



Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

real skills for
real careers



FACT SHEET

LEARNING PATHWAYS

Flexibility is a key element of the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system. There are multiple pathways through the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and learning programs are tailored to the specific needs of each client.

QUICK FACTS

In 2016, the predominant modes of delivery for VET subject enrolments were as follows:

- 62.2% were classroom-based (i.e. delivered at a college or campus)
- 15.6% were electronic-based (i.e. delivered online or via remote access)
- 9.9% were employment-based (i.e. delivered by enterprise RTOs)

- 8.4% were delivered by other means (e.g. via correspondence)
- 3.9% did not involve a mode of delivery (e.g. recognition of prior learning).

LEARNING PATHWAYS

Learning occurs in a variety of ways, and the majority of students undertaking a VET program will follow more than one learning pathway. The following is a brief summary of the more common pathways available within Australia's VET system:

Work-based learning

Work-based learning occurs in real work environments through participation in authentic work activities and interactions. It is a central tenet of VET, because it emphasises learning through practice in the workplace. This type of pathway is also known as on-the-job learning, and it is championed by enterprise registered training organisations (ERTOs).

An important feature of work-based learning is that it occurs as part of the work process under normal operational conditions.

Common forms of work-based learning include:

- Australian Apprenticeships
- Placements
- Simulations.



Australian Apprenticeships

Australian Apprenticeships (often referred to as apprenticeships or traineeships) combine full or part-time employment with a structured VET program, resulting in a nationally accredited qualification, and they are a well-known form of work-based learning. The learner spends most of their time in the workplace, and they acquire both practical and theoretical skills, both in the workplace and off-the-job.

School-based apprenticeships combine part-time employment with a structured VET program and formal secondary school studies, and they are a popular work-based learning pathway.

Simulations

Simulations allow students to engage in analysis and decision-making in a simulated environment that reflects and replicates workplace conditions. The following simulations are often used in VET:

- Trading or simulated businesses operated by RTOs (e.g. restaurants for hospitality students; greenhouses for horticulture students)
- Technology-assisted simulations (e.g. train and flight simulators)
- Structured role plays of work situations (e.g. the use of mannequins for nursing students).

Placements

Placements immerse students into a workplace for a period of time, where they typically undertake a work-related project. Placements vary in length, and they can either be a mandatory or optional component of a VET program. This type of pathway is also known as *service learning* or *structured workplace learning*.

Placements are not the same as work experience. The primary purpose of work experience is career exploration, and it is a part of vocational learning.

VOCATIONAL LEARNING

Vocational learning is delivered within the broader secondary school curriculum. It helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career pathways and build career development skills. It provides opportunities for students to 'taste' the world of work by spending time in a real or simulated workplace.

Vocational learning is not the same as work-based learning, because it does not occur as part of the work process under normal operational conditions.

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OFF-THE-JOB LEARNING

Off-the-job learning occurs away from the work process. Common forms of off-the-job learning include:

- Classroom learning
- Online learning
- Distance learning.

Classroom learning

The vast majority of off-the-job learning occurs within the premises of RTOs, or in temporary off-site training rooms that RTOs establish in remote and regional locations for specific VET courses. Some workplaces have dedicated training rooms that are removed from the work process for safety or logistical reasons, and these are used to engage employees in off-the-job training.

Online learning

The provision of VET online is a popular form of off-the-job learning. It is a flexible and self-paced learning pathway, as students can schedule their study time around family and work commitments. Support and resources are available from an RTO's online campus or student portal, and students can engage via webinars and online communities.

This type of pathway is also known as e-learning, and the My Skills website can be used to search for RTOs that offer online options for VET courses.

Distance learning

The provision of VET by correspondence is another form of off-the-job learning, where students correspond with an RTO via email and telephone. This is a particularly supportive learning pathway for students who are unable to attend an RTO.

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There are many ways
to succeed. Do it
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Vocational
Education
and Training.



KEY WEBSITES

- My Skills
<https://www.myskills.gov.au/>
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
<https://www.ncver.edu.au/>

RELATED TOPICS

- Australian Apprenticeships
- Preparing Secondary Students for Work
- Registered Training Organisations.



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FAQS

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