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# Education and Training in Victoria

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A guide for newly arrived young people and their families

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Produced by the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)  
3rd edition 2013

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*Education and Training in Victoria: A guide for newly arrived young people and their families* was first published as *A Guide for Newly Arrived Young People* by the then Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and first published in 1998.

In 2003, a version was updated and published by the members of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee's Refugee Young People and Transitions Working Group, in conjunction with the then Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.

CMY thanks all agencies that contributed to the production of this new edition.

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## Introduction

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This guide is designed to meet the information needs of young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds who are considering their future in Australia. It provides teachers, careers advisors, youth workers, community workers and other professionals with information about the Victorian Education system and potential pathways.

This guide was developed as a response to a perceived need among young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds for an introduction to, and overview of, the education and training system in Victoria. While there exists a vast range of educational and training options there is a lack of information and support available to assist people to 'map out' a structured, clear pathway between courses.

It is important to recognise that the traditional pathway through the compulsory school system and on to university is not the only pathway to professional qualifications or to a successful career. Many newly arrived young people do need extra time and support to gain a sufficient standard of academic English skills, to get used to the Australian education system or to make up for disrupted education in their country of origin.

There are some pathways designed to do exactly that. In this situation, it is always useful to keep an open mind about other pathways that may be better tailored to young people from migrant or refugee backgrounds, and avoid the disappointment of struggling in an inappropriate pathway. Different pathways will suit different people, and an essential first step is to be equipped with the relevant information.

# The Victorian Education System

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Australian Qualification Framework Level	School	Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Higher Education and University
1		Certificate I	
2	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (including VCE)	Certificate II	
3		Certificate III	
4		Certificate IV	
5		Diploma	Diploma
6		Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree Associate Diploma
7			Bachelor Degree
8		Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
9		Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
10			Masters Degree
11			Doctoral Degree

# 1. English Language Schools and Centres

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As a first step, many newly arrived young people with English language needs enrol in an On-arrival English program. On completion, people who wish to go on to further study or training make decisions about where they can find the most appropriate course.

## 1.1 New Arrivals Program

Permanent resident young people under 18 years of age who have been in Australia less than six months can study English through the New Arrivals Program at an English Language School or Centre, a government, catholic or independent school. The New Arrivals Program provides intensive English language programs in which students study subjects from the mainstream school curriculum. These programs aim to prepare students for the English language demands of mainstream schools and introduce them to schooling in Australia.

The Program is free and is usually for six to 12 months depending on their educational background and or refugee / humanitarian status. English language schools and centres are located in both Melbourne and regional Victoria. They provide full time courses for students and cater for both primary and secondary schools.

Enquiries regarding enrolment can be made at the English Language School or Centre closest to where the student is living. Once students complete the course, a transitions officer at the language school or centre will assist them to enrol in an appropriate mainstream school.

The Program is provided through the following Primary and Secondary English Language Schools, English Language Centres and New Arrivals Program sites:

- Ballarat New Arrivals Program
- Blackburn English Language School [www.blackburnels.vic.edu.au](http://www.blackburnels.vic.edu.au)
- Broadmeadows English Language Centre
- Brunswick English Language School
- Collingwood English Language School [www.collingwoodels.vic.edu.au](http://www.collingwoodels.vic.edu.au)
- Geelong English Language Program
- Glen Eira English Language School [www.gec.vic.edu.au/english-language-centre/7](http://www.gec.vic.edu.au/english-language-centre/7)
- Mildura New Arrivals Program
- Noble Park English Language School which has campuses in Noble Park, Springvale, Hampton Park and Cranbourne [www.nobleparkels.vic.edu.au](http://www.nobleparkels.vic.edu.au).
- Shepparton New Arrivals Program
- Westall English Language School
- Western English Language School [www.esl-wels.vic.edu.au](http://www.esl-wels.vic.edu.au)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Current at 12 Feb. 13

Students over 18 at 1<sup>st</sup> January in the year of enrolment are not eligible for enrolment. These young people may enrol in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) or AMEP Special Preparatory Program.

