RETURN TO STUDY: VCE and VCAL

VCE and VCAL as pathways to tertiary study, more satisfying work opportunities, new careers and personal enrichment
Am I eligible for Adult VCE?
You are eligible for Adult VCE if you:
• are at least 18 years of age on 1 January in the year of enrolment
• have not been enrolled at a school for the previous 12 months.

How does Vocational Education and Training (VET) relate to VCE and VCAL?
Approved VCE VET programs and other nationally recognised VET qualifications may contribute to the satisfactory completion of both the VCE and the VCAL.

What can returning to study do for me?
Returning to study to complete your VCE or VCAL can lead to:
• more satisfying work opportunities
• new careers
• tertiary study
• personal enrichment.
VCE
The Victorian Certificate of Education

The VCE is a senior secondary certificate of education that contains a wide selection of general curriculum components (VCE studies) and programs from Vocational Education and Training qualifications.

If you have some prior VCE units
If you have completed some VCE units and want to do more in order to satisfy the requirements for completion of the VCE, you have the option of doing one of the following:

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

Adult student
You must meet two criteria to be enrolled 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.

Eligibility
To satisfy requirements for the award of the VCE, students returning to study (adult students) must satisfactorily complete at least eight units including:

• two units from the English group at any level (i.e. from Units 1, 2, 3 or 4)
• three sequences of Units 3 and 4 in studies (or subjects) other than English.

For a tertiary entrance ranking, the English units must be completed at Units 3 and 4 level.

VCE VET programs can count towards satisfactory completion of the VCE at Units 1–4.

If you have credit for studies prior to VCE
If you are returning to study with credits from a senior secondary qualification that predates the VCE, you will need to contact the VCAA for advice.

If you recently discontinued your VCE study
It is not necessary to repeat Unit 3 of VCE studies (provided they were satisfactorily completed) but it is advisable to do so if you plan to take the end-of-year examinations. It is necessary to repeat Unit 3 of VCE studies as well as Unit 4 to gain study scores.

If you wish to repeat VCE units
There is no penalty for repeating VCE units. Repeating a study at the Units 3 and 4 level is a way of improving your study score and enhancing your chances of getting into a tertiary course. However, you cannot count a unit more than once towards satisfactory completion of the VCE.

Entry requirements
There are no formal entry requirements for studying the VCE as an adult as long as you meet the criteria to be enrolled as an adult. You should contact an Adult Community Education (ACE) provider, a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute or the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) about minimum educational requirements. For some studies, it may be advisable to complete Units 1 and 2 prior to enrolling in Units 3 and 4.

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

Time involved
Most VCE studies require attendance at a class of between three and four hours per week per study. This may be in one session or spread over two or more sessions per week. Students are also expected to study outside class.
**VCAL**
The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

VCAL is a hands-on senior secondary certificate of education that provides students with practical work-related experience as well as the opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy and personal skills.

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
- Industry Specific Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Personal Development Skills.

**Entry requirements**
The VCAL has three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. Students start and complete their VCAL at the level that matches their 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.

**Time involved**
Many students complete one VCAL level in one year. A VCAL certificate and statement of results will be issued to students who successfully complete a VCAL program at each of the levels.

**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 the assessment requirements for each part of the program. For more information on the VCAL visit the VCAA website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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**Assessment**
Graduation in the VCE depends on the satisfactory completion of the units that make up the VCE studies. The decision about satisfactory completion will be based on your ability to demonstrate the outcomes within each unit.

These outcomes are specified in the study design for each VCE study. They describe the knowledge and skills you should be able to demonstrate by the time you have completed a unit.

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

**School assessment**
There are two kinds of School-based Assessment. The first is called School-assessed Coursework, in which students complete the assessment tasks specified in the study design. These tasks must be done mainly in class time and include essays, tests, reports and case studies.

A few studies in the visual arts and technology areas have the second type of assessment, which is a School-assessed Task. This task is the same for every student enrolled in the particular study and the specifications are set by the VCAA.

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

**Study scores**
If you satisfactorily complete Units 3 and 4 of a VCE study and the associated graded assessments, you are eligible for a study score. The study score is used if you apply for tertiary studies.

**The General Achievement Test (GAT)**
The GAT is an essential part of the VCE. It provides the basis of a quality assurance check on the marking of examinations. Any student who is enrolled in a VCE or scored VCE VET Units 3–4 sequence is expected to sit the GAT, which is held in June.

For more information on the VCE visit the VCAA website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au
There are many nationally recognised vocational certificates that you can undertake as part of, and within, the VCE or VCAL. This enables you to complete both the VCE or VCAL and a vocational qualification at the same time.

**VCE VET**
The VCAA provides direct credit in the VCE for a specific set of vocational certificates, which are called VCE VET programs. These programs are included in the VCE with Units 1 and 2 and Units 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).

VCE VET programs are available in a range of industry areas including business, hospitality, building and construction, and interactive digital media.

For more information on VCE VET programs visit the VCAA website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

**Block credit recognition**
Other vocational certificates 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 to the VCAL.

For more information on block credit recognition contact the VCAA: (03) 9032 1737 or 1800 134 197.

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**Top tips**

- Plan ahead: check key dates for VCE on the VCAA website: vcaa.vic.edu.au
- There are plenty of opportunities to be recognised for your work during your VCE. Check out the Excellence and Awards page on the VCAA website. You could become a VCE Leader or participate in the Season of Excellence.
- One way to learn about VCAL is to hear from students themselves — check out VCAL 4 Life, a short film written by VCAL students showcasing three outstanding VCAL programs. The film is available on the VCAA website and the Victorian Applied Learning Association website.
- Once your VCE or VCAL enrolment is finalised ask your VCE or VCAL coordinator to run an eligibility test in VASS. This will confirm that you are eligible to receive either a VCE or VCAL certificate at the end of the year.
What is available after VCE or VCAL?

**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 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.
* ATAR was previously known as ENTER.

**VCE VET**
VET units of competency or qualifications completed as part of the VCE or VCAL may contribute to, or provide credit into, 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 are likely to be interested in going on to training at TAFE institutes, doing an apprenticeship or getting a job.
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

Where to 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
- Victorian Skills Gateway
- Centre for Adult Education (CAE)
  www.cae.edu.au
A full list of providers is available at:
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

The information in this booklet is available in languages other than English on the VCAA website:
www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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