



# **Review of C and E Course Classifications**

## **Final Report**

**2021**

Front Cover Art provided by Canberra College student Aidan Giddings

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## 1. Forward

It is my pleasure to present the *Review of C and E Course Classifications: Final Report*. In line with the terms of reference, the Review of C and E Course Classifications considered ways to strengthen vocational education in ACT schools.

A shared understanding of vocational education in ACT schools is crucial for broadening educational opportunities and ensuring quality outcomes for students.

This report states the final recommendations in the context of vocational education in ACT schools and provides background, context, and data.

The Final Report should be read in conjunction with *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Report* and *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* and *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Regulation Impact Statement*.

The BSSS Secretariat, on behalf of the Review Committee, consulted with a broad range of stakeholders. I thank all of those who took the time to complete a survey, participate in an online forum or make a submission. I appreciate the passion and dedication they showed for VET in schools. I'd also like to thank the members of the Committee for assisting me with this Review.

Finally, I would like to thank the BSSS Chair Roberta McRae for the opportunity to undertake this important task. I and the review committee firmly believe that the recommendations of this Review provide sectors and schools flexibility to design and implement quality VET pathways for senior secondary students.



Louise Mayo AM  
Chair  
Review Committee  
Review of C and E Course Classifications

## 2. Executive Summary

Vocational education delivered to senior secondary students was introduced to enable secondary students to undertake nationally accredited vocational education and training (VET) programs while completing senior secondary school.

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) recognises the value of vocational education courses and their contribution to quality education and enhanced transitions to work and further education.

Students can undertake vocational education and training (VET) as part of a senior secondary certificate and completion by a student can provide credit towards both a recognised VET qualification and a Senior Secondary School Certificate. There are 26 BSSS courses providing access to VET, across an increasingly diverse range of learning areas.

The context of VET in schools has been the subject of discussion at national level. Recent reports, *Looking to the Future: Report of the Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training* (2020), *Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System* (2019) and *Nurturing Wonder and Igniting Passion, designs for a new school curriculum: NSW Curriculum Review* (2020), encourage reflection on the role of VET and its contribution to the senior secondary certificate. A key issue raised in these reports is provision of clear vocational pathways underpinned by robust quality assurance processes.

A comprehensive environmental scan of delivery of vocational education in senior secondary schools across Australia indicates that there is not one model for delivery. Each jurisdiction has developed an approach tailored to their own context, reflected in the processes that they implement to deliver and certify VET. These approaches are varied, complex and subject to review. The continuing national focus on reviewing VET, as well as student pathways, has not as yet resulted in an optimal model that is recognised as providing the best system for senior secondary students.

This Review presents an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of vocational education in ACT senior secondary schools. The purpose of this Review is to examine existing Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) curriculum, assessment and moderation policies and procedures for C and E Courses, to determine if changes are required to meet the future needs of students pursuing a VET pathway, whilst at the same time meeting BSSS legislative requirements.

The BSSS is the statutory authority responsible for the certification of senior secondary school studies in government and non-government schools in the Australian Capital Territory. The *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997* is the legislation that defines roles and responsibilities in senior secondary education in the ACT. Key legislation that is pertinent to this review relates to accreditation guidelines, quality assurance and alignment with national agreements.

The Final Recommendations of the Review align with local and national perspectives on education and VET in schools. Key principles underpinning the Final Recommendations are as follows:

- That the purpose of senior secondary education is to prepare students for diverse pathways to further learning, work and participation in civic life'. (Australian Qualifications Framework)
- That students develop transferrable skills and understanding of their use in different contexts, through curriculum that embeds the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities, with knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.
- The learning entitlement for each student is that they become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community. (Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019))
- That the ACT senior secondary system builds on the P-12 student learning continuum informed by the Australian Curriculum.

- That ACT senior secondary curriculum provides a platform for quality learning and upholds high expectations for achievement of all young adults.
- That all pathways are of equal status in the senior secondary system.
- That ACT teachers are duty bound by the Australian Professional Standards for teachers (AITSL).
- That ACT senior secondary curriculum reflects coherence and cohesion as informed by the *BSSS Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum*.
- That all assessment is subject to BSSS quality assurance measures.
- That students experience a breadth of study and have access to a diverse range of VET opportunities.

The Final Recommendations establish a new process for recognition of non-integrated vocational competencies on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. The options available for the delivery of VET empower colleges to select the approach to be implemented.

Schools will have further flexibility to design and implement VET programs that are tailored to address the needs of industry and interests of their students.

Currently, schools may deliver BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a Training Package, providing the school is an RTO with scope, qualified staff, and resourcing to support each Training Package. Alternatively, the needs of students wishing to pursue competency only pathways can be pursued through non-school RTO's.

The Final Recommendations build on the strengths of the current model.

Developing C Courses into A/T/M/V or A/T/M courses will maximise learning options and heighten the safekeeping of the student learning entitlement. Schools delivering BSSS A/T/M/V or A/T/M courses are supported by robust BSSS quality assurance processes and enjoy the benefits of being a member of a system wide professional learning community.

School-based RTOs will have flexibility to deliver BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses integrating a Training Package or exercise their RTO status and deliver a VET Training Package that is not integrated into a BSSS course.