## 1.2 Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

Migrant and humanitarian entrant young people aged 16-25 can study English at the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) for 510 hours. Students at the AMEP have five years to complete classes. Students aged 16 or 17 may choose AMEP over an English Language School or Centre if they do not intend to go to a mainstream Australian school but would rather learn English and then seek work or work skills training.

AMEP in Victoria is run by Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES). The AMES Youth Program offers courses and activities for new arrivals aged 16 to 25 years of age. This specially designed program gives young people an opportunity to improve their English and settle into a new life in Australia. Students can enrol in the AMEP by contacting AMES on 13 26 37 or visiting an AMES site. A full list of AMES sites is available at [www.ames.net.au](http://www.ames.net.au).<sup>2</sup>

Students living in Northern Melbourne can access the Northern AMEP, which offers English courses about Australian society, culture and customs. More information about Northern AMEP is at [www.northernamep.com.au](http://www.northernamep.com.au).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.3 AMEP Special Preparatory Program

Refugee and humanitarian entrants between 16 and 24 years of age and with less than seven years of education are eligible for up to 400 hours additional English language tuition after accessing their 510 AMEP hours.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.4 After the New Arrivals Program

Staff at English Language Schools and Centres will recommend suitable schools for students at the end of their New Arrivals course. Many students enter a mainstream secondary school where they often receive further English support, particularly in schools that have high numbers of newly arrived students from non-English speaking backgrounds. These students are also usually supported through the senior secondary years to prepare them for further study or employment.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ames.net.au/learn-english/english-for-youth.html](http://www.ames.net.au/learn-english/english-for-youth.html) accessed on 12 February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> [www.northernamep.com.au/](http://www.northernamep.com.au/) accessed on 12 February 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Current at 12 Feb. 13

<sup>5</sup> Current at 12 Feb. 13

## 2. The Education System in Victoria

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In Victoria, all children must attend school from the ages of five to 17 years. Students may attend school for up to 13 years, spending seven years at a primary school (prep to year 6) and six years at a secondary school (year 7 to year 12).

In Victoria, there are a range of schools to attend: co-educational, single sex, religious, private and state government. There are also schools which cater to students with a learning or intellectual disability.

The Victoria school year consists of four terms, with short breaks of about two weeks between each term. There is a longer break during the summer when many Australians celebrate Christmas and this is over the December – January period. Primary School hours are usually between 9:00am to 3:30pm, Secondary school hours are usually 8:30am – 3:30pm Monday to Friday but these hours can vary between schools.

### 2.1 The Curriculum

All schools offer students a comprehensive curriculum designed to prepare students for further studies or work. The curriculum offers students a wide choice of subjects to suit their individual learning needs and abilities in the following Key Learning Areas:

- The Arts
- English/English as a Second Language
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages other than English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Studies of Society and Environment
- Technology
- Vocational Education and Training (available in most schools)

Student welfare coordinators provide advice and counselling on welfare matters. This might include making referrals to appropriate counselling services for students who have experienced trauma as a result of their refugee experience. Other support may include assistance with financial support for families who are experiencing financial difficulties. Overall, they help students to continue to make satisfactory progress at school.

## 2.2 Parent Information

Schools usually send out regular newsletters about school activities and they will hold *Parent Teacher Interviews* twice a year. This provides an opportunity for parents to meet their childrens' teachers and to ask questions about their progress.

Parents can ask for an interpreter to attend their child's parent teacher interview. Schools with large numbers of newly arrived students from non-English Speaking Backgrounds will have Multicultural Education Aides that speak community languages and can also provide information and assistance to parents on issues about their childrens' education.

## 2.3 Finding a primary school and enrolment

Most children attend a primary school close to their home. For government primary schools, a child is allocated a school in the neighborhood zone where they live. Neighborhood schools have an obligation to accept any student who lives in their zone.

School staff will provide parents and students with the appropriate enrolment forms. Several documents are required to enroll a child, including:

- Evidence of the child's date of birth
- Name and contact details of parents, guardians and emergency contacts
- Immunization Status Certification (this is evidence that the child has had vaccinations for contagious diseases)
- Health and welfare information (for example, if the child has asthma, diabetes, allergies, poor eyesight or hearing, specific custody arrangements)
- Information about the language(s) the child speaks (to help the school build on the child's knowledge).<sup>6</sup>

## 2.4 Students with special needs

The Victorian education system follows a policy of integration, meaning some students with physical or learning disabilities (special needs) are able to attend mainstream schools and receive assistance. There are also some Government schools that are for students with specific disabilities.

