Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College
2016 Year 11 VCAL Handbook
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You are about to undertake your final years at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College and as senior students you will play a very important role in the life of the College. You will be in a position to provide leadership to the more junior students both on and off campus. They will look to you for example, encouragement and advice. Hence your approach to life as a VCAL student must be positive, well considered and in keeping with your career and further education aspirations.

In 2015 we are encouraging all VCAL students to embrace the challenge of not only pathway success but also in being leaders and role models for the College Cohort.

All VCAL students have the capacity to show leadership. In any capacity, both formal and informal, they have the opportunity to have a positive impact on not only other students and the College in general but on themselves. We are challenging the VCAL students to participate and integrate with College life and understand that VCAL is about career pathways, but also carries the responsibilities of leadership.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning is a hands-on option, which provides practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work. The Year 11 and 12 VCAL program has a vocational emphasis. It is an applied learning approach to senior studies. It offers a pathway into employment, traineeships or apprenticeships. In VCAL students connect with their communities and gain real life experiences. Real life tasks are used to achieve learning outcomes from a number of the VCAL strands. Learning is at times integrated across a number of subjects. In VCAL knowledge is shared and teachers recognise the knowledge learners bring to the learning environment.

VCAL is not for all students. It is for those that want to work towards an apprenticeship, traineeship or school based apprenticeship. It is for students who are highly motivated, industrious and have initiative. Students need to be hardworking in classes and demonstrate that they can work independently. VCAL is for students that are working to the best of their ability.

The College looks forward to working with the VCAL students in 2015 as they pursue success and all its rewards.
Study Guidelines

Set Clear Goals

At the outset you need to be aware of your reasons for undertaking the VCAL. You should set your long-term goals, one of which should be successful completion of your VCAL studies. As a full-time student, you will need to make some sacrifices to achieve these goals. Family life, sporting and recreational interests, academic pursuits and social activities are all important parts of life. The challenge is to find the right balance between these commitments for a successful and enjoyable year.

If you want to succeed, there are no excuses. The successful completion of all VCAL studies at both Levels 1/2 and 3/4 involves a considerable amount of work, much of it in your own time. You should, then, approach VCAL with the intention of making the fullest use of the time provided for study at school and at home.

Study Enrolment

Home study should take place in suitable surroundings, away from the distracting influences of hobbies, television, music, telephones, friends and other members of the family. It is best to have your own permanent, private and quiet place.

The room should be warm, well-lit and well-ventilated. You should have a suitable chair and desk or table, with space to use, store and sort materials. Effective study is linked with physical fitness and mental efficiency. You need plenty of sleep and exercise, and a healthy diet. Allow time for short breaks. You need a change from sitting.

Organisation

You must be well organised. Study hours are precious, and should be carefully planned. Produce your HOME STUDY TIMETABLE, and diligently follow it. Timetables should show study, co-curricular and family commitments, allowing time for sport, recreation and relaxation. These are to be submitted to the VET Coordinator by the commencement of Week 3, Term 1.

Study at a time which suits you and your family’s lifestyle, but make it part of your everyday routine, preferably at the same time each day. Develop a study habit. START PROMPTLY.

Maintain and use your school homework diary, recording important dates and deadlines. Maintain and use a semester or year planner so you can prepare for the busiest times of the year.
Time Allocation

Each VCAL study should receive an approximately equal amount of time. For Unit of Competency it is recommended that you will spend on average at least 30 minutes per night working towards the completion of that study. This means a minimum target of three hours of work each night, leaving enough time for some relaxation. Over the weekend (Friday evening to Sunday evening) a Year 11 student is expected to do a minimum of 6 or 7 hours of study. Over the weekend (Friday evening to Sunday evening) a Year 12 student is expected to do a minimum of 9 hours of study in Term 1, while 16 hours would be recommended by the closing weeks of Term 3.

Using Study Time Effectively

Setting aside the time is just the beginning. Set short-term goals for each study period: be clear on what you want to achieve. The time should be spent on a suitable combination of:

- work due the following day
- assignment/project work to be completed over an extended period of time
- research: following up references, reading and note-taking
- report writing
- deeper study, extended reading and the development of ideas and clear understanding
- Revision and review learning, preparation for tests and examinations.

A positive strategy to study is to avoid putting off the major tasks: tackle them as quickly as possible. Make regular progress on long-term work requirements and assessment tasks such as projects, research assignments, essays, reports, problem-solving and wider reading. These must be an integral part of each week’s study, and not left until deadlines are close.