The stakeholders who participated in the public consultation process were passionate about vocational education in schools. They valued the opportunity to deliver a national qualification and had confidence in the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) quality assurance processes. Some felt that working independently of BSSS processes (assessment and reporting A-E grades) provided greater opportunity to award competencies and enable provision of industry linked qualifications.

The option to deliver a VET Training Package that is not integrated into a BSSS course is a significant opportunity for school-based RTOs to design and implement a VET Pathway that balances the needs of students, staffing and resources.

C and E Course classifications will be superseded by the External VET Credit Unit Classification. The External VET Credit Unit classification refers to recognition of Training Packages that are not integrated into BSSS courses.

The phasing out of the C Course classification removes risk embedded in BSSS Policy and Procedures where the student may not be able to achieve a qualification or competencies due to external factors. The impact of changes to Training Packages, or school RTO scope reduction or the availability of VET qualified staff, can result in C Courses that can no longer be delivered, including where certificates are deleted or no longer available to schools. At times changes result in conditions that schools cannot meet, and courses must be discontinued. When VET is embedded in A/T/M courses, students are still able to complete a course, without the VET component should this prove necessary. Schools are also able to introduce new course areas without or prior to gaining scope.

The proposal to increase quality assurance measures for recognition of external VET protects students and increases the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Many RTOs are delivering high quality programs that provide opportunities for students to enhance their skills, provide industry experience, and prepare them for a pathway beyond school. However, nationally, and locally, there are inconsistencies in respect a lack of transparency, accountability, and quality of the training by some providers.

As a result of these inconsistencies, some state and territory education departments and non-government schooling sectors have established approved provider lists and prescription about the type of VET suitable for students in the senior phase of schooling.

In conclusion, these recommendations outline reforms to strengthen VET in schools. More importantly, they will ensure students undertaking a vocational pathway are safeguarded and receive their learning entitlement.

## 2.1 Review of C and E Course Classifications: Final Recommendations

A summary of the Final Recommendations is below:

- a. That the five C Courses (Horticulture, Outdoor Recreation, Live Production Services, Music Industry, and Musical and Stage Performance) currently not available as A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses be redeveloped as new A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses. (Note: The remaining three C Course areas are currently available as A/T/M/V or A/M/V integrated courses.)
- b. That the redevelopment of the five C Courses (Horticulture, Outdoor Recreation, Live Production Services, Music Industry and Musical and Stage Performance) into new A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses take place in 2022 and be available for delivery from 2023.
- c. That the BSSS develop Professional Learning opportunities to support the implementation of BSSS courses integrating a VET Training Package.
- d. That C and E Course Classifications be phased out and superseded by the External VET Credit Units Classification by the end of 2023.
- e. That the BSSS liaise with RTOs for the recognition of External VET Credit Units on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- f. That the BSSS Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) and Assessment and Certification Committee (ACC) explore the appropriate levels of contribution of External VET Credit Units towards the requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- g. That the BSSS CAC and ACC develop policy and procedures for recognition of External VET Credit Units on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- h. That the BSSS establish policy and procedures, and a schedule of RTOs and qualifications approved by the BSSS, for delivery and recognition of External VET Credits on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- i. That school-based RTOs have the flexibility to deliver BSSS accredited A/T/M/V or A/M/V Courses or apply for registration with the Board as providers of External VET Credit Units of identified Training Packages, for recognition on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- j. That the BSSS establish a panel to advise the Board on External VET Credit Unit expectations and processes.



### 3. Background

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) recognises the value of vocational educational training (VET) courses and their contribution to quality education and enhanced transitions to work and further education. The Board has a range of policies and procedures to ensure that VET study undertaken during years 11 and 12 through schools as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or external RTOs can contribute towards the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate of Education and be recognised on certificates issued by the Board.

System developed BSSS Courses integrating VET were introduced in 1998. This remains the primary approach for delivering VET qualifications to senior secondary students in the ACT.

C and E Course classifications were Board endorsed in December 2008. This followed discussions about the contribution of VET towards the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (known then as the Year 12 Certificate). Prior to the introduction of C courses, VET was recognised in the form of registered (R) units. The decision to create a new classification was designed to increase the status and contribution of VET courses in the certification of students.

E course classification was Board endorsed to include all externally delivered VET. This included Australian School Based Apprentices (ASBAs), which were previously credited as R units on the ACT Year 12 Certificate. The recognition of VET in the certification of students has evolved since 2008. From 2014, student achievement in VET courses has been equally recognised with other courses and documented on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. These VET courses contribute to the minimum requirement of the Certificate.

In 2021 there are 26 BSSS courses providing access to VET training, across an increasingly diverse range of learning areas. Of these, 18 are a combination of A/T/M/V Course Classifications (reflecting BSSS Course Design Specifications), which differentiate knowledge, skills and understanding to meet the needs of students. There are currently eight C Courses on the BSSS register, which contain the training skills identified by industry. (See VET Courses, Appendix 4) Three training packages are currently in both V and C course forms.

E Courses are delivered by a variety of RTOs. Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) delivers the majority of external VET courses undertaken by ACT senior secondary students.

