



Guilford Young College

School profile

- Tasmania
- Metropolitan (other colleges in the RTO are provincial and metropolitan)
- Non-government
- Year 11 to 12 (other colleges in the RTO are Year 7 to 10, Year K to 10, and Year K to 12)
- Guilford Young College is the lead college in the RTO formed by nine Catholic colleges
- 16 vocational education and training (VET) qualifications in 10 industry areas offered in 2015
- 879 students were enrolled at Guilford Young College in 2015

Guilford Young College is a co-educational, systemic Catholic college catering to Year 10 to 12 and operating on two campuses in the metropolitan area of Hobart, Tasmania. It is the lead college in the Southern Tasmanian Catholic Colleges Trade Training Centre, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) formed in partnership with eight other Catholic colleges spread over approximately a radius of hundred kilometres.

Program background

Guilford Young College is an RTO and has been since 1995. In 2011, the other eight colleges joined as partners to deliver VET to secondary students. The teachers have industry backgrounds and the colleges have fully equipped industry-standard workshops. The VET programs involve significant work placements and on-the-job assessments as well as operating simulated businesses.

Initially with the opening of the Trades Training Centre, the college aimed to deliver VET programs at Certificate III qualification level to the existing large class sizes within the short time frames available on the existing timetable. These two pressures, together with the accountability requirements as an RTO and the newness of the venture, meant staff were initially somewhat overwhelmed.

The school undertook a review of the VET programs bringing in an outside consultant. The decision was made to deliver Certificate I and II, a step back from Certificate III, and the program was revolutionised.

Smaller classes sizes were instituted, staff development was put in place and working in teams became the way of doing business. Teachers feel well supported within an accountable but achievable framework and industry is supportive of the new arrangements.

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 programs cover different industry areas across the nine colleges in partnership with a range of industries. Courses are offered in industry areas covering 16 qualifications. The industries include: Agrifood, Automotive, Business, Engineering, Community services, Construction, Hospitality, Sports coaching, Tourism, Health Services, and Early Childhood Education and Care.

Most of the VET programs run over Year 11 and 12 and provide students with the opportunity to complete a Certificate I or II qualification. Early Childhood Education and Care, and Health Services are delivered at Certificate III level. The programs are offered within normal college timetables with the occasional full day set aside to undertake particular VET projects or assessments. As a consequence there is no interruption to other choices that students might make.

Class sizes are kept small. 'You can't run large class numbers in VET. I teach mathematics and 25 students is fine. In VET it isn't because of the fact that it's a one-on-one observation, [instruction and] assessment. So, [you need] small group numbers and at St Virgil's we keep classes under 12 students. I'm very lucky here. If you have 20 students, the whole course is basically lost in the paperwork, and there is a lack of personal time with students. So it's important [to keep class sizes small]!' (Agrifoods Teacher, St Virgil's College)

For Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, approximately 15 units are provided over two years, with a weekly playgroup run at the college. Full childcare facilities are provided through a partnership with a local childcare centre and family day care providers. Students also undertake a six to eight weeks work placement.

Automotive is delivered at one college with three other colleges able to access the VET program. There are fully-functional workshop facilities and students can complete Certificate I or Certificate II qualifications. Students are required to complete up to six weeks of work placements and there are excellent employment outcomes for the students.

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.

The RTO participated in a consortium of Southern Tasmanian Catholic Schools receiving a grant that enabled the extension of the trades facility across the schools and colleges.

St Virgil's has 65 acres of adjoining land, vegetable plots and a work placement arrangement with a local nursery that enables it to deliver Certificate I in Agrifood in Year 9 and 10. Certificate II Agrifood is also delivered at two other colleges with strong industry partnerships.

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.

The college is a strong advocate for its staff having industry backgrounds. It has sought out people who are 'lovers of the discipline and their trade ... [who] exude that enthusiasm [in the classroom]'. Students value the industry knowledge brought by the teachers.

The college wanted to encourage the movement of students across colleges in the RTO in order to access different VET courses. Having teachers with strong industry credibility bringing 'real life knowledge of the workplace' and experiences to students' learning tended to break down their resistance to moving between colleges, encouraging them to access these attractive courses. Regular movement to access courses now occurs across four of the nine colleges.

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The college had to ensure that all accountability requirements were met for provisional registration and for the teachers to qualify to be in the classroom. The college supports industry teachers with matters such as pastoral care techniques or report writing.

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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 quality and relevant workplace learning opportunities enables students to develop skills that are better aligned with workplace needs.

Students have always been, and still are, at the centre of all arrangements and negotiations. It takes some time to educate teachers, principals and school leadership that industry needs and industry trends also need to be central to the college's cost design, equipment, and the way it works. But Guilford Young College has really taken on the fact that, for the provision of VET, industry has to be strongly engaged.

Students who have finished four units of competency in Construction can continue Certificate I at Guilford Young. However, many Year 10 students go straight into an apprenticeship. Many companies have come

to know the skills the students develop through the Construction program and as a consequence students are well sought after.

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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.

Year 9 and 10 students can undertake VET as an elective in the junior colleges of the RTO prior to going to Guilford Young College, or St Mary's District College, a Year 7 to 12 college, for Year 11 and 12, where they seamlessly continue their VET course.



While the VET programs contribute to the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) in Tasmania, they are not recognised as part of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). However, VET programs are deliberately integrated into the timetable so that VET is not regarded as an alternative pathway that closes off other options for students.

'I really enjoyed doing my Certificate III [in Childhood Education and Care] here. I decided that that's what I wanted to be doing and I continued on with a diploma after I left. Four years later and I'm still loving it. I'm looking at continuing studying into my Bachelor [degree].' (Ex-student)

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.

Guilford Young is the lead college in the Southern Tasmanian Catholic Colleges Trade Training Centre, an RTO formed in partnership with eight other Catholic colleges: St Aloysius Catholic College, Dominic Catholic College, Mackillop Catholic College, Mt Carmel Catholic College, Sacred Heart Catholic College, St James Catholic College, St Mary's Catholic College, St Virgil's Catholic College.

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The VET teachers have a common bank of information to work with. 'We're all doing the same thing across all schools and our performance is assessed.'
(Teacher, mathematics and VET: St Virgil's College)
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The college employs an RTO Director who undertook the original review of the VET programs. She works across the nine colleges which all work closely together.

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 the opportunity to gain work readiness skills helps students make informed choices and prepares them for learning in a workplace environment.

Contact with students and teachers across the schools in the RTO means that students move from Year 10 to Year 11 seamlessly. Teachers are able to talk to students about their needs and future aims and goals, whether transitioning into an apprenticeship or continuing with an academic pathway that includes practical skills.

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'I come from a background where I was teaching adults. Coming into a school environment, communication is obviously very different. But [I find that students] really respect the fact that you're treating them like an adult. ... Because we are teaching them in a workplace kind of environment, we naturally take the role as facilitator rather than teacher. The students really respect that difference in educational approach.' (Hospitality teacher, Mackillop College)

About 61 per cent of students leaving Guilford Young are going into jobs in the industry that they worked in through their VET course. The college is proud of that outcome. About 20 per cent will go into further study in that vocational area. Quite a few go on to university.

