Qualifications: Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a senior secondary certificate of education recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The VCAL can include components of accredited Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Further Education (FE) qualifications from within the AQF.

VET training is a compulsory requirement for completion of VCAL certificates at Intermediate and Senior level.

The VCAL is accredited and issued at three award levels:

- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Foundation) – VCAL – FND [V]
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Intermediate) – VCAL – INT [V]
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Senior) – VCAL – SEN [V].

The following codes appear on the State Register:

- VCALFND001 – VCAL Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Foundation)
- VCALINT001 – VCAL Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Intermediate)
- VCALSEN001 – VCAL Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Senior).

These codes may be used by some VCAL providers for funding purposes.

The qualification aims to provide the skills, knowledge and attributes to enable students to make informed choices about pathways to work and further education. Personal development, students' interests and pathways for senior secondary students, in the context of applied learning, are underpinning principles of the VCAL. The VCAL acknowledges these principles by the development of knowledge and:

- employability skills that help prepare the student for employment and for participation in the broader context of family, community and lifelong learning
- skills that assist the student to make informed vocational choices within specific industry sectors and/or to facilitate pathways to further learning.

The VCAL certificate at Intermediate and Senior level recognises completion of a senior secondary qualification and primarily prepares students for further studies at the next VCAL level, in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and in VET and/or employment. Students enrol in a VCAL learning program at the level that matches their skills and abilities. For example, a student may start at either Foundation level or Intermediate level in Year 11.

Nominal duration

Each of the three award levels has a nominal duration of 1000 hours, which typically is a mix of class time and independent learning. However, particularly in non-school settings, the nominal hours (including both scheduled and unscheduled contact hours) may vary when considering the specific needs of each student.

The three qualification levels provide flexible entry and exit points for a range of student abilities and interests and offer a clear progression for knowledge and skills.

The following table is provided as a guide to help VCAL practitioners determine the general focus and award level of training. It must, however, be used in conjunction with the 'Curriculum options' table in 3.3, which outlines the curriculum options for meeting VCAL strand requirements.

VCAL levels

Foundation	**Focus**
	At Foundation level, knowledge and employability skills development is supported by a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and preparatory learning.
	Level
	The following components of training are recommended at Foundation level:
	• VCAL Foundation units
	• VET Certificate I
	• FE Certificate I.
Intermediate	**Focus**
	At Intermediate level, knowledge and employability skills development leads to independent learning, confidence and a high level of transferable skills.
	Level
	The following components of training are recommended at Intermediate level:
	• VCAL Intermediate units
	• VCE Units 1 and/or 2
	• VET Certificate I, II
	• FE Certificate II.
Senior	**Focus**
	At Senior level, knowledge and employability skills development leads to a high level of interpersonal skills, independent action and achievement of tasks that require decision making and leadership.
	Level
	The following components of training are recommended at Senior level:
	• VCAL Senior units
	• VCE Units 3 and 4
	• VET Certificate II and above
	• FE Certificate III and above.

Pathways

The VCAL is designed to develop and extend pathways for young people. On completion of the VCAL, students will be able to make informed choices about employment or education pathways. Meaningful pathways are created by linking student aspirations and future employment goals to the choice of accredited curriculum, as well as connecting VCAL learning programs to work and industry experiences and active participation in the community. The ability to include curriculum from VET and FE in VCAL learning programs connects students with broader options for work, further education and active community participation.

Successful partnerships in the VCAL involve building a culture of collaboration and crossing bridges between schools and other providers. Achieving the pathways that arise from these partnerships relies on strong cooperative relationships and a commitment to:

• a shared understanding that 'learning does not stop at the school gate'

• a shared understanding and working knowledge of cultures of technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, adult community education (ACE) organisations and schools, with easy movement between these sectors

• a 'whole community' approach, involving shared leadership, the pooling of resources and expertise, and the letting go of exclusive ownership of learning programs.

