A guide for teachers new to the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning 2013
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The VCAA is the official source of advice for all information regarding operational aspects of the VCAL. For further information, please refer to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority “VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook, 2013” and the monthly VCAA bulletin. If you require additional assistance please contact the VCAL Unit at the VCAA on (03) 9032 1727.

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Introduction

About this guide

This resource has been developed as a short handy guide for teachers who are new to the exciting challenge of being a teacher of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). It is not intended as a fully comprehensive guide to every aspect of VCAL, but as a reference point with signposts to where to find more information on relevant topics.

Naturally, as VCAL is not a static program and delivery is constantly being reviewed, there may be some information that is not relevant to your situation, but we hope VCAL First offers a thorough and valuable reference to a program that represents a huge growth area in schools and adult and community education providers of the qualification.

This guide is divided into sections with information on What, Who, Why, How and What about VET and aims to answer the many questions new practitioners have in these main areas. Within each section there are suggested activities to help you identify how each of these aspects may be addressed in your school or education provider.

VALA

This resource has been developed as part of the ongoing work of the Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA).

VALA works to support and advocate on behalf of applied learning teachers in Victoria and encourages all VCAL teachers to become members, either through their organisation or individually. For more information go to:

www.vala.asn.au
VCAL: You are here

As a teacher new to VCAL you may be wondering what it’s all about. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning can be full of surprises for teachers who have not taught it before, but be reassured that these are all positive. VCAL offers teachers the chance to be flexible, creative and inventive and enables them to look outside the school grounds for inspiration and program possibilities.

Forging alliances with community groups and councils, industry and business, and liaising with employment networks and workplace learning coordinators are just a few of the new opportunities that may come your way. You will also be able to establish and build strong working relationships with your students based on an adult approach to learning.

Other benefits of the course are the ways VCAL lends itself to innovative projects that connect with the interests and focus of young people, and the chance for you to develop new teaching skills in relation to these.

This short video is intended as an introduction to VCAL for students, parents and new teachers. Produced by VALA for the VCAA, it features interviews with award winning VCAL teachers, a parent and an employer. Click here to view it now.
Section 1 WHAT

This section introduces the structure, curriculum and framework of the VCAL course. It gives you a broad overview and places to find out more information. The go to place for all definitive answers is always the official Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) website. www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal

What you already know

Here’s a quick quiz to do for fun to see if you already know some interesting facts about VCAL. The answers are on the next page.

1. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) has been running for how many years?

2. How many students (in round numbers) were enrolled in 2012?

3. Applied learning pedagogy is usually expressed as a number of principles - how many are there?

4. In 2012 there were 400 VCAL providers offering courses. True or False?

5. VCAL is a recognised Senior School Certificate, just like the VCE is. True or False?

6. Victoria is the only state in Australia that offers the VCAL. True or False?

7. VCAL has how many compulsory strands?

8. How many VCAL units are available?

9. Which VCAL unit will meet the literacy strand requirement?

10. What is the biggest number of VCAL students enrolled in a single provider?
Definition

The VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning) is a recognised senior school qualification, like the VCE, for year 11 and 12 students. VCAL courses provide practical education and training for young people. Through hands-on learning, students gain skills and knowledge relevant to work and life in local and global communities. VCAL is administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

The VCAA is an independent statutory body responsible to the Victorian Minister for Education, serving both government and non-government schools.

The mission of the VCAA is to provide high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting that enables individual lifelong learning.

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

The role of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) is to provide regulation that ensures quality education and training is delivered by the providers it registers in Victoria, and promote informed choice when it comes to your education and training decisions. The VRQA is also responsible for the regulation of apprenticeships and traineeships in Victoria.

www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Quiz Answers

1. 10
2. 21755
3. 8
4. False 442
5. True
6. True
7. 4
8. 23
9. Reading and writing at the award level or above
10. 486

VCAL First
This guide can only present brief summaries of vital information for you as a teacher of VCAL, so for full advice always check the official publications available from VCAA. Your school or organisation will have copies of these, but updated versions are also available as downloads online from the VCAA site. For example, to read a brief three-page overview of the background and structure of the VCAL course, including entry pre-requisites and nominal duration times published by VCAA, go to: http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vcal/VCALinfointro.pdf

Curriculum guide

VCAL programs focus on the hands-on application of knowledge and skills and the course is divided into strands and levels. Each strand has a key focus, but, unlike other curriculum documents, it includes little or no prescribed content. Rather, it provides a series of statements of the outcomes of the learning. These state the level of skill the learner must achieve to be assessed as competent in that area. This means that the content can be developed to suit the needs and interests of the particular group of students or young learners who make up the VCAL class, and can accommodate differences between communities and available resources.

Structure

VCAL is offered at three levels and there are four strands offered at these three levels.

Levels

There are three levels of VCAL. They are:

- Foundation
- Intermediate
- Senior

The three qualification levels cater for a range of students with different abilities and interests. They also provide a progression of skills, knowledge and attitudinal development. Unlike other secondary school levels, these are not determined by age, or by pre-requisites. There are no pre-requisites for entry into a VCAL course. A student may complete a senior level VCAL at Year 11, if their teacher believes they
are capable and the opportunity exists. Some Year 12 students may complete a Foundation VCAL. See the Unit Assessment Planning Guide for more details.


Foundation level

At this level the focus is on knowledge and employability skill development, supported by a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and preparatory learning.

Intermediate level

At intermediate level, the focus is on knowledge and employability skills development that leads to independent learning, confidence and a higher level of transferable skills.

Senior level

At this level the focus is on knowledge and employability skills that lead to a high level of interpersonal skills, independent action and achievement of tasks that require decision making and leadership.

The demonstration of knowledge and skills which apply directly to the workplace or further training is also important. Source: VCAA website – http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/handbook/2013/AdHand2013.pdf

One main difference between the levels lies with the amount of support given by the teacher to the students. At Foundation strong support is required and students need direction and guidance through every process. By Senior level, students are expected to be self-managing and to use the teacher as a resource to facilitate and assist them when they undertake projects. Often these students might assist by teaching certain skills to other students or taking some responsibility for organising and supporting Foundation level students in projects they are undertaking.
Choosing a level

Students can enter at the level of VCAL that suits their learning needs, abilities and interests. Decisions about which VCAL level a student should be placed in should take into account the student’s literacy level, interests, goals and ability. The decision about entry level should also take into account the student’s:

★ strengths and interests
★ preferred learning style
★ vocational goals
★ readiness for participation in structured workplace learning or vocational education
★ teacher and peer support needs
★ envisaged pathways
★ leadership capabilities

Source VCAA VCAL information sheet July 2011


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 information is provided as a guide to the flexible entry and exit points in regard to the levels. The table on the next page is taken from the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook 2013 designed to help VCAL practitioners determine the general focus and award level of training.
## Curriculum options for meeting the VCAL strand requirements

