Mater Dei College is a Catholic co-educational college established in 1993. The college offers a rich program in Catholic Education based on the pillars of faith, community service and learning.

Mater Dei College believes in the dignity and the nurturing of the individual.

The college has been providing Vocational Educational and Training (VET) in Schools for 15 years and sees VET in Schools as a positive, viable pathway for their students.

**School profile**

- Approximately 1000 students
- Years 7–12
- Year 10 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 28%
- Year 11 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 48%
- Year 12 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 39%

Mater Dei College values the education and formation of the whole individual. The college aims to provide programs to meet the needs of students of all academic levels, to give them the opportunity to achieve their full potential in a supportive education environment. Delivering VET in Schools allows the college to provide students with individual pathway plans to assist them in transitioning from the college to employment or further training and education.
Program background

Mater Dei College is committed to providing educational opportunities for students to enable them to establish a strong foundation upon which to base their journey into a world beyond the college.

The college offers a range of training opportunities to their students commencing in Year 10. VET in Schools programs include endorsed programs, school based apprenticeships/traineeships, standalone certificate I and II qualifications, or qualifications integrated within School Curriculum and Standards Authority courses. The college has a comprehensive career education program to support its students to enable informed decision making.

Students’ VET choices are increased through the college’s membership with CareerLink.

Program partners

Mater Dei College has been a member of CareerLink for 15 years. Careerlink is a joint school-industry training initiative of the Northern Suburbs Cluster of Schools. CareerLink has partnership arrangements with both private and State training providers and provides VET in Schools programs and workplace learning for students of member schools.

This partnership:

- has a memorandum of understanding between CareerLink and all the cluster schools;
- employs CareerLink to facilitate the coordination, placement and supervision of students undertaking a VET in Schools program with a training provider or workplace learning under the CareerLink program;
- employs a CareerLink representative as a cluster group leader who is responsible for managing the program and addressing any student workplace issues on behalf of member schools;
- requires members to meet quarterly to:
  - resolve any issues in the cluster group;
  - plan for and evaluate VET programs on offer; and
  - collectively decide what VET programs they would like CareerLink to offer the following year.
- enables the schools to work together to create viable class sizes so students have more training options;
- does not require member schools to provide CareerLink with teaching staff;
- is funded through the school and student contribution; and
- is supported through an induction program for new students and parents, facilitated by CareerLink.

1 The Northern Suburbs Cluster of Schools includes eight other Catholic and Independent schools.
**Program features**

*Course structure*

Students participating in the CareerLink program have the opportunity to undertake a VET qualification and/or workplace learning. Students undertaking a VET qualification commence their nominated course at a registered training organisation (RTO) one day a week from February to June in Year 11 or 12.

Students participating in CareerLink workplace learning:

- commence their workplace learning in June one day a week for 15 days in Year 11 or 12;
- complete a total of 110 hours in the workplace, achieving a minimum of 20 employability skills with at least one from each of the nine categories;
- complete a skills logbook to capture tasks undertaken;
- submit their logbook to the host employer for assessment and the CareerLink School Coordinator weekly for verification purposes; and
- complete two units towards their Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

CareerLink also offers a Career Awareness Program for Year 10 students. This work readiness program is especially targeted at students hoping to continue further studies with a training provider when they leave school. Students enrolled under this program:

- gain work employability skills and work experience in an area of interest;
- attend a training provider one day a week in Semester 1;
- complete 17 days or 110 hours of work experience in Semester 2; and
- complete the Certificate I in Business in Year 10.
Student entry requirements

Due to the requirements associated with participating in the CareerLink program, students undertake a comprehensive application and selection process. Students must submit the following information and forms as part of the student application package:

- most recent school report;
- references from two teachers;
- career guidance assessment – mapping requirements of chosen career with the student’s current skills and strengths;
- signed student contract – both parent and student’s signatures are required;
- signed health care form – both parent and school coordinator signatures are required; and
- a WorkSafe certificate.

Students who are successful in the application process are able to demonstrate:

- evidence of their ability to succeed in school subjects;
- readiness for workplace learning;
- evidence of regular school attendance;
- a positive attitude towards the community, school, teachers and peers;
- evidence of research/investigation into chosen area of training course and workplace learning; and
- basic knowledge and understanding of the industry selected for the training course and workplace learning.

Applicants are notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

There are no set entry requirements for all other qualifications offered by the college, although the college prefers that the student has a:

- C grade average; and
- low absenteeism record.

This requirement is assessed on an individual basis.

Student selection process

Students meeting the CareerLink program entry requirements attend an interview with the CareerLink representative. Students are expected to bring their portfolio with them to the interview. The portfolio should include things such as:

- work and learning samples – records of activities they have undertaken relevant to the area of study;
- certificates of academic/special interest or sporting achievements;
- references from employers or community associations; and
- a career plan outlining the steps they plan to take to reach their future career goal.