Effective Reading

The basic element in most studies is reading. Build these guidelines into your reading habits:

1. You must have a CLEAR PURPOSE for reading, that is, to GATHER INFORMATION and to increase understanding.
2. Skim quickly through the article or chapter first. Look at any charts, maps or pictures. Glance at the paragraph headings or chapter summary before reading it in detail.
3. Be ACTIVELY INVOLVED in your detailed reading. TAKE NOTES, summarising your material under headings. Underline or highlight important points as you read.
4. Change the rate of your reading. Read slowly if material is difficult. Read quickly if work is easy.
5. READ IN PHRASES OR SENTENCES. If you try to read word by word your concentration will waver and you will lose the meaning of what you are reading
6. CONCENTRATE. Do not let your mind wander. Think about what you are reading.
7. BUILD YOUR VOCABULARY. Write down new words. When you find a word that you cannot work out from the context, look it up in the dictionary and write its meaning.

REMEMBER: No one can organise your work for you or do it. You MUST:
- Do the PLANNING.
- Do the RESEARCH.
- Hand in the work ON TIME.
- Avoid leaving things to the last minute.
The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

The VCAL Program

VCAL is not designed for all students; it is a specific program that may be undertaken only by application to the VET Coordinator.

The program is designed around Applied Learning where VCE is structured around theoretical practice of studies. VCAL is designed to be based upon the foundation of competent skills and application, this does not mean that VCAL is any less of an academic challenge to students, it requires a specific skill set and students must meet very strict criteria to be assessed as competent in outcomes.

The principles behind VCAL require a negotiated curriculum, where teachers and students engage in a dialogue about their curriculum. There is a need for a flexible timetable with a mix of subjects at the College and the other days at Work Placement. For example:

- Monday - School
- Tuesday - School
- Wednesday – VET/Work Placement
- Thursday - School
- Friday – VET/Work Placement
Student Programs

Work Related Skills (WRS)

School based projects focusing on enterprise, teamwork, communication, resume writing, job applications, researching industry areas, OH&S etc. This unit includes structured work placements.

Please note: Students are responsible for their own work placements. literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work.

Personal Development Skills (PDS)

This subject builds on competencies developing the knowledge and skills that leads to the development of self, social responsibility, building community, civic responsibility and improving self-confidence.

Literacy & Numeracy Skills (LNS)

Literacy Skills curriculum encourages the development of knowledge/skills, in the contexts of family, employment, further learning and community.

Numeracy Skills curriculum develops skills to use mathematical skills within society related to design, measuring, time, travel etc.

Religion

This subject looks at practical aspects of Religion to everyday life. Students work to developing their faith into real life applications of their life and practical applications of issues around refugees, social justice and community.
VCAL Assessment

School-Based Assessment

For satisfactory completion of a unit, a student must demonstrate achievement of each of the outcomes as specified in the Unit of Competency. The teacher of the unit makes decisions as to what constitutes “competency.” As school-assessed coursework forms part of the on-going learning, feedback will be provided to students on the work being assessed. Students are advised to retain all coursework until end of the school year in case the Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority wishes to examine the material.

Achievement of an outcome means:

- The work meets the required standard
- The work was submitted on time
- The work is clearly the student’s own
- There has been no breach of rules

Storage of Student Work

Students must retain Coursework that has been submitted for assessment, as well as any drafts or materials used in the process of completing the Coursework, until the end of the school year. The VCAA may request any materials relevant to assessment by the school. Students may also be required to photocopy their work for review processes.

Coursework assesses each student’s overall level of achievement on the assessment tasks designated in the study design. The study design specifies a range of tasks to assess achievement of each of the unit’s outcomes. Assessment tasks designated for coursework are part of the regular teaching and learning program and must be completed mainly in class time.

