



National Disability Coordination Officer Program
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

What's the Difference?

Information to help you make the right decision for your post school options

A Comparison between

**School, Vocational Education and Training (VET)
and
University**



HOW IS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIFFERENT FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL?

ENROLMENT INTO SECONDARY SCHOOL	ENROLMENT INTO VET (POST SCHOOL)*	ENROLMENT INTO UNIVERSITY
Once you enrol at your secondary school it is compulsory to remain enrolled until 16- 17 years of age in an approved learning program unless you have completed SACE or another qualification or are full time employed.	You need to apply online to enrol into a course. The fact that a course is available is no guarantee that it will be offered.	You are required to enrol at least every year if not every semester.
An enrolment form is completed and submitted by your parent/ guardian prior to your entry into secondary school	Once the RTO** accepts you into a course you will need to enrol online and re-enrol every semester if you are doing a course for more than a semester.	Once the university makes you an offer of a place in a program you are responsible for accepting that offer.
Enrolment and subject selection are unrelated depending on the school setting.	To enrol you must complete the form and pay for your course. There may be penalties for late enrolment. You are responsible for keeping your personal details in the RTO records up to date.	Enrolment is not complete until you select your courses for the semester into which you are enrolling.
Your teachers, course counsellors and parents can assist you in selecting your subjects and can complete any required paperwork for you.	Modules within each course are mostly pre-set by the RTO/course design.	You are responsible for selecting, adding and dropping your courses before each semester and completing the required process. A program adviser is available for advice only.
There is shared responsibility between you, the school and your family to discuss any learning support needs. The secondary school provides learning support needs based on an assessment process and functional impact of your disability.	Students with disability or chronic medical conditions are encouraged to advise as early as possible of their intention to apply to study. Decisions regarding disability related supports are based on professional documentation and personal negotiations between the student, a course coordinator or TAFE lecturers and Access and Inclusion Advisors.	Students with disability or chronic medical conditions are encouraged to advise the university as early as possible of their intention to apply to study. It is not compulsory but will assist if you tick the box on your enrolment form that asks if you have a disability/medical condition. Decisions regarding provision of disability related supports are based on professional documentation and personal negotiations between the student, the University Disability Advisors and the lecturers.

PERSONAL FREEDOM IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	PERSONAL FREEDOM IN VET	PERSONAL FREEDOM IN UNIVERSITY
Secondary school is mandatory up till 16- 17 years of age and is <i>free</i> at a State funded secondary school (unless you choose other options).	Courses at RTOs are voluntary and most of them have fees. Some courses require compulsory attendance.	Study at a university is voluntary and often expensive, although many fees can be deferred using HELP – Higher Education Loan Program.
While you may have some personal study time built in, the majority of your weekly timetable is structured by others.	Some courses have set timetables while others are fully self-paced and flexible. You are expected to manage your own time as much as possible.	The lecturer often sets the times for lectures. A choice of times for tutorials is usually offered. You are expected to manage your own personal study time and timetable.
You need permission from your parents / caregivers to participate in extracurricular activities and some are compulsory.	There may be some extracurricular activities available, but they are voluntary.	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities. (Choose wisely in the first semester and then add activities later.)
You need money for special purchases or events.	Some courses may require you to purchase materials and personal protective equipment.	Some courses may require you to purchase materials and textbooks, with some available in e-format.
Your parents and teachers will guide you in your responsibilities and setting priorities.	Some lecturers may link you with services on campus for support you may request. E.g. setting your study priorities. However, you are responsible for your own decisions and setting your priorities.	You will be faced with a large number of decisions you have not had to face on your own previously. Whilst counsellors are available on campus you are responsible for balancing your responsibilities and setting priorities.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if your behaviour is out of line. Students need to abide by a student code of conduct.	Guiding principle: As an adult learner you are expected to take responsibility for your decisions and actions, as well as their consequences. If your behaviour is considered a safety risk, you may be excluded from a course and will not be permitted to re- enrol.	Guiding principle: As an adult learner you are expected to take responsibility for your decisions and actions, as well as their consequences. If your behaviour is considered a safety risk, you may be excluded from a course and will not be permitted to re- enrol. Universities have a written student code of conduct.

SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSES	VET CLASSES	UNIVERSITY CLASSES
On a daily basis you attend classes according to the timetable provided. Some days you may have free study periods that allow you to study.	Some courses run classes continually throughout the day while others have a more flexible approach.	You often have hours between lectures & tutorials at variable times throughout the day and week.
You spend 20-25hrs in class between the hours of 8.30am –3 or 3.30pm Monday – Friday.	Classes and practical sessions can be held from as early as 7.30am or run as late as 9.30pm, any weekday depending on the level, delivery mode and nature of the course.	Depending on the degree, if you are an internal student studying full-time you can expect to spend 12 to 16 hours each week in lectures or tutorials between 8am – 9pm Mon – Fri.
The school year is 40 weeks long; in senior secondary school, classes / subjects are usually arranged in semesters.	Courses can be as short as one day in length or as long as two years. TAFE SA has semesters and terms with ongoing enrolments for some courses.	The academic year is divided into 2 semesters, usually with a week at the end of semester for exams. Universities vary in how many semesters they may offer. Some courses/subjects are offered as “intensives”, which mean they will run over 4 weeks.
Your classes are scheduled for you.	In some courses the timetable is pre-set while other courses are entirely self-paced by you.	You select your schedule from the timetable provided.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance and your end of term report will reflect this. You will be warned if non-attendance jeopardises Centrelink payments.	Lecturers take attendance. Failure to attend a compulsory component of your course can lead to a grading of non – competent. Non -attendance may have implications for Centrelink penalties.	Lecturers and tutors may not formally take attendance but are likely to record whether or not you attend. You will need to read the course outline to determine if attendance is required. Failure to attend a minimum number of tutorials and practicals can lead to a subject failure. Non-attendance may have implications for Centrelink penalties.
Classes generally have no more than 25 students.	Classes can range from 12 to significant numbers of students.	Lectures may have 100 students attending, or more. Tutorial groups are smaller.
Textbooks may be provided at little or no cost.	You need to budget for your own textbooks, tools, safety equipment/clothing, materials photocopying and stationery. In some practical courses this can cost more than \$200.	You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks, course notes and photocopying, which will may cost more than \$200 each semester.

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS	VET LECTURERS	UNIVERSITY LECTURERS
Teachers usually check your completed homework.	Lecturers often don't check that you have completed required reading but will often base their assessment on the competent completion of set tasks.	Lecturers and tutors don't check that you have completed required reading, but tutorial discussions, assignments and exams usually require that you have read and can reference the required readings.
Teachers remind you of any incomplete work.	Lecturers may not remind you of incomplete work but often you will not pass the unit until all tasks have been successfully completed.	Lecturers may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Lecturers may not be aware you are having difficulty until assessing your competence. It is advisable to approach them if you do not understand the course content or have concerns.	Lecturers are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to approach them if you need assistance. It is not usual for a university lecturer to seek you out.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Lecturers are usually available to answer questions and demonstrate practice for set periods.	Lecturers expect and want you to attend during their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have university qualifications and experience in education.	Lecturers are experienced in their field and also have qualification in how to conduct training to at least Cert IV - Workplace Training and Assessment	Lecturers have university qualifications and have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS	VET LECTURERS	UNIVERSITY LECTURERS
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Lecturers will usually provide access to content and learning materials. They may give illustrations, demonstrations or provide background information about a topic. You will be expected to become familiar with the content to relate to the practical component of the course.	Lecturers may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Lecturers may expect you to relate this information to the textbook or journal readings.
Teachers often write/type information on the board/smartboard to be copied into your notes or provide handouts of relevant information.	Lecturers will intersperse discussion with practical activities or demonstrations. They will usually point out any vital information or skill that you are expected to remember or demonstrate.	Lecturers may lecture without discussion with students and expect you to understand the important ideas. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Lecturers impart knowledge and facts but also demonstrate the level of competence you will be expected to have in your assessment.	Lecturers expect you to analyse and synthesise information, compare different theories, or apply new information to solve new kinds of problems.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Lecturers will usually remind you of assignments and due dates but will expect you to be up to date with work and your progress towards competence.	Lecturers expect you to read, save, and consult the course profile/ outline. The course profile/ outline states exactly what is expected of you, when assignments are due, and how you will be graded.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Lecturers may tell you what was covered in a particular class but will expect you to catch up. They may not repeat any practical demonstrations you may have missed.	Lecturers expect you to obtain for yourself any notes from classes you missed.