For information about enrolling a child with special needs visit the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) website

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/disabilities.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/disabilities.aspx)

## 2.5 More information

For more information about enrolling in a primary school and to find schools in a particular area, visit the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website.

[www.education.vic.gov.au/](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/)

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<sup>6</sup> [www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/living-in-victoria/education-and-childcare/primary-schools](http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/living-in-victoria/education-and-childcare/primary-schools) accessed on 13 Feb. 13

## Profile: Habib

*My name is Habibullah (Habib) Mohammadi.*

*I am 19 years old and arrived in Australia in 2007.*

*When I started at school in Australia, in grade 5, English was difficult to communicate in both writing and reading.*

*In year seven, I experienced discrimination from other students at school based on my accent, skin colour and Afghani background.*

*Currently I am completing year 11 and working hard academically. I am studying English as a Second Language at Cranbourne Secondary School.*

*My aim is to pursue a career working with in sport in developing countries or with migrant and refugee communities in Australia.*

### 3. The Victorian Secondary school system

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Secondary school starts at year 7 in Victoria. It is compulsory for all students to be engaged in education until they are 17 years of age.<sup>7</sup> After Year 10 and up to age 17 students must continue in approved education or be in full-time employment.

#### 3.1 Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is a two year certificate that can be studied in Year 11 and 12. Although VCE usually takes two years, there are cases where it can take longer to complete. Some English as Another Language (EAL) students find it easier to spread their VCE studies over three years so there is more time for their English to develop. Schools can advise students when this is appropriate.<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.2 VCE Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Students can undertake a vocational education and training (VET) qualification within their VCE program. These arrangements are known as VCE - VET.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/leaving.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/leaving.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

<sup>8</sup> This information is subject to change. Schools and other providers will have the most up to date information on the VCE and you can also visit the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) website at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au).

The VET qualification is focused on preparing students for employment. In general, they are more 'hands on' and practical than VCE studies which are more theoretical and which focus on preparation for tertiary study. Most secondary schools offer VET courses that contribute to satisfactory completion of VCE requirements and these courses are recognised nationally. There are over 40 VET industry areas available for study within VCE, and more are becoming available all the time.

For further information, contact the VCE Coordinator and the Careers Teacher at your local Secondary School.

### 3.3 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

On completion of all VCE assessment, an ATAR is calculated from each student's results. This is not a score, it is a rank relative to all other students in the state of Victoria and is used to allocate places in tertiary institutions. A student with an ATAR of 95 was ranked in the top 5% of students in the state. A student with a rank of 43 was in the top 67% of students in the state. Both students passed their VCE.

### 3.4 English as Another Language

Newly arrived students from non English speaking backgrounds usually choose English as Another Language (EAL) as their compulsory English study. A student is eligible to study EAL at Victorian secondary schools if both the following conditions are met:

- He or she has been a resident in Australia for no more than seven calendar years immediately prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January of the year in which the study is undertaken at Units 3 and 4
- English has been the student's major language of instruction for a total period of not more than seven years prior to the year in which the study is being undertaken at Units 3 and 4.

### 3.5 Adult students undertaking VCE

Students who want to undertake adult VCE must be at least 18 years of age at 1<sup>st</sup> January in the year they expect to complete their VCE. Students must have been absent from full-time secondary schooling for a minimum of one full school year. Part-time study the previous year is permissible.

Students who fit this criteria are then able to study a one year full time VCE course. To qualify for adult VCE, they must satisfactorily complete at least two units of EAL; and three sequences of Units 3 and 4 in studies other than English, two of which may be VCE VET sequences.

Some adult students choose to study extra units to improve opportunities for further study. Adult VCE is usually studied at a TAFE College, secondary college or by distance education.

