

Merrimac State High School 2017

Vocational Education and Training Student Handbook



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Vocational Education Student Handbook

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Vocational Education and Training – Departments

Certificate Offered	Department / Staff
CPC10111 Certificate I in Construction (RTO 0083- TAFE)	Business/IT Lisa Cowderoy
MEM20413 Certificate II in Engineering Pathways(Yr 12 only) (RTO 0083 – TAFE)	Business/IT Lisa Cowderoy
UEE222011 Certificate II in Electrotechnology (RTO 0083 – TAFE)	Business/IT Lisa Cowderoy
SIT20212 Certificate II in Hospitality (RTO 30978 – Blueprint)	Business/IT Lisa Cowderoy
FSK20113 Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (RTO 30080 – Merrimac State High School)	Special Education Program Mrs Heike Orlow
CHC010108 Certificate I in Work Preparation (Community Services)	Special Education Program Mrs Heike Orlow
HLT21212 Certificate II and III in Health Support Services (RTO 0083 – TAFE)	HPE Warren Joseph
ICA10111 Certificate I in IDMT (RTO 30080- Merrimac State High School)	Senior Schooling

Introduction – What is VET?

Vocational Education and Training

The contents of this handbook summarise key points of our VET policies. If you would like to see a full copy of any policy outlined here, please approach your VET teacher, the Head of Department Senior Schooling or Industry Liaison Officer.

All VET programs offered by Merrimac State High School can lead to:

- a nationally recognised Certificate if you complete all of the requirements of the qualification, or
- if you do not complete a full course, a Statement of Attainment for those parts that you do successfully complete.

This Certificate/Statement of Attainment will be recognised in all eight States/Territories of Australia.

Your VET teacher will provide you with full information about the VET qualification/s you are aiming for at Merrimac State High School, including an overview of the specific units of competency in each, assessment requirements, and vocational outcomes. You will also be given information about pathways to further learning.

This handbook has been written to provide VET staff and students with important information about the VET programs offered by this Merrimac State High School RTO. It will also keep you informed about your rights and responsibilities as a VET student.

The school will keep a record of your attendance at the Induction meeting for VET, at which time this manual will be discussed in detail. You will be asked to sign a register acknowledging that you have received the manual.

You should also take time to thoroughly read over this manual in your own time and keep it as a reference point for time you are enrolled in a certificate course at Merrimac SHS.

Student Subject Selection – Enrolment and Induction

What are the benefits of a VET course?

VET studies have clear outcomes based on assessment of your demonstrated competencies. VET qualifications and courses differ from other school courses and criteria-based assessment, by including:

- a. Work-like activities
- b. Competency-based training and assessment
- c. Competency standards, which are an industry-determined specification of performance that sets out the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to operate effectively in employment.

This way of proving your abilities really appeals to lots of people.

VET courses also provide you with a clear pathway to further learning and employment.

How do I get into a VET course?

Students enrolled in VET subjects participate in the same enrolment and selection processes as other students at the School.

What if I want to change courses or pathway?

Once you are allocated to a class it creates a great deal of additional work to change classes or subjects. Also, the subject you wish to move into may be full. If you are involved in out of school learning during school hours; e.g., a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (SAT), this will further restrict your opportunities to change classes, as timetable arrangements will have been made especially for you. Please ensure you think carefully before committing yourself to a study pathway.

It is understood however, that there are some circumstances that necessitate changes to enrolment once classes have started. You must apply to the Head of Department of the related qualification to change a course of study. Permission for change will then depend on the reasons stated and class numbers.

If you decide you wish to change pathway from VET to OP, you must seek immediate advice from the Head of Department Senior Schooling. There is a time frame in which changes like this can be made and you must act quickly at the beginning of Year 11.

You also need to be aware that late entry into a VQF Certificate course could hinder your chances of achieving the full qualification.

Course Information

What is my VET course all about?

Subject information has been developed for each separate VET qualification offered at Merrimac State High School. The information is detailed in the Subject Selection booklet which is freely available to all students and parents, on the school website. Hard copies are available at the Subject Selection Evening or from School Administration.

Student Support

What if English and Maths difficulties prevent me making progress in my VET Course?

