



Knowledge is Power

Gladstone Park Secondary College

VCAL Student Handbook



VCAL – Hands on Learning

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Introduction

The VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning) is an alternative to VCE for students who are more suited to a hands-on, practical working environment. VCAL students aspire to undertake employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and further vocational study.

VCAL is offered at three levels: **Foundation**, **Intermediate** and **Senior**. Foundation and Intermediate VCAL are equivalent to Units 1 and 2 VCE. Senior level VCAL is equivalent to Units 3 and 4 VCE.

The VCAL Certificate aims to provide students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make informed choices about pathways to work and further education.

The principles underpinning the VCAL are:

- the development of knowledge and employability skills that help prepare students for work and for participation in a broader society – family, community and life-long learning
- the development of knowledge and skills that assists students to make informed vocational choices and facilitate pathways to further learning and employment.

Some students who have completed VCAL have gone on to careers in Carpentry, Child Care, Nursing, Law Enforcement, Office Administration, Hair and Beauty, Sports Coaching, Music, Auto-mechanics or Warehousing.

Students begin the VCAL at a level suitable to their capabilities and this will be determined in consultation with the VCAL Co-ordinator and VCAL teachers to find the level that best suits the student.

Each VCAL certificate has 4 compulsory Strands

- **Literacy and Numeracy** - English and mathematics required for the workplace
- **Industry Related Skills** – provides the opportunity to undertake vocational study. This can be delivered at school, TAFE or in the workplace.
- **Personal Development Skills**- covers project management, organisational skills, team work and health related issues
- **Work Related skills** - designed to teach students about the workforce and facilitates work experience by undertaking a work placement for 1 day each week.

Entry to VCAL is by application and interview. Numbers are limited. This process commences in approximately week 2 of term 3 each year.

What is a VCAL week like?

VCAL students attend school a minimum of three days a week with some students attending five days, depending on their VETiS and SWL arrangements.

A student who attends VET in school (this is an example only):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
VCAL class including 1 period of VET	VCAL class including 1 period of VET	VCAL class including 2 periods of VET	Work placement day	VCAL class including 1 period of VET

A student who attends VET at TAFE (this is an example only):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
VCAL class	VCAL class	TAFE	Work placement	VCAL class

VCE and VCAL – What’s the difference?

<u>VCE</u> - Victorian Certificate of Education	<u>VCAL</u> - Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
A two year certificate.	Foundation, Intermediate or Senior certificates awarded as each level is completed.
Certificate awarded when requirements of VCE are met, usually at the end of two years.	Certificate awarded when requirements of VCAL are met, typically within 18 months.
A main requirement for entry into University or TAFE courses. Some employers also require it for selection purposes.	Best suited to students seeking employment, vocational training, traineeships, apprenticeships or TAFE courses.
All Units have a theoretical component. Some subjects have a large practical component.	All Units have large practical components and requires students to demonstrate this through evidence.
Courses consist of VCE Units and can include VETiS Units.	Courses consist of VCAL and VETiS Units at school and/or TAFE. Students can elect to undertake some VCE Units.
Semester long Units of work where set outcomes must be completed by the end of the semester.	Semester long Units of work where set outcomes must be completed by the end of the semester.
All students studying a Unit must meet the same outcomes.	All students studying a Unit must meet the same outcomes.
Assessment is based on tasks completed in class and exams.	Assessment is based on evidence collected through a wide range of activities, including work placement, TAFE coursework and classroom activities.
Students must satisfactorily complete 16 Units, including 3 Units of English, and Units 3 & 4 in at least 3 other subjects.	Students must complete a minimum of 10 credits, VCAL core subjects and credit gained through VETiS or VCE studies.
Students attend school for six periods per day, five days a week.	Students attend school for six periods per day, five days a week, including an approved Work Placements and TAFE attendance.

- **VCAL and VCE students are subject to the same discipline and welfare policies, uniform policies and attendance requirements. All students are enrolled in, and their progress reported on, the same computer system (VASS). Both VCE and VCAL are overseen by VCAA.**
- **VCAL and VCE students are offered the same opportunity to participate in all College programs including graduation ceremonies, formals, sport and other extra-curricular activities.**

Successfully completing a VCAL Certificate

To successfully achieve a VCAL certificate at any level, students need to obtain 10 credits.