Between the period 2008-2019, the Board has undertaken a number of reviews including requirements for the ACT Year 12 Certificate (2014), ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum (2015), Assessment and Moderation (2018) and the ACT Scaling Test (2019). At a national level, the *Review of Senior Secondary Pathways (2020)*, *Australia Curriculum, Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (2019)*, *Recognition of learning success for all (2020)*, and *Strengthening Skills (2019)*, encourage reflection on the role of VET and its contribution to the senior secondary certificate.

Quality assurance is a key theme for senior secondary curriculum, assessment and certification for Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) and educational authorities at local and national levels. This review focused on how C and E courses meet contemporary curriculum and assessment quality assurance requirements for school students.

There have been significant changes in delivery of BSSS curriculum and VET since 2008. The C and E Course Classifications have not been reviewed since their inception. It is timely to review these course classifications to evaluate their role and impact in serving the needs of ACT senior secondary students.

In addition, it is important to note that the review and the recommendations are in no way a criticism of the fine work of VET teachers currently delivering C courses. Quite to the contrary, as the endeavours of these teachers in providing quality learning opportunities to students continue to be outstanding. This review and the recommendations focus on the structural, regulatory, certification integrity, and risk aspects of the classification – not the dedication and professionalism of VET teachers.

## 3.1 Scope of the Review

As indicated in the Terms of References (TOR) (Section 6.1) “The review will cover the following:

- a) Investigate how Vocational Education and Training (VET) is undertaken and recognised in other jurisdictions for senior secondary students?
- b) Compare and evaluate the learning outcomes of E, C and V courses.
- c) Determine if and how the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should recognise VET:
  - delivered by college based Registered Training Organisations (RTO) other than V courses
  - undertaken as part of an Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASBA)
  - delivered by an external RTO during senior secondary.

The review does not include consideration of matters that are the domain of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); VET delivery and decisions that are the responsibilities of Registered Training Organisations (RTOS); operational matters in the delivery of VET courses; or VET certificates which are produced in accord with national requirements.

## 3.2 Structure of Report

The Final Report provides recommendations for C and E Course Classifications. It includes the final recommendations, background, and methodology. The Final Report should be read in conjunction with *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Report* and *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* and *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Regulation Impact Statement*.

*The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Report* was endorsed by the Committee to be released for public consultations. The Report proposed draft recommendations in the context of vocational education in ACT schools and provides background, context, and data to inform discussion. It was designed to enable all educators in the senior secondary system to engage in the Review. The Report was published on the BSSS website and will provide a structure and focus for public consultation events.

*The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* outlines the process that involved key stakeholders in providing their views and feedback on the draft recommendations. The Report outlines methodology and key themes raised in the public consultation event.

*The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Regulation Impact Statement* is the document that summarised the Committee best advice to the Board, including: a definition of the problem to be addressed, the objectives of any solution proposed, the full range of practical options and an analysis of each one.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Membership of the Committee

The Board appointed a review committee from defined constituencies of ACT education for their expertise.

The composition of the Review committee includes:

Chair	Ms Louise Mayo AM*
ACT Education Directorate	Mr Jason Borton
ACT Catholic Education	Dr Tony Bracken
ACT Independent Schools	Ms Rita Daniels
Canberra Institute of Technology	Mr Andrew Whale
Skills Canberra	Ms Josephine Andersen
Industry	Mr Vince Ball
BSSS Executive Director	Mr Martin Watson

\* Ms Louise Mayo AM is an experienced member of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies. Ms Mayo is the representative for ACT Vocational and Training Organisations on the Board.

### 4.2 Key Issues

The Committee assessed current policy and procedures for BSSS C and E Course Classifications in relation to the functions of the Board, *BSSS Policy and Procedures* and recent national reports.

An analysis of *BSSS Policy and Procedures* for C and E Course Classifications indicates inconsistencies within *BSSS Policy and Procedures* for senior secondary curriculum, quality assurance, assessment, and certification.

Key issues to be addressed include:

Inconsistency in BSSS Policy and Procedures	BSSS A/T/M/V or A/M/V Courses	C and E competency only Courses
Curriculum design	Written under a BSSS endorsed framework (learning area rationale, goals, advice for assessment and Achievement Standards A-E grades).	C and E Courses are not based on a curriculum and are focused on the development of a set of specific skills known as competencies for an industry area. They are not written under a BSSS endorsed framework.
	Courses are written for the context of senior secondary education, aligning with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the purpose of senior secondary education qualification type (i.e. qualifies individuals with knowledge, skills, and values for diverse pathways to further learning, work, and effective participation in civic life).	Training Packages are written for adults. They are not developed with the focus of senior secondary education. Each competency is described as the skill to be demonstrated. They are developed for delivery by trainers, not teachers.