STUDYING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	STUDYING IN VET	STUDYING IN UNIVERSITY
You are usually required to attend according to your schedule and complete additional work in your own time.	Depending on the course you are doing you will need to spend at least the same amount of time in class as you would outside the class, practicing your skills development and the knowledge component of your course.	You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class e.g. 16 hrs of class time may require 30 hours of private study a week.
Teachers often revisit content and link new learning to student's previous knowledge, concepts or understanding.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly, complete learning tasks and practice skills regularly.	You need to review lecture notes and text books and other study material regularly.
You are expected to complete short assignments, e.g. reading information on topics that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. Grading of assignments: A-E against performance standards.	You may be required to read, understand and demonstrate complex procedures, formulae or recipes. In some courses there are substantial amounts of required readings and learning tasks.	You will be assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing for assignments, which may not be directly addressed in class.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.	Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material and practice the skills demonstrated to you; classes proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.	Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.



EXAMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	EXAMS IN VET	EXAMS IN UNIVERSITY
Tests are often frequent and cover small amounts of material. Many subjects have assignments instead of tests.	You will have frequent opportunities to demonstrate your competence or knowledge in each module of work. The lecturer will organise the practice sessions to complete these demonstrations.	Exams may be infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the lecturer, need to organise the material to prepare for the exam. A particular course may have as little as 1 exam in a semester.
Makeup tests may be available. Infrequent exams are scheduled in some subjects, for example at the end of semester/year.	You are often allowed additional opportunities to demonstrate your competence if you fail at the first attempt.	Makeup exams are seldom an option; if they are, you need to apply for a deferred/secondary exam if you are unable to attend an exam. You will need supporting documentation from your treating practitioner. Holidays or work commitments are not a reason to apply for deferred/secondary exams. Cut-off dates apply to students seeking alternative exam arrangements. Your subject/course outline will explain in more detail the exam process.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Assessment is often based more on assignments and tests rather than exams.	Lecturers usually schedule exams to occur in a formal exam period at the end of semester.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Lecturers may conduct review sessions, pointing out important concepts, skills or knowledge required to demonstrate competence.	Lecturers rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Achievement is seen as the ability to demonstrate skills and understanding and then to transfer these to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.	Mastery is usually seen as the ability to competently complete a task, demonstrate knowledge or solve a problem utilising all the skills and knowledge imparted during the course.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to creatively apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.
Teachers will provide adjustments on behalf of students with a disability in consultation with parents, students or key supports.	Students must make an appointment, preferably at enrolment, with an Access and Inclusion Advisor, to develop an Access Plan and negotiate reasonable adjustments and special provisions.	Students must negotiate with the university's Disability Adviser to organise reasonable adjustments and special provisions. This should occur at the start of a course through a Disability Access Plan wherever possible.