The following table outlines curriculum options that, on satisfactory completion, meet minimum requirements for meeting the VCAL strand requirements.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand/Level</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy and Numeracy Skills</strong></td>
<td>- VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing units</td>
<td>- VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Intermediate/Senior units</td>
<td>- VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Senior unit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
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<td>- EAL</td>
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<td>- English</td>
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<td>- Foundation English</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Literature</td>
<td>- Literature</td>
<td>- Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>selected FE reading and writing modules†</td>
<td>selected FE Certificate II or III Literacy reading and writing modules†</td>
<td>selected FE Certificate II or III Literacy reading and writing modules†</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VCAL Numeracy Skills units</td>
<td>VCAL Numeracy Skills units</td>
<td>VCAL Numeracy Skills units</td>
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<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
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<td>- any Mathematics units</td>
<td>- any Mathematics units</td>
<td>- any Mathematics units</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Chemistry</td>
<td>- Chemistry</td>
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<td>- Environmental Science</td>
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<td>- Physics</td>
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<td>selected FE numeracy and mathematics modules†</td>
<td>selected FE numeracy and mathematics modules†</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industry Specific Skills</strong></td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Accounting</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
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<td>- Biology</td>
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<td>- Chemistry</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Industry and Enterprise</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Physics</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Technology studies</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The Arts**</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Related Skills</strong></td>
<td>VCAL Work Related Skills units</td>
<td>VCAL Work Related Skills units</td>
<td>VCAL Work Related Skills Intermediate/Senior unit</td>
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<td>VET certificates</td>
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<td>VCE units:</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
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<td>- any Technology studies†</td>
<td>- any Technology studies†</td>
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<td>- Outdoor and Environmental Studies</td>
<td>- Outdoor and Environmental Studies</td>
<td>- Outdoor and Environmental Studies</td>
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<td>selected FE certificate/modules</td>
<td>selected FE certificate/modules</td>
<td>selected FE certificate/modules</td>
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<td><strong>Personal Development Skills</strong></td>
<td>VCAL Personal Development Skills units</td>
<td>VCAL Personal Development Skills Intermediate/Senior unit</td>
<td>VCAL Personal Development Skills Senior and</td>
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<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates</td>
<td>VET certificates for above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Selection of components in VCAL learning programs at the award level

The previous table includes the VET/FE qualifications for the VCAL award levels. It indicates the possible sources of accredited curriculum. While individual VET units of competency/modules may be selected for inclusion in a VCAL learning program, it is not necessarily intended that the student would achieve the entire VET 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.

* Themed VCAL providers should refer to the Themed VCAL course requirements when considering curriculum options for learning programs.
† For example, Certificates in General Education for Adults.
** The Arts are Art, Dance, Drama, Media, Music, Studio Arts, Theatre Studies and Visual Communication Design.
† 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.

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Strands

VCAL qualifications have strands offered at the three levels. Within the strands there are a range of units that can meet the strand purpose. The four strands of VCAL are:

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Personal Development Skills (PDS)
- Work Related Skills (WRS)
- Industry Specific Skills (ISS)

Although the VCAL curriculum is organised in separate strands, it is designed to be the basis of programs where the learning outcomes of several strands can be integrated concurrently.

Guides to all the strands are available from the VCAA website along with exemplars and examples.


Integrated programs

VCAL is designed to facilitate integrated and holistic learning where at least some of the strands are integrated together as part of a larger more meaningful unit. Many schools and institutions use project based leaning experiences to offer a context where all the strands can be usefully applied and skills authentically assessed as students carry out parts of the project.

For a short handout on integrated programs go to:

Case study: example of a project to support an integrated program

VCAL V-Garden

A small group of eight VCAL students working at Intermediate level have negotiated with their teacher to continue to build established links with the local primary school by carrying out a project there. The Coordinator of Levels 5 and 6 at the Primary School is keen to get a vegetable garden started and has contacted the VCAL teacher to see how the two schools and groups of students could work together on this.

The project will take one 10 week term to plan and complete and is designed to make sure that skills and knowledge needed to complete it are explicitly taught. These skills are then practiced in a hands-on situation that benefits the community, and leads to a concrete outcome. The VCAL students will demonstrate their competence in a range of ways over time in a real situation.

The skills, knowledge, and attitudes that the students will be able to demonstrate might be directly linked to learning outcomes for Literacy, Numeracy and Personal Development Skills and evidence of competence in these areas could be collected throughout the project.

Find out what integrated projects have worked well at your school or learning provider.
Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Literacy Skills

The VCAL Literacy Skills section of the strand is designed to develop knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to reading, writing and oral communication in the social contexts of family, employment, further learning and community and to provide pathways to further study and work.

The strand consists of learning outcomes that describe the capabilities associated with reading, writing and oracy for:

- ★ knowledge
- ★ self-expression
- ★ public debate
- ★ practical purposes

Writing for self expression

Students write a short recount, narrative or expressive text on a familiar subject. (Source: page 14 of Curriculum Planning Guide: Literacy and Numeracy Skills Strand, Literacy Skills Units, VCAA, 2008.)

Students might be invited to write a paragraph describing their first experience of work outside the school whether paid or unpaid, based on examples of other short personal pieces taken from blogs or the weekend newspaper.
Numeracy skills

The VCAL Numeracy Skills section of the strand is designed to develop knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the practical application of numeracy in the contexts of home, work and the community. The strand consists of learning outcomes that describe the capabilities associated with numeracy for:

★ practical purposes
★ interpreting society
★ personal organisation
★ knowledge

Numeracy for practical purposes - Design

Students can use everyday language of shape, size, colour and other commonly used attributes to identify and recognise shapes in the context of their common usage and application. (Source page 15, Curriculum Planning Guide: Literacy and Numeracy Skills Strand, Numeracy Skills Units, VCAA, 2008.)

This outcome could be the basis for work on packaging, comparing the costs of goods offered in different shaped packaging to entice the supermarket shopper and assist in helping students become more discriminate consumers. In relation to work, the shapes of plumbing pipes, their diameters and uses would connect numeracy skills to work situations.
Personal Development Skills (PDS)

The VCAL Personal Development Skills units have been developed to recognise learning not recognised within other qualifications that leads to the development of:

★ self

★ individual and group responsibility

★ self-confidence and resilience

★ values of integrity, enterprise and excellence

★ empowerment for active citizenship

★ social responsibility

Its purpose is to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes that lead towards:

★ self awareness.

★ improved health and wellbeing

★ commitment to, and achievement of, personal goals

★ social and community awareness

★ civic and civil responsibility

For more info go to:


Industry Specific Skills

The purpose of this strand is to enable the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes related to one or more vocational contexts in preparation for progression to further learning or employment. While specific VET units can be curriculum components of this strand, the learning program should focus on vocational contexts in order for learners to make informed choices as to the pathway options available to them through the VCE, VET, FE and employment. There are no VCAL units within this
strand, as curriculum for this strand must be selected from nationally accredited Training Package qualifications or a VCE unit that has a vocational focus, for example, VCE Design and Technology. (For Foundation VCAL only)

Curriculum selected for the learning program should also provide a range of experiences within a particular industry sector to assist students to make informed decisions for future pathway choices and to promote the student’s employability skills. It is not specifically intended that students will graduate as qualified in an occupational area, but that they will have gained highly relevant experience and developed employability skills for an industry sector. The units that may be selected depend on the level of the VCAL qualification and should adhere to the parameters set and described in the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.

Study in this strand is designed to:

★ develop key knowledge and skills in a vocational context that assists the students in making informed choices regarding further learning and/or employment

★ provide vocational experiences relevant to student interest and abilities

★ provide pathways to further study through credit gained that articulates into VCE or VET courses

For more info go to: http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/Publications/Publications/VCAL_CPG_Wk_rel_skills.pdf

Find for the curriculum guides relevant to your teaching area and become familiar with the layout and content.
Other units

Skills for Further Study unit (Senior only)

This is offered as a single unit. The purpose of this unit is to enable students to develop knowledge and skills for further study that will prepare and assist them to pursue diverse and higher level education and training pathways in a range of settings. It covers topics such as time management, planning and the development of a CV. More info at:


Timing

The VCAL program has been structured to be flexible in its delivery in regard to timing. This means that it does not have to fit into a school calendar year. Due to the requirements of schools that deliver a range of programs, it very often conforms to two-semester or four term time allocations. In other areas, such as community or TAFE, it can be extended to fit in with learner needs or part-time attendances. Each of the three award levels has a nominal duration of 1000 hours.

Attendance and hours are not requirements to receive a VCAL qualification. However, within a school setting, a typical VCAL learning program would be based on a full-time load of independent learning and timetabled class time of 1000 hours. In other educational settings the nominal hours (including both scheduled and unscheduled contact hours) may vary, taking into consideration the specific needs of the student.