A credit is gained for successful completion of a unit of study. A unit of study can be:

- one VCAL unit
- one VCE unit
- 90 hours for VET modules or units of competence

A student's VCAL learning program typically includes:

	Foundation		Intermediate		Senior	
Literacy & Numeracy						
Literacy or any VCE English	Reading and Writing Unit 1	1	Reading and Writing Unit 1	1	Reading and Writing Unit 1	1
	Oral Communication Unit 2	1	Oral Communication Unit 2	1	Oral Communication Unit 2	1
Numeracy or any VCE Maths	Foundation	1	Intermediate	1	Senior	1
Personal Development	Unit 1	1	Unit 1	1	Unit 1	1
	Unit 2	1	Unit 2	1	Unit 2	1
WRS	Unit 1	1	Unit 1	1	Unit 1	1
	Unit 2	1	Unit 2	1	Unit 2	1
VET	Not required		VET	1	VET	1
SWL	Not required		Required		Required	
VCE Subject	Each unit	1	Units 1 or 2	1	Units 1 – 4	1

Credits will be awarded for the satisfactory completion of a VCE unit. This is generally the case when students transfer from VCE to VCAL.

Since units completed carry from one year to the next in VCAL, most students are eligible to qualify for their Senior Certificate in June of their Year 12. This means they are able to accelerate their exit from school by achieving the same level certificate in June as a student who completes VCAL in December.

Each certificate level must have at least 6 units at that level or higher, 1 of which must be PDS and the other Literacy (Reading and Writing). In other words, there are 4 units at intermediate and 6 at senior and as long as they include PDS and Literacy (Reading and Writing) at senior the student will be awarded a senior certificate.

At the time of entry into VCAL, whether at the start of Year 11 or later, many students have already displayed an aptitude for certain VCE studies. In recognition of this and the flexibility of the VCAL program, students may elect to study a VCE subject as part of their VCAL. This subject will provide a credit towards the certificate and the student will be assessed at the same standard as any other student in the class, regardless of whether they are VCE or VCAL.

Three levels of VCAL

Year 11

Most students are enrolled in the Intermediate certificate in semester 1.

Foundation

At this level the focus is on basic and preparatory knowledge and employability skills. There is also a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. Students and parents will be notified if this is considered to be the appropriate entry point.

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.

The other components of Year 11 include:

- VET study (at school or an external provider (TAFE))
- 1 day of work once unit 1 of WRS has been completed. This will be June for many students. Some student may elect to volunteer for a local community organisation for one day per week for a term.

Year 12

Most students are able to achieve a Senior certificate at the end of an 18 month VCAL program. In the past, more capable students have been able to complete a Senior certificate in 1 year. If this is the case then the student needs to indicate their interest as soon as possible and no later than mid-term 1 of their first year of VCAL.

Senior level

At the Senior 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 that apply directly to the workplace or further training is also important.

The other components of Year 12 VCAL at Gladstone Park Secondary College include:

- VET study (at school or an external provider (TAFE)
- 1 day of work from the start of the school year
- Demonstrated ability to lead a major project e.g. Breakfast club

How long will it take me to complete VCAL and what do I get?

The VCAL has been developed for Year 11 and 12 students. A VCAL certificate and Statement of Results are awarded when the student successfully completes their VCAL program at 1 of 3 levels. Some students complete a VCAL level in one year but many go on to complete their Senior Certificate in June of the following year.

Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR)

VCAL students are not awarded an ATAR.

If students elect to study a VCE subject within their VCAL program, and sit the final VCAA exam, students will be required to sit the GAT (General Achievement Test) in June and will be awarded a study score for that subject. One study score will not provide an ATAR.

Assessment

Achievement of a unit for any strand is based on meeting the elements of the outcome.

Awarding the satisfactory completion of a VCAL unit is based on a decision by the teacher that **there is sufficient evidence that the student has achieved the learning outcome.**

Students will be observed to demonstrate competence on more than one occasion and in different contexts to make sure that the **assessment is as consistent, reliable, fair and equitable** as possible.