If you are doing a VET subject you will find that basic literacy/numeracy elements are included in the course. This should help you to learn more easily as the English and Maths components are connected to the subject you've chosen to study. It is compulsory to study the minimum of English Communication and Prevocational Maths. English and Maths A may be accessed via negotiation with the relevant Heads of Department.

If you still feel you need additional language, literacy or numeracy support, please approach your VET teacher first who may refer your matter to the Head of Department.

Communications – Where can I get on-going information about School Based Traineeships and Apprenticeships?

General VET information and specific details about Work Experience, School Based Traineeships and Apprenticeships will be distributed by daily notices and via Student Notices and email. If, after a period of Work Experience you decide on an industry area that suits you, you may decide to apply for a School Based Traineeship/Apprenticeship.

School Based Traineeship/Apprenticeships are advertised, when they are made available, via the Student Notices and emails. You must check the Student Notices daily or check with the Industry Liaison Officer to see what opportunities are available.

If you are interested in a School-based Traineeship or Apprenticeship, it is strongly recommended that you complete work trials or work experience in this area before signing up into a traineeship or apprenticeship. You are more likely to confirm that this vocational area is of interest to you and achieve a successful outcome.

It is extremely important and entirely your responsibility to attend scheduled meetings and appointments on time. Poor personal organisation can lead to missed opportunities and, once you start moving into the world of work through work placement and School Based Traineeship/Apprenticeships, you will find that deadlines cannot be changed and appointments cannot always be rearranged.

Failure to attend scheduled meetings without proper and courteous notification to the staff concerned will be seen as a lack of commitment and a failure to see school work as a priority.

Assessment

How Do I Know When Assessments Are Due?

You are given a term planner at the beginning of every term with all due dates. You will need to plan and prepare your study timetable to meet all assessment expectations. You need to use a system to record all assessment dates, work commitments and study roster. You can use Outlook, which is on your laptop, for this.

How are VET assessments organised?

This section outlines the school's VET assessment policy. Read it carefully. It shows how we try to make every assessment fair and to keep you fully informed so that you can do your best.

1. Well in advance of formal assessment students will be issued with: an assessment cover sheet detailing;
 - task requirements,
 - elements of competency that will be assessed,
 - advice about assessment methods/procedures,
 - due dates,
 - criteria that will be used to make judgements about student performance,
 - space for comments and feedback.
2. Students will have access to their profile at any time but as a minimum student will sight their profile of results in each VET subject each term throughout a two year course. This tells you how you are going overall in the course. Your results will be closely monitored, with a review of attendance, participation and competencies completed each term conducted by the subject teacher, and Head of Departments. Reasonable adjustment may be made to the assessment items.

3. Reasonable adjustment may be made to the assessment items. This means that if you have a specific learning difficulty you may be able to take the assessment in a different format or have extra time, for example. Remember though that you still have to perform to industry standard. It is your responsibility to inform your teacher in advance should reasonable adjustments need to be made to assessment instruments.
4. Your teacher will give you feedback about your performance and tell you how to improve. It is your responsibility as a learner to ask if you do not understand.
5. If you are still not prepared to accept your result, you have the right to appeal. See the Head of Department Senior Schooling to commence this process.

If you need more information about this, ask your VET teacher. S/he will go over this at the beginning of each year.

VET Assessment Policy—Competency Based

What's special about competency-based assessment?

Merrimac State High School VET courses are part of national training packages. In order to be successful in gaining competency, you must demonstrate you have the necessary underpinning knowledge and can apply this in a practical way in a workplace setting to industry standard.

Each course is made up of a number of units of competency. Some are core/ compulsory units; others are electives, chosen by your teacher. Each unit is made up of several elements of competency. Each element of competency is assessed using a range of industry standard performance criteria. You should be able to demonstrate your competency in a range of situations. (See next section)

To demonstrate competence in any given unit you will have to show that you can achieve a satisfactory level over time. This will mean that some elements of competency may be assessed several times to build a picture of your overall competence.

Each assessment will be graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. When you have completed all assessments set towards a particular unit of competency you will then be deemed to be either competent or not yet competent in that unit. When you have demonstrated competence in all units you will be awarded the appropriate VQF certificate for your course.