Source: Introduction section of Curriculum Planning Guides

Pathways

The VCAL may be used as a pathway to the workplace, TAFE courses, apprenticeships and some Higher Education courses. The flowchart shown on the following page shows how VCAL, VCE and VET can combine or be used as individual pathways to lead a range of learning, study and work opportunities.
Learning Pathways

Senior School Certificates

VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education)
- 20-24 units
- 12 different studies available

VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning)
- Literacy and Numeracy SMLS, Industry Specific Skills
- Work Related Skills, Personal Development Skills

Vocational Education and Training

VCE/VCAL Program
- School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- TVEI VET certificates

Completion of VCE

Training (TAFE or school, Industry, RTO, ACE)

Completion of VCAL

Structured Workplace Learning

Employment/Apprenticeship/Traineeship

TAFE Certificate I/III/V, Diploma, Advanced Diploma

University

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Connections between VCAL, VCE and VET

VCAL

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a hands-on option, but can connect to VCE through the flexibility of its enrolment methods. For example, a VCAL learning program can include units from the VCE. Refer to the VCAA website or the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/schooladmin/handbook/handbook.aspx for more information on this.

VCE


VET

Vocational Education and Training (VET) units are an integral part of any VCAL learning program and contributes to the ISS strand. Students may sometimes link their Work Related Skills with a School-Based Apprenticeship and Traineeships (SBAT) For more info on SBAT’s go to: http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/general/recognition/vcerecognition.aspx

Click here to watch ‘Any questions?’ a fun, informative animation on VCE, VET and VCAL created by Frankston and Mornington Peninsula LLEN.
For more info on VET in schools go to: http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vet/index.html

To find out more about these three options and how they work together, read the Where to now? booklet which is written for students and parents and includes information on all these options. For a copy of the booklet, go to:


or to receive hardcopies of the booklet, contact Information Services at the VCAA Ph: (03) 9032 1627 or 1800 134 197

or email: vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

There is no charge for these booklets.

VIP = Very Important Process

- Be sure to run an eligibility function for each student to make sure that their choice of units complies with the requirements for the qualification.

Flexibility

The table below summarises the flexible options available to VCAL students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>VCAL Units</th>
<th>VCE units</th>
<th>VET and/or Further Education units/ modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Skills</td>
<td>✓ VCAL Literacy Skills Reading and Writing Units</td>
<td>✓ VCE English, Foundation English, English Language, ESL and Literature units</td>
<td>✓ Selected FE modules e.g., reading and writing modules from the Certificates in General Education for Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy skills</td>
<td>✓ VCAL Numeracy Skills Units</td>
<td>✓ Any VCE Mathematics units, Environmental Science, Chemistry and Physics</td>
<td>✓ Selected FE modules e.g., mathematics modules from the Certificates in General Education for Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Specific Skills</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓ In Foundation VCAL only, VCE Units such as The Arts, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Industry and Enterprise, Technology Studies and Accounting</td>
<td>✓ Units/modules from selected VET certificates at the appropriate level. VET is mandatory for enrolments in Senior and Intermediate VCAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Related Skills</td>
<td>✓ VCAL Work Related Skills Units</td>
<td>✓ VCE Units such as Industry and Enterprise, any Technology Studies, Outdoor and Environmental Studies</td>
<td>✓ Units/modules from selected VET or FE certificates at the appropriate level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development Skills</td>
<td>✓ VCAL Personal Development Skills Units</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Case Studies

VCAL: BEN

As a child, Ben faced many personal challenges and struggled with his schooling.

"I've always wanted to work with animals," he says. "VCAL has given me the opportunity to do just this." As part of his VCAL program, Ben attended TAFE one day a week and completed a Certificate II in Animal Studies. At school, he also looked after a number of animals, including lizards, fish, snakes and birds. Ben was responsible for feeding them and cleaning their enclosures. Having the opportunity to work with animals and complete his animal studies at school reinforced Ben's ambition to pursue a career working with animals.

A highlight of Ben's VCAL year at MacKillop College was a school trip to Romeos, a 28-day journey that proved to be the adventure and challenge of a lifetime. "We were responsible for all the decision-making and coordination of the trip and we learnt important life-skills," he says. During the year, Ben's VCAL class was also given the responsibility of organising the school end-of-year dinner.

"I loved the hands-on learning and we got to do real things," he says. "We even had to organise and cook a three-course meal for 200 guests this year!" VCAL has also provided Ben with the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills.

"Before this year I wouldn't even pick up a phone but I'm a lot more confident now and can rely on myself a lot more.

Ben is currently undertaking Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing, a program he's enjoying immensely. After this he hopes to get a job at the RSPCA. His dream is to eventually become a vet.

VCAL: RENEE

Renee had a passion for a career working with students who have disabilities, however she had not enjoyed the structured learning of Year 10 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Bentleigh. Of all the VCE subjects only Auslan (a unit in sign language) really appealed to her.

Renee decided to complete Auslan as part of her VCAL program because she was particularly interested in working with people who have hearing impairments. She undertook a year-long work placement with Berendale, a secondary school for students with varying disabilities, where her tasks ranged from school administration to assisting students with classroom work.

VCAL gave Renee an opportunity to follow her passion, work in a hands-on environment, build her confidence, gain valuable employment skills and the ability to practice her sign language with the hearing impaired.

She believes that the industry experience she has gained while completing her VCAL certificate is something that is invaluable. "I have learnt so much more, about myself and my goals in life; before, I felt like I was walking into walls," she recalls.

"My favourite thing about the VCAL program was my work at Berendale, it definitely helped me realise my passion," she says. "VCAL is a great opportunity for someone who knows what they are passionate about. Also if you learn better with a hands-on approach it is a great way to go."
I have checked the VCAA website for information relevant to my teaching area

I have read the Curriculum Planning Guides relevant to my class

I have checked what curriculum planning documents are available to me from within my school

I understand how VCE, VCAL and VET are different from each other

I see how VCE, VCAL and VET connect to each other in my organisation.

I have subscribed to the VCAA bulletin (online)

My school receives VCAA notices

The VCAA and VALA websites are bookmarked in my browser
Section 2  WHY

Why do we have VCAL?

There is an ancient belief from Chinese philosophy that theory without practice is foolish, but practice without theory is dangerous. Since VCAL is built upon the theory of applied learning, and you as a teacher will be applying your learning in the classroom, this section is devoted to looking briefly at the pedagogy which forms the bedrock foundation of sound applied learning practice.

Back story

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) was developed to meet the learning and educational needs of young people who have limited or poor outcomes from post compulsory education. These needs were identified in the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (Kirby 2000). The review found the two factors most frequently cited by students for their decision to leave school were:

★ a desire for work
★ a lack of interest in schoolwork

It was difficult though for these students to achieve a successful transition to work because of:

★ lack of work related experience
★ no record of school achievement
★ lack of relevant work related training

(Source: Changing lanes: VCAL report by Helen Stokes, Australian Youth Research Centre, Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne, 2004)

To address these points the VCAL was developed. It is based on eight key applied learning principles.
Applied Learning

★ is a teaching and learning approach that links the real world and learning
★ develops skills and knowledge in contexts where the teaching/learning
  focus is on the skills and knowledge required for the task or project
★ involves learners and their teachers in partnerships with organisations and
  individuals outside school
★ is concerned with working with students in an holistic manner - taking into
  account the learner’s personal strengths, interests, goals, previous
  experiences and preferred ways of learning
★ places equal importance on theory and practice. Theory relevant to the
  content is explained and taught and then returned to the context for further
  practice
★ is applicable to all content areas

Think about other Applied Learning programs, units or activities
you have been involved in before you became a VCAL teacher.

How might you transfer your learning from that experience to
this course?