Assessment tasks take many forms, depending on the requirements of the Study. They may be an essay, a presentation, a test, or a laboratory report. Some common tests will be held on special SAC days and after school.
Satisfactory Completion of VCAL Studies

Assessment principles for VCAL learning programs

Assessment within the VCAL should be based on the following principles:

- Assessment tasks/activities should be grounded in a relevant context and not be culturally biased.
- Students should have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement at their own pace.
- Instructions for assessment tasks/activities should be clear and explicit. Students must know what is expected and the criteria by which satisfactory completion will be established.
- Time allowed to complete a task should be reasonable and specified and should allow for preparation and reflection as appropriate to the activity. Where the assessment task is linked to a project or activity, the assessment tasks/activities may take place over a number of weeks.
- Assessment tasks/activities should be open-ended and flexible to meet the specific needs of students

Satisfactory VCAL unit result

A student will receive an S (satisfactory achievement) for a unit in the Work Related Skills, Personal Development Skills, Skills for Further Study–Senior and Literacy Skills units when they have demonstrated competence in all learning outcomes for the unit. In the Numeracy Skills units, students must demonstrate competence in five of the six learning outcomes at the Foundation and Intermediate level and six out of the seven learning outcomes at the Senior level.

For VCAL units, students will receive a satisfactorily completed (S) or not yet complete (N) result for each unit.

Students will receive an N in a VCAL unit if they do not meet the course requirements outlined in the Curriculum Planning Guides.

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

If students are in severe danger of not satisfactorily meeting outcomes, then a review panel will meet to discuss and review such concerns and where possible devise a plan and consequence.
What must students do to receive a VCAL qualification?

A student is awarded a Certificate when they gain credits for 10 units that fulfil the minimum requirements for a student’s learning program. A credit is gained for successful completion of a unit of study. A unit of study can be:

- 1 VCAL unit
- 1 VCE unit
- 90 hours for VET modules/units of competence and/or Further Education (FE) modules.

Each unit of study must be justified against the purpose statement for one of the four VCAL curriculum strands.

A student’s VCAL learning program must include:

- a minimum of two VCAL units
- at least one literacy unit*
- at least one numeracy unit
- at least one unit from the Industry Specific Skills strand. At the intermediate and Senior levels this must include a unit of study from a VET qualification
- at least one unit from the Work Related Skills strand
- at least one unit from the Personal Development Skills strand
- at least six credits at the level or above, of which one must be literacy and one VCAL Personal Development Skills unit.

*If a student is enrolled in a VCAL literacy unit to fulfil the Literacy Skills strand requirement, the student must complete the VCAL Literacy – Reading and Writing unit at the certificate award level.

For satisfactory completion of a unit, a student must demonstrate achievement of each of the outcomes for that unit as specified in the Study Design. This decision will be based on the teacher’s judgment of the student’s performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The College has developed a number of policies to enable these judgments to be made as consistently and fairly as possible. A summary of these policies follows. Students and parents should become very familiar with them.
Attendance

The School and VCAA requires regular attendance.

Therefore:

Students must be in school throughout the hours of a normal school day.

Students are to attend all timetabled periods. In addition to VCAL classes this includes all Homeroom sessions, Assemblies and scheduled subject activities.

Students are expected to attend TAFE and work placement.

Students are to be punctual to school and to class.

Appointments are expected to take place out of school hours. If this is not possible, advance notice is required. Appointments for driving lessons and tests and other such activities are not permitted during school hours.

No student may leave the school grounds without the prior approval of the Head of Senior School. If such permission has been granted, the student must sign out at Student Reception and sign in again when he/she returns. In cases of illness, students must attend Sick Bay and they will give permission to leave the school if appropriate.

Many of the School Assessed Coursework tasks, including Common Tests will be conducted during class time. It is imperative that students attend all of these sessions. If a student cannot attend a School Assessed Coursework Task due to severe illness or family tragedy, the VET Coordinator must be contacted immediately. A note from a parent with appropriate documentation, for example a medical certificate, is expected upon the student’s return to school. An alternative test or task will be arranged for the student at the earliest convenience of the subject teacher. The catch-up SAC is usually conducted after school hours. Students who are absent without substantial reason forfeit their right to do a catch-up SAC. Catch-up SACs must be completed within a ten day period of the original scheduled assessment day.

Extended Absence from School

An extended absence from classes may jeopardise a satisfactory completion of a unit. The College must be informed in writing as far as possible in advance of the proposed absence, or in the case of unexpected circumstances, as soon as reasonably possible. The communication must outline clearly the reasons for the absence (where relevant, accompanied by medical documentation) and be signed by parents. Parents may be requested to attend an interview to discuss the matter.
Submission of work

Deadlines and late submission of work

A VCAL Student has the sole responsibility of ensuring all of their pieces of assessment are given to their class teacher on time. A VCAL Student must be able to organise and manage their time effectively.

If a student is absent on the due date, they must make every effort to ensure the work is delivered to the teacher on the day they return to the College. Otherwise, the work must be submitted to subject teacher accompanied by a note from the parents explaining the absence and appropriate documentation.