GRADES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRADES IN VET	GRADES IN UNIVERSITY
Grades are provided with comments and feedback is given for most assigned work.	Students must demonstrate their competence in each unit.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Homework tasks, including assignments and tests contribute to the final subject grade.	Competency in class activities, does not count for the final assessment unless the lecturer says that it does.	Grades on exams, assignments and tutorial presentations provide the entire course grade.
Initial assessment tasks, especially when they result in a low mark, may not have an adverse effect on the final subject grade.	Competency in each unit may be a prerequisite for subsequent units.	Your first exams are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected - but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may finish year 12 as long as you have passed all required courses. SACE completion is 200 credit points.	You must demonstrate competency in all aspects of a unit/course to receive a pass/competency achieved result. It is compulsory to be able to demonstrate competency in all units of a course.	You may graduate only if your average grade in classes meets the faculty / school standard.



RESOURCES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES IN VET	RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY
Some equipment such as laptop computers may be provided by the school on a loan basis for use across schooling and at home.	Services that are required to make a subject accessible (such as interpreters, assistive technology etc) will only be provided through an individually negotiated Access Plan.	Services that are required to make a subject accessible (such as interpreters, assistive technology etc) will only be provided through an individually negotiated Access Plan.
Textbooks etc may be provided free of charge or on a loan basis by the school.	If a textbook is required, it must be purchased by the student. The VET provider may assist with acquiring accessible formats such as braille, large print or electronic copies of texts.	All textbooks required for study must be purchased by the student. The university may assist with acquiring accessible formats such as braille, large print or electronic copies of texts.
Schools may provide tools for practical subjects free of charge to students.	Students may need to purchase their own tools (e.g. knives for cookery students or beauty kits for hair and beauty students). Equipment and tools students are required to purchase may cost significant amounts of money depending on the course.	Provision of equipment will vary from course to course but may cost significant amounts of money depending on the course.
Students will not be charged for the cost of adjustments provided to teaching, learning or assessment.	Students will not be charged for the cost of flexible teaching, learning or assessment. RTOs may loan Assistive Technology to students during education and training, or it may need to be purchased. Students need to share information about their disability with course coordinators or Access and Inclusion Advisors to identify how to access reasonable adjustments.	Students will not be charged for the cost of flexible teaching, learning or assessment. Assistive Technology may be loaned to eligible students during education and training. Students need to share information about their disability with Disability Advisors to identify how to access reasonable adjustments.
Personal or health care is provided through the school based on the student's One Plan, or Personalised Plans for Learning.	VET providers do not provide personal or attendant care services. Students should talk to their NDIS Local Area Coordinator about these arrangements or contact the VET provider's disability advisor to ask about how to make private arrangements.	Universities do not provide personal or attendant care services. Students should talk to their NDIS Local Area Coordinator about these arrangements or contact the university's Disability Adviser to ask about how to make private arrangements.

Students with disabilities, learning difficulties or chronic medical conditions must have their needs considered for in:

- Enrolment
- Course participation
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- Student support services

Schools, RTOs and Universities must eliminate harassment and victimisation for all students.

Further information on disability rights in education and employment is available at:
<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights>

Remember:

Any adjustments made for disability must be reasonable.

The Disability Standards for Education:

- Students with disability may negotiate reasonable adjustments which do not undermine the core/inherent requirements of a course
- Further information about the Disability Education Standards and resources for students are available at:

<https://www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>

ADCET, Students with Disability <https://www.adcet.edu.au/>

Practical services and supports that you may be able to access as part of an Access Plan:

- Assistive technology
- Voice recognition software
- Auslan interpreters
- Text in alternative formats
- Adaptation of equipment
- Alternative assessment methods
- Extra time for essays, exams and work
- Physical access modifications
- Hearing loops or assistive hearing devices
- Special equipment
- Note takers
- Electronic versions of lectures

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Further information about the NDCO program is available on the ADCET website: <https://www.adcet.edu.au/disability-practitioner/ndco>

*VET, or Vocational Education and Training, includes courses at Institutes of TAFE, Agricultural Colleges, Apprenticeships and Traineeships as well as courses by private training providers – Registered Training Organisations.

** RTO = Registered Training Organisation – includes TAFE