You are required to demonstrate competence by meeting performance criteria in all of the elements in all of the units in a range of situations before you are judged to be competent overall and to receive a full VQF certificate.

What does it mean to be competent?

What are the rules about submitting assessments?

They are exactly the same as for any other student at Merrimac State High School. See your student diary for details.

What sort of assessment work might I be expected to do?

There are a variety of assessment items that may be used to assess your level of achievement. All are equally valid. Examples include:

- oral presentations, written reports, demonstrations, teacher questioning, a portfolio of work, research assignment, checklist of skills.

All courses use a variety of assessment types.

Assignments, Examinations and Practical Assessment

What about exams?

You may have scheduled exam sessions for your VET subjects. These sessions may be used by your teacher for a variety of purposes, including: exams, oral interviews, practical sessions and exams. As a result, the Absent Assessment Policy also applies in VET. You should also be aware that all VET knowledge exams require a 100% pass rate to be deemed 'satisfactory'.

If you fail just a few questions your teacher may go over this section of the exam with you and give you the opportunity to explain your understanding orally. Your satisfactory responses will be noted on your response paper.

Your teacher may; however, require you to re-sit this assessment. This will be a different exam paper testing the same elements as the first one. Failure to attend meetings for oral questioning or exam re-sits may result in your being deemed 'Not Yet Competent' in a unit of competencies and therefore ineligible to attain the full certificate.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Can I request extensions? What if I cannot complete an assessment on time?

The rules for VET subjects are exactly the same as for other Senior subjects. Extensions are granted by the Head of Department based on the QCAA's policy of Special Consideration. Please be advised that a medical certificate may be required in order for special consideration to be granted. Keep in mind that with a certificate

courses ALL work will still need to be completed to industry standard despite the arrangement for Special Consideration.

How do I prove that I am competent to industry standard?

Some VET courses include an annual Structured Workplace Learning component. During Structured Workplace Learning you are required to cover a variety of workplace skills particular to each course. Your teacher will provide you with a workbook to be signed off by your workplace provider to assist him/her to make judgements about your competency.

You are encouraged to find your own placement wherever possible. However, the school will step in to help if you have problems. All placements must be agreed by the HOD and the Industry Liaison Officer.

If I'm not satisfied with the results of an assessment, what should I do?

Students have the right to appeal against an assessment decision related to the attainment of competencies:

First, discuss your assessment outcome with your teacher.

Read the comments on your Assessment Cover Sheet and listen to teacher feedback. Ask the teacher to explain the decision and to help you understand where you need to improve.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your VET program, you need to follow the procedures below.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction.

An **appeal** is to apply for reconsideration of a decision or outcome

For full details see Complaints and Appeals, in this Handbook.

QCE- Queensland Certificate of Education

How is VET recorded on my Queensland Certificate of Education?

When you have successfully demonstrated competency in all VET course requirements you will be entitled to have the relevant Certificate recorded on your QCE. You will also receive a separate VQF Certificate for your course. This will list all the units of competency in which you have been assessed as competent.

If you have not completed the course then only the units of competency that you have successfully achieved will be recorded. You will also receive a Statement of Attainment recording successful units of competency.

If you leave school before course completion you will be issued a Statement of Attainment detailing units of competency achieved to date. You MUST let your VET teacher and the VET Co-ordinator know that you intend to leave in writing and provide a forwarding address.

USI (Unique Student Identifier), Issuance of Certificates & Statements of Attainments

A Unique Student Identifier (USI) is a reference number made up of numbers and letters, unique to each student.

This USI allows students to link their previous and future VET qualifications into a single authenticated transcript, through the National Vocational Education and Training Data Collection, and prevents them from losing their record.

This lets students see all of their training results, from all their previous providers.

A USI Number will stay with the student for life, and must be recorded with any nationally recognised VET course they undertake.

How do I get a USI?

