

# Subject Selection and Pathways Frequently Asked Questions

## General Subject Selection FAQ

### Year 7 into Year 8

There are no electives offered in Year 8, however a significant program undertaken by all students is the ESTEEM program, which runs over 15 periods in a ten-day cycle in Semester 1 and 18 periods in a ten-day cycle in Semester 2.

The ESTEEM program fuses the mathematics, science and digital technology components of our Year 8 curriculum into a single inquiry based STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) course. Through innovative pedagogical practice, we are aiming to prepare students both for their individual future alongside their role in building national capacity. We are seeking to increase student's ability to think critically and creatively, problem solve and implement solutions involving digital technology. With a more diverse and relevant skillset, students will benefit from the propensity to be informed citizens, and confident decisions makers complex issues that impact on their lives and the world around them.

### Year 8 into Year 9

#### What electives are offered in Year 9?

Students and parents can download the electives offered in Year 9 from the Damascus College website.

#### What are the compulsory subjects for Year 9?

Religious Education • English • Mathematics • Humanities • Science • Physical Education/Health

#### How many subjects do I choose?

In addition to your core subjects, you have the opportunity to choose to study subjects which you particularly enjoy and which will help you to achieve your long term goals. You need to choose **six** subjects: three subjects for Semester One and three subjects for Semester Two.

Electives for Year 9 subjects can be accessed via the College website.

<http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/life-damascus-learning-teaching-year9-and-10>

*Note that if you choose French, Indonesian, Arabic or Energy Breakthrough Team, you must take this subject in both semesters, therefore you will only need four other subject choices: two for Semester One and two for Semester Two.*

#### What do I need to do in Year 8?

Fill out the draft subject selection form for Year 9 prior to your TA interviews. Subjects need to be signed by your parents and TAs prior to entering your preferences online on **Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> August**

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## Year 9 into 10

### What electives are offered in Year 10?

Students and parents can download the electives offered at Year 10 from the Damascus College website.

### What are the compulsory subjects in Year 10?

Religious Education • English • Mathematics • Humanities • Science • Physical Education/Health

### How many subjects do I choose?

In addition to your core subjects, you have the opportunity to choose to study subjects which you particularly enjoy, have strengths in and which will help you to achieve your long term goals.

You need to choose **four** subjects: two subjects for Semester One and two subjects for Semester Two.

Electives for Year 10 subjects can be accessed via the College website.

<http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/life-damascus-learning-teaching-year9-and-10>

*Note that if you choose French or Indonesian, or intend to accelerate into a VCE unit 1/2 or VET subject. You must take this subject in both semesters, therefore you will only need two other subject choices: one for Semester One and one for Semester Two.*

Fill out the draft subject selection form Year 10 prior to your TA interviews. Subjects need to be signed by your parents and TAs prior to entering your preferences online on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August**.

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## Acceleration

### What is acceleration?

Acceleration is where students have the opportunity to undertake a Year 11 subject in Year 10.

### What do I need to do if I am thinking of accelerating?

If you are considering acceleration it is important that an active discussion takes place with your parents, subject teachers and teacher advisors.

Students can select to accelerate in VET subject or a VCE subject. Subjects offered in these areas can be accessed from the College website.

### What are the requirements if I am considering acceleration?

Students who are considering acceleration in a VET or VCE subject, will need to provide proof and documentation that the considered subject meets their long term goals.

Students considering acceleration into a VCE subject will need to have attained an average of 85% in Year 9 for your subjects particularly in English and in the subject area you are considering.

An interview with students regarding VCE acceleration will take place after submitting your application and entering your subject preferences online this will occur between **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August**.

### What is the expectation for students who accelerate in a VET or VCE subject?

It is expected that students who are successful in their application for VET or VCE acceleration will:

- commit to any after school workshop offered. These workshops will consolidate the explicit learning offered in these subjects and ensure that students are maximising their potential in achieving success in their senior years.
- meet the criteria for acceleration, which includes ensuring semester 2 results are on par with semester 1 results.
- be subject to a review in Year 10 and Year 11.

Students will need to download the acceleration form from the College website <http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/life-damascus-learning-teaching-year9-and-10>

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## VCE, VET and VCAL

See Appendix 1 for the learning pathways VCE, VET and VCAL can lead you.

### VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education)

#### What must I include in my VCE program?

To earn your VCE at Damascus College, we recommend students to do 13 units in Year 11 (of which 1 unit of Religion and society and 2 units of English are compulsory) and 10 units in Year 12 (of which 2 units are English).