Why Applied Learning?

★ to engage and motivate learners
★ to provide authentic contexts for learning skills that are valued in the
  workplace and community
★ to improve the self-esteem and confidence of learners
★ to provide different learning options that cater for learners with a range of
  different learning styles
★ to provide meaningful contexts for developing theoretical understanding
  as well as practical skills
Principles of Applied Learning and support activities

The activities below are used by Jenny Roache, Pathways Coordinator at Mooroolbark College in Melbourne’s outer east to assist teachers new to VCAL. It helps them in getting to know their students and becoming familiar with linking what they do in the classroom to the principles.

The activities shown here under the headings of each of the eight principles are related to getting to know a new group and establishing and negotiating the curriculum.

**Principle 1: Start where learners are at - their skills, knowledge, needs and motivation**

- Invite each person to write down six things about themselves- what they are interested in, are good at, have done, places they have been, hobbies, pets, interests and so on
- As a facilitator ensure that you always model first! Share your list with the group first- then ask them to write
- In pairs share your lists- reading them out
- Still in pairs interview each other about anything you found of particular interest
- With permission, introduce your partner to the group, telling the group anything interesting that you discovered
- List all the skills and interests in a central place as the basis for further real work
Principle 2 Negotiate the curriculum and make it relevant

- Be explicit about what students are required to achieve. Outline expectations clearly— it is not necessary to use the exact wording of the Learning Outcomes on the curriculum documents. Reword them to make them user friendly.
- Brainstorm how students may meet these learning outcomes and competencies, using their interests.

Principle 3 Share Knowledge. Learn from everyone

- Having identified interests and learning modalities, ask students to plan a presentation based on something from their area of interest.
- Depending on the level of students’ ability, negotiate and discuss what may be involved and set clear guidelines.
- Ask students to use their preferred learning style.

Principle 4 Connect with communities

- Invite volunteers to speak to the class about their experiences and knowledge which can be connected to content.
- Ask people from the school, local and civic community to talk about their lives and what they do.
- Consider using parents or other volunteers in the classroom to assist students with their work as mentors, informed tutors or as an additional presence in the class.
- Get out of the classroom to do project work, see real life and investigate other spaces.
Principle 5  Build resilience, confidence and self-worth

- Check in and check out with students, Speak to them as they arrive and leave. Greet them at the door. Ask them how they are
- Invite students to select emotion cards to describe how they are feeling today
- Ask about their hobbies and interests
- Encourage learner responsibility by asking students to teach tasks - for example, setting up technology, demonstrating activities

Principle 6  Integrate learning

- Try to take the opportunity to check out what other teachers are doing. Use the intranet, ultranet, time over a coffee in the classroom, or notes in your pigeon hole
- Look for opportunities to connect what you do in your class with what is going on elsewhere to cut down on repetition and reinforce integrated learning

Principle 7  Promote diversity of learning styles and methods

Identify people’s learning styles and modalities. This can be done in a range of ways, including:

- Discussion on what is an introvert or an extrovert. Create a line with introverts at one end and extroverts at the other depending where you see yourself
- Match pairs up from either end. Discuss what is positive about your personality type and what is challenging
- Discuss how you learn best- auditory- visual- kinaesthetic. Use quizzes from the internet to identify this.
- Graph the room-identify learning modalities and ask students to group themselves
Brainstorm the type of learning activities you prefer and what you find difficult or boring. Why?

Principle 8 Assess appropriately

- Assessment needs to be fair, valid and flexible
- Ensure assessment strategies match the task
- In competency based learning, direct evidence is usually the most appropriate. How can the students show what they have learnt? How can you record this?
- Indirect evidence can also be valuable. Can someone give feedback or report on how a learning activity went?
- Supplementary evidence supports the demonstration of learning outcomes. Here written work or reports may be considered.
- Use self assessment and peer assessment as powerful and authentic tools for gaining feedback
- Invite students to give you feedback on your teaching strategies
- Use the assessment method that best fits the learning content and context and the tool to match it - for example; an observation checklist to be completed as you watch a demonstration of gardening.

(For more information on assessment and the meaning of some of these terms, go to Section 4 of this guide.)

Note down any of the activities shown here that might work well with your learning group.
Applied Learning examples

These two examples show how real life contexts create an authentic focus for learning skills and developing knowledge, and how this can benefit the local community.

Example 1

**From design to delicious**

An integrated curriculum involves VCAL students in creating a garden area and vegetable beds for a local primary school. The VCAL group will be working with students from levels 5 and 6 and will be responsible for planning, designing and physically creating the vegetable garden with the support of their teacher and their VET trainer in horticulture.

The program makes students excited about their learning and prepares them for further study in a range of areas such as horticulture, environmental science and health as well as putting science and maths into context. In addition, students develop skills in teamwork, communication, leadership and working safely.

Being in an area where the many nurseries are an important source of employment, it also helps to prepare the students for part-time work.
A healthy walk – a resource for newly arrived migrants

VCAL students from a regional centre created a visual resource for newly arrived immigrants who needed visual and oral information rather than printed brochures.

The resource, produced on a CD, contained an informative walking tour of the town, explaining and showing the location and services available from a range of health facilities such as Maternal and Child Health Centres.

In producing the resource, the students worked with the local council and health services. They researched, planned the walk, took photos and wrote and recorded the narrative.

The council is thrilled with the finished product, which they distribute and promote widely. The understanding of the health services has increased among the target community members and the students honed their skills in project planning, leadership, teamwork, interviewing and communicating information for a practical purpose.

How might your group undertake a project like this in the community?
I have identified applied learning and teaching strategies that I already have from other areas that I can use with my VCAL class.

I have made links between the eight applied learning principles and other principles of learning and teaching with which I am familiar.

I have made notes on the suggested activities shown here that might work well with my group.

I have some ideas on how a VCAL group might connect their learning to a community project to create an applied learning context.

The checklists are offered as a quick way to check whether you have the information you need from the information and suggested activities in this section.
Section 3  WHO

This section looks at the learners, the providers and support organisations that can assist you in your role as a VCAL teacher.

Who are VCAL students?

In 2012 there were 21,755 students across Victoria enrolled in VCAL at 442 providers. They came from a wide range of geographical, economic and racial backgrounds, so it is not possible to generalise or create a profile of a ‘typical’ VCAL student. However, it is often the case that these students are keen to engage and explore work and life options in a hands-on, experiential way. They may be looking for a more innovative and dynamic learning program than those traditionally offered at senior levels, and they may be less likely to want to go on to university immediately. The features of VCAL such as negotiation, flexibility, cooperation and teamwork are vital ingredients in the appeal and success of the program with this group of young learners.

Benefits of VCAL

★ negotiated curriculum - students take part in creating their areas of learning and using their experiences and interest - within and outside school

★ workplace connections - students can experience trying out their skills in the workplace either in a paid or voluntary capacity
community connection – students can see how to contribute and what other work and support recognition of skills that the traditional curriculum does not recognise

★ focuses on skills that can be learnt and demonstrated - students can experience success in learning which builds their confidence as learners

★ acknowledges and caters to a range of learning styles

★ makes links with ‘real life’

★ flexibility - fits in with other courses such as VET and part-time approaches which allows for part time work commitments

Student snapshot

Jessica Brown from Monbulk Secondary College

Jessica won the Foundation VCAL Outstanding Student Achievement Award 2010, and her moving speech charts the journey she made. As she says in her speech, “I was often angry, struggled with aspects of my school program and if you ask my brothers I probably disrupted our entire home life”. Read Jessica’s speech at:


Find a VCAL success story from your learning community.
Who offers VCAL?

442 providers within the state offer VCAL programs and in 2012, 21,755 students were enrolled. This number has grown every year since the program was first trailed in 2002 in 22 providers. The main providers are government schools (66.4%) and TAFEs, but VCAL is also offered at Catholic and independent schools and community and adult education centres.

