

VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning)

At PHSC it is possible to complete a VCAL certificate at foundation, intermediate or senior level - the levels roughly correspond to years 11 and 12. Students complete four compulsory VCAL studies and a VET study. VET and SBA (School-based Apprenticeships) or SWL (Structured Workplace Learning) are timetabled as a part day or an entire day and run at a range of campuses (see VET information). For many students, VCAL is a one-year course which focuses on the transition from school to further study, traineeship or apprenticeship, or work. VCAL guides them in working out an individual pathway into work.

Foundation level

At foundation level, the focus is on knowledge and employability skill development, supported by a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and preparatory learning for the world of work.

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 senior level, the focus is on knowledge and employment employability skills leading to competence in 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 VCAL has four curriculum areas, called strands. These strands are:

1a) English - Literacy Skills: foundation, intermediate or senior level

The aim of these units is to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding in literacy in the contexts of family and social life, workplace and further education settings, and in the wider community.

The overall purpose is to provide an applied real-life approach to literacy development. This consists of two units, including a reading and writing unit, and an oral unit, studied over two semesters.

1b) Maths - Numeracy Skills: foundation, intermediate or senior level

The aim of this study is to apply maths skills to tasks which are part of students' everyday life, the workplace and the community. Students are asked to develop everyday numeracy to make sense of their

personal and public lives. This study is made up of two units, studied over two semesters.

2) Work Related Skills: foundation, intermediate or senior level

The aims of this study are to:

- develop key competencies and employability skills through a work-related context
- develop and apply critical thinking skills
- develop planning and organisational skills
- provide experiences that prepare students for a vocational context
- develop particular interests and abilities that may link to employment-related goals.

This study consists of two units, including a full day per week of an SWA or SBA placement, and is undertaken over two semesters.

3) Personal Development Skills: foundation, intermediate or senior level

The aim of this study is to develop students' self esteem and personal growth. Students are asked to develop their skills and abilities in leadership, teamwork, goal setting, time management, accepting responsibility, decision making, problem solving and reflection. This is largely met through the design, implementation and evaluation of individual, group or community-based projects.

This study is made up of two units, one undertaken each semester.

4) Industry Specific Skills: foundation, intermediate or senior level

Through a VET study, students develop knowledge and skills in a vocational context, undertake vocational experience in relation to their interests and abilities, and establish pathways to further studies through credits gained that articulate into a VCE or VET course. A VET study is made up of two units, one undertaken each semester. These units can also be done through SBAs. See VET subjects for more details. Wednesday is generally regarded as VET day but some courses run on other days. Individual programs will be organised around such courses.

VCAL students must complete the five VCAL strands (see above) at the appropriate level. For students to complete this program they must complete a VET or SBA for the Industry Specific Strand. A VCAL student timetable would consist of three days at PHSC, one day at VET/SBA and/or one day SWL /SBA.

Sample Timetable Please note that Work Related Skills and Personal Development outcomes are achieved through Community Projects and the Railway House project on this timetable.

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1					
2	Literacy	Numeracy	VET day	Literacy	Numeracy
3	Railway House	Railway House		Railway House	Railway House
4	Railway House	Railway House		Railway House	Railway House
5	Community Projects	Community Projects		Community Projects	Community Projects
6	Community Projects	Community Projects		Community Projects	Community Projects

To complete a VCAL certificate a student must successfully complete 10 units including:

- At least one unit of English - Literacy Skills
 - At least one unit of Maths - Numeracy Skills
 - One VET study
 - At least one unit of Work Related Skills
 - At least one unit of Personal Development skills.
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- For each semester-length unit the following attendance policy applies: The maximum number of days a student can miss without certificate is five. Partial days and single lessons count towards this total. With medical certificates students are allowed a total of twelve days. To meet the unit outcomes students are required to complete work in class. Students who exceed the permitted absence rate of twelve will not complete the outcomes for that unit and will not receive a VCAL certificate. In this case the student will be likely to attend the VCAL program on an Individual Learning Program which will be devised with the student, parent and Student Welfare Co-ordinator.
- **There are three types of absence in VCAL.**
 - i. A medically certified (MC) absence is where a medical certificate is provided. Uptosevenabsences per unit will be accepted with medical certificates.
 - ii. Aparentexplained absence is where no medical certificate has been provided but the parent has notified the school via compass or the coordinator via email or phone. This is typically used if the student has a cold, severe headache but is not serious enough to see a doctor or if the student is unexpectedly delayed due to transport issues. Up to five absences per unit will be accepted without medical certificates.
 - iii. An unexplained absence is where the student has either arrived significantly late to class or has not attended class and no parental explanation is given. This is in effect truanting. Students will receive a Principal's detention on Friday afternoon in this case.
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- Parents should check Compass regularly to view their child's attendance to ensure they are complying with the above policy.
 - Family holidays should only be organised during school holidays.