VCAL pathway options

Foundation	• Intermediate or Senior Level VCAL
	• apprenticeships and traineeships (school-based or full-time)
	• Certificate I (or above) VET courses
	• Certificate I (or above) FE courses
	• employment
Intermediate	• Senior level VCAL
	• completion of VCE
	• apprenticeships and traineeships (school-based or full-time)
	• Certificate II (or above) VET courses
	• Certificate II (or above) FE courses
	• employment
Senior	• completion of VCE
	• apprenticeships and traineeships (school-based or full-time)
	• Certificate II (or above) VET courses
	• Certificate III (or above) FE courses
	• Industry Pathways
	• employment

1   VCAL program components

A VCAL program must contain curriculum that can be justified against the purpose statements of each VCAL strand. A program must contain a minimum of two VCAL units and may also contain curriculum components from:

- additional VCAL units
- VCE studies
- VET-accredited curriculum or training packages or FE-accredited curriculum.

1.1   VCAL units

A VCAL unit contains accredited learning outcomes that are generic by nature and enable content to be developed and/or planned at the local level to suit the individual needs of students. Locally developed non-accredited curriculum and activities or structured workplace learning programs can contribute to the achievement of learning outcomes in a VCAL unit.

Each VCAL unit is 100 nominal hours in length, and each unit successfully completed contributes one credit toward the VCAL at the appropriate award level. The nominal hours include both scheduled and unscheduled time.

VCAL units are available at the three VCAL award levels (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior) to cater for the different needs, abilities and experiences of students.

The following VCAL units are currently available (any additional units will be announced in the *VCAA Bulletin*).

Work Related Skills
- WRS011 Work Related Skills Foundation Unit 1
- WRS012 Work Related Skills Foundation Unit 2
- WRS021 Work Related Skills Intermediate Unit 1
- WRS022 Work Related Skills Intermediate Unit 2
- WRS031 Work Related Skills Senior Unit 1
- WRS032 Work Related Skills Senior Unit 2

Personal Development Skills
- PDS011 Personal Development Skills Foundation Unit 1
- PDS012 Personal Development Skills Foundation Unit 2
- PDS021 Personal Development Skills Intermediate Unit 1
- PDS022 Personal Development Skills Intermediate Unit 2
- PDS031 Personal Development Skills Senior Unit 1
- PDS032 Personal Development Skills Senior Unit 2

Literacy Skills
- LIT011 Literacy Skills Foundation Reading and Writing
- LIT012 Literacy Skills Foundation Oral Communication
- LIT021 Literacy Skills Intermediate Reading and Writing
- LIT022 Literacy Skills Intermediate Oral Communication
- LIT031 Literacy Skills Senior Reading and Writing
- LIT032 Literacy Skills Senior Oral Communication

Numeracy Skills
- NUM011 Numeracy Skills Foundation
- NUM021 Numeracy Skills Intermediate
- NUM031 Numeracy Skills Senior
- NUM032 Advanced Numeracy Skills Senior

Skills for Further Study
- SFS031 Skills for Further Study Senior

VCAL unit learning outcomes may be assessed in the context of programs that include community-, school-, work- and sports-based projects and/or activities. More information about assessment is provided in the VCAL Unit Assessment Planning Guide.

1.2   Appropriate curricula at award levels

VCAL learning programs must be designed to meet the VCAL course requirements, ensuring that the curriculum selected is consistent with the purpose statement of the curriculum strand at the award level.

Each student should be enrolled in a learning program that includes curriculum for developing Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Industry Specific Skills, work related skills and personal development skills. Each learning program should be designed to allow students to achieve the required credits and to meet all course requirements, and be at the appropriate level.

To ensure that students can receive a VCAL certificate, providers should consult the 'Curriculum options' table in 3.3 and run the eligibility report in VASS as soon as possible.

Information on the four curriculum strands is published on the VCAA website. To ensure coherence in designing a VCAL learning program, selected curriculum components must closely align with the purpose statement of the appropriate curriculum strand.

Selecting curriculum for VCAL curriculum strands

Curriculum components for the VCAL can be selected from VCAL units, VCE units and accredited curriculum from VET and FE units of competency/modules. Locally developed non-accredited curriculum, structured workplace learning programs and community and youth programs provide the context for the achievement of VCAL units. Delivery strategies for units or modules should be consistent with the VCAL delivery principles and requirements outlined in accredited course documents, VCE study designs or VCAL curriculum planning guides on the VCAL webpages.

