where to now?
2026

your guide to senior secondary school pathways in Victoria

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

VICTORIA State Government

What's inside...

Acknowledgement

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority proudly acknowledges and pays respect to Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their rich and enduring cultures.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which we rely. We pay respect to Elders past and present of the lands where we conduct our work and recognise their ongoing contributions as the first educators on the land now known as Victoria.

We want your feedback

Let us know what you think of *Where to now*.

» **Complete our survey**

Set up for success

Resources

Online

Visit **vcaa.vic.edu.au** to find lots more info.

Your school

Before you choose your pathway and subject preferences, talk to your career counsellor. They can help explain your options and offer advice to help you to make the best decisions for your final years of school.

About special provision

If you want to complete the VCE, VCE VM or VPC and you are affected by an illness or injury, have an impairment or disability, or are impacted by factors relating to a personal circumstance, you may be eligible for special provision. Ask your school about what's available to help you successfully complete your VCE, VCE VM or VPC.

Allowances for personal circumstances or illness

If you experience circumstances immediately before or during your examinations that mean your external assessment results are unlikely to be a fair or accurate indication of your learning or achievement, you can apply for a derived examination score.

> "Congratulations on reaching this important milestone – your final years of schooling.
>
> There are many varied and exciting study options available to you, from classroom-based exploration to hands-on skills development in high-demand industries. Whatever pathway you choose, I wish you the very best."

The Hon. Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier of Victoria
Minister for Education
Minister for WorkSafe
and the TAC

Pathways snapshot

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

The VCE offers a wide range of subjects and opportunities beyond school. It can include VET programs and can lead to an ATAR.

You are aiming for university entry through an ATAR or alternative entry program.

You're considering a TAFE or VET certificate course.

You're interested in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

You want to get straight into the workforce after Year 12.

VCE Vocational Major (VM)

An applied learning program within the VCE. VCE VM includes specific subjects to build the skills you need after school and VET programs to develop practical skills.

You're considering an apprenticeship, traineeship or further education and training.

You want to get straight into the workforce after Year 12.

You're aiming to get into university through a non-ATAR pathway.

Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC)

A foundation secondary certificate for students who want an individualised program at a more accessible level than the VCE.

It can help you move into a senior secondary qualification (e.g. VCE), entry level VET courses or straight into a job.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VET allows you to do nationally recognised, hands-on training as part of your VCE, VCE VM or VPC.

VET develops industry-specific knowledge and skills, as well as general skills for employment, training and further education.

Victorian Certificate of Education

The VCE opens pathways to university, TAFE or VET certificate courses, apprenticeships and traineeships, and the workforce.

It offers studies in humanities, science, mathematics, technologies, arts, physical education, and languages, as well as VET programs.

About the VCE

The VCE is Victoria's senior secondary qualification.

Many students choose the VCE because of its range of subjects and the opportunities it can lead to after finishing school.

You can tailor your program to your interests and can include hands-on vocational studies as well as classroom-based learning.

What is an ATAR?

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is a ranking between 0.00 and 99.95. Your ATAR is based on your study scores and compares your achievement to all other Year 12 students. Universities may consider a student's ATAR as part of their admissions process.

What is a study score?

A number between 0 and 50 that indicates your ranking compared to all students doing the same subject in that year.

Terry's VCE program

Terry enjoys puzzles and problem solving, and is considering engineering or design studies at university.

She is exploring a variety of subjects to help her decide on a pathway for future study. She loves working as part of a team and wants a career that will combine her creative and critical thinking skills.

Year 11

VCE Units 1 and 2
English
Mathematical Methods
Physics
Art Creative Practice
Drama

VCE VET
Cert II in Engineering Studies

Year 12

VCE Units 3 and 4
English
Mathematical Methods
Physics
Art Creative Practice
Drama

VCE VET
Cert II in Engineering Studies

Designing your course

Most students study 5 or 6 subjects across Years 11 and 12. Most subjects are made up of 4 units, and Units 3 and 4 must be completed as a sequence.