This means students need to be able to provide **evidence for any work undertaken**. This evidence will come in a variety of forms, including (but not limited to)

- Teacher observations
- Photographs
- Self-reflections
- Completion of work books
- Awards from participation in other activities
- Log books
- Discussion or debate
- Contribution records

It is important that all evidence **collected**:

- meets the required standard for the level attempted;
- meets timeframes within a reasonable period; and
- is clearly their own or the student indicates where it is as a result of teamwork.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that teachers are able to authenticate their work through the regular submission of evidence.

If at the end of semester 1, students have not been able to demonstrate competence for the unit, they will be able to continue to work towards it in semester 2 however this will create a workload that could result in an incomplete certificate in VCAL at the end of Year 11 and/or Year 12.

Students are strongly advised to meet the timeframes as set out by their teachers. Where a student fails to meet deadlines, after school catch up sessions will be issued, to support them to meet the requirements of VCAL.

Resubmission of Tasks

Students will be given further opportunity to resubmit work that did not meet the required standard. Students must be well prepared for the assessment in order to achieve their best result and avoid the resubmission of work.

Computers

While encouraging the use of computers, the college is not able to make computer facilities available to all students at all time. Computer/printer breakdown or mishap is not an acceptable excuse for late submission or non-submission of evidence.

VCAL students have access to computers for a large part of their time at school and are expected to demonstrate responsible use of school resources. Any inappropriate researching or breach of the school internet and computer usage policy could place their position within VCAL in jeopardy.

Time Management

VCAL students have many demands placed on them since students are expected to manage class work for 4 subjects, VET studies, work placement, project management, contributions* and in some cases volunteering.

As students develop their skills in managing these demands, there may be instances where they find themselves falling behind. If this is the case, it is important to place priority on:

- attending TAFE/VET
- work placement
- school based work
- projects
- volunteering and **finally**
- contributions.

To contribute towards school-based activities (known as contributions) students need to ensure they are up to date. The highest priority must be placed on TAFE and VET study and attendance requirements.

If the teacher feels a student is behind in their school work, they may be issued a catch-up session after school by the VCAL coordinator. It is imperative that the student attends this catch-up as soon as possible. The day the catch-up is scheduled is their responsibility and on a day that the student actually attends school. Missing a catch-up due to TAFE or work commitment is not an acceptable excuse.

In the event that a student feels overwhelmed or unable to meet their commitments they should see the VCAL coordinator or Senior School Program Manager as soon as possible to help negotiate their time and in some cases reduce the level of commitments the student undertakes.

High Achieving Students

In some cases, students excel and produce work to a level that is far beyond that of the VCAL Certificate and are ready to transition earlier to their future. In an effort to recognise this and to assist students' transition, students can leave with a Senior Certificate at the end of Year 11.

Year 12 students accelerating their senior certificate and leaving in June must have successfully completed:

- Senior PDS Unit 1 and
- Senior Literacy Unit 1 (Reading and Writing) and
- 200 hours of VET and
- Any 3 other senior units e.g. Senior Numeracy (1 Unit) Senior WRS Units 1 and 2 (2 units)

Students who leave under these circumstances part way through the year will be invited to the school Graduation and end of school Year 12 celebration days.

Absence from school

The College Council has ruled that an 'N' (not satisfactory) can be given for a Unit if a student's attendance for that Unit falls **below 90%**, thus preventing the student from 'satisfactorily completing' the Unit. Approved absences include:

- Illness with a medical certificate
- Attendance at TAFE (evidence is provided by the TAFE)
- Attendance at **approved** work placement, the log book must be submitted on the first day returning to school
- Attendance at **approved** volunteering, the log book must be submitted on the first day returning to school
- Attendance at other school approved activities, however a contribution record must be submitted within 1 week of completing the activity.

However, total absences, both approved and unapproved must not be more than 20%.

Students who are too ill to attend TAFE must have a medical certificate issued for the day of TAFE. **External providers set their own attendance requirements** and without evidence, are well within their rights to not award competency. This can seriously hamper a student's ability to meet the requirements of the VCAL Certificate.