Some programs are delivered in non-traditional settings such as Adult Community Education (ACE) centres, community spaces and alternative school settings. You may hear the terms Community VCAL or Satellite VCAL. Many secondary schools have introduced re-engagement programs for students aged 15 and over, both to retain students at high risk of disengaging from education and training and also to re-engage students who have already left school. These programs are usually delivered entirely away from the school campus and may involve partnerships with external providers.

Re-engagement programs fall into two groups, Community and Satellite VCAL:

In Community VCAL, 100% of the qualification is delivered by an external provider contracted by the school.

In Satellite VCAL a school delivers a VCAL program at another campus of the school, often an external site. The staff for the Satellite VCAL program are employed by the school.

Who ‘s who in VCAL

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

DEECD is committed to ensuring that every young Victorian thrives, learns and develops, enjoying every opportunity to realise a rewarding and fulfilling life.

www.education.vic.gov.au
Local government

Your local council may have a range of services to support you and your students. You will find a youth development officer or a similar role in most local governments. Contact them to see how you can work with them and the support they can offer.

VCAA VCAL Team

The VCAL team assists and supports VCAL provision and programs. To find contact details and who to contact for support, go to:


Independent Schools

The Independent Schools website lists contacts for that sector.


Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV)

The Catholic Education Commission has regional contacts who support teachers of VCAL in Catholic schools. For a list of contacts go to:


VCAL Liaison Teachers (VLT)

VLTs are appointed to assist with coordination of assessment moderation meetings, known as Quality Assurance or QA within their region. They also enable networks, provide a central focus for ideas and contribute to the organisation of Professional Learning opportunities. To find the contact details for your local VLT go to:


VCAL Teacher Networks

VCAL teacher networks are often organised by interested groups and individuals in an area or who teach at a particular kind of school who wish to get together and share ideas.
VET networks

VET in schools teachers have networks organised within regional and suburban areas. e.g. http://www.imvc.com.au

PYE organisations

Partners in Youth Engagement (PYE) is a group of not-for-profit organisations and Government agencies involved in supporting Victorian schools and education providers delivering community based, applied learning programs and projects.

The members are:

- **Advance – Office for Youth** which offers school-based program for young people to volunteer in their community.
- **Consumer Affairs Victoria** provides consumer education resources and professional development.
- **Country Fire Authority** offers opportunities to work with communities of challenging situations identified by students.
- **Awards Victoria** offers the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, Compass Award, The Bridge Award, The Challenge Award and OzQuest.
- **LifeSaving Victoria** provides water safety programs and accredited training courses for schools and community groups.
- **SCOPE** offers the Scope Young Ambassadors disability education program which promotes tolerance, understanding and acceptance of others.
Australian Red Cross has school based programs to enhance community engagement and participation.

Victoria Police offer the Victoria Police Youth Corps, a program that develops personal skills such as leadership, teamwork, self-esteem and good citizenship in young people.

PYE also includes representatives from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and VALA.

For more information and a list of these organisations go to:


Workplace/industry

Building a relationship with local industries can take time and effort but has huge repayments both in the choices it can allow for students when it comes to work placement, and also in the general community understanding of how VCAL operates. VCAL students have undertaken work placement in industries such as hospitality, retail, manufacturing, construction and horticulture. Some of these relationships begin by working from a base of relatives and friends of the students in the local area, but can extend to organisations such as supermarkets or banks.

Other schools

Other schools in your locality may wish to support your VCAL students by entering into a partnership. Many successful projects have been run, for example, where a VCAL group have built a sandpit or vegetable garden for a primary school in their area, thus forging links between the two and enhancing the understanding of the practical results of VCAL learning.
Professional organisations

VALA

The Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA) is the peak body for applied learning practitioners. It offers leadership, development and advocacy for educators of applied learning across all sectors. Established in 2005 in response to the rapid growth in Victoria of applied learning in post-compulsory education, it now supports over 1000 applied learning educators from across education sectors.

www.vala.asn.au

VISTA

VISTA is the peak association for professionals working in the Victorian Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. VISTA is committed to raising the status of the VET profession within the community, promoting a deeper understanding of applied learning pedagogy within VET, and supporting the professional skill and career directions of VET practitioners.

www.vista.org.au

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)

These networks are focused on connecting local groups to improve education, training and employment options for 13-19 year olds. They provide support to VCAL programs in a variety of ways, from offering spaces for Professional Learning sessions, to forging links between schools and local employers. Some LLENs work closely with VCAL providers to create Professional Development opportunities, program links and promote industry and communication networks.

www.llen.vic.gov.au

Workplace Learning Coordinators

The Workplace Learning Coordinator Program was developed to increase the access to quality workplace learning placements for all young people aged 15 - 19 years.

The Workplace Learning Coordinator Program aims to:
★ Increase the number of young people undertaking workplace learning placements, especially in areas that provide strong vocational outcomes

★ Increase the alignment of VCAL and VET provision and local industry needs

★ Increase the number of Koorie young people undertaking workplace learning placements

Workplace learning programs can improve student learning, enhance student engagement and well-being, and support successful transitions and pathways.

The Workplace Learning Coordinator works with all secondary schools, training providers, local employers and Koorie and community organisations to achieve its goals.

How does your school or provider work with the LLEN and WPLC?
I have some ideas on how a VCAL group might connect their learning to a community project to create an applied learning context.

I know how to:

☐ Identify student learning needs and adjust planning and teaching strategies as required
☐ Review my students’ profiles on the intranet
☐ Obtain student folios and assessment data from previous years
☐ Clarify school/faculty policy on recording and storing student portfolios

I know where to find:

☐ established community links
☐ industry based networks
☐ the contact details of my VLT
☐ my local VCAL teachers network
Section 4  HOW

This section approaches the practicalities of providing a VCAL program in your school. As VCAL is an applied learning program, it requires programs which emphasise the knowledge skills and attitudes of the learner in a hands-on environment. Students must have the opportunity to demonstrate their capability and to apply their understanding in a real-life context. Often this will take place outside a school setting, but explicit teaching may also occur within a classroom. The delivery of VCAL therefore requires careful planning to make sure that implementation and assessment run smoothly and are integrated. This section covers these areas and uses the VCAL V-Garden Project used throughout this guide as a case study to provide examples of planning and assessment documents.

The learning environment

The learning environment is the term used to cover the physical space in which learning takes place, but also the culture or general feeling associated with the group. Because VCAL takes a more adult learning approach, and because a great deal of learning occurs outside the school or institution, this term is used in preference to classroom.

Having said that, many VCAL classes do take place in traditional classrooms, and teachers find establishing a sense of ownership, through the use of posters, decoration or generally devoting the space to the interests of their particular group is a useful first step in creating engagement and pride in the program. Displays of any kind but especially those related to the project underway or that celebrate the achievements of the group, no matter how small, will add to the feeling of the space being a safe and productive place.
Negotiating agreements

Creating an atmosphere that is safe and supportive is vital so learning can occur, and one way of working towards achieving this is to negotiate agreements with the group, rather than imposing a set of rules. Experienced VCAL teachers find that negotiating agreements about behaviour, the use of phones, punctuality and the kinds of language that the group finds acceptable, for example, assist the group to be self-governing and begin the journey toward self-management and taking on responsibility.

Getting to know the group

Some activities on this topic are included in this guide in Section 2, under Applied Learning Principle 1.

Mark Collard has published a free ebook called Sure Fire Ice Breakers & Group Games that contains a range of games that work really well with VCAL students as part of getting to know each other and developing team skills. If you are a member of VALA you can access this at vala.asn.au/resources and search for ice-breakers in the Search by keywords box to get the link for the free download.

