



Halls Head College

School profile

- Western Australia
- Provincial
- Government
- Year 7 to 12
- Onsite courses delivered under third party auspice arrangements with six external RTOs
- 14 courses in eight industry areas in 2015
- 1247 students enrolled in 2015

Halls Head College is situated in Mandurah approximately 74 kilometres south of Perth, Western Australia. The college opened in 2001 with Year 8 to 10 and began offering senior programs in 2010. Halls Head College directs its planning to the provision of opportunities and pathways for students in a local area that has very low employment. Vocational education and training (VET) at Halls Head College is part of its core business and culture. A hallmark of its provision is the range of different types of pathways available to senior students. The 14 onsite courses are delivered under third party auspice arrangements with six external Registered Training organisations (RTO); students attending offsite training do so at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges or private RTOs.

Program background

The Halls Head VET program has been in operation six years. Beginning on a small scale in 2010 with the first cohort of senior students, the college trained existing staff to deliver a few in-school VET opportunities within the curriculum. Over time the program has expanded its onsite delivery to 14 VET courses. It also runs combined offsite and onsite delivery with an emphasis on flexible pathways with breadth and depth. It introduced the Big Picture Academy in 2015 and a number of other flexible programs to meet the needs of different student groups and individuals.

The substantial growth in senior school student numbers over the previous three years has enabled the school to provide the flexibility within the timetable to enable onsite and offsite combinations for VET programs. The college has continued its practice of upskilling and training existing staff where possible.

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.*

Halls Head College has four major senior programs: the general senior pathway; the Big Picture Academy; Profile, which offers offsite courses through TAFE and private training providers; and the Senior School Transition Program.

The general senior program is the traditional pathway through which students gain their Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and an Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR). Students may take VET courses in combination with other subjects.

The Big Picture Academy is an Australia-wide program whose flexible nature enables students to pursue interest areas through personalised learning programs where they complete some subjects in the curriculum and some through work or in the community with mentors. The Big Picture Academy gives students outcomes ranging from Certificates II to IV potentially, providing pathways into university or further training through TAFE or other training providers.

The Profile program enables students to study within an industry area not covered onsite at the college. Students may access training through TAFE or a private training provider on a fee-for-service basis. These courses consist of one or two days a week offsite with the remaining time at school. The courses are highly sought after and the college bases selection on such things as the student's school report, attendance record, behaviour, workplace learning and an interview.

The Senior School Transition Program supports Year 11 students who want to transition into TAFE and other post-school training pathways. Students study English, Mathematics, Career and Enterprise, and a Certificate II

Business potentially enabling them to achieve a WACE. They attend three days at the college and two at TAFE and/or a workplace learning placement. The Certificate II in Business was selected because it was considered to be generic across a number of industries.

Some of the programs are run in conjunction with employers and business associations.

Halls Head College runs some short courses, such as barista and first aid training, that complement the student's certificate courses.

For students who are disengaged, the college has built strong partnerships with external training providers to provide alternative learning programs and VET courses. Through counselling the college seeks to partner students with an industry or VET course that is of interest to them and will potentially re-engage them and build their generic employability skills so that they can then pursue further learning or work opportunities.

The college draws on extensive research undertaken with industry, businesses and business associations in the local region and beyond to identify potential pathways for students and the VET courses it should run. It also draws on its reviews and student interest to make decisions about courses. Wherever there is interest in a course, its feasibility will be seriously investigated.

Looking to the future the college is moving towards a more enterprising approach to support students with both on and off-the job training. It has recently upgraded its kitchen to industry standard and is establishing a cafeteria within the college to enable students to practise their skills.

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 has arranged its VET delivery largely from within the ranks of its existing staff by retraining or upskilling them and encouraging them to draw on areas of interest or previous careers. In addition, rapid growth has also enabled the college to employ new staff with the specific required skills. The college believes that VET students have most to gain when the nurturing nature of the school's existing staff is combined with ability and training to teach in a VET area.

A key appointment has been the Training Pathways Coordinator who has major responsibility for VET program delivery, research into potential courses, management of compliance, the extensive course counselling and communication with parents and students. The college's Training Pathways Coordinator has a background with an industry association and strong industry knowledge and links. He is supported in his role by the deputy principal who has responsibility for VET structures and timetables. This is also a key role since flexibility is critical to making the program work.

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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.

Apart from constantly renewing links with industry in the interests of currency of information, and seeking new opportunities, recently the college formed a number of partnerships that are starting to have excellent results. One example is the Energy Apprenticeships Group (EAG), a Group Training Organisation (GTO) addressing skill shortages in the oil and gas sector.

EAG made it known that it would employ 14 graduates from Year 12 across Western Australia to commence as Process Technician Trainees early in 2016. Moreover, this would be extended to a further 24 positions to include Mechanical and Electrical Traineeships for 2017. Halls Head College was one of five schools that participated in the EAG program, providing students with first-hand training in skills and strategies so they could compete for these statewide advertised positions. Students and parents participated in a number of activities.

The college views this as an excellent opportunity for its students to engage with the oil and gas sector and to develop generic skills that support students whether they choose options in the energy industry or other industries, or other pathways. One of Halls Head's Year 12 female graduates was successful in gaining a position.

'I always saw myself as being university orientated. It wasn't until Halls Head College hosted some information days about a lot of different pathways with Apprenticeships and Traineeships, that I considered something other than university.' (Apprentice Process Operator and Halls Head College, Year 12 graduate]

'Halls Head has helped us by making sure they got students prepared, ready to go into these industries with the necessary skills, not just technical skills, but also communication skills, relationship skills, conflict resolution skills. So by the time they're actually coming to work for us, they are ready to transition from a school-based environment to a workplace environment.' (General Manager, Energy Apprenticeship Group)

Other partnerships with industries include those with the Australian Mines and Metals Association and Ramsay Health Care Western Australia's NEXTGEN PLUS.

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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 delivers and assesses 14 onsite VET courses under the auspice of six RTOs and the associated quality assurance and certification processes required of RTOs. It considers that the opportunity to tap into the expertise of industry organisations provides both benefits for the college staff and potential employment pathways for students. Profile program and Senior School Engagement program students attend TAFE or a private training provider, which are the RTOs.

Review

The school's VET offerings are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they meet the needs of industry and employers. Similarly, jurisdictions and school sectors update their policies and procedures in line with funding priorities and skills needs. Schools should have in place review processes for the VET programs they offer to ensure these maintain their currency and effectiveness within both VET and school policy environments.

Halls Head College reviews the VET courses offered and decides future offerings, taking into account labor trends, information from industry associations and employers, and student interests.

The college has the view that it should be thorough in its investigations about possible opportunities or options for students as a group or individually. If the solution does not immediately present itself, the Training Pathways Coordinator holds discussions with stakeholders seeking advice and possible solutions.

'I think it's important to keep an open mind and be flexible. We [want] to provide opportunities for students that meet their career aspirations or their desired pathways or needs. Whether that's onsite, whether that's [offsite through TAFE], or whether that's fee for service. Whether we're linking them up with employers who may be able to provide employment or workplace opportunities. We endeavour to do everything we can.' (Training Pathways Coordinator)

As a result of the college's review this year, it will be introducing engineering in 2017.

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