#### Are there any compulsory subjects that I need take at VCE?

VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) advises that for the calculation of the ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank), students must satisfactorily complete both Unit 3 and Unit 4 of an English sequence.

- Three sequences of Unit 3 and 4 studies in addition to the sequence chosen from the English group. These sequences can be from VCE studies and/or VCE VET programs.
- At Damascus College, all students will do 1 unit of Religion and Society in Year 11 spread over 2 semesters.

#### How do I choose which subject suits me?

Students are encouraged to fill out the career plan and seek assistance from the Career Advisor, Mrs. Joanne Lawrence, Subject Teachers and/or Learning Area Leaders and Teacher Advisor in choosing the right subjects that will maximise your potential in achieving success

#### What are the attendance requirements for the VCE?

All VCE units require 50 hours of class time. You need to attend sufficient class time to complete work.

#### What is a study score?

A study score shows how well you have performed in a study at Unit 3 and 4 level, compared to everybody else in Victoria who took that study. Study scores calculated by the VCAA (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority) will be used by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) to calculate the ATAR.

#### How can I earn a study score?

At Unit 3 and 4 level, there are three Graded Assessments for each study, consisting of School Assessed Coursework (SACs), School Assessed Tasks (SATs) and examinations.

#### Do I earn a study score for a VET Subject?

A student in VCE doing a VET subjects that have scored assessment have two Graded Assessments. The Graded Assessments are different for each study and contribute towards the study score in different ways. If you complete at least two Graded Assessments and have satisfactorily completed both unit 3 and 4, you will be awarded a study score. You can find a list of Graded Assessments for every study in 'Report Results: Score aggregation' section of the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.

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### How is the study score calculated?

To calculate the study score, the VCAA combines the standardised scores for each of your Graded Assessments. Each graded assessment in a study contributes a specific percentage, or weighting, to the final study score.

### How does the GAT affect my VCE results?

The General Achievement Test (GAT) is an important part of the VCE assessment procedures. Achievement on the GAT is a good predictor of achievement on other assessments. If students have done well on the GAT, then their achievements are likely to be high in their school assessments and examination

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## How do I choose which subjects suit me?

### Guidelines when selecting subjects

Here are some things to consider, from a careers perspective, when choosing to do a subject in Years 11 and/or 12 at Damascus College.

Some of these guidelines may apply to you but not necessarily, all of them. Please seek guidance from your Career Advisor, Mrs. Joanne Lawrence) and specialist subject teacher in attaining a more accurate representation of the subject listed below, and its requirements to successfully complete it.

### 20th Century History and Ancient History

- You enjoy History, are doing quite well in Year 10 and are fascinated by events, which happened long ago.
- You want to pursue studying humanities at university (arts, communications, economics etc.).
- You enjoy research and writing essays and would enjoy working on a major historical investigation.

### Accounting

- You enjoyed Humanities as a core subject and are doing very well at Year 10 level.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the business/accounting/finance/economics area and this subject will be useful.
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### Art

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective.
- You are a creative and practical person who enjoys working on a major project
- You are very organised and have great time management skills.
- You are looking at a career or further study in this area at TAFE, a private college or university.
- You are interested in university study in the areas of architecture, fine arts, design, photography and planning.

### Biology

- You enjoy Science and are doing quite well in Year 10.
- You want to study a health-related course at university e.g. Nursing, Physiotherapy, Medical Science, Dietician etc.
- You have high literacy skills.
- You want to study a science course at university.

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## Business Management

- You enjoyed the commerce component of Humanities as an elective.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the business area.

## Chemistry

- You enjoy Science and did very well in Year 10.
- You want to study a medical-related course at university i.e. it is either assumed or recommended by the university that you do this.
- You want to study a science course at university i.e. it is either assumed or recommended by the university that you do this.
- You want to study engineering at university i.e. it is either assumed or recommended by the university that you do this.

## Computing

- You want to pursue a career or study in computing-related areas.

## Drama

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective.
- You are a creative person who enjoys working on a major performance- based project.
- You are looking at a career or further study in this area at a private college or university (e.g. acting, theatre studies, and drama teacher).

## English, English Language and English Literature

- It is compulsory for you to study at least 2 units of English for the VCE
- If you enjoy English and did very well in Year 10 (i.e. achieved a VH or H), you may choose to study English Literature.
- Students choosing English Literature will still need to do English.

## Environmental Science

- You enjoyed Horticulture subject as an elective in Year 9.
- You have experience on a rural property.
- You want to get a job working on a property.
- You want to continue your studies at TAFE, an Agricultural College or at university (e.g. Rural Science or Agriculture or Agribusiness etc.).