Planning

Planning an integrated VCAL program involves identifying which teaching areas and learning outcomes can be delivered and assessed most readily through the proposed activity, task or project. If students have the opportunity to be involved in a local community activity, this could be the basis for a project that is then mapped to a number of learning outcomes from different units.
Careful planning makes sure that you identify opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills across the curriculum. It is then easier to see gaps where additional activities need to be designed or incorporated to fulfill curriculum requirements. Planning also takes into account the evidence required for assessment purposes so that teaching and assessment uses variation and offers different contexts for the practice of skills and demonstrations of knowledge.

Further information on assessment is provided later in this section, but it is important to note that successful completion of all learning outcomes for a VCAL unit may be demonstrated in one integrated assessment activity or spread over a number of different activities. To be awarded an ‘S’, the student must demonstrate competence on more than one occasion and wherever possible in different contexts to make sure the assessment is consistent, fair, valid and reliable.

Planning a project

This section looks closely at the steps involved in planning and assessing a project. Assessment is included here as part of the learning process. The planning method shown is a simplified model of a project management approach. It is made up of four stages: Plan, Develop, Implement and Evaluate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Overview of the unit learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Project outline to identify key skills and knowledge required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Match (map) skills to learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Identify teaching areas and assessment opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 1  Overview of the unit learning outcomes

Familiarise yourself with the learning outcomes of the units you are working with. For example, if you are using VCAL Intermediate PDS and Literacy and Numeracy strands, read over the learning outcomes and elements for those units so that you can see patterns and links and then set them aside. This is so that you are not trying to meet each element separately, which might create repetitive tasks, but rather are looking holistically at the project and then mapping or matching the skills back to the elements afterwards. If there are any gaps, activities can then be added at the planning stage to make sure all the learning outcomes will be met.

Use the templates on the following pages to start planning your project.

Step 2  Project outline to identify key skills and knowledge required

Using the four stages of the project management approach, create an overview of the project. A sample template for this is shown in Table 1A.

Table 1B shows a completed example of the [planning template based on the VCAL V- garden project which will be undertaken at the local Primary School. (See Case Study description in Section 1 for more information.)
Table 1A Planning template (blank)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Project Outline</th>
<th>Key Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EVALUATE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1 B Planning template (completed with sample info)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Outline</th>
<th>Key Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLAN</strong></td>
<td>Determine scope, time and costings to create a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• liaise with PS staff and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• create partnership teams between VCAL and PS students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• determine client (PS) requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• map position and size to scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• develop list of required tools, materials and plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOP</strong></td>
<td>Develop plan and ask for feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make estimate of costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• develop time schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify key tasks and delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• communicate plans to PS and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• incorporate any changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPLEMENT</strong></td>
<td>Create vegetable garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• measure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• edge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• dig</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• fertilise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• cultivate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• plant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• mulch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATE</strong></td>
<td>Monitor the use and gather feedback from the users at intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organise a meeting to discuss the success of the project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• conduct a survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• interview users for feedback and comments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• collate information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• present findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3  Match (map) skills to learning outcomes

When you have written down all the particular skills and activities students will be engaged with during the project, create another table which shows the skills on the left. Table 2 shows an example of this. (You could also create this as a larger spreadsheet, whiteboard/electronic board, or butchers’ paper outline or flowchart, but all tables are shown here separately to aid clarity.)

Table 2A  Key Skills and links (blank)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skills</th>
<th>Curriculum links</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• liaise with PS staff and students</td>
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<td>• create partnership teams between VCAL and PS students</td>
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<td>• incorporate any changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• mulch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organise a meeting to discuss the success of the project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• conduct a survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interview users for feedback and comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• collate information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• present findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brainstorm all the curriculum links you can think of, no matter which strand they might belong to, if possible without referring to the curriculum document. Using Plain English in this step will help you create checklists and other assessment documents for students later on. Table 2B shows an example. Possible PDS Learning Outcome links have been highlighted in blue.

**Table 2B**  
**Key skills and links (completed with sample info)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skills</th>
<th>Curriculum links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- liaise with PS staff and students</td>
<td>- planning, organisation, teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- create partnership teams between VCAL and PS students</td>
<td>- questioning, clarifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- determine client (PS) requirements</td>
<td>- numeracy, mapping, measure scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - map position and size to scale | - planning, research, writing, 
| - develop list of required tools, materials and plants | calculations |
| - research costs | - planning, reporting, teamwork |
| | - listening, speaking |
| | - writing, PP report |
| - make estimate of costs | - team meeting, team building |
| - develop time schedule | - planning, project management |
| - identify key tasks and delegate | - listening, speaking, notes, report |
| - communicate plan to PS and community | - note-taking, reflection |
| - incorporate any changes | - report writing, presentation |
| | - possible PDS links |
Once a group of skills has been identified as being linked to the learning outcomes of a certain unit, you can start mapping (matching) the activities and possible assessment tasks to specific learning outcomes to make sure they are all covered and to see where any gaps are. At this stage of the planning, you can then create an additional activity or expand a skill set to make sure that all learning outcomes of the unit are met.

Table 3 shows an example of a mapping sheet that matches activities and tasks to the elements of a Learning Outcome. This table uses just one learning outcome to aid clarity. Carrying out this step shows that there is a gap in Element 2.4 Identify strategies to minimise risks associated with the activity. The gap is highlighted on the table using a green bar.
Table 3  Learning outcomes and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDS Unit 2 Foundation</th>
<th>Activities-Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Plan and organise a simple activity within a community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Discuss and select a topical issue or event related to a community activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Plan an activity to address a community need.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Contribute to the completion of a community activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Identify strategies to minimise risks associated with the activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Reflect on their contribution to the activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Only one of five learning outcomes is shown here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The elements are demonstrated when the student can:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2.1 | • liaise with PS staff and students  
• create partnership teams between VCAL and PS students |
| 2.2 | • determine client (PS) requirements  
• develop list of required tools, materials and plants  
• develop time schedule  
• identify key tasks and delegate  
• communicate plans to PS and community |
| 2.3 | • measure  
• edge  
• dig  
• fertilise  
• cultivate  
• plant  
• water  
• mulch |
| 2.4 |  |
| 2.5 | • organise a meeting to discuss the success of the project  
• conduct a survey  
• interview users for feedback and comments  
• collate information  
• present findings |
Step 4 Identify teaching areas and assessment opportunities

Behind each one of these activities is assumed knowledge and skills, and knowing your students will help you work out what they need to be explicitly taught or which areas need revision. From Table 3 it is clear that ELEMENT 2.4 Identify strategies to minimise risks has not been covered. Suggested ways that this element could be met might include:

★ instruction for students on using tools
★ students developing safety guidelines for the primary school children
★ using a Job Safety Audit (JSA)
★ conducting an OH&S audit of the site

All these activities, which are part of the planning, developing, implementing and evaluating the project, offer opportunities for assessment and for gathering evidence of the student’s ability to demonstrate skills and apply knowledge.

Summary

After the planning has been completed, timetabling, resource collection and other details of implementation will need to be worked out. The more comprehensive and clear the planning is, the easier it will be to create a list of milestones with the students and assist them in meeting the required timelines. Planning assessments is also a part of this process but is discussed separately in the next section as it needs space to explore the way it is approached in a VCAL program.

What projects might work for your students?
Hint: Start small and work up to something bigger.
Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence about the performance of learners and making a judgement about whether they have met the specified standards.

Students undertaking VCAL are assessed against set criteria. If the student’s performance does not meet the specified standards, the student is given additional opportunities to demonstrate their skills until the standard has been met.

Another way of expressing this is to see competence as a continuum with the standard at one end. A student may enter the program at any point along the competence continuum and the teacher assists the student to move from that point towards being able to meet the specified standard.

Assessment of VCAL units

A VCAL provider coordinates the assessment and the collection of results for all curriculum components in a VCAL program. The satisfactory completion of curriculum components must be in accordance with the assessment guidelines for the accredited curriculum.

