



ACT BOARD OF SENIOR SECONDARY STUDIES

**Guide to Vocational Education and Training
in ACT Colleges**

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

VET is the teaching and learning of a curriculum specific to the world of work. VET is a national system with qualifications that are recognised and can lead to employment anywhere in Australia.

VET courses are based on national Training Packages that are designed to meet industry standards across Australia and they are endorsed by specific industry areas.

Completion of a VET course leads to the achievement of nationally-recognised qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

[Training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au) is the National Register on VET in Australia. [Training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au) is the authoritative source of information about: Training Packages, qualifications, units of competency, accredited courses and skill sets.

THE ACT SENIOR SECONDARY SYSTEM

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies is responsible for the certification of senior secondary school students in government, Catholic and independent schools in the ACT.

The Board is a strong advocate of Vocational Education and Training (VET) as a learning opportunity for ACT senior secondary students to access relevant, high quality and nationally recognised qualifications that strengthen their pathways to further education and employment.

The Board recognises the value of VET programs 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 colleges 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.

The Board defines vocational programs as structured and sequenced training that has been nationally endorsed. All Board classified vocational programs (A/V, T/V, M/V, C or E) lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment and are registered on the national database training.gov.au.

Those aspects that of VET delivery, either in schools or externally, that fall within the role of an RTO are not the responsibility of the BSSS.

Students can undertake VET courses in years 11 and 12 with the completion of VET competencies providing credit towards both a recognised VET qualification and a Senior Secondary Certificate. The Board of Senior Secondary Studies certifies VET qualifications and Statements of Attainment on behalf of ACT colleges that are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or schools that have Third Party Service Agreements with college RTOs.

The Board also recognises VET qualifications delivered by external RTOs and facilitates the allocation of credit toward the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, based on hours of training and assessment.

Students in Year 10 may participate in VET courses and achieve qualifications where schools form partnerships with ACT colleges that are RTOs. The Board of Senior Secondary Studies produces the certificates for VET qualifications and Statements of Attainment achieved. These courses do not contribute to the Senior Secondary Certificate.

THE BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS OF STUDYING VET

Students are able to receive a nationally recognised VET qualification while working towards the Senior Secondary Certificate. Board accredited vocational programs undertaken during years 11 and 12 can contribute to the requirements for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement.

VET can strengthen education by giving the opportunity to gain practical skills and knowledge.

VET qualifications provide industry exposure and experience in the workplace that reinforces skills development.

Through the study of VET students also develop employability skills that can be applied across different jobs and industries -- such as teamwork, problem solving, self-management, initiative and enterprise. VET can lead to full-time, part-time or casual employment opportunities and may also lead to further study at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) or university depending on the student's goals.

RECOGNITION OF VET IN THE ACT SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATE

There are a range of policies and procedures to ensure that VET study undertaken by students during Years 11 and 12 through college RTOs or external RTOs can contribute towards the requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

a) Formalised

The credit for VET is based on the specific course undertaken by the student, up to a maximum of eight standard units from any one industry and/or course area. More credit for courses may appear on the Senior Secondary Certificate, but only eight are counted towards meeting the requirements for the Certificate. BSSS accredited vocational courses are developed in consultation with CIT and local industry advisers to ensure that they assist student transitions to work and further education. The courses are based on the units of competence as defined in the relevant Training Package and are grouped into semester (55 hours) units for delivery and assessment purposes. Vocational courses can be studied as minor courses (minimum of 110 hours) up to double major courses (minimum of 400 hours).

The BSSS registers vocational programs delivered by external RTOs as E Courses. Students enrolled in these courses receive credit towards the unit and course requirements for an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate based on the competencies achieved and hours of participation in the training.

b) Unspecified

Where a student obtains other vocational qualifications from an external RTO during years 11 and 12, recognition towards the Senior Secondary Certificate is given as an E course, the value of which is determined by the BSSS based on the hours of training and assessment. The student must be enrolled in the college while undertaking the program.

How much VET can count towards a Senior Secondary Certificate?

A maximum of eight standard units from the study of VET courses delivered by an external RTO may contribute towards the 17 points required for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Students can have as many standard units as they have credit for printed on their certificate.