Extended Holidays & Attendance

Extended family holidays are not approved absences for the purposes of meeting the VCAL attendance requirements. Parents are asked to consider this in relation to planning holidays outside the regular school vacation periods. The school will not provide make-up opportunities for missed assessments (unless the absence is approved) and absent days will contribute to the total unapproved absence count for Units being studied. Any missed assessments may lead to an inability to meet the elements within a Unit and therefore make the student ineligible for a Certificate at the desired level.

Contributions to the school community during school hours

As part of the VCAL program, students are expected to contribute to activities within the school. These are referred to as 'Contributions'. Leaving class is a privilege not a right and at the time of leaving class the student must sign out with an expected return time and date on the 'daily ins and out' register. Students must wear their VCAL lanyard in a manner that is visible to any staff member without them having to ask for it. Failure to adhere to these rules could result in the student being marked as having an unapproved absence.

Approving absences

Absences must be verified within two weeks of the absence. Decisions to give an 'N' mark are not subject to appeal to VCAA.

It is the responsibility of all VCAL students to provide evidence in the form of the *Work Placement Logbook* to Senior School on a weekly basis to ensure any absences that are approved can be recorded. Failure to do so will result in a PD.

Enrolling in VCAL

The entry point into VCAL determines the process for enrolment in VCAL at Gladstone Park Secondary College.

Year 10

Step	Timing	Process
1.	Term 3 Week 2	Year 10 Portfolio interviews. Students should indicate a preference for VCAL at these interviews.
2.	Term 3 Week 3	Collect a VCAL Application form
3.	Term 3 Week 4	Student and parent VCE information session
4.	Term 3 Week 5	Student and parent VCAL information session (this is compulsory for those wishing to be successful in their application)
5.	Term 3 Week 5	VCAL application forms are due
6.	Term 3 Week 5	VCAL workshop
7.	Term 3 Week 5	Successful students confirmed for entry into VCAL the following year. Unsuccessful students will be provided with advice and options available for future study and will be placed on a waiting list.
8.	Term 3 Week 6	Unsuccessful students should meet with a Careers Advisor to submit a subject selection for VCE or consider alternative pathways for following year
9.	Term 4	Meet with Careers to discuss and finalise VETis studies for the following year
10.	Term 4 Week 9	VCAL orientation. This is compulsory. Failure to attend will result in a position being offered to a student on the waiting list.

Please note acceptance to the VCAL program is not automatic and all applicants will be judged on merit and on the space available since the numbers are limited.

Year 11 – Mid year (transfer from VCE to VCAL)

In the event that a student finds VCE is not the most appropriate pathway and they wish to transfer to VCAL, they will be asked to:

- Complete and return the signed Change of Subject form sheet by the due date (approximately week 6 in Term 2).
- Meet with Careers to ensure that VCAL is suitable for future career aspirations
- Meet with the VCAL Coordinator
- Attend the VCAL orientation day.

These steps are compulsory and failure to meet any of these may mean that the student will not be offered a place in a VCAL class.

VCAL classes start for transferring students at the commencement of Semester 2 (week 8/9 Term 2). All VCE students transferring mid year to VCAL are expected to sit their VCE Unit 1 exams and make every effort to pass their VCE subjects since every unit successfully completed provides a credit towards their VCAL certificate.

Students are encouraged to visit the Careers Centre at recess, lunch or after school to research possible careers.

Year 12 (transfer from VCE to VCAL)

In the event that a student finds VCE is not the most appropriate pathway, they will be asked to:

- Complete and return the signed Subject Selection sheet by the due date.
- Meet with Careers to ensure that VCAL is suitable for future career aspirations
- Meet with the VCAL Coordinator
- Attend the VCAL orientation day at the end of term 4.

These steps are compulsory and failure to meet any of these may mean that the student will not be offered a place in a VCAL class.

Transfer to VCAL from VCE is not available after February of the Year 12 year. Mid year applications can be considered in Year 12 but are rare since most students would not meet the criteria for graduation in the same year.