For specific information on assessment and suggested evidence, always refer to the curriculum guides for each strand. In addition, VCAA publishes the VCAL Unit Assessment Planning Guide which is the definitive authority on assessment questions.

Go to: vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/providers/resources/assess_guide/VCALAssessmentGde.pdf

Quality Assurance (QA)

The VCAL QA process ensures that there is a common understanding and consistency among teachers regarding assessment judgements and the design of assessment tasks for the three VCAL levels. The VCAL QA process enables teachers to clarify their ideas about the appropriate VCAL level and tasks for their students.

The VCAA has established nine VCAL QA regions. These nine regions are similar to the previous nine Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
regions. Further information can be found in Attachment 3 in the 2013 Notice to Schools – VCAL quality assurance arrangements:

vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/providers/quality/index.aspx

QA also provides an opportunity for teachers to clarify their ideas about the appropriate VCAL level and tasks for students. Most teachers look forward to participating in these days, reporting that it is a great chance to engage in meaningful professional development using specific examples from their own teaching practice and discovering how other teachers approach VCAL tasks.

The guide to QA for 2013 can be found at:


There is a VCAL QA Panel in each Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) region to:

- establish regional benchmarks for consistency in the assessment of VCAL levels and VCAL learning outcomes
- provide advice to VCAL providers that will enable them to confidently design VCAL unit assessment tasks and to make assessment judgements about successful achievement of the learning outcomes for VCAL units
- allocate providers to one of three categories
- select and provide advice regarding exemplar models of VCAL tasks for publication on the VCAA website.

Go to http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/providers/quality/index.aspx for more information and for the dates and contacts for your school.

Which QA category does your school belong to?
Who coordinates QA in your school?
Insert QA dates in your diary.
Principles of assessment

There are four principles of assessment: validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility.

- Valid = assesses what it claims to assess
  
  Example: an assessment of the skill of taking accurate measurements should not include calculations of those measurements if calculation is not being assessed.

- Reliable = the method and tools used will produce a consistent result no matter which student they are applied to or which or teacher uses them

  A checklist might include the phrase - interacts well, but the word well could be interpreted differently by different assessors so a more specific phrase such as interacts courteously, professionally or appropriately would be more reliable.

- Flexible = appropriate to a range of situations

  An assessment task does not rely on special equipment that one group may have access to but others may not; or if a student arrives at an assessment time feeling distressed due to personal reasons it should be possible to reschedule the assessment.

- Fair = The assessment does not disadvantage anyone and takes into account the characteristics and needs of the students.

If a student is unable for religious reasons to give a presentation to a group of males, an alternative presentation audience would be selected.

S stands for …

S stands for satisfactory. Students receive an S or an N (which means Not Yet Complete). To be awarded an ‘S’, a student must achieve all learning outcomes (there are exceptions in the numeracy units and Senior Reading and Writing only requires 7 out of the 8 learning outcomes to be achieved). Successful completion of all learning outcomes for a VCAL unit may be demonstrated in one integrated assessment activity or spread over a number of different activities. To be awarded an ‘S’, the student must demonstrate competence on more than one occasion and
wherever possible in different contexts to make sure the assessment is consistent, fair, valid and reliable.


**Designing assessment**

This method is offered here as a guide only, as it would be more productive time wise for the busy teacher to do this as part of the overall planning. It is separated out here to make assessment issues and strategies clearer.

**The four-step method**

1. Clarify the evidence requirements by thoroughly examining and analysing the unit and then imagine and visualise what a competent student would be able to do.
2. Choose the most appropriate assessment method. (See next section)
3. Design and develop assessment tools. (See next section) Ask for feedback from colleagues and students where appropriate.
4. Try out the tools and alter where necessary to improve them.

**Assessment methods and tools**

When used in reference to competency based assessment, the word 'method' refers to the ways assessment is undertaken. The term ‘tools’ in this context means the items used to collect evidence and includes instructions to the student.

When selecting a method choose the best method to demonstrate competence and allow for holistic assessment. A variety of methods will suit different learning styles within the group. Assessments are viewed as opportunities for learning and a chance for a student to demonstrate their capabilities in a safe and supportive environment.

Table 4 summarises some of the methods and their associated tools.
### Table 4  Assessment methods and tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment methods</th>
<th>Assessment tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation of performance</td>
<td>• student instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical demonstration</td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>• student instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>• student instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>• student instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• case study description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• discussion record sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written questions</td>
<td>• questions with instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>• teacher answer sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal questions</td>
<td>• questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• record sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• possible answers reference sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report by third party (may be verbal &amp; recorded)</td>
<td>• questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• record sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio or assignment</td>
<td>• student instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• contents list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product inspection</td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>• statements for debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• instructions on rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journal</td>
<td>• learner instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• starter sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self assessment</td>
<td>• guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer assessment</td>
<td>• guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• checklist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence

Evidence is anything that supports the assessor’s claim that a student has achieved a learning outcome including the assessment criteria/elements.

Evidence can be Direct, Indirect or Supplementary.

Direct

★ observation of performance
★ video of performance
★ product

Indirect

★ simulation
★ role-play
★ case study analysis

Supplementary

★ written or oral questions
★ feedback from a third party.


Table 5 shows how assessment methods can vary depending on whether their focus is on knowledge or performance from less direct to very direct methods. There is some overlap between them which is not shown in this table.

Evidence examples

To continue with the VCAL V-Garden example used previously, Table 5 uses the information from Table 4. By adding an extra column, we can show evidence that could be collected throughout the project and how it relates to the learning outcomes.

These items are kept together as a portfolio of evidence to show what the students have been able to do, track the development of skills and assist in measuring the level of those skills against the standard. The evidence is as direct as possible, as the unit focuses on performance of skills.
### Table 5 Possible evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDS Unit 2 Foundation</th>
<th>Activities/Assessment tasks</th>
<th>Possible Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNING OUTCOME 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>liaise with PS staff and students</strong></td>
<td>Mind maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Only one of five learning outcomes is shown here</td>
<td><strong>create partnership teams between VCAL and PS students</strong></td>
<td>Discussion notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plan and organise a simple activity within a community.</td>
<td><strong>determine client (PS) requirements</strong></td>
<td>whiteboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELEMENTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>develop list of required tools, materials and plants</strong></td>
<td>brainstorm (photos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The elements are demonstrated when the student can:</td>
<td><strong>develop time schedule</strong></td>
<td>Drawings, plans, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Discuss and select a topical issue or event related to a community activity.</td>
<td><strong>identify key tasks and delegate</strong></td>
<td>Phone call log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Plan an activity to address a community need.</td>
<td><strong>communicate plans to PS and community</strong></td>
<td>Meeting notes, minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Contribute to the completion of a community activity.</td>
<td><strong>measure</strong></td>
<td>Project plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Identify strategies to minimise risks associated with the activity.</td>
<td><strong>edge</strong></td>
<td>Letters, emails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Reflect on their contribution to the activity.</td>
<td><strong>dig</strong></td>
<td>between schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>fertilise</strong></td>
<td>Budgets, lists, receipts, requests to sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>cultivate</strong></td>
<td>Checklist*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>plant</strong></td>
<td>Photos (annotated and dated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>water</strong></td>
<td>Film/video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>mulch</strong></td>
<td>Digital story with narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diary, journal, log book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* organise a meeting to discuss the success of the project</td>
<td>Meeting notes, podcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* conduct a survey</td>
<td>Written or spoken reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* interview users for feedback and comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* collate information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* present findings &amp; comments received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a sample of this kind of checklist is shown in Table 6
Rules of evidence

Evidence must be Valid, Reliable, Sufficient, Authentic, Current and Consistent.