	Courses reflect Board Endorsed design specifications guaranteeing student learning entitlement including the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills, General Capabilities, and Cross Curriculum Priorities.	C and E Courses are not written under course design specifications that guarantee student learning entitlement and they are not based on the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills, General Capabilities, and Cross Curriculum Priorities. Some Training Packages may at times refer to some literacy, numeracy or social skills related to working with others, based on the skill being taught.
<b>Quality assurance</b>	Student work is assessed and quality assured (system moderation) using Board Endorsed Achievement standards.	C and E Courses are not assessed and quality assured (system moderation) using Board Endorsed Achievement standards. Instead, they are subject to ASQAs processes.
<b>Assessment</b>	Assessment is based on A-E grades.	The grades 'Pass' or 'Participated' are awarded depending on completion of any competencies attached to the unit.
<b>Certification</b>	Training Packages are constantly being updated. At times the rule changes result in conditions that schools cannot meet. When VET is embedded in A/T/M/V or A/M/V course, students are still able to complete a course, without the VET component.	A student package is risk if the course is discontinued due to rule changes result in conditions that schools cannot meet through no fault of their own.
	The '90% participation rule' and '70% assessment rule' applies to A/T/M/V courses.	The '90% attendance rule' does not apply to E Courses but is awarded on student participation. The '70% assessment rule' does not apply to C and E Courses due to assessments not having percentage weightings.

The C Course classification was designed to increase the status and contribution of VET towards the minimum requirements of the Senior Secondary Certificate. BSSS Certification data for the period 2006-2020 indicates that C Courses have not led to significant increases in VET engagement or outcomes. (See Long Term VET Data for ACT Senior Secondary Students, Appendix 6.2)

BSSS Certification data for the period 2018-2020 (Refer to Appendix 6.3) reflects that there are fewer than 200 students per year enrolled in a C Course for the period of 2018 to 2020. A small proportion of students studying VET, approximately 15%, are enrolled in a C Course. As for completion of qualifications, data indicates that there is no significant difference between students enrolled in C Courses or A/T/M/V Courses. If a student studies an A/T/M/V Course they are more likely to achieve two qualifications.

The purpose of a C Course is to achieve competencies and complete qualifications. However, the data doesn't indicate that this is a more successful way of doing so. In fact, there is no significant difference between C Courses and A/T/M/V Courses in VET attainment. This indicates that VET outcomes are not increased when students are focused on completing VET alone.

Current *BSSS Policy and Procedures* permit the maximum contribution of C and E Course credit to be half of the minimum requirement of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. What should be the maximum contribution External VET Credit Units or their equivalent and Units to the minimum requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate?

Refer to *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* for more information.

### 4.3 Public Consultation

The BSSS Secretariat, on behalf of the Review Committee, conducted public consultation on the *Review of C and E Course Classification: Report (Report)* between the period 17 August and 17 September 2021.

The Review Committee were interested in hearing the perspectives and views from a range of stakeholders including:

- teachers of VET
- Curriculum Coordinators and VET Coordinators
- VET students
- principals
- parents
- industry
- tertiary sector, including CIT and universities.

Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the draft recommendations, either by

- using the Survey Monkey Platform available on the BSSS Website
- written submission
- attending an online focus group event.

Notification of public consultation was published on the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies website at [www.bsss.act.gov.au](http://www.bsss.act.gov.au).

The pie charts below show who responded in the public consultation process.

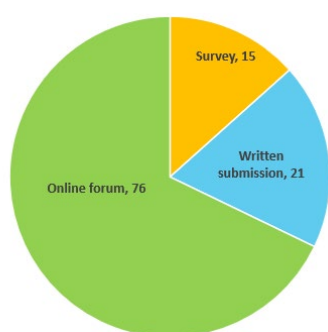


Figure 1: Modes of engagement

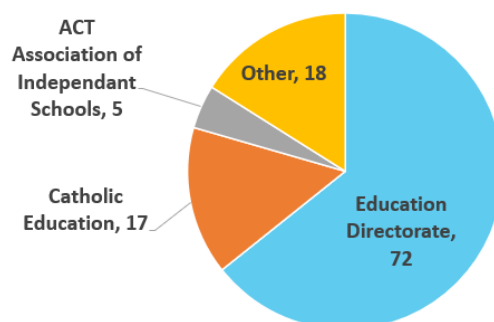


Figure 2: Sector engagement

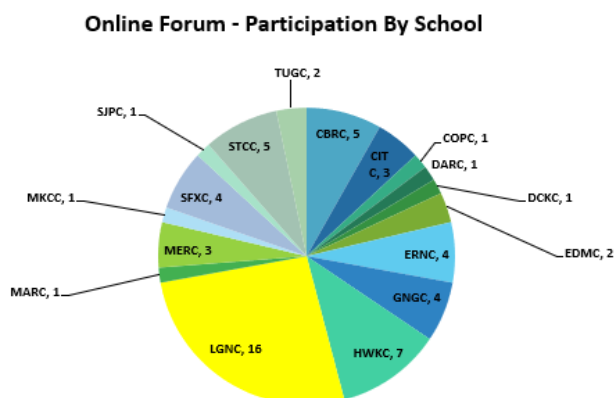


Figure 3: Engagement by school

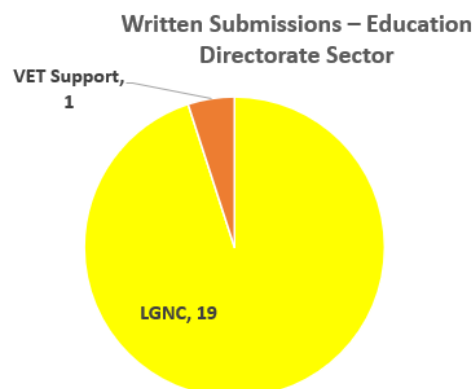


Figure 4: Written submissions by school

Key themes raised in public consultation include:

- Integration of VET in A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses is problematic and increases workload for teachers.
- Competency-only courses provide a clear pathway to industry and industry richness.
- Teachers at school-based RTOs value ASQA regulatory standards and deemed quality assurance measures they enforce as sufficient.
- Competency-only courses offer flexibility in assessment and learning to cater for the needs of diverse learners.
- Risk associated with qualified trainers was acknowledged.
- Value investigating alternative approaches for the continuation of C Courses.
- Exploring the contribution of E Courses to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate was supported.

