

# 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 students 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), VCAL is an accredited secondary certificate.

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

Intermediate and Senior VCAL units can also contribute to a VCE program.

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

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Industry Specific Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Personal Development Skills.
- **See unit descriptions at end of document**

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

## Why would I choose to do the VCAL?

Just like the VCE, the VCAL is an accredited senior secondary school certificate undertaken in Years 11 and 12. The VCAL is based on hands-on learning, also referred to as 'applied learning'.

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

## When can I do the VCAL?

Students can begin their VCAL program in Year 11 or Year 12 of secondary school. The VCAL is also available at TAFE institutes and a number of Adult and Community Education (ACE) centres.

## What are the VCAL levels?

The VCAL has three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. Students would start and complete their VCAL at the level that matches a student's needs and abilities.

## How long will the VCAL take me to complete?

The VCAL has been developed for Years 11 and 12 students and the time it takes varies depending on how their VCAL program is structured. A VCAL certificate will usually take a year to complete.

## What do I get after successfully completing the VCAL?

If students successfully complete their VCAL program, they will receive a VCAL certificate for either Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level, depending on the VCAL level students chose to complete. Students will also get a Statement of Results from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), listing all completed VCAL, VCE and VCE Vocational Education and Training (VET) units, and a Statement of Attainment from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for VET or Further Education (FE) training students have completed.

## **I have already started a VET certificate. Will this count towards my VCAL?**

Yes. Students should speak a teacher or careers counsellor to work out how much of a student's prior study counts towards a student's VCAL and to plan the remainder of a student's VCAL program.

## **I have already done a VCE subject. Will this count towards my VCAL?**

Yes, if students have an 'S' result for the VCE unit it will count towards their VCAL.

## **Can I swap to the VCE if I change my mind?**

Yes. If students change their mind and want to swap to the VCE, or if students want to pursue the VCE after completing the VCAL, any units successfully completed as part of a student's Intermediate/Senior VCAL may count towards a student's VCE. However, students need to make sure that they have successfully completed either Unit One or Unit Two of a VCE English in order to enrol in Units 3 / 4 English.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS**

### **Unit purpose**

The purpose of this unit is to focus on the development of organization and planning skills, knowledge, practical skills, problem solving and interpersonal skills through participation in experiences of a practical nature. The focus of the learning program for Intermediate Unit 1 includes:

- Subject specific knowledge applicable to a relevant personal, social, educational and/or community activity
- Skills applicable to a relevant personal, social, educational and/or community activity
- Development of self-management skills
- Development of leadership skills
- Interpersonal communication skills.

### **Content summary**

The learning outcomes of the VCAL Personal Development Skills units are general to enable maximum flexibility for content selection at the local level. Content of learning programs should link to one of the following curriculum contexts:

- Personal Development
- Health and Physical Wellbeing
- The Community
- Family.

Content will be selected for the achievement of the learning outcomes by the VCAL provider.

A recognized program such as Advance, a Victorian youth development program or a locally developed program such as a structured camp must enable the achievement of the Personal Development Skills unit learning outcomes. The outcome will be both the successful achievements of the Personal Development Skills unit learning outcomes as well as an award such as the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award.

## **LITERACY SKILLS UNITS:**

### **Literacy Skills Units**

The Literacy Skills Units are designed for use within the Literacy and Numeracy Skills Strand of VCAL.

The purpose of the Literacy Skills Units is broadly to enable the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes in literacy that allow progression in the main social contexts of:

- Family and social life
- Workplace and institutional settings
- Education and training contexts
- Community and civic life.

These social contexts are not seen to be autonomous and often overlap.

Four domains of literacy have been identified as corresponding with these social contexts:

- **Literacy for self-expression:** focuses on aspects of personal and family life, and the cultures which shape these
- **Literacy for practical purposes:** focuses on forms of communication mainly used in workplace and institutional settings and in communications with such organizations
- **Literacy for knowledge:** focuses on sociological, scientific, technological, historical and mechanical theories and concepts which are relevant to education and training
- **Literacy for public debate:** focuses on matters of public concern, and the forms of argument, reason and criticism used in the public arena.

The Literacy Skills Units are premised on the understanding that effective literacy skills development occurs within social contexts. The application of literacy skills cannot be separated from social context. The overall purpose is to provide an applied real-life approach to literacy development.

Literacy includes reading, writing and oral communication skills.

## NUMERACY SKILLS UNITS:

### Numeracy Skills Units

The Numeracy Skills Units are designed for use within the Literacy and Numeracy Skills Strand of VCAL.

The purpose of the Numeracy Skills Units is broadly to enable the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes in Numeracy within relevant and meaningful contexts.

Numeracy is the ability to use mathematical skills in order to carry out purposes and functions within society related to designing, measuring, constructing, using graphical information, money, time and travel, and the underpinning skills and knowledge for further study in mathematics or related fields.

Four domains of Numeracy have been identified as corresponding to the domains of Self-expression, Practical Purposes, Public Debate and Knowledge, identified in the Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Units:

- **Numeracy for Practical Purposes** parallels the Practical Purposes domain of the Reading and Writing Unit. This addresses aspects of the physical world to do with designing, making and measuring.
- **Numeracy for Interpreting Society** corresponds to the Reading and Writing domain of Public Debate. It relates to interpreting and reflecting on numerical and graphical information of relevance to self, work or community.
- **Numeracy for Personal Organisation** is an interpretation of the Self-expression domain of the Reading and Writing Unit. Its focus is on the numeracy requirements for personal organizational matters involving money, time and travel.
- **Numeracy for Knowledge** is introduced at the Senior level and matches the Reading and Writing domain of Knowledge. It deals with mathematical skills needed for further study in mathematics, or other subjects with mathematical underpinnings and/or assumptions.

## **WORK RELATED SKILLS**

### **Unit purpose**

This unit provides a focus for more complex development of work related and pre-vocational skills in a context appropriate to the task through:

- Integrating more complex learning about work related skills with prior knowledge and experiences
- Enhancing the development of employability skills at a more complex level in relevant work-related contexts
- Developing more complex critical thinking skills that can be applied to work related problem solving situations
- Developing more complex work related planning and organizational skills that incorporate evaluation and review
- Development more complex work related skills, which can be transferred to other work contexts.

### **Content summary**

The Work Related Skills units have been developed to recognize learning that may not normally be recognized within other qualifications, which is valued within community and work environments as preparation for employment. Locally developed programs that use different social and work contexts to develop interests and employability skills can be selected for inclusion in the Work Related Skills units.

Content will be selected for the achievement of the learning outcomes by the school or educational provider. VCAL programs may include content from accredited and non-accredited curriculum, for example TAFE Taster programs. Teachers must ensure that these programs meet the learning outcomes of the Work Related Skills Units.

Content can include structured workplace learning and on-the-job learning/training but must enable the achievement of the Work Related Skills unit learning outcomes.