

Equal Learning. Equal Outcomes. Equal Status.

Improved support and recognition of externally provided Vocational Education and Training (VET) to ACT Senior Secondary Students

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) has put in place improvements to benefit ACT senior secondary students undertaking external VET including Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASbAs).

The improvements will mean:

- VET outcomes will be of equal status with all other Board accredited courses.
- Students will have their time at work and competency achievements added to their academic record on a regular semesterly basis.
- Through an improved and transparent process previously unrecognised/unknown VET outcomes will be recorded on ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (ACT SSC).
- Students, families, and schools will be able to more effectively plan and monitor student VET pathways and progress in a clear, timely, and student-centred way.

The Context

The BSSS is responsible for accrediting and quality assuring all courses and units that contribute to the ACT SSC. All students can develop transferrable skills and understanding of their use in different contexts, through curriculum that embeds the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities. All courses including *E Units* listed on the on the ACT SSC are subject to quality assurance processes. What is included on a student's certificate must be fair when compared to their peers.

Recent national reviews, including the *Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into work, further education and training* and the *Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System* led by the Hon Steven Joyce, recognised the importance of VET in providing alternative vocational pathways to secondary students.

However, these reviews also raised concerns that VET in schools *"is of inconsistent quality, difficult to navigate, and not well integrated into senior secondary studies. VET qualifications delivered in schools need to meet clearly defined standards and deliver or contribute to credentials that are accepted in the labour market. (Senior Secondary Pathways Review 2020, page 76).*

The improvements that have been made to the recognition of VET on the ACT SSC have clearly defined expectations and standards drawn from an extensive evidenced based review conducted in 2021. VET integrated into a BSSS course will be quality assured through system moderation. External VET will contribute to a course equivalent and be quality assured through the completion of competencies which will be recorded as *E Units*. VET recognition of the hours completed on-the-job will be recorded as *W Units*.

Students will be able to undertake VET in all the ways they currently do, with the added certainty and security that the improvements provide.

To meet these new requirements:

RTOs need to

Supply competency completion information to a student's school once a semester.

Employers need to

Supply hours of work information to a student's school once a semester.

Schools need to

Record work hours and competency completion information for each student once a semester.

Students need to continue

Working hard in their training and workplace, and let their school know what they are doing.

These changes will improve the consistency, integration, and contribution of VET to the ACT SSC credential. The BSSS in partnership with schools will be providing plannability, predictability, and protections. This is what students deserve.

No guess work. No wondering. No missed opportunities.