Refer to *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* for more information.

## 4.4 Committee Meetings

The committee held three meetings. Two meetings were conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions. At the initial meeting the Committee was briefed on the terms of reference, the issues involved, the review process and the role of committee members. At this meeting committee members provided feedback on the draft Report for public consultation.

The second meeting was conducted online. Committee members endorsed the *Review of C and E Course Classifications: Report* for public consultation.

At the third meeting, committee members considered *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Public Consultation Report* and options outlined in *The Review of C and E Course Classifications: Regulation Impact Statement*. The draft recommendations released for public consultation were modified considering feedback from public consultation and further discussions.

## 5. Recommendations and Discussion

A summary of the Final Recommendations is below:

- a. That the five C Courses (Horticulture, Outdoor Recreation, Live Production Services, Music Industry, and Musical and Stage Performance) currently not available as A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses be redeveloped as new A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses. (Note: The remaining three C Course areas are currently available as A/T/M/V or A/M/V integrated courses.)
- b. That the redevelopment of the five C Courses (Horticulture, Outdoor Recreation, Live Production Services, Music Industry and Musical and Stage Performance) into new A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses take place in 2022 and be available for delivery from 2023.
- c. That the BSSS develop Professional Learning opportunities to support the implementation of BSSS courses integrating a VET Training Package.
- d. That C and E Course Classifications be phased out and superseded by the External VET Credit Units Classification by the end of 2023.
- e. That the BSSS liaise with RTOs for the recognition of External VET Credit Units on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- f. That the BSSS Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) and Assessment and Certification Committee (ACC) explore the appropriate levels of contribution of External VET Credit Units towards the requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- g. That the BSSS CAC and ACC develop policy and procedures for recognition of External VET Credit Units on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- h. That the BSSS establish policy and procedures, and a schedule of RTOs and qualifications approved by the BSSS, for delivery and recognition of External VET Credits on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- i. That school-based RTOs have the flexibility to deliver BSSS accredited A/T/M/V or A/M/V Courses or apply for registration with the Board as providers of External VET Credit Units of identified Training Packages, for recognition on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
- j. That the BSSS establish a panel to advise the Board on External VET Credit Unit expectations and processes.

These recommendations are a critical step towards strengthening VET recognised on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and affords flexibility for school-based RTOs to provide a range of quality VET pathways for students. These recommendations address inconsistencies in *BSSS Policy and Procedures* between the A/T/M/V and A/M/V, and C and E Course Classifications.

The recommendations uphold the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate by addressing the inconsistencies in *BSSS Policy and Procedures* between the A/T/M/V and A/M/V, and C and E Course Classifications. The inconsistencies in *BSSS Policy and Procedures* between the A/T/M/V and A/M/V, and C and E Course Classifications are as follows:

- In the context of the ACT Senior secondary Certificate, the A/T/M/V and A/M/V Course structure maximises the security of the student learning entitlement whereas C and E Courses carry significant risk.
- For A/T/M/V or A/M/V Courses, student achievement is reported A-E. For C Courses, student achievement is reported as 'Pass' or 'Participated'. For E Courses, students are awarded a 'Pass' grade on units representing hours in structured learning activities.
- For A/T/M/V or A/M/V Courses student presentations are moderated using Board endorsed Achievement Standards. For C and E Courses, student presentations are not moderated against Board endorsed Achievement Standards or guidelines.

Developing C Courses into A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses supports school leaders and benefits students in the following ways:

- All BSSS courses will provide for the student learning entitlement (i.e., knowledge, skills, understandings, and values that will provide a foundation for their future contribution to Australia's society)
- Schools delivering BSSS A/T/M/V and A/M/V courses are supported by robust BSSS quality assurance processes including course accreditation, and statistical and system moderation. These processes maintain consistent standards and ensures equity across the ACT senior secondary system
- Consistent presentation and structure of courses listed on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, and
- The redevelopment of those C Courses currently not available as A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses will enable opportunities at a system level to create a professional learning community that has a shared understanding of senior secondary curriculum, focused on maximising learning outcomes for all students. This is difficult with curricula and assessment systems that lie predominately outside the purview of the BSSS.

The Recommendations enables the Board to meet its legislative requirements while providing flexibility for school-based RTOs to continue provision of quality VET pathways for students.

The C and E Course Classifications will be replaced with the External VET Credit Unit Classification. The BSSS External VET Credit Unit classification refers to recognition of Training Packages that are not integrated into BSSS courses.