Work submitted the day after the due date without adequate reason will be marked according to the appropriate marking criteria but the grade shall then be reduced by 50% and this recorded as their final grade. Work submitted more than one day late shall receive a grade of 0.

Extension

Extension is the process of granting additional time to complete work.

- At the beginning of the Unit work schedules will be provided to students showing all dates for the submission of assessment tasks.
- Subject teachers may grant extensions of up to two school days at their own discretion, if satisfied with the reasons given by the student.
- A longer extension may be granted to students by the VET Coordinator, if they submit a written application with supporting evidence for an extension. This must be done at least 3 days prior to the published submission date. Requests for such extensions will only be considered in the case of serious circumstances.
- The VET Coordinator, in consultation with the subject teacher will make final decisions on extensions.
- Normally only one extension will be considered in each Unit of competency.
- Where an extension has been granted and a student fails to submit a piece of work by the revised date, the “Not component” result will be recorded and parents will be informed.
- Subject teacher’s records will show all details of extensions granted.
- Students who fail to submit work by the appropriate date may be referred to the VET Assessment Panel.

Parents will be advised by the subject teacher if a student:

- fails to submit work by the due date
- submits work of an unsatisfactory standard

Parents will be sent a letter by the VET Coordinator if a student:

- repeatedly fails to submit work by the due date
- has been identified as at risk of failure
Re-submission

- Re-submission of work, which has not satisfied a particular Learning Outcome, gives the student the opportunity to complete satisfactorily all the requirements.
- Unsatisfactory work will be returned to students with clearly stated dates for re-submission. Parents will be informed of the unsatisfactory nature of the student’s work.
- Where the completion of course work or the awarding of an “N” is in dispute, the VET Assessment Review Panel will be the final arbiter.

Redemption

Redemption is the process of converting an unsatisfactory grade in a particular Learning Outcome to a satisfactory grade. The process is necessary in cases where:

- no work is submitted
- no extension is granted and work is submitted after the due date
- an extension has been granted and work is submitted after the extended date

In such cases, the student will be called before the VET Assessment Review Panel for final consultation. Students are only allowed one redemption from the Panel.
Authentication

Authentication is the process of checking that work submitted by students is their own. In order to meet the requirements for satisfactory completion of a unit, students must submit work that is clearly their own. All assistance received by the student in producing the work must be acknowledged and be obvious to the reader.

Acceptable levels of assistance include:
- the incorporation of ideas or material derived from other sources, (e.g. by reading, viewing or note-taking) but which has been transformed by the student and used in a new context;
- Prompting and general advice from another person or source which leads to refinements and/ or self-correction.

Unacceptable forms of assistance include:
- Use of, or copying of, another person’s work or other resources without acknowledgment
- Actual corrections or improvements made or dictated by another person.

In addition, the following VCAA rules are to be observed by all students.
- Students must not submit the same piece of work for assessment more than once.
- Students who knowingly assist other students in a Breach of Rules may be penalised.
- Students must sign the Declaration of Authenticity at the time of submitting the completed task. This declaration states that all unacknowledged work is the student's own. Students must also sign a general declaration that they will observe the rules and instructions for VCAL, and accept disciplinary provisions.

The following procedures are used for authentication at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College:
- In order to attest that work is genuinely the student's own, the teacher will sight plan or draft, consult with students during the process and keep a record of this process.
- The teacher will sight/monitor/consult with students during each task and will maintain records of such.
- Work will only be assessed if the teacher can attest that to the best of her/his knowledge the work is the student’s own.
- Where a teacher is not satisfied that a piece of work is the student's own, the matter will be referred to the VET Coordinator to decide on further action.
- If it is determined that a breach of rules has occurred the College has the power to impose any of the following penalties:
  - refusal to accept part of the work submitted
  - resubmission of work if this can occur within the time constraints of the Unit
  - reprimanding of a student who has enabled another to obtain an advantage
  - to change the result to an Not Competent depending on the task

- Parents will be informed immediately if a Not Competent is given.
- Students have the right to appeal to the VET Assessment Review Panel, but will be expected to justify their position very clearly.
- In case of dispute, the Principal will be the final arbiter as per the VCAA Handbook.
Special Provision

There are four forms of Special Provision for VCAL:

- Student programs
- School-based assessment
- Special Examination Arrangements
- Derived Examination Scores

In each case there are specific eligibility requirements that apply.

