and knowledge on the job.

'I've learned to do rock work and paving and I've been involved in building ponds, streams and billabongs for

people's back yards,' he explains. 'It's also given me the chance to get licences to drive a bobcat, an excavator and a dingo, which is a machine for moving rocks.'

'With the skills I've learned, I'm now able to plan and build a landscaping project myself.' Anthony intends to finish his apprenticeship before establishing his own

landscaping business. He credits VCAL with setting him on the right path to achieving this goal.

'VCAL can help you decide what you want to do with your life or if you already know the kind of career you want, it gets you started in the right direction. It gave me the chance to get hands-on experience in my chosen industry,' Anthony adds.

Anthony's VCAL Program at Senior Level

Literacy and Numeracy Skills	Industry Specific Skills	Work Related Skills	Personal Development Skills
Literacy Skills – Senior Reading and Writing	Certificate III in Landscape (SBA)	Work Related Skills Units 1 and 2 – Senior	Personal Development Units 1 and 2 – Senior
Literacy Skills – Senior Oral Communication			
Numeracy Skills – Senior			

WHAT COUNTS TOWARDS MY VCAL?

WHAT IS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

Vocational Education and Training (VET) provides an opportunity for schools, training institutes and industry to work together in preparing students for employment and further training. Most secondary schools offer VET courses that contribute to satisfactory completion of the VCAL and provide a VET credential that is recognised nationally.

WILL PRIOR VET STUDIES COUNT TOWARDS MY VCAL?

Yes. You should speak with your teacher or careers counsellor to work out how much of your prior study counts towards your VCAL and to plan the remainder of your VCAL program.

I HAVE ALREADY DONE A VCE SUBJECT. WILL THIS COUNT TOWARDS MY VCAL?

Yes, if you have an 'S' result for the satisfactory completion of a VCE unit, it will count towards your VCAL. You should speak with your teacher or careers counsellor to plan the remainder of your VCAL program.

CAN I SWAP TO THE VCE IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

Yes. If you change your mind and want to swap to the VCE, or if you want to pursue the VCE after completing the VCAL, any VCE units successfully completed as part of your VCAL will count towards your VCE. You might also be able to transfer credit for other units and modules completed as part of your VCAL. You should discuss this with your teacher or careers counsellor if you decide to take this option.

CAN I WORK PART-TIME AND/OR CONTINUE AN APPRENTICESHIP WHILE ENROLLED IN THE VCAL?

Yes, you can gain recognition and credit for part-time work while enrolled in the VCAL. This work can include:

- School-based Apprenticeships
- part-time work
- structured workplace learning placements.

HOW IS THE VCAL ASSESSED?

The VCAL is made up of accredited courses/certificates. Your VCAL program is assessed by your teacher in accordance with assessment requirements for each part of the program.

DO I NEED TO SIT FOR THE GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST (GAT)?

The GAT is a test of knowledge and skills in writing, mathematics, science and technology, humanities and social sciences and the arts. It is done by all students doing one or more VCE Units 3 and 4 sequence. Students doing a scored VCE VET Units 3 and 4 sequence will also be required to sit the GAT. Students whose only enrolment consists of VCAL units are not required to sit the GAT. However, you can choose to sit the GAT if it is appropriate to your pathway into further education, training or employment.

INDUSTRY TALK



The inability to obtain skilled workers and the difficulty in attracting young people to some trades is a constant lament of manufacturers ■ Employers need young people with literacy and numeracy skills, computer skills and the ability to work as part of a team ■ They are looking for young people who have both a basic understanding and an interest in their industry ■ VCAL provides a well-rounded learning program and practical hands-on experience ■ One of the benefits of VCAL is that it gives young people the chance to get a taste of working life and the opportunity to find out what it's like to work in a particular industry ■ I know many peak industry bodies support VCAL ■ I hope that, in turn, industries both large and small will get behind this innovative education program ■

TIMOTHY PIPER DIRECTOR OF VICTORIA, AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP (AIG)

WHAT DO I STUDY?

With the help of your teacher or careers counsellor, you can develop a VCAL program that suits your particular learning needs and interests. You have the choice of selecting units and modules for each of the following four compulsory VCAL strands:



STRAND 1 **– LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS**

Your VCAL program must include literacy and numeracy subjects. These can be selected from VCAL literacy skills and VCAL numeracy skills units and/or VCE English and Mathematics units or selected further education studies such as the Certificate in General Education for Adults.

