

Return to study



VCE and VCAL as pathways to
tertiary study, more satisfying
work opportunities, new careers
and personal enrichment

So, you're thinking of returning to study?

Studying a senior secondary certificate as an adult can help you achieve your personal, professional and educational goals.

Whether you are considering further study as a way to gain entry into a tertiary course, transition to more satisfying work or a new career, or to pursue a personal interest, you can rest assured that returning to study has enabled thousands of people to reap the benefits and enrichment of lifelong learning.

Both the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) are highly successful, world-recognised senior secondary certificates developed and administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

Over the past five years, more than 6000 Victorians have enrolled in VCE or VCAL as adult students. This includes people of all ages, from all walks of life, and with a wide range of educational backgrounds and experience.

Where can I study VCE and VCAL?

VCE and VCAL courses are available for people returning to study at a range of providers:

Adult community education (ACE) providers

www.education.vic.gov.au/training

Victorian Skills Gateway

www.education.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway

Centre for Adult Education (CAE)

www.cae.edu.au

A full list of providers is available at:
schlprv.vcaa.vic.edu.au/schoolsstudiessearch

Select 'Adult' sector for ACE and TAFE providers.

Study by correspondence

Adult students may be eligible for distance education. Enrolments are processed by the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV).

For more information:

www.distance.vic.edu.au

What is available after my studies?

VCE

On completion of the VCE, you may apply for tertiary study in Victoria through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC). An Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) will be calculated by VTAC based on your VCE study scores.

For more information: www.vtac.edu.au

Adult VCE students should note that to be eligible for an ATAR the English units must be completed at the Units 3 and 4 level.

If you repeat VCE units to improve your grades and you apply for tertiary entrance through VTAC, the ATAR will be calculated using the highest study scores, regardless of the year they were achieved.

VCE VET

VET units of competency or qualifications completed as part of the VCE or VCAL may contribute to, or provide credit towards, other higher level VET qualifications. Some VCE VET programs have scored assessment. These studies will be treated the same as scored VCE studies in the calculation of the ATAR. VCE VET programs that do not have scored assessment can contribute to the ATAR as increments.

For more information: www.vtac.edu.au

VCAL

Students who complete the VCAL can go on to further training at TAFE institutes, do an apprenticeship or get a job. Some universities also now offer places to VCAL graduates.

For more information on TAFE courses: www.education.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway

Students who wish to enter the workforce after completion of the VCE or VCAL can contact Centrelink for information and advice about careers.

For more information about entering the workforce: www.humanservices.gov.au

Students who wish to enrol in university studies should contact the relevant university for advice.

VCE

Victorian Certificate of Education

The VCE is a senior secondary certificate of education that enables you to study a broad range of subjects (VCE studies) as well as programs from Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications. A full list of VCE studies can be found on the VCAA website, along with the study design for each.

The VCE is a world class credential recognised nationally and internationally for university entry. To enrol as an adult, you must:

- not have undertaken full-time secondary schooling for the full year preceding the first year of enrolment as an adult
- be at least 18 years of age on 1 January in the year of enrolment.

The VCE course is made up of studies and units. A study is the overall subject, for example, English or Biology. It is comprised of four units (Units 1, 2, 3 and 4), each of which is a semester in length.

You can study just Unit 1 of a study, or just Unit 2, or both Units 1 and 2. Units 3 and 4 of a study must be studied as a sequence and completed in the same year.

At Units 3 and 4 level, there are graded assessments for each study, consisting of assessment undertaken at your VCE provider and examinations set by the VCAA. If you complete at least two graded assessments, and satisfactorily complete Units 3 and 4, you will be awarded a study score.

A study score can be as high as 50, and shows how you performed in a VCE study or scored VCE VET program, relative to all other students doing that same study.

Study scores are used by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) to calculate the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR). If you intend to use your VCE to enrol in a tertiary course make sure you contact VTAC: www.vtac.edu.au

For some studies, it is advisable to complete Units 1 and 2 prior to enrolling in Units 3 and 4. Your VCE provider can advise you on study selection and whether those studies have educational pre-requisites.

To be awarded the VCE, adult students must satisfactorily complete at least eight units including:

- a Unit 3 and 4 sequence from the English group of studies
- three Units 3 and 4 sequences in studies other than English.

If you have already completed some VCE units, you have one of the following options:

- completing the minimum requirements that apply to school students (16 units – including at least three units from the English group which must include a Unit 3 and 4 sequence, and three Units 3 and 4 sequences in studies other than English)
- enrolling as an adult and completing eight units at Units 3 and 4 level.

