

Feedback on consultation for the revised secondary certificates

Purpose of this document

This document is to update the Victorian community on the outcome of public consultation undertaken in June 2021 on proposed designs for the new Vocational Specialisation and the Foundation Pathways certificates.

Consultation overview

The VCAA would like to acknowledge feedback provided by stakeholders via the Engage Victoria website and through many consultation meetings and other channels on the structure of the proposed new certificates.

- Almost 600 survey responses were received.
- Workshops were held with current VCAL and VCE students across regional and metropolitan Victoria.
- Meetings were held with reference groups of education stakeholders and experts on education delivery in Victoria and other jurisdictions.
- More than 2,740 stakeholders attended the 17 webinars for schools and providers in the lead-up to and during consultation.

Consultation outcomes: what we heard

VCE Vocational Major

The VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM) will replace Intermediate and Senior VCAL. The VCE VM will provide recognition for students who choose to undertake an applied learning program that prepares them for a pathway into vocational education and training, higher education or work.

Stakeholders supported the proposed design and the stronger educational experience the new studies will provide, noting it will improve perceptions of vocational and applied learning. There was strong support mandating 180 nominal hours of VET over two years – provided schools are supported to expand their VET delivery capacity – and for mandating Personal Development Skills and Work Related Skills units. Several notable themes emerged in consultation feedback. As a result, some of the proposed design was modified in response to that feedback

<h3>Naming</h3>	<p>The program has been named the <i>VCE Vocational Major</i>. Stakeholders were clear about the preferred name for the certificate. Students particularly embraced this alternative.</p>
<h3>Literacy requirement</h3>	<p>There was widespread support for students to complete three Literacy (Vocational Major) units including a Unit 3–4 sequence. This is necessary to provide them with the literacy skills they need for a successful future. Some stakeholders were concerned that this requirement may make it more challenging for some students to</p>

complete their senior secondary certificate. However, students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning outcomes.

Unit 3–4 sequences

Responders to the survey understood that the curriculum is designed for Units 3 and 4 to be completed in sequence to progressively build knowledge and skills. Students will be able to complete Units 1 and 2 in any order, rather than on a sequential semester basis as is required for other VCE studies. Education providers will be able to integrate Units 3 and 4 between studies and offer some Unit 3–4 sequences simultaneously to better work with requirements for Structured Workplace Learning and VET studies.

Mandating 11 of the 16 units

Students will need to complete a minimum of 16 units, 11 of which are mandatory for the program. Stakeholders noted that student programs can still be tailored to their individual interests and aspirations. Many students will undertake 20 units across Years 11 and 12, providing ample opportunity for providers to develop broad and individualised programs of study.

Intermediate exit point

Some stakeholders noted that there will be no intermediate exit point in the VCE VM for students wishing to leave at the end of Year 11. Particular feedback said this had been a motivational element for students to stay in education. While this is a requirement of a senior secondary certificate in the regulations, the development of the design for the Statement of Results will include investigating whether partial completion of the VCE VM could be included. Students who complete before the end of the certificate will receive the enhanced Statement of Results.

Implementation in small schools

Stakeholders noted that smaller schools will require support to offer a broad program offering. The Department of Education and Training's Senior Secondary and Pathways Reform Taskforce is investigating additional supports.

Victorian Pathways Certificate

The Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) is designed to replace the existing Foundation VCAL for students in Years 11 and 12 and is designed to support students to transition either to the VCE, the VCE VM or to entry level VET or employment – particularly focusing on vulnerable students at risk of leaving education or students with additional needs.

Stakeholders welcomed the proposed wider range of electives beyond what is available in Foundation VCAL, noting that the VPC will provide opportunities to extend and tailor students' programs of learning to their aspirations.

Several notable themes emerged in consultation feedback. As a result, some of the proposed design was modified in response to that feedback.

Naming

The new certificate will be named the *Victorian Pathways Certificate*, in response to stakeholder concerns with the use of the term 'foundation' in the certificate's title and the request from students for a certificate they could be proud of.

Satisfactory completion requirements

Stakeholders emphasised that the VPC needed to provide a flexible pathway to suit different students' learning needs, abilities and interests. In response to the informed feedback, the proposed timeframe has been changed from a two-year duration to a more flexible timeframe linked to the needs of the student. The other major change is a reduction in the requirement for a student to complete 16 units down to 12 units. Students will be able to complete this certificate over a shorter or

longer period of time depending on their needs and abilities. Some will take 2 to 3 years, while some may take 18 months.

Enrolment

Stakeholders sought additional advice on how to ensure students were best supported to choose the most appropriate certificate. The VCAA will provide guidance to support students, families and educators to make appropriate decisions regarding a student's suitability for the VPC.

Implementation supports

Schools and non-school senior secondary providers noted that providers will need implementation support, particularly around staffing, resourcing and timetabling. The VPC curriculum will allow schools with small numbers to co-deliver some units, as is current practice at some VCAL providers and with small classes in some VCE subjects. The Department is also developing place-based support and workforce supply and capability initiatives, which will help schools to manage implementation challenges.

Next steps

Results from the VCAA's consultation on the draft designs for the VCE VM and the VPC indicate significant community and stakeholder support for the reforms to VCAL and senior secondary pathways. The VCAA and the Department will continue to listen to stakeholder views about implementation and delivery to ensure a smooth transition to the VPC and VCE VM when they are implemented in 2023.

The VCAA has submitted an application to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to accredit the VPC as a new foundation secondary course and an application to amend the current VCE accreditation to enable the addition of the VCE VM as a program within the VCE.

Consultation on the curriculum for the VPC and VCE VM is currently underway via the VCAA website and closes at midnight on Wednesday 6 October. The VCAA's curriculum and assessment panels are considering the feedback received so far. One major theme in educator feedback is a need for greater guidance on the approach to applied learning. Detailed advice about this will be included in the advice to teachers, which will be published on the VCAA website to coincide with the release of the new curriculum in early 2022. This will include an explicit definition of applied learning.

The VCAA is developing resources and a program of professional learning to support providers during 2022 as they prepare for the implementation of the VPC and VCE VM in 2023. Further information about these initiatives will be made available later in 2021.

In 2022, there will be opportunities to engage in the design of the integrated certificate to be implemented from 2025. Stakeholders will also be invited to input on the proposed enhanced Statement of Results.

Once accredited, the VPC and VCE VM will be formally launched in early 2022.