You can register for a USI online, at **NO COST** to the student. You can create a USI doing the following:

1. Log on to <http://portal.usi.gov.au/student>
 - When applying for a USI, students will be required to supply one of the following valid forms of ID:
 - Driver's Licence
 - Medicare Card,
 - Australian Passport
 - Visa (with Non-Australian Passport)
 - Australian Birth Certificate,
 - Certificate of Registration by Descent
 - Citizenship Certificate
 - ImmiCard
2. Click on 'Create your USI'.
3. Follow the prompts to create your USI account.

Registered Training Organisations will be prohibited from issuing a Statement of Attainment to students if they do not have a verified USI.

The school will issue Qualifications and Statements of Attainment within 30 days of a student completing or withdrawing from a qualification or unit of competency. Where this is the final semester of the year, qualifications will be issued to students with their final school report. In the case of Year 12 students, certificates achieved during Year 12 will be posted to students with their final school report

If students change subject they are also entitled to their Certificate or Statement of Attainment

If students change schools they should ensure they complete the appropriate Leaving Forms. Merrimac State High School will send an S1 form to the new school outlining your studies in both VET and non-VET subjects for which Merrimac State High School is the course provider.

Students should ensure they leave a forwarding address with the HOD Senior Schooling so certificates issued by both the school and the providers with which the school has Memorandum of Understanding can be posted to the new address.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

What if I already have some of the skills/competencies that are included in my course?

When you commence a VET program, you may think there are some units of competency in which you are already competent. You could apply for what is called 'Recognition' for those specific units of competency. If you do, you will need to provide evidence that you can in fact already do these particular tasks to the same standard as required in your vocational course.

NOTE: You do not need to go through the Recognition of Prior Learning process if you already have a Statement of Attainment from another Registered Training Organisation for any units of competency which are the same as those in any of the school's VET programs. You will be awarded automatic recognition in these cases. This is called mutual recognition and results will be credit transferred. You must provide evidence for Credit Transfer and apply through the school's Credit Transfer application process. See the HOD Senior Schooling for further information. RPL means getting credit for what you know if your knowledge and skills are of the same standard as required in your vocational course.

The RPL Process

RPL will allow you to

- Progress through the course at a faster rate
- You will not have to repeat work in which you are already competent
- Have your knowledge and skill level formally recognised

RPL can only be granted for the units of competency, which each course covers. You may have developed knowledge and skills suitable for RPL from other subjects, work experience, industry placement, part time job or unpaid work, activities outside school etc...

If you wish to apply for RPL you must:

- Ask your teacher for specific information about the elements of competency that relate to this subject
- See your teacher for a RPL Application form, complete this in detail and attach all relevant evidence for assessment.
- Evidence may be products of your work, a personal report, a work report from an employer, work experience or industry placement records, certificates gained, magazine or newspaper articles about you, other forms of commendation.
- You may be asked to attend an interview, to do a practical task or to provide more information.

Your class teacher and head of department will look through your application and decide the outcome. You will be notified of the result in writing. If you disagree with the outcome you may appeal.

Complaints and Appeals

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your VET program such as:

- An administrative matter (e.g. The non-issue of qualifications/statements within the prescribed timeline etc.),
- A financial matter (e.g. non-refund of VET subject levies, etc.),
- A person outside the school (e.g. a person at your place of work/training)

If you feel comfortable, first speak to your VET teacher or VET Coordinator. They may be able to help you to solve the problem.

To proceed with a formal complaint please refer to the school's VET Complaint Policy. This can be found on the Merrimac State High School website.

The school is committed to dealing positively with your concern. It helps us to learn how we can deliver better training for you

Continuous Improvement – Setting High Standards

The school is always trying to improve its services to students. At times throughout the year you may be issued with a questionnaire about your VET studies or asked to participate in a class discussion about your VET program. You should also provide informal feedback to your VET teacher or Head of Department Senior Schooling. You may also be asked to represent the student body on an Internal Review Committee.

We need your input, so do your best to get involved in these processes.

Access and Equity

How does Merrimac State High School make sure students and staff are treated fairly?

Discrimination occurs if a person treats someone differently on the basis of an attribute or characteristic such as gender, sexuality, race, physical or intellectual impairment, age, etc.

Merrimac State High School works hard to meet the needs of each student through implementing access and equity principles and practices which acknowledge the right of all students to equality of opportunity without discrimination.