There is no penalty for repeating VCE units. Repeating a study at the Unit 3 and 4 level may improve your study score and enhance your chances of getting into a tertiary course. However, you cannot count a unit more than once towards satisfactory completion of the VCE. It is necessary to repeat Unit 3 of VCE studies as well as Unit 4 to gain a study score.

If you are returning to study with credits from a senior secondary qualification that predates the VCE, you should contact the VCAA for advice.

Assessment

There are two types of graded assessment in the VCE: School-based Assessment and external assessment.

School-based Assessment is set by your teacher and includes School-assessed Coursework completed at school, and School-assessed Tasks completed at school and home. These are marked at your school, but the VCAA checks the marks to ensure all schools in Victoria are marking to the same standard. Details about School-based Assessment are specified in the VCE study designs.

External assessment is set and marked by the VCAA. These are held in October and November each year. Some studies have a performance or oral examination as well as a written one.

Results of School-based Assessment and external assessment in each study contribute towards your study score.

Time commitment

Most VCE studies require students to attend between four and five hours of classes per week per study. This may be scheduled as one session or spread over two or more sessions per week. To support your learning in class, you will be expected to spend an equivalent amount of time on study outside of class.

The VCE does not have to be completed in one year. Accumulation of units can be spread over a number of years, but a Unit 3 and 4 sequence of one study must be completed in one academic year to gain a study score.

GAT

Any student who is enrolled in a VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequence is expected to sit the General Achievement Test (GAT) held in June each year. It plays an important role in checking that school-based and external assessments are accurate. Results of the GAT do not count towards the completion of the VCE.

VCAL

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

VCAL is a hands-on senior secondary certificate of education that provides students with practical work-related experience, and develops literacy, numeracy, and personal skills.

The certificate is a pathway to many careers and educational opportunities. VCAL students have gone on to start small businesses, change careers or pursue further study at a TAFE or university.

The VCAL has three levels — Foundation, Intermediate and Senior — that match a student's needs and abilities.

There are no entry requirements for the VCAL and students can take as long as needed to complete a certificate at any level.

The VCAL's flexibility enables students to undertake a program that suits their interests and learning needs. Accredited modules and units are selected from the following four compulsory strands.

Literacy and Numeracy Skills include subjects such as VCE English and Maths or other accredited studies from the Certificate in General Education for Adults.

Industry Specific Skills include units of competency from a range of VET qualifications such as automotive, engineering, construction, hospitality and retail.

Work Related Skills include Structured Workplace Learning, a School-based or Part-time Apprenticeship/Traineeship or part-time work.

Personal Development Skills include participation in community-based projects, voluntary work and/or structured activities to develop self-confidence, teamwork and other skills important for life and work.

If you have completed some VCE units or a VET study you may be able to get credit towards your VCAL.

Time commitment

The weekly time commitment for VCAL will depend on how you structure your program. Many students complete a VCAL level in one year.

Assessment

The VCAL is made up of accredited courses and certificates, for example, VCAL units, VCE units, VET units of competency or Further Education units. A VCAL program is assessed by teachers in accordance with assessment requirements. Assessments include classroom-based tasks and projects that cover a range of outcomes across the VCAL strands.

No two VCAL programs look the same and students are encouraged to discuss their interests with their teachers to determine a learning program that meets their individual needs and passions.

VET

Vocational Education and Training

VET allows you to do nationally recognised training as part of your VCE or VCAL.

Studying VET gives you the opportunity to combine general and vocational studies, explore career options and pathways, learn in the workplace and develop skills that prepare you for the workforce and further study.

VCE VET

The VCAA provides direct credit in the VCE for a specific set of VET qualifications, which are called VCE VET programs. These programs are included in the VCE with Unit 1 and 2, and Unit 3 and 4 levels of recognition.

VCE VET programs can be included in both the VCE and the VCAL.

VCE VET programs may be offered by schools, Adult Community Education (ACE) providers, TAFE institutes or private registered training organisations (RTOs).

The industries you can explore through VCE VET are diverse, including business, hospitality, building and construction, community services and interactive digital media.

Block Credit Recognition

Other VET qualifications can also contribute towards satisfactory completion of the VCE. If you have completed training at Certificate II level or above in an area not covered in VCE VET programs, the VCAA may award you credit. This is called Block Credit Recognition. Certificate II training may contribute to the VCE at Units 1 and 2 level, and training at Certificate III and above may contribute at Units 3 and 4 level.

Any nationally recognised VET can contribute toward the VCAL.



Plan ahead – check
key dates for VCE on
the VCAA website:
www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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