To achieve your VCE

Complete at least 16 units, including:

- 3 units from the English group,[1] including a Unit 3–4 sequence
- at least 3 other Unit 3–4 sequences.

To achieve an ATAR

To receive an ATAR, you must achieve the VCE requirements as well as study scores in at least 4 subjects including an English subject.

To achieve a study score

For each subject, you must complete Units 3 and 4 as a sequence in the same year and complete the required graded assessments.[2]

You can choose to study only Units 1 and 2 of a subject however only Units 3 and 4 can receive a study score.

1 See page 20 for a full list of subjects.
2 You need to complete at least 2 graded assessments to receive a study score.

Choosing subjects

Apart from the required English group units, the subjects you choose are up to you.[3] You can include an extra English group subject and some VCE VM subjects.

Choose subjects that:

- interest you
- you are good at
- will help you do what you want after school – apply for university[4] or a TAFE course or get a job in your chosen field.

VCE over 2 or more years

Most students do their VCE over 2 years, studying Units 1 and 2 in Year 11 and Units 3 and 4 in Year 12.

Some students start Units 1 and 2 of a subject in Year 10 and study Units 3 and 4 in Year 11. Talk to your career counsellor about how to structure your VCE program to best suit you.

3 If your school doesn't offer a subject you want, talk to your career counsellor about other options including Virtual School Victoria, the Victorian School of Languages, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or another school.
4 Consider university prerequisites if you have a specific tertiary pathway in mind.

About the VCE VM

The VCE VM is an applied and vocational stream within the VCE.

The VCE VM offers choice and flexibility for students to pursue their strengths and interests. Learning comes to life in real-world contexts that relate directly to students' futures.

Students develop transferable skills alongside subject-specific knowledge – developing the capabilities needed to succeed in further education, work and life.

Alex's VCE VM program

Alex loves food and cooking, and would love to follow that passion into a career. He likes thinking on his feet and thinks a fast-paced restaurant kitchen will be an exciting place to work.

Alex is aiming for an apprenticeship and enrolment at a TAFE after school.

Year 11

VCE VM Units 1 and 2
Literacy
Personal Development Skills
Work Related Skills

VCE Units 1 and 2
General Mathematics

VCE VET
Certificate II Cookery

Year 12

VCE VM Units 3 and 4
Literacy
Personal Development Skills
Work Related Skills

VCE VM Units 3 and 4
General Mathematics

VCE VET
Certificate II Cookery

Designing your course

The VCE VM has specific subjects,[1] each made up of 4 units. Units 3 and 4 are usually completed as a sequence. Students can incorporate other VCE subjects and all VCE VM students undertake one or more VET programs as part of their studies.

To achieve your VCE VM

Complete at least 16 units, including:

- 3 VCE VM Literacy or VCE English units (including a Unit 3–4 sequence)
- 2 VCE VM Numeracy or VCE Mathematics units
- 2 VCE VM Work Related Skills units
- 2 VCE VM Personal Development Skills units
- 2 VET[2] credits at Certificate II level or above (180 nominal hours).

Students must complete a minimum of 3 other Unit 3–4 sequences as part of their program.

What is VET?

VET is Vocational Education and Training.[2] Students engage in nationally recognised, hands-on training in practical industry settings.