Valid

• Is the task consistent with the VCAL unit purpose statement?
• Have the learning outcomes been taken into account?
• Is the level appropriate?

Sufficient

• Is there sufficient evidence to enable a decision to be made? This is important for activities involving a group of students working on an activity.
• Is there a balance of direct and indirect evidence?

Authentic

• How do we know this is the work of the student?

Current

• How do we know this is current work?

Consistent

• Has the evidence been collected over time to ensure there is a consistent demonstration of competencies in the learning outcomes?


Sample assessment tool – checklist

The following example of an assessment tool is linked to the VCAL V-Garden project. To assess the implementation part of the project, the teacher may choose to use a checklist to record actions that they observe on-site. These records of observations are just one part of the evidence needed to support the assessment of a learning outcome, and contribute to the overall assessment of competence.
## Table 6  Sample of a checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Record of observations - Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/ criteria</th>
<th>Tick when shown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses tape measure where necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measures the length and width of the plot correctly according to the rough plan provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is able to read the measurements on the tape measure correctly—for example, centimetres and millimetres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes measurements accurately and legibly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marks corners clearly using wooden pegs, spray markers or similar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clearly marks edges using string line, spray markers or similar to ensure a straight line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicates clearly with other team members to assist in work processes e.g. uses clarifying questions; explains actions; gives instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher signature………………………………………………………………..

Student Signature ………………………………………………………………..
Portfolio of evidence

A portfolio of evidence is a physical or electronic collection of evidence gathered during the program. It can include one or more of the following:

- student self-assessment (verified by teacher/mentor)
- teacher observation records/checklists of oral presentations, practical activities and role-plays
- reflective work journals
- student logbooks
- oral presentations
- an oral explanation of text
- written text
- a physical demonstration of their understanding of a written or oral text
- discussion
- debates
- role-plays
- folios of tasks or investigations
- photographic/video productions
- multimedia presentations
- program awards or statements of completion, e.g. Surf Life Saving Bronze Star.

Sample evidence for VCAL V-garden project

Darryl demonstrates his ability to use the trenching tool safely to create a water channel for the new garden bed. 20 October, 2012. Observed by LH. Signed: LH

The checklists are offered as a quick way to check whether you have the information you need from the information and suggested activities in this section.

I have:

☐ identified some activities to help me get to know my group
☐ done some pre planning using the template provided
☐ some ideas on how a VCAL group might connect their learning to a community project to create an applied learning context.

I know

☐ how to obtain any preferred planning templates
☐ who to ask about QA
☐ the QA category and dates for my school or provider
Section 5  What about VET?

Overview

Vocational Education and Training (VET) refers to a range of nationally recognised vocational certificates which are an important pathway into work or further study at TAFE for VCAL students. VET is closely related to the Industry Specific Skills and Work Related Skills Strands of VCAL and may be Integrated within a VCAL program.

VET qualifications are stand alone certificates in their own right and have the benefit of being recognised by employers and training providers across Australia. VET certificates start at Certificate I and progress through Levels II, III, and IV and continue onto Diploma and Advanced Diploma level. Higher level VETs may also be recognised by universities for those seeking to progress to degree level study later on. VETs are great way for young people to get an early start in the world of work and can lay an important foundation for further progress after school.

VET in VCAL

VET in VCAL allows students to include vocational studies within their senior secondary certificate. Students undertake nationally recognised training from either accredited state curriculum or national training packages.


There is a wide range of VET certificates available for students to choose from across all areas of employment and training.

Assessment in VET

Assessment in VET is done through a system of modules and units of competency that are designed to acknowledge skills development, usually in the context of a specific industry setting. The language of assessment used in the VET documentation may be slightly different from the VCAL documents but they are both based around the determination of competence. VET is an important component of an Intermediate or Senior VCAL course and can be a powerful means to engage and extend young people in their own learning pathway. There is also the possibility to integrate aspects of VET within the VCAL program.
Integrating curriculum

The teaching and learning program for the various units, units of competency and modules that make up the learning program can be integrated. Providers of VCAL are encouraged to integrate the learning outcomes from a number of VCAL units where possible and practicable. The knowledge and skills development that lead to the learning outcomes in one unit, such as a VCAL unit, can be extended by including content drawn from a VET module or unit of competency. Record keeping for each curriculum component should reflect assessment of each learning outcome and/or unit of competency.

Programs can be designed to include a thematic or project based approach. Planning for this includes learning experiences and assessment tasks that are based on integration of learning outcomes, such as the one used as an example throughout this guide. This might include combining the learning outcomes from different curriculum components in the same or different curriculum strands to reflect the integration of skills and competencies in authentic contexts, such as social or work activities.


VCAL and structured workplace learning

There is no formal on-the-job training or structured workplace learning requirement within the accredited units of the VCAL. However, if a VET module/unit of competency is used to meet one of the requirements of the VCAL, this VET module/unit of competency may require a structured workplace learning placement.

Further information on SWL can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/default.aspx
VET and Employability Skills

Whichever way you approach VET in your VCAL it is useful to note that the federal government in consultation with all industry sectors has developed a set of eight core skills that employers assess as vital, no matter which sector you are employed in. VET providers must embed these into all courses. These skills are recognised by employers and training providers across all industries:

Here is an extract from the youth central site that explains to students why these eight skills are useful. This shows how VET overlaps very well with the Integrated nature of VCAL and can be built into your thinking as a teacher.

1. Communication

You have to be a good talker and maybe also a good writer (depending on the job). You have to be confident about speaking to people face-to-face or over the phone, and you may also need to write well enough to be understood in emails and memos.

2. Teamwork

You have to be good at working with people. This means both your workmates and other people that come into contact with your organisation.

3. Problem Solving

You have to be able to find solutions when faced with difficulties or set-backs. Even if you can’t think of a solution straight away, you need to have a logical process for figuring things out.

4. Initiative and Enterprise

You need to be able to think about the bigger picture and the future of the organisation you’re working for. Employers will value your ability to think creatively and to make improvements to the way things are.

5. Planning and Organising

You need to be able to organise yourself, plan project timelines and meet deadlines.
6. Self-Management

You need to be able to get on with your work without someone having to check up on you every five minutes. You should also be able to stay on top of your own deadlines and be able to delegate tasks to make sure things get done on time.

7. Learning

You should want to learn new things and be able to pick them up quickly. There are likely to be some changes to your job and to the structure of your workplace while you are working there. You should be able to take on new tasks and to meet the needs of a changing workplace.

8. Technology

Most jobs these days require you to use some form of technology. You'll need to know how to use a computer and how to touch-type for most office jobs, but there are other types of technology that you might need to be familiar with depending on the industry you work in.

Source: youthcentral.vic.gov.au/Jobs+&+Careers/Planning+your+career/Employability+skills/#.UQW7dKVQWms
Other Useful websites

The following websites may be useful in investigating or implementing VET training programs:

training.gov.au
Contains a listing of all nationally recognised qualifications, a list of RTOs according to Scope of Registration and has a database of competency standards.

Information on SWL, VET funding for Government schools and VET in Schools

IMPORTANT: VET enrolments should be entered onto the VCAA's Victorian Assessment Software System (VASS) in accordance with the guidelines provided on the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.

Related information

The VCAL Co ordinators Resource Kit

VCAL Curriculum Planning Guide : Industry Specific Skills and Work Related Skills

REMEMBER!
The VCAA is the official source of advice for all information regarding operational aspects of the VCAL. For further information, please refer to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority “VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook,2013” and the monthly VCAA bulletin. If you require additional assistance please contact the VCAL Unit at the VCAA on (03) 9032 1725.
## Acronym list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Adult and Community Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCAFL</td>
<td>Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>Cumulative Performance Measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>FE</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
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<td>National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<td>Post-Results and ATAR Service</td>
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