School-based RTOs will have flexibility to deliver BSSS accredited courses integrating a Training Package or exercise their RTO status to deliver a Training Package and apply for External VET Credit Unit recognition. For example, a school-based RTO may choose to deliver the BSSS Hospitality course integrating a Training Package or alternatively deliver the supporting qualifications from the Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (SIT) Training Package.

If a school-based RTO chooses to deliver a Training Package that is not integrated into a BSSS course they may apply to the BSSS for recognition of qualifications/competencies on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate as an External VET Credit Unit, or simply exercise their RTO status by certifying the student.

A school-based RTOs decision to work outside BSSS processes will mean that they are empowered to manage delivery of the Training Packages, AVETMISS, and provide certificates independently of the Board for students who complete the qualifications/competencies.

A key benefit expected from the recommendation is the support that the BSSS lends to schools through the provision of courses integrating a Training Package. School leaders will have confidence that students not only receive a VET qualification but also their broader learning entitlement. In addition, schools delivering BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training package will be supported through quality assurance processes and procedures including course accreditation, system moderation and professional learning opportunities.

The Recommendations enable access for senior secondary students to a variety of external providers and increases the range of vocational education opportunities to access a wider variety of Training Packages.

The proposal to increase quality assurance measures for recognition of external VET safeguards students and maintains the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Many RTOs are delivering high quality programs that provide opportunities for students to enhance their skills, provide industry experience and prepare them for a pathway beyond school. However, both nationally and locally, there is inconsistency in the transparency, accountability, and quality of the training by some providers.



As a result, some state and territory education departments and non-government schooling sectors have established a schedule for approved providers and prescriptions about the type of VET suitable for students in the senior phase of schooling.

An ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies schedule for approved providers will support schools in their endeavour to ensure that all students have access to quality VET programs. Applications for recognition of RTO's and Training Packages, and External VET Credit Units on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate will be required to meet requirements approved by the Board.

The proposed recommendations will allow the Board to meet its legislative responsibilities and requirements pertaining to quality assurance and remove limitations in its capacity to consider and develop ways to strengthen vocational education in ACT schools.

The *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual* will be amended to reflect these recommendations.

## 5.1 Incorporation of Stakeholder Feedback

The BSSS Secretariat, on behalf of the Review Committee, conducted focus groups events with key stakeholders including students, industry, higher education, parents, principals, Curriculum and VET Coordinators.

The following draft recommendations were published for public consultation:

- a. That C Courses be redeveloped as A/T/M/V or A/M/V courses.
- b. That the level of contribution, achievement and quality assurance requirements of VET qualifications intended for consideration as E Courses on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate are consistent with high expectations for students and support the integrity and quality of the certificate.
- c. That E Courses continue to be delivered by external providers only.
- d. That the BSSS establish an approved list of external non-school based RTOs, providers, and qualifications.

The Final Recommendations incorporates stakeholder feedback in the following ways:

Item	Key themes raised in public consultation	Option 3 incorporates stakeholder feedback in the following ways:
1.	Stakeholders identified key knowledge, skills, and values that students should have gained from studying a BSSS course integrating a VET Training Package Course include critical and creative thinking, literacy and numeracy, problem solving, communication skills, interpersonal and collaboration skills.	Design specifications for A/T/M/V courses articulate knowledge, understandings, and skills in units. In contrast, C Course are competency only. Redevelopment of C Courses into A/T/M/V courses will guarantee that students receive their learning entitlement, supporting school leadership and maintaining the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.
2.	Stakeholders identified workload as a barrier to delivering BSSS courses integrating a VET Training Package.	The recommendation to develop Professional Learning opportunities on BSSS courses integrating a VET Training Package (TP) supports school leaders to build teacher capacity and confidence to delivers these courses. Provision for school-based RTOs to either choose to deliver a BSSS courses integrating a VET TP or exercise their RTO status and delivers the qualification provides school

		<p>leaders with options to address student interest and staffing arrangements.</p> <p>The vast majority of VET courses and VET delivery are through A/T/M/V.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p>The development of C Courses into BSSS A/T/M/V or A/T/M courses would force schools to abandon the delivery of VET.</p>	<p>Provision for school-based RTOs to either choose to deliver a BSSS courses integrating a VET TP or exercise their RTO status and delivers the qualification provides school leaders with flexible options to provide vocational education.</p> <p>The vast majority of VET courses and VET delivery are through A/T/M/V.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<p>Forcing schools to deliver BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training Package provides poorer outcomes for students, fewer Statements of Attainment, or full qualifications.</p>	<p>Provision for school-based RTOs to either choose to deliver a BSSS courses integrating a VET TP or exercise their RTO status and delivers the qualification supports school leaders with flexibility to maintain their current program.</p> <p>System data indicates similar competency outcomes for A/T/M/V and C Courses.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p>Stakeholders generally expressed confidence in Nationally Recognised Training packages and trust ASQA requirements for RTOs.</p>	<p>Provision of BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training Package and BSSS External VET Credit Units ensures meets stakeholder expectations and maintains the integrity of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p>C Courses address the needs of diverse learners (For example, students have multiple attempts at a competency, allowing for greater success rates).</p>	<p>Provision of BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training Package and BSSS External VET Credit Units supports school leaders when meeting the needs of diverse learners.</p> <p>There is no requirement in A/T/M/V Courses that assessment used for determining the Achievement Standards is the only assessment used for assessing competencies. Students in A/T/M/V are not limited to one attempt at a competency.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p>Competency only courses reduce the barrier for an industry professional to deliver a BSSS course and allows access to expertise and networks beyond the school.</p>	<p>Provision of BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training Package and BSSS External VET Credit Units supports school leaders to pursue partnerships with industry or engage industry professionals.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<p>Competency only courses provide a clear pathway to industry and industry richness.</p>	<p>Provision of BSSS Courses integrating a VET Training Package and BSSS External VET Credit Units support school leaders with addressing student needs and interests.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p>Support exploring approved external VET providers.</p>	<p>The preferred option incorporates this support for exploring approved external VET providers.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p>Lack of clarity on the contribution of E and C Course on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.</p>	<p>The preferred option incorporates investigating the maximum contribution of external VET to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.</p>