STRAND 2 **– INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SKILLS**

Your VCAL program at the Intermediate and Senior levels must include components of nationally recognised VET qualifications. However, you are not required to focus on, or complete, any single VET certificate. For example, you can choose to complete various units of competency from a range of VET certificates to meet the VCAL requirements and gain experience in a range of vocational areas. The range of VET options is extensive. Some examples are automotive, engineering, building and construction, hospitality, retail, multimedia, information technology, agriculture, horticulture, warehousing and hair and beauty.

STRAND 3 **– WORK RELATED SKILLS**

In order to develop employability skills, VCAL gives you the choice of undertaking a structured work placement, or a part-time apprenticeship/traineeship, or part-time work. You can also study units and modules that will help prepare you for work, for example occupational health and safety or job interview skills.

STRAND 4 **– PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS**

As part of your VCAL program you will participate in projects and activities in your community or school that will help develop your teamwork skills, self-confidence and other skills important for life and work. For example, your school may work with the local council to enhance parklands. The learning you gain from being involved in such a project can be counted towards the VCAL.

SARA DOUTHAT

– CROYDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CASE STUDY 2

'I've always been more of a hands-on learner, that's what VCAL is all about,' says Sara.



'In Year 10 I used to be really quiet and shy and I wasn't getting much out of school,' she continues. 'VCAL really brought me out of my shell. Instead of being stuck in a classroom working out of a textbook, I go out and get work experience to get credits towards my certificate.'

Sara is part of a VCAL student team who run a school-based printing-business. They

produce T-shirts, mouse pads and key rings and do all the designing, printing and pressing themselves.

'It's taught me a lot more than just how to print a T-shirt', says Sara. 'Now I've got experience with managing a budget, sourcing materials and communicating with suppliers. I'll be able to use these skills when I start my own business.'

A serious animal lover, Sara has also been able to tailor her VCAL program to help her realise her dream of becoming a professional pet groomer. She does VET training in Animal Studies and a structured work placement at The Good Life Farm in Chum Creek.

'I've learned lots of new skills, like clipping goats' hooves

and shoeing horses,' says Sara. 'It's a lot of fun and the experience will help me get into the industry.'

'With VCAL I can see how I'll actually be able to use what I'm learning in the real world,' she explains. 'It makes it easier to get involved and much more interesting.'

Sara's VCAL Program at Intermediate Level

Literacy and Numeracy Skills	Industry Specific Skills	Work Related Skills	Personal Development Skills
Literacy Skills – Intermediate Reading and Writing	Certificate II in Animal Studies and Certificate I in Vocational Preparation	Work Related Skills Units 1 and 2 – Intermediate	Personal Development Skills Units 1 and 2 – Intermediate
Literacy Skills – Intermediate Oral Communication		VCE Design and Technology Unit 1	
Numeracy Skills – Intermediate		VCE Agricultural Studies Unit 2	

WHERE CAN THE VCAL TAKE ME?



Can I get into higher education if I successfully complete the VCAL?

If you are considering going to university straight from school, VCAL is probably not the best option for you. Students planning to go straight into higher education usually do the VCE which allows them to gain an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) from the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC). If you are studying the VCAL at Senior level and decide that you might be interested in going on to university, check with your teacher or careers counsellor as some universities will consider students with a VCAL Senior certificate for admission. However, entry straight from school is not the only route into university. Some people study a VET course at TAFE, perhaps leading to a diploma or advanced diploma, and then decide that they would benefit from a university course. VCAL would be a good start along this pathway.

WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS ONCE I HAVE COMPLETED THE VCAL?

The VCAL will give you practical work-related experience and a qualification that will be recognised by TAFE institutes and employers. Together these will help you move from school into work, an apprenticeship or traineeship and/or further training at TAFE. Alternatively, if you start studying for your VCAL at Foundation

level in Year 11 and successfully complete it, you may consider going on to complete either the Intermediate or Senior level of VCAL in Year 12. Or you might reconsider your options, decide university is the right choice for you after all and transfer to the VCE.

WILL THE VCAL GET ME READY TO ENTER A TRADE?

If you have completed VET units as part of your VCAL certificate you will have developed knowledge and skills that employers value, for example industry awareness, use of tools required in the industry, occupational health and safety. Completed VET units will also help demonstrate to an employer that you are keen to work in this industry.

To find out more about VCAL, contact the **Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority** on 1800 134 197

or visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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