## Food and Technology

- You are interested in the science of food.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the area of food technologist, nutrition or dietetics and this subject will be useful.

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## French

- You enjoyed this subject from Years 7-10.
- You would like to continue to learn the language for interest or career reasons.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the area of languages, international studies, diplomatic service, teaching or translating and this subject will be useful.

## Geography

- You enjoyed this area of study in Humanities in Years 7-10.
- You are looking at further study at university or a career in the area of geography, urban planning or environmental courses and this subject will be useful.

## Health and Human Development Physical Education (H&HD)

- You enjoyed Health and PE in Years 7-10.
- You are looking at further study at university or a career in the area of human movement/sports or science/physical education-related courses and this subject will be useful.
- You are aware that the content of the course is more theory-based rather than practical

## Indonesian

- You enjoyed this subject from Years 7-10.
- You would like to continue to learn the language for interest or career reasons.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the area of languages, international studies, diplomatic service, teaching or translating and this subject will be useful.

## Industry and Enterprise

- You enjoyed the commerce component of Humanities as an elective.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the business area and this subject will be useful.

## Legal Studies

- You are interested in the legal system and law-related issues.
- You are looking at further study or a career in the area of law and this subject will be useful.

## Mathematics (see Appendix 2 for Pathways options)

- General Mathematics: This maths course focuses on financial, geometric and linear modelling. A great option for those who are thinking of accounting, economics and business.
- Mathematical Methods: You have mathematical ability and an interest in the subject. You are looking at university study in the areas of economics, business, engineering, psychology, statistics, architecture etc.
- Specialist Mathematics: You enjoy maths and did very well in Year 10 Advanced Mathematics (i.e. achieved a VH/H). You are looking at university study in the areas of maths, computer science, engineering, etc.

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## Music

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective.
- You have musical ability and/or pursue this outside school.
- You are a creative person who enjoys working on a major performance-based project.
- You are looking at a career or further study in this area at a private college or university (e.g. performer, music teacher).

## Physical Education Theory (PE Theory)

- You enjoyed Health and PE in Years 7-10.
- You are looking at further study at university or a career in the area of human movement/sports or science/physical education-related courses and this subject will be useful.
- You are aware that the content of the course is more theory-based rather than practical.
- High literacy skill is needed if considering this subject.

## Psychology

- You enjoy Science and are doing quite well in Year 10.
- You want to study a health-related course at university e.g. Social Science, Psychology, Nursing, Medical Science.
- You have high literacy skills.
- You want to study a science course at university

## Physics

- You enjoy Science and you are doing quite well in Year 10 (ie achieved a VH/H)
- You want to study a medical or health related course at university (eg medical radiation science, pharmacy) and it is either assumed or recommended that you do this by the University
- You want to study engineering or a science course at university ie it is either assumed or recommended by the university that you do this.

## Religion and Society

- For students who enjoyed Religious Education in Years 7-10 and achieved good results.
- You are interested in various areas of religious history, different religious traditions (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism.)
- The skills acquired in the course will suit students wishing to study humanities-based courses at the university.

## Product and Design Technology (Wood and Metal)

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective
- You are a person who enjoys working on a major project
- You are a creative and practical person looking to study architecture or a design based occupation.

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### Systems Engineering

- You enjoyed Mathematics and Science
- You are a creative and practical person who enjoys working on a major project
- You are looking at a career of further study in engineering, electrician etc.

### Visual Communication

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective
- You are a creative and practical person who enjoys working on a major project
- You are looking at a career of further study in design based occupations.

### Visual Arts

- You enjoyed this subject as an elective
- You are a creative and practical person who enjoys working on a major project
- You are very organised and have great time management
- You are looking at a career of further study in this area at TAFE, a private college or university
- You are interested in university study in the areas of architecture, fine arts, design, photography and planning.

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## VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning)

### Why would I choose to do the VCAL instead of the VCE?

The VCE is a good option for students who would like to go on to further education at university. However, you might feel that this is not the right option for you.

Just like the VCE, the VCAL is an accredited senior secondary school qualification undertaken in Years 11 and 12. The VCAL is based on hands-on learning, also known as 'applied learning'.

If you choose to do the VCAL, you will gain practical experience and 'employability' skills, as well as the skills you will need to go onto further training in the workplace or at a TAFE.

### When and where can I do the VCAL?

You can begin your VCAL program in Years 11 or 12 of secondary school. The VCAL is also available at most TAFE institutes and a number of Adult Community Education (ACE) centers.