Contribution of VET in the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate to tertiary entrance

VET courses with embedded competencies contribute to the requirements for a Tertiary Entrance Statement and ATAR where the course has been accredited by the BSSS as preparing students for higher education. A maximum of eight standard units can be used from any one industry area towards the 20 points required for an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement.

VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Vocational courses must be assessed in accordance with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* and the guidelines outlined in the relevant training package. Students undertaking A, T and M accredited vocational courses will be assessed against the criteria and achievement standards referenced in the relevant framework to produce A-E grades and scores. They will also be assessed against competency standards as described in the relevant training package.

The BSSS certifies VET that is:

- listed on the national training.gov.au website, and delivered and assessed by an ACT college, which is an RTO with scope from Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to deliver specified qualifications
- delivered and assessed by a high school partnering with an ACT college RTO, with a Third Party Service Agreement (TPSA)
- delivered and assessed in accordance with relevant Training Package requirements.

Vocational learning contributes to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate in a variety of ways:

- BSSS accredited A, T, and M vocational courses with embedded competencies delivered by colleges and are reported with A–E grades
- BSSS accredited C courses (competency assessment only) delivered by colleges are reported with the grade ‘Pass’ where at least one competency is achieved by the student; or ‘Participated’ where no competencies are achieved but assessment and attendance requirements are met
- BSSS E courses recognising study at external RTOs are reported with the grade ‘Pass’
- Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) are reported as E courses with the grade ‘Pass.’

The BSSS credit arrangements recognise VET studies externally:

- through direct credit when the qualification or Units of Competence relate to a VET course that is being studied by the student
- towards the Senior Secondary Certificate, providing the VET does not duplicate school-based study.

Vocational qualifications are certificates that bear the Nationally Recognised Training logo and are achieved by students meeting the requirements as described in the relevant vocational course and industry specific Training Package. Vocational qualifications certificated by the Board include Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III and Statements of Attainment. Vocational qualifications report the relevant competencies demonstrated by the student.

For vocational qualifications, the following principles apply:

- RTOs must comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015
- students demonstrating all required competencies in the VET qualification packaging rules, and where applicable SWL requirements, will receive a vocational Certificate
- students demonstrating some of the required competencies in the VET qualification packaging rules will receive a Statement of Attainment for the specified qualification
- competence must be demonstrated over time and in the full range of industry context. To be deemed competent in a unit, students must demonstrate all the performance criteria within the documented range statements and assessment contexts
- Vocational Qualifications (Certificates or Statements of Attainment) must include:
 - Nationally Recognised Training Logo
 - provider number of the Registered Training Organisation (the college)
 - college principal's signature.

The Board of Senior Secondary Studies produces the certificates and statements after provision of accurate data from colleges.

MECHANISMS FOR THE DELIVERY OF VET

Directly by an RTO

i. School which is an RTO

A number of government colleges and non-government schools in the ACT are RTOs. As such, they must meet the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015. Schools must demonstrate that their VET teachers have the relevant qualifications and specific competencies, industry currency and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In addition, colleges must have scope to deliver the course and meet any other requirements and including the physical resources specified in the Training Package.

ii. CIT

A number of students undertake vocational studies through the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) while enrolled in senior secondary studies at a college. These opportunities may be developed and promoted by the home college or accessed by the student through their own initiative. Any competencies achieved are given direct credit if the student is studying a related VET course of study at the school. Credit may also be given in the form of E units, in accord with BSSS policies, where there is no duplication of content with school-based study.

iii. Other RTO

A number of students undertake vocational studies through an external RTO while enrolled in senior secondary studies at a college. The same conditions apply as for the delivery of VET by CIT or a TAFE.

By the school in partnership/auspice arrangement with an RTO

Where colleges are not RTOs or do not have the necessary infrastructure to deliver a Training Package, they may form a partnership in the form of a Third Party Service Agreement with another RTO for the delivery of part or all of the qualification.

SCOPE TO DELIVER VET PROGRAMS

Colleges in the ACT may deliver VET programs once they have completed an extensive registration process conducted by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to become a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Once registered, college RTO's are granted scope to deliver specific qualifications from National Training Packages.

ASQA will grant scope on the basis of an RTO's ability to meet the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 and the relevant industry training package. Human resources (teacher qualifications, capabilities and industry currency), assessment and communication systems, and physical resources (tools, equipment and teaching environment) are primary considerations in the granting of scope. Alternately colleges may form a partnership with another RTO for the delivery of part or all of the qualification.

UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER (USI)

All students undertaking a VET course are required to have a Unique Student Identifier (USI). The USI is a 10 digit alpha numeric reference number unique to each student. The USI is linked to the national VET data collection system and provides students with access to, and control over, future training records. The USI is designed to continue to track progress in vocational education after students leave school. Access to this Australian Government portal is at <https://www.usi.gov.au/>.

STRUCTURED WORKPLACE LEARNING

Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) is the workplace component of a nationally recognised industry specific VET program. It provides supervised learning activities contributing to an assessment of competence, and achievement of outcomes and requirements of a particular Training Package. Not all courses require SWLs.

The following conditions relate to SWL in Board courses:

- to gain credit for SWL, a student must be enrolled in a directly related VET program and have reached the level of achievement indicated in the relevant BSSS accredited course SWL unit
- a student must be awarded an A-E or Pass/Participated (C Course) grade in the associated BSSS accredited VET unit for the Structured Workplace Learning unit to be awarded, otherwise the SWL will be recorded as Work Experience
- students will be awarded a grade Pass or Participated in the Structured Workplace Learning unit
- structured Workplace Learning units are awarded in multiples of 0.5 standard units up to a maximum of 4 Structured Workplace Learning units, equivalent to 2 standard units, per course. The SWL component cannot be greater than 50% of the course.
- the maximum contribution of Structured Workplace Learning units to the minimum requirements for a Senior Secondary Certificate is 4 standard units
- as an integral part of a vocational program, the Structured Workplace Learning units will be reported with the associated course on the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

- within T courses, Structured Workplace Learning units do not contribute to course type or course score. Only the T units are used for the 80% rule in the calculation of a course score and in the determination of course types e.g. minor, major.

See *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual Appendix 4 Guidelines for Structured Workplace Learning*.

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIPS (ASBAs)

ASBAs offer students, 15 years of age or over, the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised vocational qualification by combining paid work and training as part of their education program.

An ASBA can fit within a student's study program whilst at school and count toward their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

Training is provided by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). This may be the school, CIT or a private provider.

A Certificate II qualification requires a minimum of eight hours (equivalent to one day) in the workplace and a minimum of three hours off the job training per week. A certificate III qualification has a greater time and work commitment and may require further work and study after the completion of Year 12.

a. Structure

Some students complete the formal training component through their home college as the RTO by studying a BSSS accredited VET program. Other students complete their training with an external RTO and gain credit as an E course.

b. Contribution to the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate

The on and off-the-job components of ASBAs are recognised on the Senior Secondary Certificate, up to a maximum of eight standard units in the relevant industry area may contribute towards the 17 points required for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. Students can have printed on their certificate as many standard units as they have credit for.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework as:

Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit.

Credit is defined by the AQF as:

Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

Recognition of competence through the RPL process is granted to students through gathering supplementary evidence against elements, skills and knowledge from the Training Package as well as through established assessment. RPL may be granted for individual Units of Competence where the evidence is sufficient to do so.

A student having been granted RPL for one or more Units of Competence will still be required to fulfil the time-based component of units that contribute to points and A to E grading for the Senior Secondary Certificate <https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/rpl-explanation.pdf>.

BSSS POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

The *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual* is updated annually and the most recent version can be found on the website. This is the reference document for specific and up-to-date details about policy and processes relating to Vocational Education and Training and the ACT Senior Secondary System.

The *BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual* provides VET information including:

- Advisory Bodies -Vocational Education and Training Committee (1.3.1)
- Assessment in Vocational Programs (10.2.6)
- BSSS Vocational Programs (10.2)
- C Courses (3.2.5.4; 3.3.6.4; 10.2.10.2.2)
- Certification of Vocational Programs (10.2.10)
- Credit Transfer (10.2.8)
- Delivery of Vocational Programs (10.2.5)
- Duplicate Courses and content (4.3.14.5)
- E Courses (3.2.7.2; 3.3.6.5; 10.2.3; 10.2.10.2.4)
- Moderation of Vocational Programs (10.2.9)
- National Training Packages (10.1.2)
- National VET System (10.1)
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (10.1.1)
- Recognition of Prior Learning (10.2.7; 10.2.7.1)
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (10.1.3)
- Reporting of Vocational Programs (10.2.10.2)
- Structured Workplace Learning (3.2.5.5.1; 10.2.4)
- Unit Grades (A-E), Participated (Q), Pass (P) (4.3.6.3)
- VET Delivered to Secondary Students (10.1.5)
- Vocational Certification (10.2.11)
- Vocational Programs (3.2.5.5; 10)
- W Units (3.2.5.5.1; 10.2.4).