### 3.6 Completion of senior secondary school in another country

Some students have already completed studies equivalent to Year 12 or higher in another country. These students can apply to the Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority, (VCAA) for recognition of equivalent study completed elsewhere. More information on credit for VCE studies and statements of equivalence can be obtained from the **Students Records and Results Unit** at the VCAA by telephoning **(03) 9651 4402**. If students believe they are eligible for a statement of equivalence, they should ask their school to make inquiries for them. Not all countries have their year 12 recognized by Australian universities.

### 3.7 More information

Each year the VCAA publishes a **Guide to the VCE**, at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/guide02/index.htm](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/guide02/index.htm) which is given to Year 10 students. This guide contains the most recent information about VCE and any changes for the following year. For further information, contact the VCAA Information Officer on 9651 4544 / 9651 4328 (for Melbourne callers) or 1800 134 197 (for country callers).

The above VCE information has been adapted from the EAL website of the Department of Education at [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/index.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/index.htm).

See this website for more detailed information on VCE which has been translated into 14 languages.

## 4. Victoria Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

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The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a senior school certificate that is based on applied learning. *Applied learning* means that it is a hands-on course that aims to develop skills, which will help get students ready for further education, training or employment.

VCAL has three levels – **Foundation, Intermediate and Senior** with senior being the highest level. Students start at a level which matches their needs and abilities for example, if students start at Intermediate level and successfully complete it, they can move up to senior level in Year 12. Each level would normally take a year to complete. . Foundation is equivalent to Year 10, Intermediate is equivalent to Year 11 and Senior is equivalent to Year 12.

Students who do VCAL are more likely to be interested in going on to training at TAFE, doing an apprenticeship, or getting a job after completing Year 12. VCAL's flexibility enables students to design a study program that suits their interests and learning needs. It is also available to other students; for example, those studying at a TAFE institute. Some TAFEs and community organisations offer an EAL VCAL course or a Community VCAL course respectively.

There are no entry requirements. Students can enter VCAL at a level suitable to their learning needs. Teachers and careers counselors will be able to assist in deciding which level is best for each student.

## 4.1 organisations offering VCAL

VCAL is offered by many secondary schools and TAFE Institutes in Victoria. Students need to make enquiries at their local school or TAFE to find out if VCAL is offered as a course of study. Students will be required to enroll at a school or TAFE, but may do so as part of their VCAL program at other places such as Adult Community Education organisations and other community-based organisations.

Students who undertake VCAL will develop a learning program with their teacher/careers counselor by selecting units and modules for each of the VCAL Strands, or subject areas. The following are VCAL strands of study:

- **Strand 1** – Literacy and Numeracy
- **Strand 2** – Industry Specific Skills
- **Strand 3** – Work Related Skills
- **Strand 4** – Personal Development Skills.

Students will be awarded satisfactory achievement for a VCAL unit when they have demonstrated competence at achieving the learning outcomes specified for that unit. If VCAL is completed at the senior level, then students may enroll in VCE Units 3 and 4 and elect to receive grades and study scores for those subjects.

## 4.2 VET in VCAL

Students completing VCAL are required to do a VET in schools (VETiS) subject or a SBaT. Students completing a VETiS subject as part of their VCAL are required to complete Structured Workplace Learning which is a work placement. The placement is usually for 100 - 120 hours and most students will do this for one day a week whilst completing their VCAL. Some students complete their work placement in a block of several weeks.

## 4.3 Part-time work and apprenticeships while enrolled in VCAL

Students can gain recognition and credit for part-time work while enrolled in VCAL. Some forms of work include:

- • part-time school based apprenticeship or traineeship
- • work placements
- • work experience.

## 4.4 VCAL Qualifications

A student will receive a VCAL Certificate at Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level if they successfully complete a learning program in each or any of these areas respectively. Students will

also get a *Statement of Results*, listing all VCE, VET and VCAL units, and a *Statement of Attainment* for VET or further education courses.

