

# 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. And like the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) it is a recognised senior secondary qualification.

Students who do the VCAL are likely to be interested in going onto 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 2005 THERE WERE 380 SECONDARY SCHOOLS, TAFE INSTITUTES AND ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS DELIVERING THE VCAL TO MORE THAN 10,400 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-employment and pre-apprenticeship model is designed to equip students with hands-on skills and knowledge in automotive technologies complemented by underpinning skills or key competencies 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 onto further training in the workplace or at TAFE.



### WHAT ARE THE VCAL LEVELS?

The VCAL has three levels  
- Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. You would start and complete your VCAL at the level that matches your needs and abilities.

### 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 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 VET (vocational education and training), 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](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au) for a list of all VCAL providers.

# CHELSEA PRIMMER

## – MERCY REGIONAL COLLEGE

### CASE STUDY 1

For Chelsea Primmer, undertaking VCAL was a way of getting a School Based New Apprenticeship (SBNA) and realising her dream of becoming an automotive spray painter.



Chelsea started the school year undertaking a normal VCE, but after discussions with her family, friends and teachers, decided VCAL was the best option to achieve her career goals.

'I realised that there weren't a lot of opportunities to get spray painting apprenticeships, particularly for girls, and thought that doing my VCAL

and a SBNA would give me a head start,' Chelsea said.

As part of her program Chelsea is not only completing her Certificate II in Automotive (Vehicle Body-Paint/ Panel Preparation), but also works one day a week with a local panel beater.

'Working at Tim Boyle Panels I have got to assist in the preparation and painting of a variety of cars,' Chelsea explains.

'I really enjoy it and I am now even more set on becoming a spray painter. Until then I am happy to keep going with my VCAL and gain more skills and experience.'

'It's great, the VCAL work we do relates to real life which makes it easier and more interesting. A lot of the time when we revise what we have done at the end of the day I realise I have learnt skills that I didn't even realise I was learning.'

#### Chelsea's VCAL Program at Intermediate Level

Literacy and Numeracy Skills	Industry Specific Skills	Work Related Skills	Personal Development Skills
VCE Foundation English Unit 1	Certificate II in Automotive (Vehicle Body-Paint/Panel Preparation) Units 1&2 (SBNA)	Work Related Skills Units 1&2 – Intermediate	Personal Development Units 1&2 - Intermediate
VCE Foundation Mathematics Unit 1		VCE Studio Arts Units 1&2	
VCE Accounting Units 1&2			

# WHAT COUNTS TOWARD MY VCAL?

## What is a Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificate?

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

### WILL PRIOR STUDIES E.G. A VET CERTIFICATE 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 new 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 Unit 3 and 4 sequences. From 2007, students doing a scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 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 Maths units or other 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 programs. However, you are not required to focus on, or complete, any single VET certificate. For example, you can choose to complete various modules or units 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 and 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 doing this can now be counted towards the VCAL.

# TOBY APPS

## – BENDIGO SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE

### CASE STUDY 2

Halfway through Year 10, Toby Apps sat down with his Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS) Coordinator and discussed his possibilities for the next year.



'I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do; I didn't have much of an interest in doing my VCE, but I didn't want to leave school and just push trolleys', Toby explained.

'My MIPS Coordinator told me about VCAL and so I took my parents to an information night at school and we decided I would give it a go.'

The VCAL program has turned out to be just what Toby needed. It has not only given him the chance to stay in school and further his education, but also allows Toby to gain practical skills that will help him enter the workforce.

Toby enjoys the fact that he can earn credits towards his VCAL certificate outside school.

In Year 10 he received a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award for his participation in the community and is using the activities completed as part of that award to go towards his VCAL. 'I have always been more of a hands-on learner and that's what VCAL is all about,' Toby said.

'Rather than just doing normal school work in a classroom, I can use my job at Bi-Lo

and voluntary work with the Country Fire Authority to get credits towards completing my certificate.'

Toby is happy to leave his options open for the future but has marked a career in the army as a possibility.

Whatever path he does choose, Toby is confident that the skills he has learnt completing VCAL will give him a head start.

#### Toby's VCAL Program at Intermediate Level

Literacy and Numeracy Skills	Industry Specific Skills	Work Related Skills	Personal Development Skills
VCE Foundation English Units 1&2	VCE VET Building and Construction Units 1&2	Work Related Skills Units 1&2 – Intermediate	Personal Development Units 1&2 - Intermediate
VCE Foundation Mathematics Unit 1		VCE Design and Technology Unit 1	
VCE General Mathematics Unit 2		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 Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) 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 because 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 vocational education and training 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 and 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/modules as part of your VCAL you have earned credit towards a VET certificate and will have knowledge of areas such as occupational health & safety. This prior learning will be recognised and count toward your apprenticeship or traineeship.

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

or visit [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

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