Vocational Education and Training in NSW schools – providing skills and opportunities

A statement of purpose
Vocational Education and Training in Schools – Providing Skills and Opportunity

The NSW Government is committed to preparing young people to take their place in the workforce and continue on to further training. It is a key priority of the NSW Government to increase the proportion of students completing Year 12 or recognised vocational training to 90% by 2016.

Industry throughout NSW strongly support students' participation in VET while still at school, with the involvement of over 20,000 employers, through structured workplace learning programs.

One of the NSW Government's major innovations in recent years has been to expand opportunities for vocational education and training (VET) in NSW schools and to broaden the provision of VET for school students in Years 11 and 12. HSC VET students can now work towards both a nationally recognised qualification and the Higher School Certificate as well as maintaining eligibility for entrance to university.

By carefully targeting VET for school students we are assisting young people to get a taste of what interests them and meets their aptitudes – supporting their career decisions, providing a head start, and making their transition into the workforce much easier.

Choosing to study VET courses and work toward a qualification while still at school allows students to develop industry-recognised skills, whilst providing young people with a diverse range of post-school pathways. Evidence indicates that Year 11 and 12 students who undertake VET as part of their HSC have better job prospects than those who do not.

VET in Schools in NSW

VET in schools has grown dramatically in recent years. VET courses not only appeal to the interests and aptitudes of young people, they also reflect the realities of the jobs market and its shifting demands for skills and training.

Today, one in every three students in Years 11 and 12 in NSW schools is undertaking a VET course as part of their HSC. In 2013, close to 70,000 students in NSW (across all the school sectors) took one or more vocational courses during Years 11 and 12. Of these, 3,800 school students undertook school-based apprenticeships across all trades or school-based traineeships in over fifty qualifications.

HSC VET courses are generally offered by schools, TAFE NSW or other private Registered Training Organisations in a wide range of trade and industry areas, including those with skill shortages. Around 80 per cent of students undertaking HSC VET are enrolled in Industry Curriculum Framework courses in automotive, electro technology, financial services, human services, construction, metal and engineering, hospitality, information and digital technology, business services, primary industries, tourism and events, retail services and entertainment industry. These courses have a mandatory work placement component.

Students in NSW Government schools enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools courses have their training delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). RTOs are required to meet national regulatory requirements which stipulate the national standards that need to be met to be registered to deliver VET courses.

When VET delivery occurs on the school site, that delivery is most commonly delivered by a NSW DEC Public Schools NSW RTO. Around 80% of all VET in Schools delivery is carried out by school based RTOs. All delivery is by accredited VET teachers.

There are some 415 school delivery sites across the NSW Government schools RTOs. Across these delivery sites there are 46 qualifications being delivered. Other RTOs deliver VET to school students, most notably TAFE NSW. Other private or community RTOs also deliver training.
Move from a model of 10 RTOs to a new model of 4 RTOs.

In 2013, Public Schools NSW implemented a new organisational model to provide support to NSW government schools. Part of this new model is how our RTOs will operate.

The previous model of 10 RTOs which mirrored the previous 10 Education Regions has changed to 4 RTOs.

The 4 RTOs are:
- RTO 90162 - Public Schools NSW, Tamworth
- RTO 90072 - Public Schools NSW, Ultimo
- RTO 90222 - Public Schools NSW, Macquarie Park
- RTO 90333 - Public Schools NSW, Wagga Wagga

School to Work program

The NSW Government’s School to Work program assists students in Years 9 -12 to make informed decisions about their future through a range of programs including work experience and careers counselling. Some schools are extending this approach to students in Years 7-8. There are four key areas of the Program:

Planning transition pathways: supporting students to develop confidence in self-managing their career and transition planning.

Exploring career futures: providing students with access to people, opportunities and a variety of media to assist them to process information about work, education and training options.

Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning: supporting teachers to identify and provide a range of opportunities for students to make explicit links to vocational and enterprise learning in all curriculum areas.

Building networks and connections: strengthening career, community and workplace learning opportunities for students through strategic connections, partnerships and networks.

Students have access to a Careers Adviser, work education curriculum and a range of resources to enable them to plan their transition through and from school. These resources also help students to document their employability skills and career and transition planning and to develop their resumes for job and course applications.

The Transition Adviser Initiative under the School to Work Program supports targeted students who need additional support. The initiative provides specialised training of a teacher from a school who works as a member of their school’s Career and Transition Team. They help students reengage and plan their transition from school, working closely with other members of the Team such as the Careers Adviser and relevant people beyond the school.

