

Joint Ministerial Statement

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Future Directions for Vocational Education and Training in Queensland Schools

August 2004

Vocational education and training (VET) is playing an increasingly valuable role in helping young people move from school to further education, training and employment. As more young people choose to stay at school it is important that we make school more relevant to a wider range of students, not just those who intend to go to university. Vocational education and training gives young people practical opportunities to explore career paths and to develop the skills and attributes they will need as part of the future workforce, and as such it can benefit all school students.

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future make clear our goals and aspirations for young people. That is, that they achieve a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification during their senior phase of learning. As a key element in achieving this, we also said that more young people undertaking vocational education and training at school would achieve qualifications that were highly regarded by industry.

Recently, the Queensland Government asked the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), in conjunction with the Training and Employment Recognition Council, to develop a better way to accredit and deliver vocational education and training in our schools.

Students need access to a package of vocational education and training programs that will lead to qualifications and that include work placement to ensure that these programs meet industry standards.

We have received the QSA's advice and we are pleased to present our decisions on the future directions for VET in Queensland schools.

This will mean:

- more students exit with recognised VET qualifications, and with qualifications at Certificate III level if possible
- qualifications obtained through VET in Schools programs will receive better recognition from industry
- QSA will have sustainable processes in syllabus development, support and advice to schools to ensure qualifications are current
- pathways through VET to further education and employment will be stronger than at present, and
- more VET study options will be available to students, including the option for school students to enrol in a Certificate III level qualification that can be completed post-school at a registered training organisation.

The QSA will write separately to schools with advice regarding implementation.

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The QSA will move from embedding VET in Authority-registered subjects to encouraging schools to deliver qualifications directly from nationally accredited training packages.

The current embedded VET model used by QSA to support schools offering VET programs has been very successful and extremely effective in driving the VET agenda in Queensland schools. However, now that the national training package model is fully operational, it is essential for schools to use the model recognised by industry and employers.

The QSA will identify the VET qualifications from the national training packages that are best suited to delivery by our schools. This will increase industry's confidence in high quality vocational education and training qualifications achieved by young people. This initiative will mean that students on leaving school will have greater access to qualifications at the Certificate III level and above.

The QSA will redesign study area specifications. Schools can offer VET certificates and/or vocational learning strands. Vocational learning strands will not include accredited VET competencies but will allow students the opportunity to develop generic employability skills.

The QSA will ensure access to current VET qualifications.

Each national training package changes approximately every three years to keep pace with the needs of industry and a contemporary labour market. The QSA and schools need to be able to respond to these changes, and must ensure that the courses offered reflect the most current VET qualifications. Over the next two years, the QSA will package its advice to schools with respect to VET options so schools can quickly and readily respond to changes. Greater access to training packages will be possible for all schools under these new curriculum design arrangements.

VET achievements will contribute to the achievement of the new Senior Certificate.

In 2006, Queensland will introduce a new Senior Certificate which will capture a wider range of student achievement. All VET qualifications will contribute to the achievement of the new Senior Certificate.

The QSA will highlight 'best practice' models for delivery of VET in schools.

The QSA will highlight features of good practice for the organisation of work placements and effective use of resources and will present models for the delivery of VET programs in schools and in partnership with other VET providers. Schools and school sectors will be informed of innovative and good practice for student transitions from school to further study and employment. This will ensure students can access the best options available to them.

The QSA will provide work placement guidelines for schools.

The development of a set of guidelines for the implementation of work placements by schools will be of great value to both employers and schools. The set of work placement guidelines will be available to all schools by 2006. Research on the characteristics and effectiveness of quality work placement models currently in use will be conducted to ensure that students receive the best opportunities in all future programs.

Better recognition of VET outcomes for post-school pathways.

The Government is determined to see the development of clear pathways to tertiary study that include better recognition of VET undertaken at school. We will be inviting an expert group to examine current tertiary entrance practices and how VET achievements are recognised for post-school pathways. We are confident that a way forward will be found and the challenges overcome.

Schools will be encouraged to partner with other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in the provision of VET programs.

Schools will be encouraged to develop and maintain stronger links with registered training organisations to enable them to offer students access to a wider range of VET programs, particularly those at Certificate III level and above. This is already happening through the trials involving the Department of Education and the Arts and the Department of Employment and Training in the development of the District Youth Achievement Plans. Schools and TAFE institutes are working together to better coordinate educational planning for 15–17 year olds at the local level, and to provide better program support for VET delivered to school students. We remain committed to ensuring that funding arrangements across the education and training sectors provide the best opportunities possible for young people.

School authorities will provide support to schools for implementation.

School authorities will be asked to have clear implementation plans for VET in their schools. Effective support for the delivery of VET will ensure the three school sectors together with TAFE make changes to their structures and practices over the next few years. This will improve program quality, make more effective use of existing resources and support students in their transition to work and further study.

We will ensure the inclusion of VET in pre-service programs.

The review of the Board of Teacher Registration currently underway, will consider how knowledge of VET programs in the school context and industry specific training can be included in all pre-service teacher education programs for secondary school teachers. The review will also examine how VET teachers are able to be registered to teach in Queensland schools.

Conclusion

The changes we have outlined will strengthen students' access to a comprehensive range of vocational and training options to support their choice of pathway to higher education, further training and employment. Local communities will continue to work with schools to help young people access quality training and successfully transition to further education, training and employment.

These changes are part of the Queensland Government's commitment to 'ensure young people are either learning or earning'. They will help us meet our Year 12 or equivalent completion targets and at the same time help young people move smoothly and successfully on to the next phase of their lives.

Information

Office of the Minister for Education and the Arts

Office of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations

ETRF VET in Schools Project report is available on the QSA website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au

More information on the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) is available at <http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/>