

Options for Leaving School before the End of Year 12

In today's education and training system, there are many different options and pathways available for those students who choose to leave school before completing Year 12.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* legally requires students from 6 to 16-years-of-age inclusive to be enrolled at a school, registered for home schooling or undertaking an educational programme at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute or other Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

Victorian students who successfully complete secondary schooling will receive a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), a Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Many students however, choose a pathway that involves them leaving 'traditional' schooling before the completion of Year 12.

Youth Guarantee

The Victorian Government has established the Youth Guarantee, which provides young people between the ages of 16 and 20 with a guaranteed place at a TAFE institute, the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) and at participating Adult Community Education (ACE) providers.

Young people are eligible for a guaranteed place under the Youth Guarantee if they have not completed Year 12 or its equivalent and are under 20-years-of-age on the first of January of the year in which training will commence.

The Youth Guarantee provides early school leavers and young people with the opportunity for further education in a number of different learning institutes. These include:

TAFE Institutes

TAFE institutes offer a wide variety of courses in over 40 different study areas. The most commonly studied are: business related studies in computer skills, clerical and administrative subjects; community services and health studies in nursing, counselling, welfare and personal care; courses in generic skills, including job preparedness, language, literacy and numeracy skills. For further information or to find a TAFE institute, visit the [Department of Education and Early Childhood Development](#) website.

Centre for Adult Education

The CAE offers nationally recognised courses in job skills and general education, including VCE and VCAL certificates.

Adult Multicultural Education Services

AMES assists migrants and refugees to learn and live in Australia by providing a range of adult education, training and employment programmes.

Adult Community Education Providers

ACE centres offer a variety of courses including informal, non-accredited and formal, accredited programmes. ACE study is suitable for people wanting to get back into study and can be the first step towards further study at TAFE or university.

Studying at an RTO is another option. RTOs are approved to teach, assess and issue qualifications that are recognised throughout Australia. RTOs can be either TAFE institutes or private organisations that provide government funded training and/or fee-for-service training. Private RTOs include industry training centres, community education organisations, group training companies and commercial institutions.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Further education is not always the best option for some young people. In this case, students may find that apprenticeships and traineeships are a better pathway into employment.

Apprenticeships and traineeships allow students and young people to learn the skills of a particular industry by receiving on-the-job and off-the-job training at a TAFE or private provider.

Students can undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship on a part-time basis while studying for their VCE or VCAL.

A trainee or apprentice is required to sign a contract of training that must be registered with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's office of Training and Tertiary Education. Trainees and apprentices receive wages and other benefits and their qualifications are recognised throughout Australia.

Pre-Apprenticeships are 8 to 16 week courses that prepare students for an apprenticeship by teaching them the basic skills of the trade. As those undertaking pre-apprenticeships do not require an employer, the training provider will often assist students in finding an employer with whom to undergo an apprenticeship.

Entering the Workforce

Another alternative to further study is to obtain a job and enter the workforce after leaving school.

The [Job Guide](#) website lists a large variety of jobs and the education and training required for each. Students are able to use the website to find suitable jobs that relate to their interests and abilities.

The [Myfuture](#) and [Youth Central](#) websites provide information and advice about looking for, finding and getting a job.

Leaving school before the end of Year 12 does not mean that a student will never be able to complete their VCE or VCAL. Adults can study for the Adult VCE in one year provided that they have not undertaken full-time secondary schooling for the full year preceding their first year of enrolment as an adult and must be at least 18 years of age on 1 January in the year they enrol as an adult.

Although completing secondary school is often the best option for students, there are many other options. However, it is important for students who are contemplating leaving school before they finish Year 12 to speak to their parents and relevant school staff members, such as the careers teacher, year level coordinator or wellbeing coordinator to obtain advice for their future study and careers options.

Further Information:

- [Centre for Adult Education](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: [Apprenticeships and Traineeships](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: [Minimum School Leaving Age FAQs](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: [TAFE – Technical and Further Education](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: [Youth Guarantee](#)
- [Job Guide](#)
- [Myfuture](#)
- [Youth Central](#)