



# Mabel Park State High School

## School profile

- Queensland
- Metropolitan
- Government
- Year 7 to 12
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for eight qualifications; uses third party RTO auspice arrangements for four qualifications; uses external RTO delivery onsite for one qualification
- 20 courses in 9 industry areas in 2015
- 538 students enrolled in 2015

Mabel Park State High School is a small, co-educational Year 7 to 12 school located approximately 25 kilometres south-east of Brisbane in Logan City, Queensland. The school serves a multicultural community with 47 different cultures forming its population. All students find a positive and productive pathway into further education, training or employment.

BEACON, one of the key programs in the senior school, aims to initiate original and innovative projects that demonstrate solutions to youth unemployment. Across the school, leadership capabilities of the students are further developed through the Future Logan Leaders program in conjunction with local industry, community and higher education partners.

## Program background

Mabel Park State High School has an extensive and multifaceted career education program and works closely in a range of innovative ways with employers. For example, at the end of Year 10 a ceremony is held at which all students willingly commit themselves to further education and training. Employers and community are invited to witness the charter signing. The school says the powerful event is about creating a positive mindset in students about their futures.

Mabel Park established the first health training facility within a school in Queensland. Approximately 60 Year 10 to 12 students from nine Logan schools access the facility one day per week for training. The school is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and

also partners with other RTOs. It has good facilities that enable it to run a number of VET courses using industry-standard equipment.

## 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.*

All Year 11 and 12 students study one English and one mathematics subject. Of their remaining subjects, students may choose all academic subjects, a mixture of academic and VET courses, or all VET courses. The school offers three Certificate III qualifications over six lessons a week and the remaining VET courses at Certificate II level over three lessons a week.

Students enrolled in Certificate II Health Support Services train one day per week for nine months and are required to complete five to ten days of work experience. Students gain the foundational skills required in baseline clinical work, for example, infection control and food handling. With these skills they can transition directly into patient care by enrolling in Certificate III, if they choose to do so.

*'A lot of [students] had no idea what they were in for when they first started ... to see their skills and written work developing through the year, to see them so enthusiastic and so competent now ... and able to go out into the workplace, makes me very proud.'*  
(Certificate II, Health Support Trainer)

Decisions on which VET programs to provide are based on skills shortages, employment opportunities and the ability, skills and interests of students. The Health Training Hub was established in recognition of the significant growth in Australia's ageing population and the resulting growth in employment projected in this field.



The school establishes and supports students entering into an Australian School-based Apprenticeship.

All students in Year 10 and 11 have one lesson a week on career education during which time Certificate II in Workplace Practices is delivered.

The school has a partnering arrangement with a local Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute for delivery of Certificate II Engineering Pathways. The school's own teacher trainer delivers the course with quality assurance from the TAFE as the RTO. The TAFE provides the theory components of the course and signs off on the student's units of competency. The teacher adds value to the course, drawing on his knowledge of what employers are seeking and from the students' experiences in the workplace. Students who enroll in Engineering are also required by the school to take Graphics as a subject to complement their studies.

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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 are 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.*

Building relationships with the community and local employers is given high importance by Mabel Park State High School so that the school, its students and the training and qualifications it delivers have credibility in the eyes of employers. Employers are invited to special events and participate in the designated careers days for Year 10, 11 and 12 students. The school has an industry liaison officer whose role is to promote the Australian School-based Apprenticeships with employers and to find work experience and work placements for students. The VET/RTO/Senior School Manager and the Industry Liaison Manager both attend local events and are members of the Logan Chamber of Commerce.

Employers are invited to attend a meeting as part of the school's annual review process. Teachers bring their assessment items and their staff profiles, which includes their industry currency, and an employer from the relevant industry reviews these. The school invites questions and comments such as: '... in industry we have started doing it this way'; or 'yes, that is up to industry standards'; or 'we have started to use ...'