1 See page 21 for a list of VCE VM subjects.
2 Read more about VET on page 28.
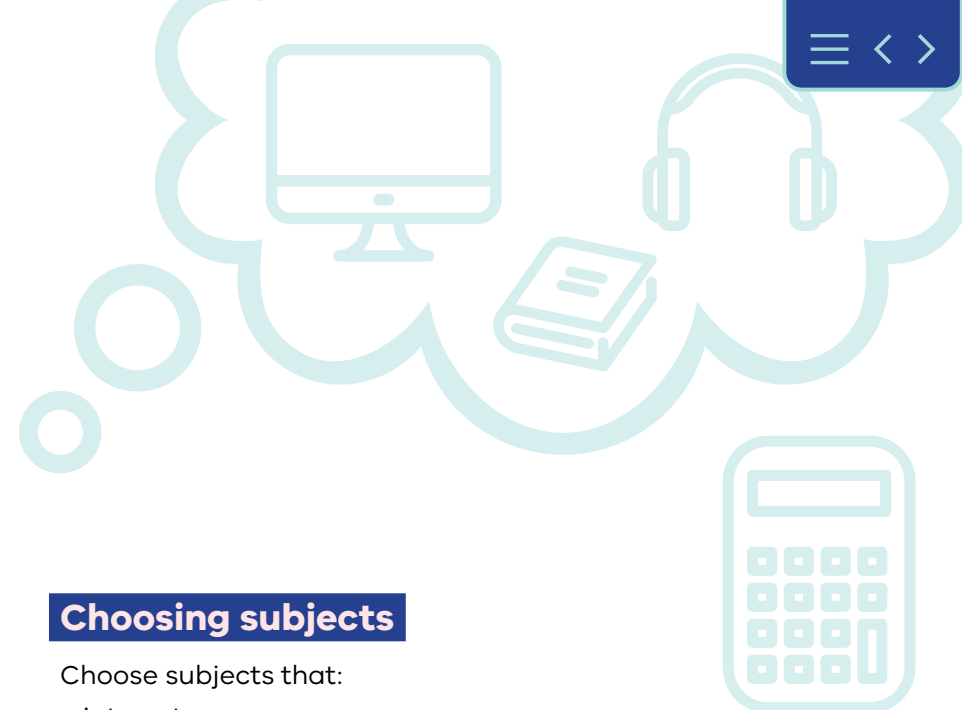
Choosing subjects

Choose subjects that:
- interest you
- you are good at
- will help you do what you want after school – apply for university or a TAFE course or get a job in your chosen field.

You can choose a combination of VCE and VCE VM studies in your program.

VCE VM over 2 or more years

Most students do their VCE VM over 2 years, studying Units 1 and 2 in Year 11 and Units 3 and 4 in Year 12.

Some students complete the VCE VM over 3 years to spread their learning over a longer period or undertake a school-based apprenticeship. Talk to your career counsellor about how to structure your VCE VM program to best suit you.

Marking & assessment

Students enrolled in the VCE are assessed in 2 ways: satisfactory completion and levels of achievement.

Satisfactory completion

This means you have met each of the outcomes outlined for any given subject. It applies to all VCE and VCE VM units.

Results

You will receive a result of S (satisfactory) or N (not satisfactory) for each unit. Only S results count towards your VCE. You will be assessed at a school level by teachers who know your work.

Repeating units

You can repeat a unit, but you must complete the full unit again, including all assessments. Talk to your teacher if you're considering repeating a unit.

Scored assessment: levels of achievement

For VCE Units 3 and 4 and scored VCE VET programs, levels of achievement are determined through a mix of school-based and external assessments, including exams.

Assessment

For each VCE subject there are 3 graded assessments. The combination of school-based and external assessments will vary from subject to subject.

For each scored VCE VET program there is an assessment for school-based work plus an external assessment. Not all VCE VET programs are scored.

Results

Your grades will be calculated from A+ to E, UG (ungraded)[1] and NA (not assessed).

1 UG indicates that the score achieved was too low to assign a grade.

School-based assessments

School assessed coursework (SAC)

A set of tasks that assess your level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 outcomes as specified in the study design.[1]

School assessed tasks (SATs)

SATs are set by the VCAA and test your practical skills and knowledge across the Units 3 and 4 outcomes of the study design.[1]

Marking and statistical moderation

Both SACs and SATs are marked by your teacher.

