



La Salle College

School profile

- Western Australia
- Metropolitan
- Non-government
- Year 7 to 12
- Third party RTO auspice partnering arrangements
- 16 VET courses in 10 industry areas in 2015
- 1448 students enrolled in school in 2015

La Salle College is a co-educational Year 7 to 12 college located in Middle Swan, a north-eastern suburb of Perth, Western Australia. The college has third party auspices arrangements with a private Registered Training Organisation (RTO). La Salle College has a new Trades Centre and also partners with Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges to deliver vocational education and training (VET) courses for which it does not have equipment. These VET courses are usually delivered both onsite at La Salle College and offsite at the TAFE college.

Program background

La Salle College has been offering VET courses for over 15 years and has ex-students who are now employers in their program. The college attributes the success of its large VET program and work experience program to having the support of staff and to the fact that VET is viewed as an equal option to more traditional academic pathways. Having core VET management staff with similar philosophies helps the college to find a VET course in which every student can experience success.

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Program features

Course selection and structure

Courses and qualifications chosen by schools and the structure of VET courses should be informed by an understanding of:

- *the needs of students*
- *how VET supports career and employment pathways*
- *industry workforce needs*
- *school sector or jurisdictional policies*
- *funding priorities targeting VET towards particular industries or occupations.*

La Salle College selects its VET course offerings based on students' goals for further education and employment, on the expertise of its staff and on the facilities and equipment available. Additionally the college considers future employment trends in Perth and Western Australia, taking into account reports from industry about skills shortages and changes that are in process or expected.

For example, Western Australian has weathered the downturn in the mining industry but despite this there are areas within the industry where employment opportunities exist. Other employment growth areas that the college has tapped into include Tourism, Hospitality, Information Technology and Health. In discussions with employers the college monitors changes and developments in technology, looking for shifts in the industry that might require new equipment and areas of future employment opportunities.

If the college does not have the required facilities and equipment to offer a VET course, it will partner with a TAFE college for delivery. La Salle College considers VET courses that are recognised for funding purposes first to keep the costs for parents as low as possible and will also arrange access to fee-for-service VET courses at TAFE, where there is a need. Students undertaking a TAFE course attend one day a week. They also undertake workplace learning preparation at La Salle College, including developing employability skills and occupational health and safety.

The college delivers Workplace Learning, a Government of Western Australia School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) accredited course for senior



secondary students. Among other aims the course seeks to develop a wide range of work-related and personal competencies through enabling students to have access to ongoing work-based experience and training. The college is part of the Onsite program, with a cluster of six other independent and Catholic schools in the metropolitan region, that coordinate student enrollments, employer training and supervision of work placements for the delivery of the Workplace Learning course. Students who apply and participate in the Onsite program are required to enroll in the Workplace Learning course through La Salle College. The course is largely delivered on-the-job, with in-class assignments to reinforce the workplace experience.

In its discussions with employers the college looks for other opportunities beyond providing VET courses to fill identified skills gaps. One such opportunity arose in discussions with a small business and has resulted in plans to develop a student-run cafe that will add value and depth to the Hospitality course.

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Facilities and equipment

Access to the right facilities and equipment is critical to the success of VET programs and is necessary to comply with VET delivery and assessment standards. The training package or accredited course materials provide information on what is needed. Identifying equipment needs informs decisions about partnerships and accessing external expertise and equipment.

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Partnering with TAFE has been a strong option for the college in providing VET programs of interest to students, where the college does not have the required facilities and expertise for delivery. This provides pathway opportunities for students to transition into TAFE seamlessly post-school.
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The college has a Trades Centre and other industry-standard facilities that enable it to deliver VET courses. Industry and families with businesses have provided advice and support with the selection and ongoing updating of equipment. Through visits to workplaces, the VET coordinator and course staff to keep abreast of new technologies required by industry.

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Staffing

Access to the right staffing is critical to the success of VET programs and is necessary to comply with VET delivery and assessment standards. The training package or accredited course materials provide information on what is needed.

