Curriculum consultation report for VCE Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate

Purpose of this document

This document is to update the Victorian community on the outcome of their input to the public consultation undertaken between August and October 2021 on the proposed curriculum for the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate.

Consultation overview

Curriculum panels were appointed to support the development of the new curriculum and played a vital role in processing feedback through a thorough consultative process. The panels consisted of current VCAL and VCE teachers, academics and VCAA Education Specialists.

The VCAA would like to acknowledge feedback on the design and content of the proposed new curriculum provided by stakeholders via the online survey and through many consultation meetings and other channels.

* 316 survey responses were received from principals, teachers, students, parents and educators, providing a variety of perspectives and feedback on the draft curriculum and the broader certificate and pathway framework.
* Meetings were held with reference groups of education stakeholders and experts on education delivery in Victoria and other jurisdictions.
* More than 1,600 stakeholders attended eight webinars for schools and providers in the lead-up to and during consultation.
* Two or more Independent Reviewers were appointed to assess each study, including one academic and one practitioner. The purpose of the independent reviews is to compile detailed feedback and expert opinion on all aspects of the curriculum or study design. An academic and a practitioner are appointed to ensure academic strength and implementation concerns are fairly addressed.
* A benchmarking report for each VCE Vocational Major study was written by appointed subject area experts. A consolidated Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum benchmarking report was written by VCAA subject experts. Benchmarking compares the curriculum to similar studies from different local and international jurisdictions, to highlight similarities and differences and draw conclusions on the strengths of the developed curriculum.
* Specific and detailed annotated responses from ten stakeholder groups were received.
* The Panel met and discussed each piece of feedback from stakeholders, to determine whether the feedback would be adopted. In many cases, the Panel determined that the feedback would improve the curriculum and it was incorporated into the next draft. The Panel recorded a rationale for not accepting feedback that was determined to not be an improvement to the curriculum. The SSCR Curriculum team then met to review the changes and to consider application across all study designs. The VCAA would like to commend each member of the Panels for their diligence in this process.

Consultation outcomes: what we heard

There were several consultation feedback areas for improvement that were consistent across the VCE Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applied learning | Feedback on all Vocational Major and Victorian Pathway Certificate studies expressed the need for further clarity on how to embed applied learning principles into teaching and learning practices and assessment tasks.  A section called “Approaches to Applied Learning” has been included in each study to clarify the principles and practices of applied learning through five categories:   * + Motivation to engage in learning   + Applied learning practices   + Student agency in learning   + A student-centred and flexible approach   + Assessment practices which promote success   The *Advice for Teachers* resources that will support the curriculum will highlight the applied nature through exemplars. |
| Study format | The VCE study design format includes areas of study, outcomes and key knowledge and key skills. This structure is unfamiliar to some VCAL teachers and we heard feedback that some teachers may need capacity building around “unpacking” the study design.  Targeted professional learning for educators will be provided from May 2022 as part of the transition and implementation process to overcome any uncertainty around how to incorporate areas of study, outcomes, and key knowledge and key skills. |
| *Advice for Teachers* | A common theme that arose through consultation was the need for examples of implementation, including teaching and learning resources to support delivery. Resources for planning, teaching and learning and assessment will be included in *Advice for Teachers* materials which will be released with the accredited curriculum next year. |

VCE Vocational Major curriculum

General feedback received from key stakeholders and the public reflects overall support for the new VCE Vocational Major studies. Constructive feedback has led to improvements and strengthening of the study designs in preparation for the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority accreditation process.

Some of the positive responses included:

* + *“The course is simple, logical, easy to map, plan and implement - a huge improvement on the existing Literacy/Oracy Study Designs.”*
  + *“Love the new curriculum - so much more structured and manageable than current VCAL Numeracy.”*
  + *“There is a more contemporary and holistic approach to work related skills that focuses on individual career development.”*
  + *“I think this is a step in the right direction from VCAL Literacy and raises the integrity of the vocational stream.”*

Several notable areas for improvement emerged in consultation feedback.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assessment | We heard from stakeholders that there is a desire for additional guidance and clarity on assessment. Evidence of assessment and related resources including rubrics will be provided as part of the *Advice for Teachers* which will accompany the curriculum when it is released in 2022. A table that suggests assessment activities that are appropriate for allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of each outcome has been included in each study design. |
| Personal Development Skills | A number of stakeholders suggested that the draft curriculum for Personal Development Skills could be more contemporary. Additionally, stakeholders told us skills and knowledge needed to be built more incrementally across Units 1 to 4, that application of the skills and knowledge needed to be more explicitly explained in the section on assessment, and that the curriculum needed to be more explicit around the capacity for students to work with their communities to develop 21st Century and employability skills. The Panel made significant changes and then tested these with many current VCAL teachers to ensure the curriculum will meet the needs of the students into the future. |

Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum

General feedback received from key stakeholders and the public reflects overall support for the Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum. The feedback has led to improvements and strengthening of the draft curriculum in preparation for the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority accreditation process.

Some of the positive responses included:

* + *“I think it provides engaging options and achievable options that could be successfully used to teach a diverse range of students.”*
  + *“It allows for greater flexibility in how a student chooses to meet requirements and this enhances student empowerment and ownership of their learning.”*
  + *“Love this unit and how it prepares students for their next steps. Students should all be able to leave with the resources and knowledge they need for successful transition to their chosen pathway.”*

Several notable areas for improvement emerged in consultation feedback.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Volume of learning | Stakeholder feedback was received around the amount of content and whether it could be taught within the required hours. Each unit requires 100 nominal hours, of which at least 50 hours are scheduled classroom instruction.  In response to feedback on the Victorian Pathways Certificate design earlier in 2021, the proposed timeframe for the certificate has been changed from a two-year duration to a more flexible timeframe to suit the needs and circumstances of individual students. The other major change is a reduction in the requirement for a student to complete 16 units down to 12 units. The reduction of the minimum number of units is expected to alleviate stakeholder concerns in relation to completion. |
| Standard/Level | Some teachers reflected that the content was too challenging for students at foundation level, whilst others were concerned that content at Level 1 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) would not provide a pathway for students into further training or employment.  The Victorian Pathways Certificate has been created to meet a key recommendation of the Firth Review for a certificate that will “formally recognise the skills and achievements of students who are not ready to complete the VCE … [and] support those students to make successful post-school transitions.” As the VCE sits at the AQF Senior Certificate Level, the Victorian Pathways Certificate is targeted at the AQF Level 1 (Certificate 1). The flexibility of the Victorian Pathways Certificate ensures that students can be challenged further as they can choose to undertake VCE Vocational Major or VCE studies. The VPC can also be adapted in the classroom through teacher agency to meet the individual needs of students. |

Next steps

Results from the VCAA’s consultation on the draft curriculum for the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate indicate significant community and stakeholder support for the reforms to VCAL and senior secondary pathways. The VCAA will continue to listen to stakeholder views to ensure a smooth transition to the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate in 2023.

The VCAA has submitted an application to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to accredit the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum.

The VCAA is developing resources including *Advice for Teachers* resources for each study and a program of professional learning to support providers during 2022 as they prepare for the implementation of the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate in 2023. The *Advice for Teachers* will provide teaching and learning advice for Units 1–4 and assessment advice for Units 3 and 4. It will also include:

* + advice on developing a program
  + teaching and learning activities
  + sample approaches to developing assessment tasks
  + sample assessment rubrics/performance descriptors.

Further information about these initiatives will be made available in early 2022.

Once accredited, the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate curriculum will be formally launched in 2022.