The assessments you complete will be different to students from other schools. To make sure your results are marked fairly against other students, your school-based assessments are checked against your school's examination results and your final results may be adjusted.

External assessments

These are the same for every student in any given subject. Usually these are examinations, and the format will depend on the subject. Certain subjects might also require other assessment tasks.

Marking

All subjects are marked to the same standard and go through many checks to make sure marking is fair and correct.

General Achievement Test (GAT)

The GAT measures your general knowledge as well as skills in a range of learning areas. Section A of the GAT assesses literacy and numeracy standards, and this is documented in your final GAT achievement statement.

The results are used to help check that your school-based and external assessments are being marked fairly. They may also be used to calculate a derived examination score[2] if needed.

You must sit Sections A and B of the GAT if you are studying one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences.

You only need to sit Section A of the GAT if you are studying one or more VCE VM Unit 3–4 sequences.

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1 Study designs are published for each VCE subject and set out the aims and requirements for that subject. Study designs can be downloaded here.

2 See page 2: allowances for personal circumstances or illness.

VCE & VCE VM subjects

Arts

- Art Creative Practice
- Art Making and Exhibiting
- Dance
- Drama
- Media
- Music
  – Music†
  – Music Composition*
  – Music Contemporary Performance*
  – Music Inquiry*
  – Music Repertoire Performance*
- Theatre Studies
- Visual Communication Design

Business and Economics

- Accounting
- Business Management
- Economics
- Industry and Enterprise
- Legal Studies

Cross-curricular

- Extended Investigation*

English

- Bridging English as an Additional Language†
- English and English as an Additional Language
- English Language
- Foundation English†
- Literature

Health and Physical Education

- Health and Human Development
- Outdoor and Environmental Studies
- Physical Education

Humanities

- Classical Studies
- Geography
- History
  – Ancient History
  – Australian History*
  – Empires†
  – Modern History†
  – Revolutions*
- Philosophy
- Politics
- Religion and Society
- Sociology
- Texts and Traditions

Mathematics

- Foundation Mathematics
- General Mathematics
- Mathematical Methods
- Specialist Mathematics

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Environmental Science
- Physics
- Psychology

Design and Technologies

- Agricultural and Horticultural Studies
- Food Studies
- Product Design and Technologies
- Systems Engineering

Digital Technologies

- Algorithmics (HESS)*
- Applied Computing
  – Applied Computing†
  – Data Analytics*
  – Software Development*

VCE VM

- VCE VM Literacy (only available to students enrolled in a VCE VM program)
- VCE VM Numeracy (only available to students enrolled in a VCE VM program)
- VCE VM Work Related Skills
- VCE VM Personal Development Skills

VCE VET programs

Structured Workplace Learning Recognition for VET†

For a full list of VCE VET programs see page 30.

Languages

Aboriginal Languages of Victoria, Arabic, Armenian, Auslan, Bengali, Bosnian, Chin Hakha, Chinese First Language, Chinese Language, Culture and Society, Chinese Second Language, Chinese Second Language Advanced, Classical Greek, Classical Hebrew, Croatian, Dutch, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian First Language, Indonesian Second Language, Italian, Japanese First Language, Japanese Second Language, Karen, Khmer, Korean First Language, Korean Second Language, Latin, Macedonian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian Russian, Serbian, Sinhala, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish Vietnamese First Language, Vietnamese Second Language

Individual schools do not offer every subject listed. Check which subjects your school offers.

† Units 1 and 2 only
* Units 3 and 4 only

VCE above and beyond

If you're achieving at a high academic level, you can add more to your VCE.

Higher Education Study program (HES)

High-achieving students can consider adding a first-year higher education subject as part of their Year 12 studies. Most major universities offer HES. It can count towards your VCE and ATAR as a fifth or sixth study and gives you credit towards the first year of a university course in that subject.

Your school must approve you for the program. Visit the Higher Education Studies in the VCE page on the VCAA website for more information.