## 4.5 More information

Victorian Qualifications Authority Website [www.vqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vqa.vic.gov.au)

# 5. Apprenticeships and Traineeships

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An apprenticeship or traineeship is a training contract between an employer and an employee in which the apprentice or trainee learns the skills needed for a particular occupation or trade. An apprenticeship or traineeship can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis and can be used as a valuable stepping stone to start a career in an industry you want to work in.<sup>9</sup>

Examples of apprenticeships and traineeships:

- Bricklaying
- Carpentry
- Commercial Cookery
- Engineering (Mechanical)
- Engineering (Fabrication)
- Hairdressing
- Plumbing.

## 5.1 Apprenticeships

The main difference between apprentices and trainees is the level of commitment that is negotiated between both the apprentice / trainee and the employer.

Under an apprenticeship:

- An employer agrees to employ you for the term of the apprenticeship (usually three to four years) and to support you in your training for that period of time, and you agree to follow instruction and attend off-the-job and/or workplace-based training.
- If your employer sells the business during your apprenticeship, the new employer must continue with the training contract.
- Once the probationary period of the training contract has passed, all parties must agree in order for the contract to be cancelled.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/what.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/what.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

<sup>10</sup> [www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/difference.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/difference.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

## 5.2 Traineeships

Under a traineeship:

- An employer agrees to employ you for the term of the traineeship and to support you in your training for that period of time, and you agree to follow instruction and attend structured training.
- If the business is sold, the new employer does not have to keep you on as a trainee.
- Either party may cancel the contract by signing a cancellation form or letter stating the date of cancellation. Mutual agreement is not required.<sup>11</sup>

## 5.3 More information

- Australian Apprentice Job Pathways [www.aapathways.com.au/Home](http://www.aapathways.com.au/Home)
- Australian Apprenticeships [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)
- Group Training Association Victoria [www.gtav.com.au](http://www.gtav.com.au)
- Real Skills Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/realskillsvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/realskillsvictoria)
- Australian Apprenticeships Training Information Service - 1800 338 022 (free call)
- Skilling Australia - 13 38 73 (local call cost)

## 6. Vocational Education and Training (VET)

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The VET sector provides education and training in a wide range of interest areas, across a broad range of skill and educational levels. The majority of this is provided through TAFE Institutes but private Registered Training Organisations (RTO) also offer VET studies.

Training areas include:

- Agriculture, Animal Studies and Natural Resources
- Architecture, Building and Planning
- Art, Craft, Music, Dance and Drama
- Business, Economics, Administration and Sales
- Computing and Information Systems
- Education
- Engineering and Related Technologies and Surveying
- Health, Community and Welfare Services

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<sup>11</sup> [www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/difference.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/apprentices/Pages/difference.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

- Hospitality, Tourism, Transport and Personal Services
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Law and Security
- Manufacturing and Processing
- Sciences.

## 7. TAFEs in Victoria

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- Advance TAFE (formerly East Gippsland) – [www.advancetafe.edu.au/](http://www.advancetafe.edu.au/)
- Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE - [www.bendigotafe.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.bendigotafe.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx)
- Box Hill Institute - [www.bhtafe.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.bhtafe.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx)
- Centre for Adult Education - [www.cae.edu.au/web/](http://www.cae.edu.au/web/)
- Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE - [www.gippstafe.vic.edu.au/](http://www.gippstafe.vic.edu.au/)
- Chisholm Institute of TAFE - [www.chisholm.edu.au/](http://www.chisholm.edu.au/)
- Gordon Institute of TAFE - [www.thegordon.edu.au/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.thegordon.edu.au/Pages/Home.aspx)
- Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE - [www.gotafe.vic.edu.au](http://www.gotafe.vic.edu.au)
- Holmesglen Institute of TAFE - [www.holmesglen.edu.au/](http://www.holmesglen.edu.au/)
- Kangan Institute - [www.kangan.edu.au/](http://www.kangan.edu.au/)
- Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE - [www.nmit.edu.au/](http://www.nmit.edu.au/)
- RMIT (TAFE Division) - [www.rmit.edu.au/](http://www.rmit.edu.au/)
- South West Institute of TAFE - [www.swtafe.vic.edu.au/](http://www.swtafe.vic.edu.au/)
- Sunraysia Institute of TAFE - [www.sunitafe.edu.au](http://www.sunitafe.edu.au)
- Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE Division) - [www.swinburne.edu.au/](http://www.swinburne.edu.au/)
- University of Ballarat (TAFE Division) - [www.ballarat.edu.au/](http://www.ballarat.edu.au/)
- Victoria University (TAFE Division) - [www.vu.edu.au/](http://www.vu.edu.au/)
- William Angliss Institute
- Wodonga Institute of TAFE

