

VET in Schools good practice models

La Salle College

La Salle College is a co-educational Catholic school in the Swan Valley.

Established in 1954, La Salle College is committed to providing outstanding opportunities for its students, ensuring it caters for the diverse educational, physical, social and spiritual needs of each young person in its care.

La Salle College has been providing its students with Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs for 10 years.



School profile

- Approximately 1400 students
- Years 7–12
- Year 11 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 53%
- Year 12 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 55%

Key strategic directions for La Salle College include continuing to develop a culture of excellence where all students have the confidence and support to reach their personal best, and extending the horizons of learning for students, taking them into business, industry and community and innovative educational settings.

VET in Schools is an important part of the way in which La Salle College is achieving these key strategic directions. It is promoted as a realistic and viable senior secondary option, particularly for those students who do not anticipate going to university straight after school.



Program background

La Salle College offers a large range of training qualifications to increase the opportunity for students to have their individual needs, interests, strengths and aspirations met in senior school. All students are offered the opportunity to study VET programs.

The college provides students with a vocational pathway in which Year 11 students are offered mainly certificate I level qualifications and Year 12 students offered mainly certificate II level qualifications (some of which may require completion of the certificate I in Year 11).

Student training options are increased through participation in ONSITE INC specialist programs, which are certificate II and/or III level.

Program partners

La Salle is a member of a seven school cluster that employs ONSITE INC to facilitate the coordination, placement and supervision of students undertaking workplace learning. This partnership arrangement also runs three specialist programs – Dream Factory, the Playground and Health Assist. The VET programs are structured as a vocational pathway in which students can progress from a certificate I in Year 11.

This partnership:

- has a formal constitution between ONSITE INC and all the cluster schools;
- employs an ONSITE representative as a cluster leader who is responsible for managing the program and addressing any student workplace issues on behalf of member schools;
- meets monthly to discuss and resolve any issues in the cluster;
- enables the schools to work together to create viable class sizes to access profile delivery, thereby increasing the range of VET qualifications available to students;
- does not involve any full time equivalent exchange;
- is funded through a school and student contribution; and
- supports member schools through an induction program for students and information evening for parents.



Program features

Course structure

Students participating in the ONSITE program:

- enrol in the 1A and 1B Workplace Learning course in Year 11 and 1C/1D in Year 12;
- attend industry/commercial work placements one day a week for two 16 week blocks in Year 11 and the same in Year 12;
- maintain the ONSITE logbook of their work experience;
- are assessed on their work related skills by their workplace supervisor; and
- complete the Certificate I in Business in Year 11 and the Certificate II in Workplace Practices in Year 12.

Students can also choose to participate in the following specialist ONSITE programs:

- Dream Factory which enables students to complete the Certificate II in Construction Pathways.
- Playground which enables students to complete the Certificate III in Children's Services.
- Health Assist which enables students to complete the Certificate II in Health Support Services and Certificate III in Health Support Services.

(Students must be enrolled in Years 11 and 12 to complete these qualifications.)

The majority of other VET qualifications are offered as Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) credit transfer, with several integrated in courses.

Student entry requirements

Students interested in participating in the ONSITE program must attend a workplace learning interview and meet the following entry requirements:

- complete an application form, placement form and student care form;
- demonstrate an acceptable level of work readiness; and
- pass an aptitude test for the electrical specialist program.

There are no formal entry requirements for other qualifications offered by the school, however, students need to attend a VET Student Induction session provided by VET teachers at the school.



Student selection process

Students who have applied for the ONSITE programs Dream Factory, Playground or Health Assist must undergo a formal selection process which includes an interview. Students are assessed on their work readiness, suitability to their chosen industry area and their ability to commit to a two year program.

All students are provided with a range of career development, advice and counselling activities to help them choose from a range of courses and VET qualifications that best suit their abilities, needs and aspirations.

These activities begin in Year 8 and include:

- Career Development and Transitions classes for one period a week for Years 8 to 10;
- Try a Trade programs in Year 10;
- industry guest speakers and work experience in Year 10;
- Year 10 course selection interviews for choosing senior secondary study program; and
- individual career counselling sessions on request for all year groups.



Parent liaison

Parent engagement and involvement in college activities, including VET in Schools, is an important part of La Salle College's ethos. The college engages with parents through:

- parent information sessions for each year group and for parents of students participating in the ONSITE program;
- Year 10 course selection interviews;
- updates about their child's progress and VET in Schools activities via email, phone and face to face meetings;
- annual surveys about the college's performance, which includes feedback on VET in Schools programs and career counselling services;
- encouraging/supporting parents to offer work experience and work placements to college students through the Friends of La Salle College network; and
- being present at and participating in individual career counselling sessions.

Program results

In 2012 La Salle College had a certificate II or higher completion rate in Year 12 of 89% and was ranked 29th of all schools in Western Australia.

A La Salle student also won a bronze medal in the VET in Schools Tourism category at the 2012 Worldskills Australia National Competition held in Sydney.

Lessons learnt

- The success of a program is about the staff – if the staff are not willing to take on the program and support it, it will not work.
- Resistance from staff who do not want to undertake the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment can be overcome – sell the vision of the benefits of teaching the VET qualification first and then sell the benefits of achieving the Certificate IV.
- A cluster arrangement works well to assist the college to access profile delivery for its students.
- Having a neutral leader in the ONSITE cluster helps to mediate the different needs of member schools.
- Partnerships work most effectively when they are based on common goals, good communication, the willingness of partners to contribute and be open, and there is a stability of personnel.
- Working with industry associations and training councils can help provide students with a realistic picture of what is required to complete VET qualifications and work in specific industry areas.



Critical success factors

<p>Leadership, continuity and partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college has a five year strategic plan that includes specific outcomes, measures and action items relating to VET in Schools. • VET in Schools resourcing is aligned to meet current and future training needs, including the requirements of a Trade Training Centre. • Strong forward and succession planning includes having a minimum of two teachers in a learning area with a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.
<p>Student cohort and parent liaison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are provided with a broad choice of VET qualifications in most learning areas as an alternative to courses. • The college has the goal of having at least one VET qualification on offer in each learning area. • Enrolment trends in the college's courses of study are monitored and, where appropriate, VET qualifications are offered in areas of declining enrolments to ensure students still have access to a viable alternative.
<p>Vision, place and configuration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given its proximity to one of Western Australia's premier tourist regions, the college offers its students vocational qualifications and pathways that link to local industry opportunities as well as broader skill shortage areas. • The college is committed to ensuring that its training offerings are linked to real post school employment, training and education opportunities and only offer VET qualifications that lead to a viable post school pathway.
<p>Flexibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new work, assessments or exams are held on 'ONSITE Tuesday' when students in this program are off campus.
<p>Course content, structure and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given the opportunity to provide feedback about VET qualifications at the end of delivery of each qualification and through Year 12 student exit surveys. This feedback is evaluated and used to continually improve courses. • An evaluation process, including capturing information about student preferences through career counselling sessions, is used to inform the choice of VET qualifications offered by the college.

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