Generally, students who transfer to VCAL at the start of Year 12 will be enrolled in a Senior Certificate and in rare cases may be eligible for an early exit.

Students are encouraged to visit the Careers Centre at recess, lunch or after school to research possible careers.

Allocating subjects and TAFE enrolments

Whilst every effort is made to accommodate students' study preferences the process of finalising subjects has become increasingly complex. Some of the factors that have to be considered are

- Staffing – both the number of staff and the availability of staff with particular specialist qualifications.
- Student preference, which is a high priority in deciding which subjects run.
- Places at TAFE are subject to availability and are generally allocated on a first come, first serve basis. The VET coordinator will make every effort to match their needs with what organizations can provide.
- **Once a TAFE course has been selected, students will be required to commit to it for the full year, with the opportunity to change at the start of the following year. The cost of external providers is outside the control of the school and need to be paid in a timely manner in order to secure their place. All TAFE courses have an additional fee outside that of school fees and any difficulty in meeting these fees should be discussed as soon as possible with the Assistant Business Manager, Anna Salvo.**

Literacy Skills Units

The purpose of the VCAL Literacy Skills units is to develop literacy skills and knowledge that allow effective participation in the four main social contexts in which we function in Australian society:

- family and social life
- workplace and institutional settings
- education and training contexts
- community and civic life.

Literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening) occurs in all these contexts and different domains or areas of literacy practice correspond with these social contexts.

There are six VCAL Literacy Skills units, two at each of the three levels: **Foundation, Intermediate and Senior**

The elements give detailed information on the requirements for satisfying the learning outcome. The learning outcome is achieved when the learner can demonstrate competence in all the elements.

Reading and Writing units

For people to participate effectively in the four social contexts they need to have competence in the four reading and writing domains:

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

Students are expected to show competence in all eight learning outcomes at the Foundation and Intermediate, but only seven at the Senior level.

Oral Communication units

The oral communication units are designed to provide participants with knowledge, understanding and skills in spoken communication for different social purposes.

- self-expression;
- knowledge;
- practical purposes and
- exploring issues and problem solving.

Learning outcomes

There are four learning outcomes in each oral communication unit. Learners must show competence in the four learning outcomes to satisfactorily complete this unit.

The learning outcomes are based on typical spoken interactions used to fulfil the broad social purposes.

Numeracy Skills Units

Underpinning the VCAL Numeracy Skills units is the concept that skills development occurs best when it takes place within social contexts and for social purpose.

Like the Literacy Skills units, the purpose of the Numeracy Skills units is to develop skills and knowledge that allow effective participation in the four main social contexts in which we function in Australian society:

- family and social life
- workplace and institutional settings
- education and training contexts
- community and civic life.

Numeracy and mathematics are used in all these social contexts.

There are three VCAL Numeracy Skills units, one at each of the three levels: **Foundation, Intermediate and Senior**. **Where a student has strong mathematical ability we encourage them to consider a VCE mathematics course. More information can be found in the VCE subject selection handbook.**

Numeracy and mathematics

In the VCAL Numeracy Skills units numeracy and mathematics are interlinked. Numeracy gives meaning to mathematics and mathematics is the tool (the knowledge and skills) to be used efficiently and critically. Numeracy is not associated with a level of mathematics, but is the critical awareness that builds bridges between mathematics and the real world.

Learning Domains

- Numeracy for personal organisation
- Numeracy for interpreting society
- Numeracy for practical purposes
- Numeracy for knowledge

Learning Outcomes

Foundation and Intermediate

- Location
- Money and time
- Numerical Information
- Data
- Design
- Measuring

At the Foundation and Intermediate levels students must demonstrate competency in five of the six learning outcomes to be credited with the unit.

Senior

- Location
- Numerical Information
- Data
- Design
- Measuring
- Problem Solving
- Formulae

At the Senior level there are seven learning outcomes and learners must demonstrate competency in six out of the seven.

Work Related Skills Units

The purpose of the Work Related Skills (WRS) strand is to develop employability skills, knowledge and attributes valued within the community and work environments as a preparation for employment.

