VET Programs for Secondary Students are most commonly aimed at entry level training, work to develop pathways to post school careers, concentrate on transferable skills and look to continually reinforce the key competencies and personal attributes that employers keep saying are important to them to see in young people looking to work in their industries.

What we used to call ‘VET in schools’ has grown dramatically since 2001. Currently, one in every three students in Years 11 and 12 in NSW schools is undertaking a VET course as part of their Higher School Certificate (HSC). Currently there are close to 70,000 enrolments in VET courses across schools in NSW.
WHAT DOES VET CURRICULUM LOOK LIKE IN A SCHOOL SETTING?

All VET courses (curriculum) for secondary school students in NSW are either developed or endorsed by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) for inclusion in the RoSA or Higher School Certificate.

These courses are developed in close consultation with stakeholders including industry and employers prior to endorsement. The course content is determined by the content of national training packages so as to ensure that qualifications and statements of attainment gained by students meet all national standards.

Approximately 80% of students undertaking HSC VET are enrolled in an Industry Curriculum Framework Course. While there are 13 of these ICF VET courses - eight are offered through schools’ RTOs in construction, metal and engineering, hospitality, information and digital technology, primary industries, business services, retail and entertainment. These courses have a mandatory work placement component, count towards a student’s ATAR or Australian Tertiary Admission Rank and also provide the opportunity for a student to receive either a Statement of Attainment (SOA) or a full qualification in the course studied.

A range of VET courses, often targeting local industry skill requirements in areas such as accounting, automotive, child studies, hairdressing, nursing and aged care, are Board Endorsed (non-framework) courses that contribute to the Record of School Achievement or Higher School Certificate, but not to a student’s ATAR.

NSW has a Work Education syllabus for Years 7 to 10 which provides students with the opportunity to develop and knowledge and understanding of the world of work, the diverse sectors within the community, and the roles of education, employment and training systems.

There is a range of courses available for elective study at Years 9 and 10, which include applied learning and/or a vocational focus. There is also an opportunity for work experience.

NSW has a Work Studies syllabus for Years 11 to 12 which supports students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence to make a successful transition from school to work and further education and training. The syllabus includes: my working life; career planning; performing work tasks; working with others; and managing change.

Curriculum Value Adding - Structured Work Placement

Work placement is a mandatory BOSTES requirement for 13 Higher School Certificate Industry Curriculum Framework courses. Currently over 60,000 students from across the three education sectors are enrolled in these courses. Students spend 35 hours each year in the workplace to meet this mandatory requirement. Currently 15 not-for-profit organisations, Work Placement Service Providers, undertake work placement coordination on behalf of NSW schools. Each year, some 30,000 employers provide 2.2 million hours of work placement for student enrolled in VET courses.

VET Delivery in the NSW School Sector

The majority of VET for secondary school students is delivered in the Government school sector, and through school-based RTOs (Registered Training Organisations) which have direct responsibility and accountability for compliance with the VET Quality Framework. About one third is delivered by TAFE NSW, with a small amount delivered by private RTOs.

VET is only delivered by RTOs which meet national standards. In government schools VET is delivered through four large RTOs which were registered by ASQA in 2014.

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
Structured Workplace Learning

Both Structured Work Placement or Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and the more general Workplace Learning forms part of the NSW secondary school provision and are available to students from Years 9, 10, 11 and 12. Workplace Learning includes, but is not limited to work experience, career and enterprise education programs, community learning and student mentoring programs. Structured Work Placement refers to contextual workplace learning for certain HSC VET courses, conducted by employers in the workplace. The Structured Work Placement process is assisted through both the brokerage services of Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs) and an on-line tool: www.Go2workplacement.com

Structured Workplace Learning is a key objective of the NSW Government to improve linkages between schools, local business, industry, TAFE NSW and local communities.

NSW sees itself as leading Australia in the provision of work placements. More than 80% of HSC VET enrolments complete 70 hours of mandatory work placement over two years to improve their workplace skills. Students studying a VET course in Year 11 only complete 35 mandatory hours of work placement.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships require a specified number of days as an apprentice or trainee, with a minimum number of days of paid employment of 100 days, or as specified by the relevant Vocational Training Order. This enables students to complete the first year of an apprenticeship (and they are then able to progress to second year post-school or a traineeship. The NSW DoE workplace learning policy covers all forms of workplace learning undertaken while at school, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The policy is available at www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/lum/workplace_learn/wrkplc_tern/PD20050016.shtml

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBATs) enable students to attain a nationally recognised VET qualification as well as their Higher School Certificate (HSC) while gaining valuable work skills and experience through paid employment. The SBAT in NSW program has been supporting school based apprentices and trainees since 2000. Each year, around 2500 students participate in the program.

The SBAT in NSW program provides students with a head start on training and valuable experience in their chosen career. Employment-based VET for secondary students, particularly the school based apprenticeship model, promotes strong transition pathways from school to employment due to continued engagement with industry and training throughout and post school.

SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEEHSIPS IN NSW – A CAREER HEAD START FOR STUDENTS

Trade Training Centres

In the five rounds of the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program, the Commonwealth has provided approximately $300 million in funding to NSW Government schools to fund some 140 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. While most training is delivered in construction, metal and engineering, primary industries and hospitality, some projects also offer training in hairdressing, automotive and electro-technology. Through this program, there has been a dramatic improvement in facilities and resources in these schools to support the delivery of VET. While funding for this Commonwealth program has ceased, the facilities endure.

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VOCATIONAL LEARNING - Career Education and Pathway Planning

Vocational learning helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career options and pathways, and build career development skills. Vocational learning includes career education and work-related curriculum as well as workplace and enterprise learning opportunities and the development of general employability skills.

The NSW Government’s School to Work program supports vocational learning. It assists students in years 9-10 in:
- Planning transition pathways – supporting students to self-manage their career and transition planning.
- Exploring career futures – providing students with access to a range of resources and opportunities related to work, education and training options.
- Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning by supporting teachers to identify and provide opportunities for their students.
- Building networks and connections by using strategic connections, partnerships and networks.

The ‘School to Work’ website maintained by Public Schools NSW provides advice for students, teachers and parents and carers. In particular, it assists students in Years 9 to 12 to make informed decisions through a range of programs including work experience and careers counselling. Some schools extend this approach to students in Years 7 and 8. Students are encouraged to document their employability skills and career and transition planning and to develop resumes for job and course applications.

Each year more than 400 government schools report on their School to Work activities. A yearly report is available at https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/about/reports.html.

The NSW Government provides funding support for School to Work in government schools, and in 2015, $2.9 million was allocated to support School to Work activities and innovative, whole school initiatives to ensure that students were able to establish the foundations for a future career.

Every government school with secondary enrolments (central schools as well as secondary schools) has a staffing allocation of a teacher-careers adviser, based on enrolment numbers. Most high schools have a full time careers adviser whose scope of work is directed by the principal. The Department, through the Learning and Teaching Directorate, supports a K-12 career development continuum and a whole school career and transition team approach. While most careers-related activity is concentrated in Years 9-12, there is some career-related learning occurring in some primary schools and some primary-secondary connections.

A significant number of government secondary schools also have a teacher trained by the Department as a Transition Adviser to support targeted students in their school, particularly those most likely to disengage early from education or training, to plan their transition from school. Their work complements the role of the Careers Adviser. Transition Advisers focus on individual support and making links in the broader community to support successful transition of targeted students.

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