If you have concerns about access or equity please speak to your VET teacher, VET Coordinator, School Counsellor or Head of Senior School.

What if I am absent for a long time and miss important work?

Firstly, you are reminded that you have attendance requirements for the completion of a QCE. It is inadvisable to take holidays during senior school terms and all such arrangements must be notified in writing to and agreed by a Deputy Principal.

If you are ill over an extended period of time, you will need to provide a Medical Certificate. Staff will help you to catch up with work, perhaps through a workbook to be completed in your own time. Staff will make every effort to help you meet course requirements.

Absence and Nominal Hours

Please be aware that some of your certificate courses have nominal hours. These are deemed the appropriate number of hours you should spend on learning in the course. If you are absent you may also not meet the nominal course hours. Your teacher can run an attendance report that will tell you if you are at risk of not meeting this requirement. You may also be required to sit additional assessment to demonstrate your competency should you not have completed enough time in the learning environment.

Participation and attendance in class and your results in assessment and exams will be closely monitored in order to maximise your potential.

Workplace Health and Safety

The school WHS Officer is Mrs Deb Landers.
She can be found in the Special Education Program staffroom.

What about health and safety? How am I involved?

The safety and wellbeing of the staff and students of this school is one of our greatest responsibilities. All of us, including you, have responsibilities to ensure a safe environment. As a VET student, you are often in areas of the school and workplaces with very specific Workplace Health and Safety requirements. Make sure you pay attention in WHS induction sessions and ask your teacher or workplace supervisor if you require information or advice about any Workplace Health Safety issue. You are specifically required to:

- use and take reasonable care of any protective equipment that is provided,
- obey any reasonable instructions in relation to health and safety,
- not interfere with or remove any safety devices from machinery,
- ensure that you do not endanger your own or others' safety by the consumption of alcohol or drugs,
- report unsafe acts or equipment to a teacher or workplace supervisor and observe good safety practices,
- report all injuries or 'near misses' to a teacher,
- ensure that your conduct does not interfere with;
 - school property,

- school staff safety or welfare, or with their ability to perform their duties,
- Student's safety or welfare, or their ability to participate in and benefit from instruction.

If you are not able to conduct yourself without endangering yourself or others you will not be allowed into areas of higher risk in the school nor allowed to go on Structured Workplace Learning or Work Experience, which may mean you cannot complete your course.

You must undertake basic Workplace Health and Safety induction prior to any work placement. You will also complete a basic induction at each workplace you attend. Details of this are provided in your Work Experience Record Book or Structured Work Record Book.

If you cannot accept these responsibilities, you may not be allowed to continue in VET classes. See the Head of Senior Schooling if you believe you may have difficulty meeting any of the requirements listed above.

Access to Records

How private is the information kept on me at school?

No staff member of this school can provide information about you to a third party without your written permission. We do, however, pass on details of your achievements to the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. This is necessary to ensure that your records are maintained and certificates are issued.

The school has to provide your contact information to work experience or external course providers. If you do not agree to this we cannot send you on work experience or Structured Workplace Learning. You will not, therefore, be able to complete the requirements of your qualifications.

What if I want to see my academic records?

You can have access to your own personal records at any time by asking your VET teacher. You will see your Student Profile at least once per term. If the matter is not related to any one specific subject you will need to approach the Head of Department- Senior Schooling.

What happens if my teacher leaves or there is a problem with resources?

The school RTO is committed to completing the outlined training and assessment once students have started study in their chosen qualification/s or course/s from the course start date (including delivery by a 3rd party on the school RTO's behalf). Students who enter the course after the start date will have a negotiated package of units that will lead to a statement of attainment.

In the event of losing the specialist trainer, and the RTO being unable to obtain a suitable replacement or 3rd party school will not be able to continue delivery, the school RTO will, if possible, arrange for agreed training and assessment to be completed through another RTO. (Fees may be incurred.) Prior to the transfer to another RTO, affected students will be formally notified of the arrangements, and an agreement to those arrangements, including any refund of fees, will be obtained. If transfer is not possible, the RTO will gain a written agreement for a subject/course transfer from the student and parent.