Aims

These units are designed to:

- integrate learning about work skills with prior knowledge and experiences
- enhance the development of employability skills through work related contexts
- develop critical thinking skills that apply to problem solving in work contexts
- develop planning and work related organisational skills
- develop OHS awareness
- develop and apply transferable skills for work related contexts.

Employability skills

Employability skills contain key personal attributes and skills that are important for young people (entry-level employees) entering the workforce and for existing employees in a global and knowledge economy. The key employability skills include:

- communication
- team work
- problem solving
- initiative and enterprise
- planning and organising
- learning
- self-management
- technology

Learning outcomes

There are 6 to 8 learning outcomes in each WRS unit and include:

- OH&S
- Research specific industry
- Identifying workplace hazards
- Working in a team
- ICT and work related activities
- Communication in the work places
- Solving work related problems
- Planning a work related activity

Students must achieve all learning outcomes to be credited with the unit.

Personal Development Units

The purpose of the Personal Development Skills (PDS) strand is to develop knowledge, skills and attributes that lead towards:

- the development of self
- social responsibility
- building community
- civic and civil responsibility, e.g. through volunteering and working for the benefit of others
- improved self-confidence and self-esteem
- valuing civic participation in a democratic society.

Unit 1

- personal development (self)
- health and wellbeing
- education
- family.

Unit 2

- community engagement
- social awareness
- civic and civil responsibility
- active citizenship.

Points for Intermediate projects and contributions.

All Year 11 students are expected to earn 100 project or contribution points. Each project is awarded a maximum of 25 points and a contribution is worth a maximum of 10 points.

The points are awarded based on the ability of the student to demonstrate their learning and ability to reflect on the skills they have gained. Only some of the project points are awarded for the project itself. It is the process that is important not necessarily the outcome.

Students at foundation level are able to accumulate points through contribution records alone. Intermediate students require at least two project submissions (1 per semester) to meet the criteria.

Learning outcomes

There are five learning outcomes in each unit. Students must achieve all learning outcomes to be credited with the unit.

Some of the learning outcomes across the 3 levels includes:

- Planning activities/projects
- Demonstrating knowledge specific to different activities
- Demonstrating skills specific to the activity or project
- Solving problems
- Teamwork
- Self-Management
- Leadership
- Interpersonal skills
- Degree of autonomy

Points for Senior projects and contributions.

Year 12s have the Breakfast club as their major project. In addition to the Breakfast club they are required to choose from one of the following:

- complete a research project
- mentor two Year 11 projects
- complete contribution records to the value of 100 points.

Vocational Education and Training (VETiS)

- VETiS subjects are optional for VCE and **compulsory for VCAL students** at Intermediate and Senior levels.
- Students who complete a two (2) year VETiS course obtain a nationally recognised vocational qualification in that field, usually a Certificate II. Each VETiS course consists of 4 Units.
- VCAL students interested in a VETiS program that is not delivered internally at GPSC, must discuss the options and costs with the VETiS Coordinator.

Advantages of undertaking VETiS

- Students gain their VCAL together with a vocational certificate from a Tertiary institution.
- Most VETiS courses incorporate work placement which equip students with work readiness skills in an adult environment.
- Students experience an occupation first hand and discover if they are suited before making a permanent career commitment.
- Undertaking a VETiS program gives a student the opportunity to create a Career pathway into a particular industry while still at Secondary College.

- **Factors to consider before choosing VCAL**
- Only VCAL students can access externally delivered VETiS programs.
- VETiS requires excellent time management and personal responsibility.
- A significant part of a VETiS course is theoretical, not just practical.
- Students are often responsible for working through self-paced modules alone.
- VCAL students may need to travel to TAFE or work placement, often missing classes at school. Students are responsible for catching up on any missed schoolwork in their own time.
- Students may be required to undertake Structured Workplace Learning during school holidays.
- There are extra financial costs associated with VETiS to cover TAFE delivery costs, books, protective clothing etc.
- 100% of the VETiS charge must be paid on or before Course Confirmation Day to ensure participation.

For the details of all VCE subjects and VETiS subjects offered at Gladstone Park Secondary College, please refer to the VCE Handbook.