## 7.1 Entry requirements

The educational and skill level required for entry to a TAFE course varies. It can range from students who:

- have not completed secondary education
- have interrupted education, including newly-arrived young people
- finished VCE
- finished VCAL
- have previous qualifications
- have relevant work experience.

All students who complete a TAFE course are awarded a certificate upon completion. A TAFE qualification is a national qualification recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. This means a TAFE qualification is recognized throughout Australia.

The qualifications from TAFE are:

- Certificate I
- Certificate II
- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma
- Bachelor Degree

## 8. English Language Studies

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TAFE Institutes also offer English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. These programs are for those who require further English and who may want to improve their chances of further study or employment. Often people have already completed an Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) or Language Centre course.

TAFE has a history of providing specialist programs for newly arrived young people who wish to learn English in a friendly and supportive environment with other young people. Programs may target both young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds with a history of disrupted schooling, as well as those who have completed secondary education and who may have commenced tertiary studies.

There are specialist ESL bridging programs offered for young people of refugee / newly-arrived backgrounds at:

- Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) - Young Adult Migrant Education Course (YAMEC) in Collingwood, Preston and Epping.
- Kangan Institute in Broadmeadows.
- Victoria University (TAFE) in Footscray and St Albans.
- Chisholm Institute in Dandenong.<sup>12</sup>
- Deakin University in Dandenong offers a bridging course for those wishing to study at university.

These programs recognise that young people may have had disrupted schooling and need a broad education course as well as English.

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<sup>12</sup> [international.chisholm.edu.au/EnglishLanguage/Pages/EnglishLanguageCentre.aspx](http://international.chisholm.edu.au/EnglishLanguage/Pages/EnglishLanguageCentre.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

## Profile: Peter

*My name is Peter Chibak Kur Mum. I am 25 years old. I am a Southern Sudanese Australian. I had a long journey from South Sudan to Uganda, then to Kenya and finally I arrived in Australia in 2003. I found the differences very hard, such as language, cultural and lifestyle. I came here with little English.*

*I went to a language school for a year and a support program called SAIL to assist me with English, and then to high school at Simonds Catholic Collage in North Melbourne. I started year 9 and I found it very difficult but really pushed myself to learn the English language.*

*I did VCE at St Bernard's College in Essendon but didn't get good enough marks to get into university. So I took a different path. I went to TAFE for one year to help me get into my dream course at university.*

*Some agencies help non-English speaking people like me as they focus on individual language needs, they supported me incorporating the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.*

*This is also important for community members who want to study at university or TAFE or work in a specialised area such as hospitality, information technology, aged care, hairdressing, financial services or other areas, accredited teacher and tutor training.*

*I joined the homework tutor and distance-learning services through TAFE which was of great benefit to me as it offers special facilities, including modern computer suites.*

*Last year I was so proud because I did a work placement at Foundation house with the Ucan2 program supporting young people of refugee background who have had disrupted education. I encourage them to follow a pathway like mine by going to TAFE because I know how much it will help them.*

*I believe that TAFE and agencies are playing a significant role in helping my community to gain skills and support themselves. In Victoria there are thousands of members of my community who need jobs but they need to learn skills to do the jobs. TAFE teaches them these skills and helps them to find work. Many young people offrom my community like me have difficulty getting a high mark to take them to university so one of the best ways for them is the TAFE way.*

## 9. University

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Universities offer a wide range of courses, some of which lead to specific occupations such as medicine, nursing or engineering, as well as more general courses such as arts or science.