VCE Baccalaureate

The VCE Baccalaureate recognises depth, breadth and achievement in VCE studies. It can provide opportunities and a portfolio to help your career and personal development.

On completion you will receive the Victorian Certificate of Education Baccalaureate. You must complete the VCE with:

- a study score of 30 or above for English, Literature or English Language, or a study score of 33 for English as an Additional Language
- a Unit 3–4 sequence in VCE Mathematical Methods or Specialist Mathematics
- a Unit 3–4 sequence in a VCE Languages subject
- study scores for at least 2 or more Unit 3–4 sequences.

Excellence and awards

Awards and recognition are available for high-achieving students, and students studying arts, design, literature, technologies or VCE Extended Investigation, or those involved in community service or public speaking.

Find out more on the VCAA website.

About the VPC

The VPC is an inclusive Year 11 and 12 foundation secondary certificate.

The flexible program suits students who would benefit from individualised learning or who are not yet ready for the VCE.

Talk to your career counsellor to see if this is the right pathway for you.

Sam's VPC program

Sam likes being around people and would love to be able to use their people skills working in an office after finishing school.

Sam wants to improve their literacy and numeracy skills as well as getting ready for the workplace.

Year 11

VPC Units 1 and 2
Literacy
Numeracy
Work Related Skills
Personal Development Skills
(Unit 1)

VCE Units 1 and 2
Industry and Enterprise

Year 12

VPC Units 3 and 4
Literacy
Numeracy
Work Related Skills
Personal Development Skills
(Unit 2)

VCE VET
Certificate I Active Volunteering

Designing your program

Your career counsellor can help you design a program that works for you.

To achieve your VPC

Complete 12 or more units, including at least:
- 2 units of VPC Literacy (or units from the VCE English group including VCE VM Literacy)
- 2 units of VPC Numeracy (or units from the VCE Mathematics group including VCE VM Numeracy)
- 2 VPC Work Related Skills units
- 2 VPC Personal Development Skills units.

You can also add VCE and VCE VM units or VET units at Certificate I level or above.

You can spend time in a workplace through Structured Workplace Learning or a school-based or part-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

Flexibility to suit you

Talk to a career counsellor if you want to know more about the VPC or switch to a VPC program.
- The time you take to complete the program is flexible.
- You can switch to the VPC from VCE or VET studies and might be able to get credit for work you've done.
- You can complete a school-based apprenticeship as part of the VPC.

Marking and results

All units are marked by your teacher.

You will receive a Statement of Results from the VCAA listing the units you completed.

For completed VET studies you will also receive a Full Qualification or Statement of Attainment from the Registered Training Organisation.

Moving to VCE or VCE VM

You can change courses into the VCE VM if it is available at your school, but the VPC units don't count towards the VCE VM

Talk to your career counsellor if you're thinking about this option.

About VET

Vocational Education and Training (VET) offers nationally recognised training. You can add VET to your study program to explore career options and learn in the workplace.

VET develops industry-specific knowledge and skills, as well as general skills for employment, training and further education.

Visit vcaa.vic.edu.au to discover more.

Results and recognition

Scored VCE VET programs

VCE VET programs with a Unit 3–4 sequence have school-assessed coursework and an end-of-year exam, giving you a study score.

Structured workplace learning (SWL)

SWL is on-the-job learning and experience or work placements that allow you to develop work skills and understand what employers expect.

VCE SWL Recognition for VET can add extra units towards your VCE, VCE VM or VPC. Talk to your school about how you can integrate SWL into your VET program.

VET pathways

VCE VET program

VET programs contribute towards your VCE, VCE VM or VPC and may give you a nationally recognised qualification. Programs that have Units 3 and 4 can be included in your ATAR.