For student programs and school-based assessment, the school is responsible for determining eligibility and the nature of the provisions granted. For Special Examination Arrangements and Derived Examination Score applications, the VCAA is responsible for determining eligibility and for granting approval.

Student Programs

The purpose of Special Provision in student programs is to help students in defined circumstances to complete the VCAL in a reasonable time frame. A student is eligible for this provision if they are significantly adversely affected by illness or other serious cause, or if they are disadvantaged by a disability or impairment. Prolonged absence from school or study is not in itself grounds for special provision.

School-based Assessment

Students are eligible for Special Provision for school-based assessment if they are adversely affected by illness, impairment or traumatic personal and family circumstances.

The usual provision granted in this category may include allowing the student to undertake the task at a later date, allowing the student extra time to complete the task, substituting or replacing one task with another task, using technology to complete the task. All of these possible provisions have to be dependent on the resources of the College.

How to Apply for Special Provision

The VET Coordinator is the first point of contact regarding Special Provision. The Principal will make the final decision on the nature of special provision.

Permanent Disability

The College must be informed in writing of any permanent disability by the end of the second week of the first semester. Medical and/ or psychological documentation must be included.

Family Problems and/or Ill Health

The College must be informed in writing of any request for consideration based on these grounds as soon as reasonably possible. The request must be accompanied by documentation from a professional and signed by parents. Parents may be asked to attend an interview to discuss the request.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Learning Outcome?

For every subject there is a series of learning outcomes. These outcomes state what you will be studying during the unit, and what you should be able to do by the end of the semester. These are the things you will be tested on, and they form the basis of your assessment; you must satisfactorily complete them.

What does Competent mean?

This means that you have fulfilled the requirements for a particular outcome. The teacher will set a number of tasks, and these must be completed properly to demonstrate that you have achieved that outcome. To achieve satisfactory completion of a unit, you must satisfactorily complete every outcome in that unit of competency. The consequences of failing to do this are serious. The unit cannot be counted towards your VET or VCAL, and you may even find yourself having to repeat it, especially if it is required for a university course you wish to enter. In addition, you can be given an grade of “Not competent” – if you:

- hand the work in late
- copy someone else’s work
- help someone else to cheat
- accept “undue assistance” for the work
- Breach the school’s attendance rules.

For further information refer to the Policy of Satisfactory Completion of VCAL Studies section of the Manual.

What if I am late handing work in?

Refer to the Policy for Satisfactory Completion of VCAL Studies section.

What is the VET Assessment Panel?

The VET Assessment Panel consists of the Deputy Principal – Teaching and Learning, VET Coordinator and the Subject Teacher. You will be called to the VET Assessment Panel if:

- You have received an “Not competent” for non-submission of work
- If the work you have submitted cannot be authenticated by the teacher
- If you have breached the attendance requirement.

What constitutes “special consideration” for a result?

If you have a disability or impairment, which affects your work performance, or you suffer from an extended illness during the year, or you have suffered severe family problems, you may apply for some assistance. Note that simply being absent for an extended period does not automatically qualify for consideration of disadvantage. All absences must be genuine and supported by evidence. Refer to the Special Provision Section of the Manual.
What is VET?

VET stands for Vocational Education and Training. It refers to enhanced senior school studies, which enable a secondary student to combine their VCAL studies with vocational training.

Where can I get more information about VCAL?

For general VCAL information consult the ET Coordinator. For subject specific information, consult your subject teacher. Useful websites on VCAL are www.vcaa.vic.edu.au.

What if my child wishes to study a VET through an external provider and what is the cost?

The College offers one of the largest ranges of onsite VET subjects found anywhere in Victoria. If a student elects to study a VET subject that is not offered by the College parents must pay the gap between the course cost and the funding the College receives through VETIS. Enrolment for external VET courses will not be completed until payment is made in full to the College. For further information please see the VET Coordinator.
# Application to enrol in the VCAL Course

This form should be printed and completed and returned to Mrs Steenholdt by 10 June 2015.

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Please answer all of the following questions in the box below each question

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<th>What are your interests once you have finished school? (eg. Apprentice motor mechanic, TAFE Course, employment).</th>
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<th>Do you currently hold a part-time job? Please outline where if you do.</th>
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<th>Are you involved in any community or sporting activities? (E.g. volunteer work, sport).</th>
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<td>Which VET/TAFE subject would you like to include in your VCAL?</td>
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