The purpose of the interview is to learn more about the student and determine:

- the student’s knowledge of the program and their chosen career path;
- the reasons why the student has applied for the program;
- if the student has a genuine interest in the program;
- whether the student has the capacity to undertake the program (match their skills/attributes to the skills required for the job); and
- what the student hopes to achieve from the program.
The college provides a range of comprehensive activities and services to assist students in course selection and guidance with career pathways options. These activities commence in Year 7 and include:

- having students develop their own career portfolios set up using Mac Books. Students save all their researched career information, useful links and resources into these portfolios and the information builds up over the years;
- Career Coaching modules – These modules commence in Year 7 and all heads of year are part of the program. There are five themes students work through during their time at the college:
  - Years 7–8 Personal development – students learn to manage their school curriculum together with extra-curricular activities;
  - Year 9 Classroom induction – guest speakers from industry groups;
  - Year 10 Exploration – students apply to do work experience, explore trades and future professions for a week, attend short courses, seminars and expos (this includes the WA Careers Expo and Skills West Expo and a CareerLink Expo) to enhance their knowledge of the working world; and
  - Years 11–12 Transition and exit plans – students work with the Career Counsellor and their parents to look at future employment, education and training options. Each student establishes a transition and exit plan;
- individual career advice and counselling to students commencing in Year 9;
- Social Skills in the workplace by Image Power Australia – 20 week program offered to students in Year 10 that also targets students with disabilities. Students learn basic social skills, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace and to improve personal communication;
- Try-a-Trade days in Year 10;
- WIKI – on the intranet for students to access career information;
- a Careers Corner segment in the weekly newsletters advertising VET related opportunities, news and programs on offer; and
- a well resourced Career Centre at the college with computers provided for resume writing and extensive resources available so students can research information on post school pathways and careers.

**Student support**

The college employs a part time CareerLink School Coordinator who assists with the administration of CareerLink at the college.

The CareerLink School Coordinator is responsible for:

- liaising with CareerLink staff, students and parents;
- preparing students for applications to enter the CareerLink program;
- scheduling student interviews and arranging industry representatives for the interviewing panel in liaison with CareerLink;
- reporting student absences for CareerLink to student administration;
- regularly monitoring CareerLink students to ensure they are progressing through the program;
• monitoring the progress and performance of CareerLink students in school subjects, in liaison with subject and homeroom teachers;
• scheduling fortnightly individual meetings with each student during work placement weeks, to check progress, discuss and assess the logbooks; and
• scheduling group meetings with CareerLink students twice a year to disseminate important information and provide progress reports for VET courses and Workplace Learning.

Students under the CareerLink program have timetabled VET/CareerLink periods to allow them to catch up on school subjects. Students who misbehave or are not performing can be withdrawn.

Parent liaison
Mater Dei College believes parental engagement is a critical factor in successful student outcomes.

Parental involvement has been embedded into the processes and procedures of the CareerLink program in the following ways:
• before a student is accepted into the CareerLink program parents must read and complete the CareerLink application form, the Mater Dei College CareerLink Agreement and student health form;
• parents are invited to the CareerLink expo with their child; and
• two progress reports a year are sent to parents.

The progress of Year 10 students on the Career Awareness Program is monitored monthly. Parents are contacted if the CareerLink School Coordinator has concerns with their child’s progress. Students with disabilities in this program are provided with an assistant that attends the training provider with them.

Program results
In 2012 Mater Dei College had a certificate II or higher completion rate in Year 12 of 97%.

Lessons learnt
• It is time consuming.
• Make sure you support your students.
• Adapt a program if you need to.
• Continually review how students perform during the year.
• Good organisation skills are critical.
• Regular parent contact is important.
• You need to have supportive staff and open communication.
## Critical success factors

### Leadership, continuity and partnerships
- The Principal has strong support and involvement in the VET in Schools program.
- VET is embedded into the college’s culture with students and teachers supporting VET in Schools programs.
- Long term critical partnerships with clearly defined roles (for example, the college’s partnership with CareerLink).

### Student cohort and parent liaison
- Students are provided with a broad range of VET qualifications in most learning areas as an alternative to courses.
- The college has established partnerships with specific training organisations to meet the needs of the different student cohorts, including Aboriginal students and student with disabilities.
- Parents are invited to their child’s subject counselling session in Year 10.

### Vision, place and configuration
- The college works with each student to establish a transition and exit plan. A plan is prepared and reviewed to encourage students to be more responsible for managing their own education.
- All students leave with a career portfolio and all documents necessary to apply for employment or further training and education.

### Flexibility
- The college has a seven day rotating timetable. This ensures that students do not always miss the same classes.
- The college has a buddy program for VET in Schools students, so each student has an allocated partner to collect notes from class if they are away.
- No new work, assessments or exams are held on Fridays – the allocated ofsite day.

### Course content, structure and evaluation
- The college has a Disability Coordinator to help tailor assessment for students.
- Student progress and performance is regularly reviewed so early intervention and assistance is possible.
- Students doing workplace learning under CareerLink have the opportunity to provide feedback in the evaluation section of their logbooks.
- The college conducts Year 12 student destination surveys looking at student pathway outcomes.

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