Staff teaching VET courses are selected based on industry experience, having the required Certificate IV Training and Assessment qualification and other additional attributes and experience they can bring into the college.

Working with employers

Collaboration is a key component of the Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework. Involvement from employers and industry is critical when planning for the implementation, delivery and assessment of VET for secondary students. Working with employers or work placement providers to provide access to quality and relevant workplace learning opportunities enables students to develop skills that are better aligned with workplace needs.

Managing relationships with employers is considered as high importance by the college. The Onsite program coordinator is responsible for all work experience placements and seeks to ensure a strong rapport is built between staff, students and employers. Prior to any agreements being put in place, a staff member visits every employer. Agreements are made between the three parties – the student, college and employer. The student agrees to being punctual, meeting the expectations of the workplace and being committed; the college commits to continue building workplace skills, and to communicating with and visiting the employer and the student; and the employer commits to providing a supportive environment for the student and to communicating with the school on any arising issues.

Integrating VET

VET needs to be integrated into the fabric of schools and the broader curriculum. This may be through:

- *flexible timetabling*
- *language literacy and numeracy support*
- *assessment support*
- *support with other additional matters that students undertaking VET courses might require.*

When the college is considering future VET course offerings, the VET coordinator is invited to attend meetings with the learning and teaching team consisting of the heads of departments. Each year as the VET courses change the college considers how it can integrate further VET course options – year on year the importance of VET providing students with pathways to further education, training or employment has grown. The VET coordinator liaises with the senior leadership team about which VET courses could be offered, the mode of delivery either onsite or offsite, and the qualifications of staff required to deliver them.

Careers counselling and the course selection process previously undertaken with Year 10 and 11 students provides important information for decision-making about future course offerings.

Registered Training Organisation status

All VET is required to be certified by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Schools have a variety of ways of accessing RTO services:

- *becoming an RTO*
- *the school sector acting as the RTO*
- *partnering with an RTO (auspice)*
- *using an external RTO to deliver and assess all of the training onsite or offsite.*



Each of these options will suit schools in different situations. Whatever the arrangement adopted, schools and employers need to be confident that the RTO has suitably qualified trainers and assessors and access to the industry-standard equipment required.

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The college has not sought registration as an RTO in its own right, seeing the benefit in being able to choose between existing RTOs to find the RTO that combines industry-standard resources with the support and expertise to best meet the needs of the college and the students.
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For the delivery of VET courses, the college has a third party auspice arrangement with a private RTO. The college also offers VET courses delivered through external RTOs, in particular through TAFE colleges.

The college has not sought registration as an RTO in its own right, seeing the benefit in being able to choose between existing RTOs to find the RTO that combines industry-standard resources with the support and expertise to best meet the needs of the college and the students.

Student support

Vocational learning activities and pre-vocational programs support students to select the right VET course and pursue their chosen pathway to a career, employment or further education and training. Career education and opportunities to gain work readiness

skills help students make informed choices and prepares them for learning in a workplace environment.

The college employs a learning support assistant whose role is to support students in VET classes with classroom work. Students needing support with literacy or numeracy may be withdrawn in small groups to ensure they meet the standards required in the VET course. The learning-support assistant monitors student progress via shared data and provides assistance to any student they notice is falling behind.

Communication

Current information from a range of sources helps students, parents, employers and the broader school community understand VET offerings and the opportunities they provide. Communication enables students and parents to understand the options available and to make informed choices.

The course selection process is a period of integrated and multifaceted communication with students and parents or carers.

Several information evenings and a careers day are held prior to enrollment in courses. The college seeks to establish an individual program that will meet the aims of each student, first helping them to establish what those aims might be. Staff work with parents, TAFE colleges and/or potential employers to help establish an individual student's pathway.

A traditional academic pathway to university is not always an appropriate choice for all students, and students and parents require help to navigate the often-confusing worlds of VET and employment.