### 9.1 Types of courses available:

- **Diploma:** Two years of full-time or equivalent part time study. The emphasis is on practical skills and general understanding of the field, leading to a Para-professional qualification.
- **Advanced Diploma:** Three years of full-time or equivalent part-time study. This involves study at a more advanced level than the Diploma, but still with some emphasis on practical skills.
- **Bachelor Degree:** Three to four years of full-time or equivalent part-time study. A student will usually specialize in at least one subject over the length of the course.
- **Graduate Certificate:** Six months of full-time or equivalent part-time study. This may involve broadening skills already gained in an undergraduate course, or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area.
- **Graduate Diploma:** One year of full-time or equivalent part-time study. This may involve broadening skills already gained in an undergraduate course or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area, or further specialization in an area.
- **Masters Degree:** Two years of full-time or equivalent part-time study. This enhances specific professional or vocational skills. The student acquires in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge, either by course work or research activities.
- **Doctoral Degree:** Three to four years of full-time or equivalent part-time study. This is awarded after undertaking an original research project, including a substantial thesis, which contributes to knowledge and understanding within a particular field of study.

### 9.2 Course requirements for students who have completed VCE

Once a student has satisfied the minimum entrance requirement, they will also need to satisfy the specific course requirements of each course for which they wishes to apply.

These course requirements include:

- **Prerequisite Studies:** These are studies, which must be satisfactorily completed before students can be considered for a particular course.
- **Grade Average:** In some cases, before a study can be counted as a prerequisite, a certain grade in a particular study must be achieved.

### 9.3 Applying for entry to Victorian Tertiary Courses

The **Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)** processes applications for most degree or diploma courses at universities and most full-time Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses at TAFE Institutes in Victoria. Each July VTAC publishes an application booklet, the 'VTAC Guide to University and TAFE courses', which contains information about courses, application procedures and an application form. Applications for undergraduate courses normally close in late September in the year prior to selection.

### 9.4 Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)

Citizens and Permanent residents on humanitarian visas can usually pay course fees through the Government Student Loan Program called Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).

Payment may usually be deferred or held over until a taxable income over a certain level is reached, and then a percentage of that income is repaid to the Australian Taxation Office. Some courses do not attract HELP but are up-front full fee courses, which start at approximately \$10,000 per year.

### 9.5 More information

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development offers learning and development support, services and resources to all Victorian children.

Also, each University produces handbooks containing outlines of each course. These can be obtained by calling each University individually.

For information about tertiary selection and procedures contact the Victorian Tertiary Administrations Centre (VTAC) directly on Phone: 1300 364 133 or see their website at: [www.vtac.edu.au](http://www.vtac.edu.au) or write to:

The Information Officer  
Victorian Tertiary Administrations Centre (VTAC)  
Suite B, 40 Park Street  
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

## Profile: Sinke

*My name is Sinke Ktesho and I am 23 years old. I arrived in Australia in 2007 from Kenya.*

*When I was in Kenya primary school (this) was (a) beautiful part of my life, filled with competition. I did so well in year 3 I went directly to year 5.*

*In Kenya, high school begins at year 9 so the transition from year 8 to year 9 was difficult. From year ten in Kenya, I tried to look into English classes couldn't find any extra classes to improve my English skills.*

*I went directly into year 11 in Australia, which I found culturally, intellectually and mentally hard to fit in. Teachers in Australia are more like guardians than teachers, they gave me the freedom to explore as much as I can.*

*I am currently in my final year at Deakin University studying International Studies. I'm concerned about human rights issues related to women, and intend to use opportunities presented in Australia to pursue the goal of doing something for someone else.*

- *Written by a young person*

## 10. Income Support

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Centrelink provides certain financial and other assistance for young people and students while they study full time.

Youth Allowance is for:

- Disadvantaged full-time students aged 16-24
- Full-time students aged 25 or over who were receiving Youth Allowance before they turned 25 and are still doing the same course
- Other young people up to 21 who are looking for full-time work, combining part-time job search and part-time study, doing other approved activities (including voluntary work), or who are ill
- 17 year olds who have reached school leaving age, and are considered to be independent.

Under 18 year olds who haven't completed year 12 or the equivalent may not get Youth Allowance unless they are in full-time education or training. To get Youth Allowance they will need to stay at

school, or go back to school, get into a TAFE or other approved training course. Exemptions from this requirement can be granted if it is not appropriate or possible.