## 6. Appendices

### 6.1 Terms of Reference

As indicated in the Terms of References (TOR) (Section 6.1) “The review will cover the following:

- a) Investigate how Vocational Education and Training (VET) is undertaken and recognised in other jurisdictions for senior secondary students?
- b) Compare and evaluate the learning outcomes of E, C and V courses.
- c) Determine if and how the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should recognise VET:
  - delivered by college based Registered Training Organisations (RTO) other than V courses
  - undertaken as part of an Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASBA)
  - delivered by an external RTO during senior secondary.

The review does not include consideration of matters that are the domain of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); VET delivery and decisions that are the responsibilities of Registered Training Organisations (RTOS); operational matters in the delivery of VET courses; or VET certificates which are produced in accord with national requirements.”

## 6.2 Key Terms

**Accreditation type** is the classification for BSSS endorsed courses, such as (T) tertiary, (A) accredited.

**Achievement standards** provide an indication of typical performance at five different levels (corresponding to grades A to E) following completion of study of senior secondary course content for units in a subject.

**A Courses** have been deemed by the Board to be educationally sound and appropriate for students in years 11 and 12.

**Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector.

An **ASBA** is an Australian School-Based Apprenticeship available for school students, 15 years of age or over, providing the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised vocational qualification by combining paid work and training as part of their education program. An ASBA is classified as an E Course.

**C Courses** are competency-based courses. They are Board endorsed VET courses that deliver the competencies from a particular Training Package that may lead to the completion of a qualification or a Statement of Attainment. Students receive a Pass (P) if they achieve a competency and Participated (Q) if no competencies are achieved. Both P and Q graded units can contribute to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

**E Courses** are courses which lead to a nationally recognised vocational qualification (VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment) that are delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or ASBAs through either college-based RTOs or external RTOs.

**Frameworks** are system documents for years 11 and 12 which provide the basis for the development and accreditation of any course within a designated learning area. In addition, frameworks provide a common basis for assessment, moderation and reporting of student outcomes in courses based on the framework.

**M Courses** are modified courses. These courses provide appropriate educational experiences for students who satisfy specific intellectual disability criteria.

**Qualification** in this context refers to the nationally recognised vocational education qualification (VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment) that may be achieved from an RTO.

**Registered Training Organisation (RTO)** is a training provider registered by ASQA (or a state regulator) to deliver VET services. RTOs provide training and qualifications that are nationally recognised.

**R unit** is a registered unit. It is a learning experience designed to develop capabilities for students in years 11 and 12.

A **subject** is a discrete area of study that is part of a learning area. There may be one or more subjects in a single learning area.

**Statement of Attainment** is the acknowledgement of completed VET competencies when a full qualification has not been completed.

**T Courses** are courses that have been deemed by the Board to prepare students for higher education. T Courses contribute to an ATAR.

**Training Package** refers to the requirements for completing an industry recognized qualification or Statement of Attainment. Training Packages are recognised nationally and are developed under the auspices of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

**V Courses** are vocational courses that deliver training in workplace specific skills and knowledge which can lead to a vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Vocational programs accredited by the Board may be classified as A, T, M or C.

## 6.3 VET Courses for ACT Senior Secondary Colleges

### VET Courses for ACT Senior Secondary Colleges

Course	Type
Automotive Technology	A/M/V
Business Services	A/M/V
Construction Pathways	A/M/V
Construction Pathways	C
Furniture Construction	C
Data Science	A/T/V
Design and Technology	A/T/M/V
Design and Textiles	A/T/M/V
Digital Technologies	A/T/M/V
Digital Products	A/M/V
Furniture Making	A/M/V
Horticulture	C
Hospitality	A/T/M/V
Hospitality Industry	C
Live Production Services	C
Media	A/T/M/V
Metal Products	A/M/V
Music Industry	C
Musical and Stage Performance	C
Networking and Security	A/T/V
Outdoor Recreation	C
Pathways to Work and Learning	A/M/V
Robotics and Mechatronics	A/T/M/V
Social and Community Work	A/M/V
Sport, Recreation and Leadership	A/M/V
Tourism and Event Management	A/T/M/V

