

# PREPARING SECONDARY STUDENTS FOR WORK

Vocational education and training (VET) in secondary school is critical to ensuring students are equipped with the skills that meet the needs of Australia's future workforce.

In 2014, Education Ministers endorsed *Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students*. The framework aims to ensure all secondary students have access to quality vocational learning and VET courses.

## QUICK FACTS

In 2016:

- 226,100 secondary students undertook VET subjects and courses as part of their school curriculum
- 17,200 secondary students undertook a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

## VET DELIVERED TO SECONDARY STUDENTS

VET provides secondary students with an opportunity to acquire workplace skills and knowledge through nationally recognised training while they are still at school. VET can also count towards a student's Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, which means they can potentially graduate with two qualifications recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Despite jurisdictional variations, VET is delivered to secondary students in two main ways:

- Students undertake VET subjects and courses as part of their school curriculum
- Students undertake a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

## VET SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Students who undertake VET subjects and courses as part of their school curriculum may complete or partially complete a nationally recognised qualification while they are at school. Those that partially complete a qualification have the option of completing it after they graduate from school.

VET is delivered to secondary students in a variety of locations, including classrooms, workplaces and external registered training organisations (RTOs). This requires collaborative partnerships with employers and RTOs, because students must have access to industry-standard equipment and people with relevant and current industry experience.

Only RTOs are authorised to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications in Australia's VET system, so RTO partnerships are critical for the delivery of VET to secondary students. Some schools become RTOs in their own right to streamline this process.

## AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIPS

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships are a great career option for secondary students, because they can start training for a nationally recognised qualification and earn a wage while completing their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

Students undertake a combination of secondary school subjects, paid work and nationally recognised training (delivered on and off-the-job). School-based apprenticeships and traineeships are available in over 500 occupations, including traditional trades.

Students negotiate time-release from their school subjects to attend work and training, and the number of hours they are employed per week differs between states and territories.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships can take between one and four years to complete. Some students complete their training while they are at school, while others finish their training after they graduate from school.

School-based apprentices and trainees are usually employed under a federal or state award or agreement. Their wage depends on a number of factors, including the year of training they are in (e.g. first year, second year etc.), the type of apprenticeship or traineeship they are undertaking and the industry they are working in.

## VET QUALITY STANDARDS

VET delivered to secondary students is identical to VET offered in any other context, and the same VET quality standards apply.

## AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS

The Australian Training Awards are the peak national awards for the VET sector, recognising individuals, businesses and RTOs for their contribution to skilling Australia. The awards are held annually, and the following categories are available to schools and students who are involved in VET:

- School Pathways to VET
- VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year
- Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year.

More information about the Australian Training Awards can be found on pages 38-39.

## KEY WEBSITES

- Australian Apprenticeships  
<https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/>
- Australian Training Awards  
<https://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/>
- Preparing Secondary Students for Work  
<http://www.pssfw.myskills.gov.au/>
- Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships Information Service.  
<https://www.aapathways.com.au/>

## RELATED TOPICS

- Australian Apprenticeships
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Awards and Competitions
- Registered Training Organisations