**Austudy Payment:** Payment is for students aged 25 or over doing an approved full-time course at an approved institution. Students with a disability may also be assisted for part-time study.

**Residence:** To receive payment, applicants should be an Australian permanent resident and living in Australia. Full-time students can sometimes be paid while out of Australia if on an official exchange program or a short holiday during their course break. Newly arrived migrants must wait two years before Youth Allowance or Austudy payments start. Refugee and humanitarian visa holders do not need to wait two years. If an interpreter is needed, one can be arranged free of charge.

The following benefits may also be available:

**Rent Assistance:** available for Youth Allowance recipients who have to live away from home to study or look for work and who pay rent.

**Interest Free Advance Payment and Special Employment Advance:** Youth Allowance and Austudy recipients can get an Interest Free Advance of their payment. A Special Employment Advance may be available to certain Youth Allowance and Austudy recipients.

**Loans for Tertiary Students:** A Financial Supplement loan is a voluntary loan scheme for tertiary students who are eligible to receive Youth Allowance or Austudy payment and also for some tertiary students who are ineligible for Youth Allowance due to the Parental Means Test. For more information, see Centrelink, Income Earning Allowance.

**Income Bank:** When a student on Youth Allowance or Austudy payment has income in a fortnight under the income-free area, an Income Bank is created. The bank allows students to build up income credits (to a maximum of \$6,000) to offset any income they later earn (including during holidays) above the fortnightly income-free area so it doesn't affect their payments as much.

**Health Care Card** will save money on some prescription medicines. Job seekers automatically qualify for a Health Care Card, full-time students have to apply separately and provide income details.

**Pharmaceutical Allowance** may be paid to Youth Allowance or Austudy payment recipients who are sick and temporarily incapacitated.

## 11. Centrelink Services for Young People

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Youth Teams are located in Centrelink Offices and work with young people to help them understand and access the education, training and employment choices available and assess eligibility for income support.

For more information in languages other than English, call 13 1202 or ask for the “Help for Young People and Students” Information Sheet (17 languages) from a Centrelink office or online at:

[www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/multifilestores/yps0112](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/multifilestores/yps0112)

## 12. Sources of further information

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### 12.1 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN)

The LLENs broker strategic, sustainable partnerships that support improved education and transition outcomes for young people. The LLENs work to broker partnerships among schools, community organisations, education providers and industry to improve education outcomes and support young people to remain engaged, or re-engage, in education or training and realise their full social and economic potential. LLENs are strategic and not service delivery organisations.

### 12.2 Youth Connections

The Youth Connections Program can help you if you have left school, or are thinking of leaving school, to continue with your education and ultimately gain a Year 12 or equivalent level education.<sup>13</sup>

#### General References

- Job and Course Explorer (OZJAC), a computerized information service on further education and careers is available in many schools and in local libraries. There is also an OZJAC course directory.
- The Job Guide, published by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Check your school library or your local Centrelink for this guide.

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[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/leaving.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/leaving.aspx) accessed on 17 January 2013.

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/Centrelink/youth-allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/Centrelink/youth-allowance).

## 12.3 For VCE/VCAL information in general

Information Section

Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority is located at:

Level 1, 2 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne, VICTORIA 3000

Australia

**Office hours:** 9:00am - 5:00pm

**Telephone:** (03) 9651 4300

**Fax:** (03) 9032 1799

### General Information

**Telephone:**

(03) 9032 1627

(03) 9032 1628

(03) 9032 1629

1800 134 197

**Fax:** (03) 9032 1590

**Email:** [vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

## 12.4 AMES

You can find out if you are eligible , call 13 Ames (2637) or More information about AMEP visit [www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/amep/). Visit AMES learning closest to you and you may be ask for your visa and personnel details.

[www.ames.net.au](http://www.ames.net.au)

## 12.5 Distance education

Distance Education Centre Victoria

315 Clarendon Street

Thornbury VIC 3071

**Telephone:** (03) 8480 0000

**Fax:** (03) 9416 8493

**Website:** [www.distance.vic.edu.au](http://www.distance.vic.edu.au)