## 6.2 Long Term VET Data for ACT Senior Secondary Students

### Long Term VET Data for ACT Senior Secondary Students

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>ACT CERTIFICATED</b>	4062	3927	4260	4266	4343	4329	4249	4283	4304	4407	4422	4448	4473	4374	4297
<b>SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATED AND COMPLETED A VET COURSE</b>															
<b>ATMV</b>	2146	2010	2088	1828	1920	1835	1834	1672	1920	1824	1605	1567	1430	1332	1182
<b>C</b>	0	0	0	0	88	133	118	151	183	221	257	267	222	230	250
<b>TOTAL ATMVC</b>	2146	2010	2088	1828	1961	1893	1886	1739	1975	1888	1725	1690	1555	1448	1326
<b>SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATED AND COMPLETED A VET COURSE AND A VET CERTIFICATE</b>															
<b>ATMV</b>	1199	1012	1008	941	981	939	894	781	790	803	690	675	576	541	461
<b>C</b>	0	0	0	0	38	55	51	62	61	86	92	98	86	110	86
<b>TOTAL ATMVC</b>	1199	1012	1008	941	995	951	911	801	805	822	735	708	614	582	512
<b>SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATED AND A VET COURSE AND A VET COMPETENCY</b>															
<b>ATMV</b>	1887	1763	1759	1595	1736	1708	1729	1529	1668	1571	1367	1323	1200	1067	950
<b>C</b>	0	0	0	0	87	128	109	144	174	200	241	227	204	213	212
<b>TOTAL ATMVC</b>	1887	1763	1759	1595	1776	1762	1774	1593	1716	1627	1479	1422	1307	1169	1065
<b>% SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATED STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED A:</b>															
<b>VET COURSE</b>	52.8%	51.2%	49.0%	42.9%	45.2%	43.7%	44.4%	40.6%	45.9%	42.8%	39.0%	38.0%	34.8%	33.1%	30.9%
<b>VET CERTIFICATE</b>	29.5%	25.8%	23.7%	22.1%	22.9%	22.0%	21.4%	18.7%	18.7%	18.7%	16.6%	15.9%	13.7%	13.3%	11.9%
<b>VET COMPETENCY</b>	46.5%	44.9%	41.3%	37.4%	40.9%	40.7%	41.8%	37.2%	39.9%	36.9%	33.4%	32.0%	29.2%	26.7%	24.8%
<b>% STUDENTS STUDYING VET WHO COMPLETED A VET CERTIFICATE</b>															
<b>ATMV</b>	55.9%	50.3%	48.3%	51.5%	51.1%	51.2%	48.7%	46.7%	41.1%	44.0%	43.0%	43.1%	40.3%	40.6%	39.0%
<b>C</b>					43.2%	41.4%	43.2%	41.1%	33.3%	38.9%	35.8%	36.7%	38.7%	47.8%	34.4%
<b>TOTAL ATMVC</b>	55.9%	50.3%	48.3%	51.5%	50.7%	50.2%	48.3%	46.1%	40.8%	43.5%	42.6%	41.9%	39.5%	40.2%	38.6%
<b>% STUDENTS STUDYING VET WHO COMPLETED A VET COMP</b>															
<b>ATMV</b>	87.9%	87.7%	84.2%	87.3%	90.4%	93.1%	94.3%	91.4%	86.9%	86.1%	85.2%	84.4%	83.9%	80.1%	80.4%
<b>C</b>					98.9%	96.2%	92.4%	95.4%	95.1%	90.5%	93.8%	85.0%	91.9%	92.6%	84.8%
<b>TOTAL ATMVC</b>	87.9%	87.7%	84.2%	87.3%	90.6%	93.1%	94.1%	91.6%	86.9%	86.2%	85.7%	84.1%	84.1%	80.7%	80.3%

The trends are more clearly revealed in the highlighted rows. The data reveals that the introduction of C Courses did not reverse the trend and did not lead to a significant increase in the number of students undertaking VET courses.

## 6.3 BSSS Certification Data for A/T/M/V and C Courses 2018-2020

	<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Average</b>
Number of graduates with a USI who completed a course	A/T/M/V	1446	1272	1123	
	C	169	165	196	
Students who completed a qualification in the course	A/T/M/V	565	480	415	
	C	53	88	69	
Qualifications completed in the course	A/T/M/V	721	649	538	
	C	62	100	79	
Students who completed a competency in the course	A/T/M/V	1299	1096	929	
	C	157	161	175	
Competencies completed in the course	A/T/M/V	19464	17454	14126	
	C	2479	3357	3109	
% of students completing a qualification	A/T/M/V	39.1%	37.7%	37.0%	37.9%
	C	31.4%	53.3%	35.2%	40.0%
% of students completing a competency	A/T/M/V	89.8%	86.2%	82.7%	86.2%
	C	92.9%	97.6%	89.3%	93.3%
Rate - Qualifications per course	A/T/M/V	0.50	0.51	0.48	0.50
	C	0.37	0.61	0.40	0.46
Rate - Competencies per course	A/T/M/V	13.46	13.72	12.58	13.25
	C	14.67	20.35	15.86	16.96