'We want our courses to be credible in the eyes of industry; otherwise they're not going to employ our students. This is also a good way of showing that we're doing what they say we should be doing ... and if not, we want to know and improve.' (VET/RTO/Senior School Manager)



'Speed Careers' sees about 10 employers from a range of different industries, each working with a group of approximately 10 students for a short period of time before moving on to the next group. In the small groups students are willing to ask employers questions and they are so engaged that the session runs itself apart from the time keeper's intervention.

The school also invites employers to work with the Year 12 students to give them advice about interviews and resumes. Students find this more powerful than listening to teachers deliver similar messages. Similarly, at the work readiness days provided for younger students, employers tell them how competitive the job market is, what it's like choosing between applicants in interviews or through resumes. At times there is a connection on the spot and a job is offered, or this event provides the first steps for students in forming their networks of employers.

A program called Business Blackboards involves employers working alongside teachers to deliver lessons aimed at showing young people that what they are learning is relevant and needed in the world of work.

By having so many opportunities to engage with the school and its students, the employers, especially those who may not have been in a school for many years, are able to see how young people are developing valuable skills and dispositions that will equip them well for the world of work. Employers who might have had some negative views of young people generally change their opinions through their contact with students and the school.

The school's teacher trainer for Certificate II in Engineering Pathways describes his role as listening – to students, to TAFE trainers and to employers. TAFE provides all theory for the course and issues the Certificates.

Ten students were placed with Hume's Pipes to undertake a work placement for one day a week. Watching their satisfaction as they came back dirty after long working days, the teacher trainer responded by teaching the theory content that Hume's Pipes needed in the workplace. Another employer employed three apprentices and provided feedback that they needed a little more mathematics – the school responded.

'After talking to employers, [we find] they don't necessarily want welding skills or fitting and turning skills; they want other skills like punctuality, consistent attendance, and the ability to solve simple problems in the workplace. They need students to be able to read, write and have some mathematics behind them. They need students to be able to work in a team; we all work better with others. When a company has to make money, they rely on these students that I'm producing to have these primary skills in place. I would hope I teach all of those skills as a primary function of teaching Engineering. On top of that, we'll also teach some technical skills like how to measure, how to drill, why to drill in a certain direction and not another, what the coolant does, what the machines do, and so on.'

(Teacher Trainer, Certificate II Engineering Pathways)

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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.

Mabel Park State High School is an RTO in its own right for some qualifications, such as Certificate III in Visual Arts and Certificate III in Information Digital Media and Technology. For other certificates the school partners with other external RTOs under auspice arrangements for the school's teacher trainers. These include for the delivery of Certificate I in Construction, Certificate II in Engineering and Certificate II in Hospitality.

Staff members' industry currency is maintained through work placements during the end of year period when senior students have left. The school ensures that all staff gain Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and have at least the level of qualification they are delivering, or higher.

The school's Health Training Hub, at which students undertake Certificate II in Health Support, has a trainer supplied by an external RTO. When establishing the facility the school put out a request for tender, seeking responses from RTOs. The successful organisation subsequently supported the school in establishing the Hub and selecting equipment. In addition the school

enlisted the support of industry which responded generously with significant donations of equipment and provision of advice. In this way the school ensured the facility meets industry standards.

Approximately 60 Year 10, 11 and 12 students from nine schools access the Hub for one day a week, with the Hub operating three days a week.

## 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 prepare them for learning in a workplace environment.*

The Industry Liaison Officer ensures that students who express an interest in a School-based Apprenticeship fully understand all that it entails for their schooling, future work, training pathways and their life – that it is more than a matter of having a day away from school, and that a significant commitment in terms of work and responsibility is involved. A prior work placement is arranged as a trial to ensure both student and employer are satisfied with the potential arrangement.

School-based Apprentices are out training on the job one day a week and, to enable them to catch up on work missed during that time, the school allows them to enroll in one less subject. During that free time they can seek help from the school's Industry Liaison Officer or other staff. The school also monitors attendance and ensures that the student is staying up-to-date with the theory component of their training and other work. It also helps to resolve any issues that may arise between the student and the employer.