### What are the VCAL levels?

The VCAL has three levels - Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. You would complete your VCAL at the level that matches your needs and abilities. **NOTE: At intermediate and Senior VCAL, completion of a VET course is a compulsory requirement**

### Are there any entry requirements?

You begin the VCAL at a level suitable to your learning needs. Your Applied Learning Coordinator and Careers Advisor will be able to help you decide which level is suitable for you in Year 11 & 12.

### What do you get after successfully completing the VCAL?

If you successfully complete your learning program, you will receive a VCAL Certificate for either Foundation, Intermediate or Senior Level, depending on the VCAL level you chose to complete. You will also receive a Statement of Results, VCAL units, and a Statement of Attainment for VET.

### What do I study?

You have the choice of selecting units and modules from each of the following four compulsory VCAL strands:

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Industry Specific Skills
- Personal Development Skills.
- Healthy Living Skills
- Vet
- Religious Education
- Structured Workplace Learning

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### Can I swap to the VCE if I change my mind?

Yes. If you change your mind and want to swap to the VCE. A panel will be formed to assess your situation and a decision will be made in your best interest. This is best looked at the end of semester 1 in Year 11.

### Can I work part-time and/or continue an apprenticeship while enrolled in the VCAL?

You can gain recognition and credit for part-time work while enrolled in the VCAL. This work can include:

- part-time apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time work
- work placement

### How is the VCAL assessed?

All accredited courses/certificates in your VCAL program are assessed by your teacher and/or RTO (registered training organisation). VCE, VET and other accredited courses/certificates are assessed in accordance with requirements. Your teacher will explain the requirements to meet the learning outcomes for VCAL units.

### Do I need to sit for the General Achievement Test (GAT)?

The GAT is a test of knowledge and skills in writing, mathematics, science and technology, humanities and social sciences and the arts. It is undertaken by all VCE and VCAL students doing one or more VCE Unit 3 and 4 sequences. Students doing a scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences will also be required to sit the GAT. Students whose only enrolment consists of VCAL units are not required to sit the GAT. However, students can choose to sit the GAT if it is appropriate to their pathway into further education, training or employment.

### Where can the VCAL take me?

#### Can I get into university if I successfully complete the VCAL?

In short yes, however, students will need to do a vocational education and training course at TAFE while working, perhaps leading to a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, and then decide that they would benefit from a university course.

If you are considering entering university straight from school, VCAL is not the best choice for you. Students planning to go straight into university usually undertake VCE programs which allow them to gain an ATAR score from the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC).

If you are studying a VCAL program at senior level and you decide that you might be interested in going on to university, see your teacher or careers advisor. It is possible that some universities will consider students with a VCAL Senior certificate for admission.

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## What are my options once I have completed the VCAL?

VCAL will give you practical work-related experience and a qualification that will be recognised by TAFE institutes and employers. Together these will help you move from school into work, an apprenticeship or traineeship and/or further training at TAFE.

If after all that, you decide you want to do the VCAL program, then see your Applied Learning Coordinator or download the application form from the Damascus website

## VET(Vocational and Educational Training)

### Is VET an extra program on top of my VCE or VCAL studies?

No your VET program is part of your VCE or VCAL and will be one of your elective choices. For example, selecting VET in Sports and Recreation in Year 11 and/or 12 it will give you four units at Level 1 -2, and a unit 3 & 4 sequence towards your VCE, contributes to your ATAR, plus a nationally recognized Certificate III in Sports and Recreation. Some VET programs will include full days of practical meaning some VCE or VCAL classes will be missed at times.

For a Year 10 student, VET is an extra on top of your Year 10 studies. Meaning you will miss some classes which is an important consideration in terms of keeping up to date with your coursework.

### How will I be assessed for my VET studies?

Your teachers will use a range of assessment tasks to ensure you have achieved competency, e.g. written tests, skills demonstration, and workplace assessment. In some programs such as Building and Construction, Scored Assessment is available i.e. you are assessed like any other VCE subject at 3 – 4 level.

### What if I change my mind about this career path and drop out?

You will receive a Statement of Attainment for your completed modules/units, many of which are relevant to a range of other courses.

### How will I fit structured workplace learning into my schedule?

Most work placements occur in term holidays. Special arrangements may be possible during term time e.g. one day a week, particularly for VCAL students.

### Will my part-time job count for structured workplace learning?

It can, but it needs to relate specifically to the required competencies of your program. Talk to your Applied Learning Coordinator for advice.

