



Marist Regional College

School profile

- Tasmania
- Provincial
- Non-government
- Year 7 to 12
- Third party Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) auspice arrangements and third party RTO delivery
- 16 courses in eight industry areas in 2015
- 796 students enrolled in 2015

Marist Regional College is a Catholic systemic college located in a regional area of Tasmania. This co-educational Year 7 to 12 college values hospitality, respect, justice, compassion and responsibility for one another, and has an inclusive entry philosophy. Its vision emphasises striving for excellence and a range of vocational education and training (VET) programs complement its academic program.

Program background

The college has a well-equipped training centre that incorporates a training restaurant, a cafe and a bakery, and has funded the development of training facilities for other VET programs. It delivers VET programs both internally and through external RTO providers. Being a regional college it is able to tap into its community and business networks to support the VET programs.

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.

The VET courses at Marist Regional College are quite diverse and cater for the different outcomes students are seeking. The college is aware that if their differing

needs are not addressed, students will disengage and not complete their courses.

The college runs courses on and off campus. Some courses are delivered internally under auspice arrangements with trainers from external RTOs and teachers. Others are courses where students go off campus to an external local RTO; this works best for short courses. There are blended learning courses in which students combine online work in supervised structured lessons at the school with practical work and work placements outside of the school.

The college tracks data such as National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) data in order to make informed choices about courses that lead to jobs.

A shortage of skills in the hospitality industry has led to the college selecting and running courses for students interested in bakery, patisserie and Hospitality.

Support from industry is of the utmost importance. The Introduction to Hospitality course, established in 2015 by the school in response to the needs of local community and businesses, was a new and challenging initiative that works well. The course is liked by the students and addresses a critical skill shortage.

There is a general move within Tasmania to combine VET with Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) courses. Driving the move is an awareness of the potential advantage for some students when they can combine the strong applied knowledge and employability skills they gain from the VET programs with the academic knowledge gained from completing TCE subjects in Year 11 and 12. Even though VET is not recognised towards the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR) in Tasmania, the advantages gained from the combination of both pathways are driving changes to the structure of VET courses.

Many students aim to go into apprenticeships after Year 12 so TasTAFE is a pathway that can be established during Year 11 and 12 with 'a taster' program offered in Year 10. A number of students are completing School-based Apprenticeships.

The college runs short courses that assist students in finding part-time work while studying. These courses

include Responsible service of alcohol, Barista and First aid, and have been designed in consultation with industry to meet skills needed by employers and to benefit students entering the workforce.

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.

Marist Regional College runs a mixed VET program. They have external RTOs who run courses and other RTOs under auspice arrangements with teachers on staff delivering the courses. The mixture varies according to the need of the time and the capacity of the college staff to take and teach the courses.

Where possible, the college prefers to have in-house staff because it strengthens the relationships with the students. Also, in-house staff have full knowledge of the students' situations, and know the structures of the college and its support mechanisms for students.

Professional development with all staff (trainers) is now a mandatory requirement. Staff are encouraged to seek professional development that is in alignment with the VET regulatory requirements. Staff are also encouraged to keep a journal of work and of professional development completed.

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 delivered to secondary students. Working with employers or work placement providers to provide access to relevant and quality workplace learning opportunities enables students to develop skills that are better aligned with workplace needs.

Employers from the area support the trades centre. The reputation of the school and its students, their work and employability skills means that many students enter jobs or apprenticeships straight after school.

Excellent communication and collaboration skills are required between the college, businesses and RTOs to strengthen professional ties and ensure the delivery of quality VET courses where students are engaged, receive quality feedback from trainers and undertake work placements that further develop core skills and knowledge. As a regional school, the college relies on the strong connections with the community and local businesses to identify possibilities of part-time work and School-based Apprenticeships for its students.

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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.

‘VET brings things to the school that aren’t in a traditional mainstream school. It allows us to deviate ... from structures that have been in place for the last ... 200 years ... and which schools often conform to because we know no different. VET opens up different pathways and different opportunities that are outside the realms of what’s traditionally seen as secondary schooling and brings industry in and industry knowledge into a school-based setting. It allows us to look outside the box.’ (Principal)

By offering a broad range of VET programs from construction to fitness, the college provides students with opportunities and pathways that they would not have if it offered TCE subjects only. Students feel inspired and engaged in their learning because they have appealing opportunities and a pathway.

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Strategies are in place for students in Year 10 and 11, prior to their subject selection, to support them with knowledge about VET pathways within the senior years and beyond.

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.

The college is not an RTO and works in auspice or external arrangements with other RTOs. This may be within the school or in an external setting.

Auspice arrangements are in place with local and national RTO providers. These are put in place after considerable research to ensure quality and efficiency. The college stresses the importance of working with high quality RTOs with strong measures in place to ensure the quality of their training and their ability to comply with administrative requirements in an efficient and timely manner. This is especially important for students completing Year 11 and 12.

Systems to assess the quality of external RTOs include reviewing RTOs performance through the national training register, training.gov.au, for details of their commitments and restrictions to deliver – past and present.



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 prepare them for learning in a workplace environment.

The introduction to VET begins in Year 10. Students in Year 10 can choose Introduction to Hospitality. A 'taster day' allows them to experience VET courses as they prepare for subject selection for Year 11 and 12. Students also have the opportunity to attend some TasTAFE taster days.

The Year 10 and 11 information forums held prior to course selection cover matters such as: nationally recognised VET qualifications and accredited courses; critical skills shortages; job security/loss at local, state and national level; employer demands; combining VET courses with TCE subjects; School-based Apprenticeships; and structured work placements, among many other topics.

The college has a Learning Enhancement Centre with a coordinator who offers support to students completing VET courses off campus, for example, with their English and mathematics requirements.

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.

As the VET coordinator stresses, everyone has to understand and feel some ownership of the VET program if it is to be a success.'... if teachers aren't behind you, if the principal isn't behind you, VET really will not take off the ground. I think that's actually one of the main roles of the VET coordinator ... having that transparent communication that opens up the doors for management and leadership [and staff] to understand ... what VET is about. If it's going to work, we have to work in unison with parents, with community, with stakeholders, with industry, with RTOs for it all to come together.' (VET Coordinator)

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Student and parent understanding of VET is developed through social media, taster and open days, and course selection forums (among other channels).

A comprehensive Student Management System was established in 2015 for all VET courses, units of competency, traineeships, and apprenticeships. This is a highly efficient tool for providing accurate and up-to-date information to students, parents and teachers.

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