The availability of VET courses in Years 9 and 10 is of particular benefit in the planning of pathways by students who will now stay on at school as a result of the increase to the school leaving age in NSW, requiring students to participate in education, training or employment until the age of 17. In 2013 there are close to 2000 students in Years 9 or 10 involved in early commencement of HSC VET courses.

VET in schools increases student retention from Year 10 to Year 12

Research indicates that the majority of former VET students said that the option to study a VET subject influenced their decision to stay on at school to Year 12.

VET in schools improves student transitions to further study and work

HSC VET students are successfully gaining entry to a wide range of study and work placements.

We know that VET students go on to university or move directly into post-school VET courses. Some become apprentices or trainees, and some go into the workforce without further study.

HSC VET students are more work-ready than other school leavers

Employers agree that VET courses give students a competitive edge. They particularly value the competencies and employability skills gained by these students.

Students and employers value work placements

NSW leads Australia in the provision of work placement. More than 80 percent of HSC VET enrolments have access to a minimum of 70 hours work placement to improve their skills. Each year, around 20,000 NSW employers provide more than 50,000 work placement opportunities for some 2 million hours of structured work placements for students.

HSC VET helps to tackle trade skill shortages

Many HSC VET students gain qualifications in trade-related occupations where there are skill shortages – e.g., automotive, hospitality and manufacturing. Others, including school based trainees, are enrolled in qualifications that provide credit transfer towards an apprenticeship.

School based apprenticeships

Students can undertake Certificate III level training as part of their HSC. This enables school based apprentices to complete the equivalent of the first year of a full-time apprenticeship.
School based apprenticeships are available in a number of areas including metal and engineering, electro technology, hairdressing, automotive, construction, and hospitality.

**Improving transition to work and further study for Aboriginal students**

There is a stronger focus on improving the transition of Aboriginal students from education into skilled employment and further study. The latest full year enrolment figures available (2012 school year) indicate that

- Indigenous student enrolments in NSW VET in Schools courses increased by 13.2% compared to 2011. (4555 students in 2011 to 5160 students in 2012)
- The number of qualifications (Certificates I, II, III or IV) or Statements of Attainments obtained by indigenous students increased by 23.5% compared to 2011. (772 students in 2011 to 954 students in 2012)

**Working with industry and employers to ensure highly valued VET courses of work placements available to students**

Improving networks and forging stronger links between schools, local businesses, industry, TAFE and the community is a high priority. Currently some 20,000 employers support VET for our secondary students by participating in the NSW Structured Workplace learning (SWL) Program.

The effort involved in securing opportunities for our students with local employers is coordinated in 30 Service Regions’ across NSW by contracted Not-For-Profit organisations.

These Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs) make connections between employers and schools and are responsible for supporting employers to offer over 2 million hours of SWL for secondary students in NSW schools each year.

**Work Placement Ready**

Go2workplacement (www.go2workplacement.com) assists students enrolled in HSC VET courses to get the most out of their work placement. Prior to embarking on their work placement, students complete a range of online modules to identify specific skills and competencies to focus on during their time in the workplace. After completing the go2workplacement program students receive a Work Placement Ready Certificate that can be used to let their host employer know they have prepared for the work placement and the skills and competencies they want to experience.

**Industry standard trades training equipment and facilities**

Students enrolled in VET courses at some 300 school sites are able to complete their training utilising industry standard equipment and facilities.

**Industry Training Centres** have been established on 16 school and TAFE sites in regional areas of NSW including the Central Coast, Central West and the Illawarra. Students are able to access training in a range of industry areas including hospitality, construction, primary industries and metal and engineering.

The NSW Trade Schools initiative established 26 specialised centres in schools and TAFE NSW Institutes. These centres enable enhanced training in industry areas such as construction, automotive, engineering, electro technology, hospitality and health care.

In the five rounds of the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program, the Commonwealth has provided over three hundred million dollars in funding to NSW Government schools to fund some 130 projects involving 267 NSW government schools. In addition to single school projects, many schools have clustered to increase student access to training across a broader range of industry areas. Whilst most training is delivered in construction, metal and engineering, primary industries and hospitality some clusters offer hairdressing, automotive and electro technology courses.

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**More information on VET in schools can be found at:**

www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools

www.tafensw.edu.au/courses/types/tvet.htm

Or contact the Senior Pathways Unit in the Secondary Education Directorate at:

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