2 Entry to VCAL studies

There are no formal entry requirements for VCAL studies. The VCAL has been designed to accommodate flexible entry and exit. Students can enter at the appropriate level of VCAL to suit their learning needs, abilities and interests. Parameters for entry and exit in schools will be determined by school regulations and enrolment guidelines. If a provider that is not a school delivers VCAL, flexible entry and exit points will be determined by the policies and regulations of that education provider.

There are no barriers to obtaining VCAL qualifications based on gender, age, social background or nationality. Students with particular needs may require additional resources to enable the successful completion of the learning program. Some students may require additional time to achieve outcomes. Students can gain more than one VCAL qualification in their post-compulsory education program, depending on their abilities and learning goals.

3 Eligibility for award of the VCAL

3.1 Course requirements

To be awarded the VCAL, students must successfully complete a learning program that contains a minimum of 10 credits and includes:

- curriculum components to the value of at least one credit, each of which can be justified against the purpose statement for each of the four VCAL curriculum strands
- a minimum of two VCAL units
- one credit for numeracy
- curriculum components to the value of six credits at the level of the VCAL award (or above), of which one must be for literacy and one credit must be for a VCAL Personal Development Skills unit. However, credits classified at Foundation level (VCAL Foundation units, VET and FE units at Level 1) cannot contribute to Senior level.

Students may carry credit forward from the previous award level into the level in which they are currently enrolled. VCAL providers can include additional curriculum, such as the VCAL Literacy Skills Oral Communication units and other VCE units in a VCAL learning program, to meet the requirement for a minimum of 10 credits. At the VCAL Intermediate and Senior levels, the learning program must also include accredited VET curriculum components to the value of a minimum of one credit in the Industry Specific Skills Strand. One credit is awarded on successful completion of 90 nominal hours of accredited VET curriculum. The VCAL program may also contain curriculum components drawn from VCE studies and FE accredited curriculum. One credit is awarded on successful completion of 90 nominal hours of accredited FE/VET curriculum.

3.2   Themed VCAL course requirements

The Themed VCAL learning program is intended to lead to informed choices for a broad range of occupations in the particular industry sector. To be awarded a Themed VCAL, a student must successfully complete an Intermediate or Senior VCAL learning program that is made up of:

- accredited curriculum components leading to a minimum of 10 credits

- curriculum components that can be justified against the purpose statement for each of the four VCAL curriculum strands

- curriculum components drawn from VCAL units and VCE units

- VET-accredited curriculum or training package qualification or FE-accredited curriculum (one credit is awarded on successful completion of 90 nominal hours of accredited curriculum).

The Themed VCAL learning program must include:

- a minimum of two VCAL units

- one credit for numeracy

- curriculum components to the value of seven credits at the award level or above, made up of:

  - one credit for literacy at the award level or above

  - one credit for a VCAL Personal Development Skills unit at the award level or above

  - a minimum of two credits in the Industry Specific Skills Strand made up of accredited VET curriculum components that are directly related to the industry theme designated in the learning program

  - a minimum of one credit for a VCAL Work Related Skills unit, which includes a structured work placement directly related to the industry theme designated in the learning program

  - two credits from the Personal Development Skills and/or Work Related Skills strands, which are directly related to the industry theme designated in the learning program (not including the VCAL Work Related Skills unit already mentioned).

Integration of the industry theme across curriculum strands other than those already mentioned is encouraged.

Enrolling students in a Themed VCAL program

VCAL providers delivering the Themed VCAL will be required to enrol students in Themed VCAL through VASS; however, before doing so, providers must obtain approval from the VCAA to deliver a Themed VCAL program. Students must be enrolled at either Intermediate or Senior level, with an additional industry theme appellation. This industry theme appellation will be included on VASS enrolment screens and on the student's VCAL certificate.

3.3   Curriculum options for meeting the VCAL strand requirements

Satisfactory completion of the following curriculum options is the minimum VCAL strand requirement. Themed VCAL providers should refer to the Themed VCAL course requirements when considering curriculum options for learning programs.

Individual student eligibility can be checked on VASS when students are enrolled in the learning program.