APPENDIX A - CLASSIFICATION OF BSSS COURSES

A and T Courses

A classification courses have been deemed by the Board to be educationally sound and appropriate for students in Years 11 and 12.

T classification is given to an accredited Year 11 and 12 course which is considered by the Board to prepare students for higher education.

M Courses

M classification courses (Modified courses) are designed for students who satisfy ACT Education Directorate Disability Criteria accepted as a common definition for census and other system processes by all sectors, public and non-government. Refer to Disability Standards for Education 2005.

H Courses

H classification is given to a Year 11 and 12 course which is designed and accredited by an Australian university and where successful completion of the course will be recognised towards an undergraduate degree. H courses may contribute to a student's ATAR calculation and the units may contribute to the college course.

C Courses

C classification is given to a Board accredited vocational education and training program appropriate for students in Year 11 and 12, which is delivered and assessed by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and registered by the Australian Quality Skills Authority under the Australian Quality Training Framework.

E Courses

E classification is given to all externally delivered courses which lead to a nationally recognised vocational qualification (Certificate or Statement of Attainment) delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation.

R Units or Courses

R classification is given to a unit or course which is appropriate for students in Year 11 and 12, and is usually designed to provide personal development, recreational or community service activities.

Vocational Studies

A, T, M, C, E and **R** courses can be part of a learning program which leads to a Vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

APPENDIX B - 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 & Technology	A/T/M/V
Design & 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
Information Technology	C
Live Production Services	C
Media	A/T/M/V
Metal Products	A/M/V
Music Industry	C
Musical & Stage Performance	C
Networking & Security	A/T/V
Outdoor Recreation	C
Pathways to Work & Learning	A/M/V
Robotics & Mechatronics	A/T/M/V
Social & Community Work	A/M/V
Sport, Recreation & Leadership	A/M/V
Tourism & Event Management	A/T/M/V

APPENDIX C - COMPETENCY BASED ASSESSMENT

Competency Based Assessment

The assessment of competence must focus on the competency standards and the associated elements as identified in the Training Package. Assessors must develop assessment strategies that enable them to obtain sufficient evidence to deem students competent. This evidence must be gathered over a number of assessment items. Competence to industry standard requires a student to be able to demonstrate the relevant skills and knowledge in a variety of industry contexts on repeated occasions. Assessment must be designed to collect evidence against the four dimensions of competency.

- **Task skills** – undertaking specific work place task(s)
- **Task management skills** – managing a number of different tasks to complete a whole work activity
- **Contingency management skills** – responding to problems and irregularities when undertaking a work activity, such as: breakdowns, changes in routine, unexpected or atypical results, difficult or dissatisfied clients
- **Job/role environment skills** – dealing with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment when undertaking a work activity, such as: working with others, interacting with clients and suppliers, complying with standard operating procedures or observing enterprise policy and procedures.

The most appropriate method of assessing workplace competence is on-the-job in an industry setting under normal working conditions. This includes using industry standard tools, equipment and job aids and working with trade colleagues. Where this is not available, a simulated workplace environment that mirrors the industry setting will be used. The following general principles and strategies apply:

- assessment is competency based
- assessment is criterion-referenced.

Quality outcomes can only be assured through the assessment process. The strategy for assessment is based on an integration of the workplace competencies for the learning modules into a holistic activity. The awarding of vocational qualifications is dependent on successful demonstration of the learning outcomes within the modules through the integrated competency assessment that meets the Training Package rules and requirements.

The integrated assessment activity will require the learner to:

- use the appropriate key competencies,
- apply the skills and knowledge which underpin the process required to demonstrate competency in the workplace,
- integrate the most critical aspects of the competencies for which workplace competency must be demonstrated, and
- provide evidence for grades and or scores for the Board course component of the assessment process.