If you are interested in a particular career pathway, ask your school how a VCE VET program in that area might enrich your studies.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

You can do your apprenticeship or traineeship in many industries as part of your VCE, VCE VM or VPC. Your school can help you arrange a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Your program would include:

- VCE, VCE VM or VPC subjects at school
- VET at a Registered Training Organisation, such as TAFE
- part-time paid work in the industry in which you are training.

The VET you undertake contributes towards your VCE, VCE VM or VPC by giving credit for Units 1 to 4, and may contribute to an ATAR.

Complete a different VET certificate

If you are interested in doing a VET certificate that's not available as a VCE VET program, you may still be able to count it towards your VCE, VCE VM or VPC. This arrangement is called block credit. There are specific rules for block credit, so ask your year level coordinator or career counsellor for more information.

VCE VET programs

Priority industry areas

Aligned to government priorities including skills shortages and economic growth.

Building and Construction

- Cert II in Construction Pathways‡
- Cert II in Building and Construction Pre-apprenticeship‡
- Cert II in Plumbing (Pre-apprenticeship)‡
- Cert II in Civil Construction‡

Community Services and Early Childhood Education

- Cert II in Active Volunteering
- Cert II in Community Services
- Cert III in Community Services†‡
- Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care‡

Digital Technologies

- Cert II in Applied Digital Technologies
- Cert III in Information Technology†‡
- Cert II in Integrated Technologies†
- CISCO‡

Health

- Cert II in Health Support Services
- Cert III in Allied Health Assistance†‡
- Cert III in Health Services Assistance†‡

Hospitality, Events and Tourism

- Cert II in Hospitality†
- Cert II in Cookery†‡
- Cert III in Events‡
- Cert II in Tourism
- Cert III in Tourism‡

Renewable Energy and Engineering

- Cert II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)‡
- Cert II in Electrotechnology (Pre-vocational)‡
- Cert II in Engineering Studies†
- Pending Renewable Energy Cert (TBC)

Other industry areas

May have locally high student or community demand.

Agriculture and Environment

- Cert II in Agriculture‡
- Cert II in Horticulture‡
- Cert II in Conservation and Ecosystem Management‡
- Cert II in Rural Operations‡

Animal Care

- Cert II in Animal Care‡
- Cert III in Equine Studies†‡

Automotive

- Cert II in Automotive Vocational Preparation‡

Business Services

- Cert II in Workplace Skills
- Cert III in Business†‡
- Cert II in Small Business (Operations/Innovation)‡
- Cert II in Applied Language
- Cert III in Applied Language‡

Creative Industries

- Cert II in Creative Industries
- Cert III in Screen and Media†‡
- Cert II in Music
- Cert III in Music (Performance)†‡
- Cert III in Music (Sound Production)†‡
- Cert II in Dance
- Cert III in Dance†‡
- Cert II in Visual Arts
- Cert III in Visual Arts‡

Design and Manufacturing

- Cert II in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles‡
- Cert II in Furniture Making Pathways†
- Cert III in Laboratory Skills†
- Cert II in Sampling and Measurement

Salon Services and Cosmetics

- Cert II in Retail Cosmetics‡
- Cert II in Salon Assistant
- Cert III in Beauty Services‡
- Cert III in Make-Up‡

Sport and Recreation

- Cert II in Outdoor Recreation
- Cert II in Sport and Recreation
- Cert III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation†‡

Individual schools may offer many of these programs but not all.

The VCE VET programs list is correct at time of publication.

† Scored VCE VET program
‡ Non-scored 3 and 4

How to find out more

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

The VCAA sets the curriculum and assessment programs in Victoria. There's loads of information about pathways, study designs and more on our website.

≫ **vcaa.vic.edu.au/student-resources**

Department of Education

The Department of Education administers government school education, apprenticeships and traineeships.

≫ **vic.gov.au/vce**

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

VTAC calculates your ATAR and has more information about tertiary course options.

≫ **vtac.edu.au**

Every student has different interests and strengths. See where your senior secondary pathway can take you.