Strand	Foundation	Intermediate	Senior

Literacy Skills	• VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing units
	• VCE units:
	  – EAL
	  – English
	  – English Language
	  – Foundation English
	  – Literature
	• selected FE reading and writing modules[†][***]
		• VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Intermediate/Senior units
		• VCE units:
		  – EAL
		  – English
		  – English Language
		  – Foundation English
		  – Literature
		• selected FE Certificates II/III Literacy/reading and writing modules[†][***]
			• VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Senior unit
			• VCE Units 3 and 4:
			  – EAL
			  – English
			  – English Language
			  – Literature
			• selected FE Certificate III Literacy/reading and writing modules[†][***]

Numeracy Skills	• VCAL Numeracy Skills units
	• VCE units:
	  – any Mathematics units
	  – Chemistry
	  – Environmental Science
	  – Physics
	• selected FE numeracy and mathematics modules[†][***]
		• VCAL Numeracy Skills units Foundation/Intermediate units
		• VCE units:
		  – any Mathematics units
		  – Chemistry
		  – Environmental Science
		  – Physics
		• selected FE Certificate II or above numeracy and mathematics modules[†][***]
			• VCAL Numeracy Skills Intermediate/Senior units
			• VCE units:
			  – any Mathematics units
			  – Chemistry
			  – Environmental Science
			  – Physics
			• selected FE Certificate III or above numeracy and mathematics modules[†][***]

Industry Specific Skills	• VET certificates[***]
	• VCE units:
	  – Accounting
	  – Industry and Enterprise
	  – Technology Studies
	  – Visual Communication Design
	  – Studio Arts
		• VET certificates[***]	• VET certificates II or above[***]

Work Related Skills	• VCAL Work Related Skills units
	• VET certificates [***]
	• VCE units:
	  – any Technology studies[‡]
	  – Industry and Enterprise (Unit 1 only)
	  – Outdoor and Environmental Studies
	• selected FE certificates/modules[***]
		• VCAL Work Related Skills units
		• VET certificates [***]
		• VCE units:
		  – any Technology studies[‡]
		  – Industry and Enterprise (Unit 1 only)
		  – Outdoor and Environmental Studies
		• selected FE Certificates II/III certificates/modules[***]
			• VCAL Work Related Skills Intermediate/Senior units
			• VET certificates II or above[***]
			• VCE units:
			  – any Technology studies[‡]
			  – Industry and Enterprise (Unit 1 only)
			  – Outdoor and Environmental Studies
			• selected FE Certificates III certificates/modules [***]

Personal Development Skills	• VCAL Personal Development Skills unit	• VCAL Personal Development Skills Intermediate/Senior unit	• VCAL Personal Development Skills Senior unit

†   For example, Certificates in General Education for Adults.

‡   In most VCE Technology studies, students are required to plan and design in Unit 3 and develop/make products in Unit 4. Therefore, it is recommended that students undertake both Units 3 and 4.

*** While individual VET/FE units of competency/modules may be selected for inclusion in a VCAL learning program, it is not necessarily intended that the student will achieve the entire VET/FE qualification.

The relevant registered training organisation (RTO) will provide advice on selection of appropriate accredited units of competency/modules in accordance with the selected training package or curriculum document requirement.

Upon successful completion of the requirements for a VCAL, students will receive a VCAL certificate and a Statement of Results. Successful completion will be certified in July or December in each enrolment year. Additional Statements of Attainment or certificates will be provided by the RTO for successful completion of VET or FE curriculum. Students who commence a VCAL program, but do not complete it, will receive a Statement of Results at the completion of each year of study.

General credits

VCE units that are included within a student's VCAL program, but do not meet the purpose statement of any of the VCAL curriculum strands, may contribute towards the overall minimum total credits required and/or minimum credits required at the award level.

4 Atypical VCAL programs

4.1 Students with credit from the VCE

If a student has a previous enrolment in VCE (not successfully completed) or VCAL, or other Victorian qualifications, the studies completed may form part of their current year VCAL record.

4.2 Adult students returning to study

There are no formal VCAL entry requirements for adult students returning to study, and there is no variation in course requirements based on the age of a student.

4.3 Student transfer and credit from interstate studies

Nationally accredited studies that meet the VCAL qualification design rules, purpose statements and course requirements and have been completed by a student prior to their enrolment in VCAL may contribute to the award. Students must apply to the VCAA through the Victorian provider they are enrolled with, using the **Application for credit towards the VCE/VCAL** form.