### Does a VET program help me if I want to go on to further study?

Yes, more than half of students go on to TAFE and/or university. The subjects you do in your VET program may give you credits and guaranteed pathways into other courses at TAFE.

### Do I have to select compatible VCE or VCAL subjects that relate to my VET program?

Not necessarily, but you should consult your Applied Learning Coordinator at your secondary college for recommendations.

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## How do I decide if I should do a VET program?

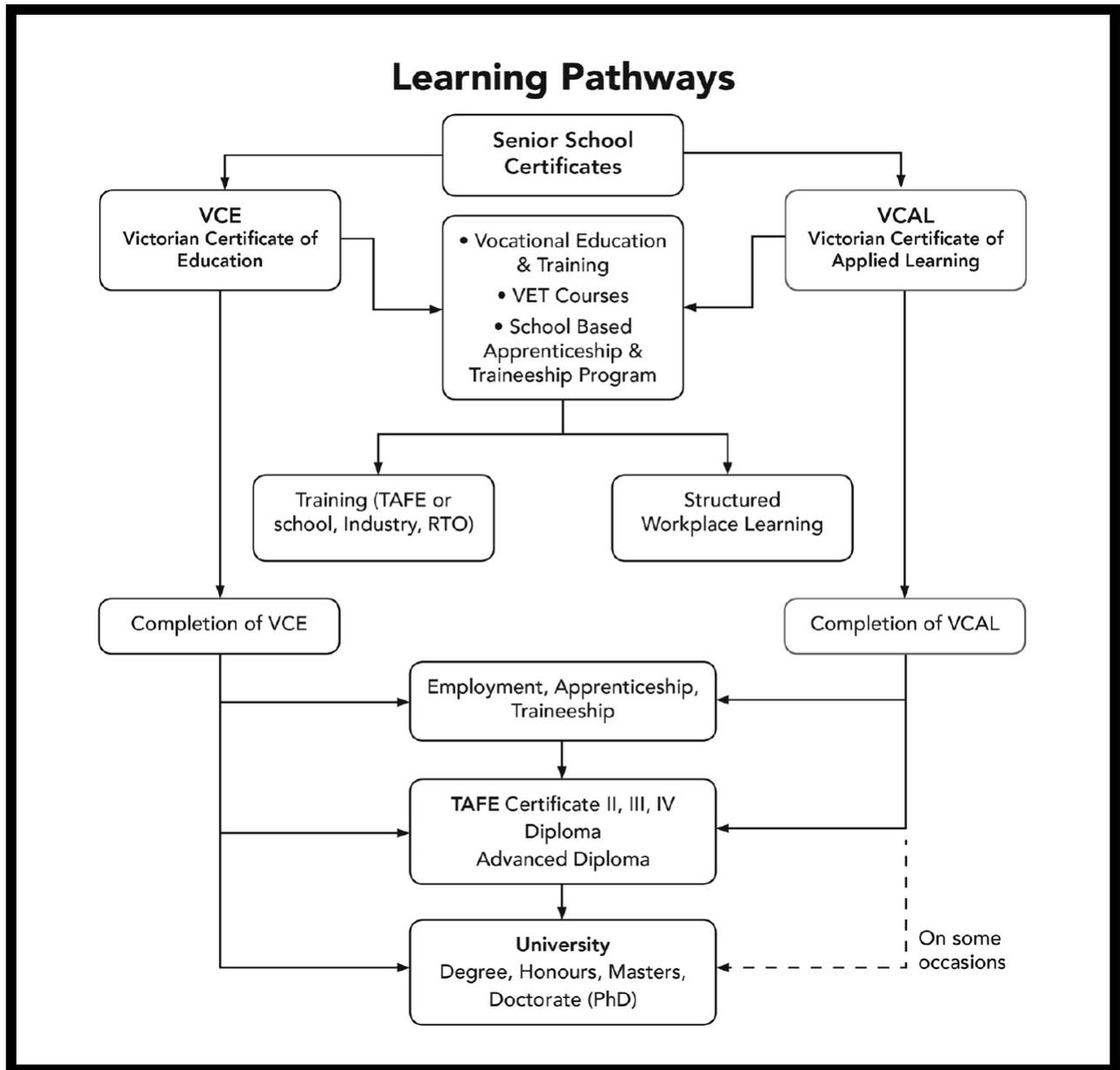
- Speak with your Applied Learning Coordinator and careers advisor here at school.
- Talk to family or friends who work in the field you are considering.

If after all that, you decide you want to do a VET program, then see your Applied Learning Coordinator or download the application form from the Damascus website.

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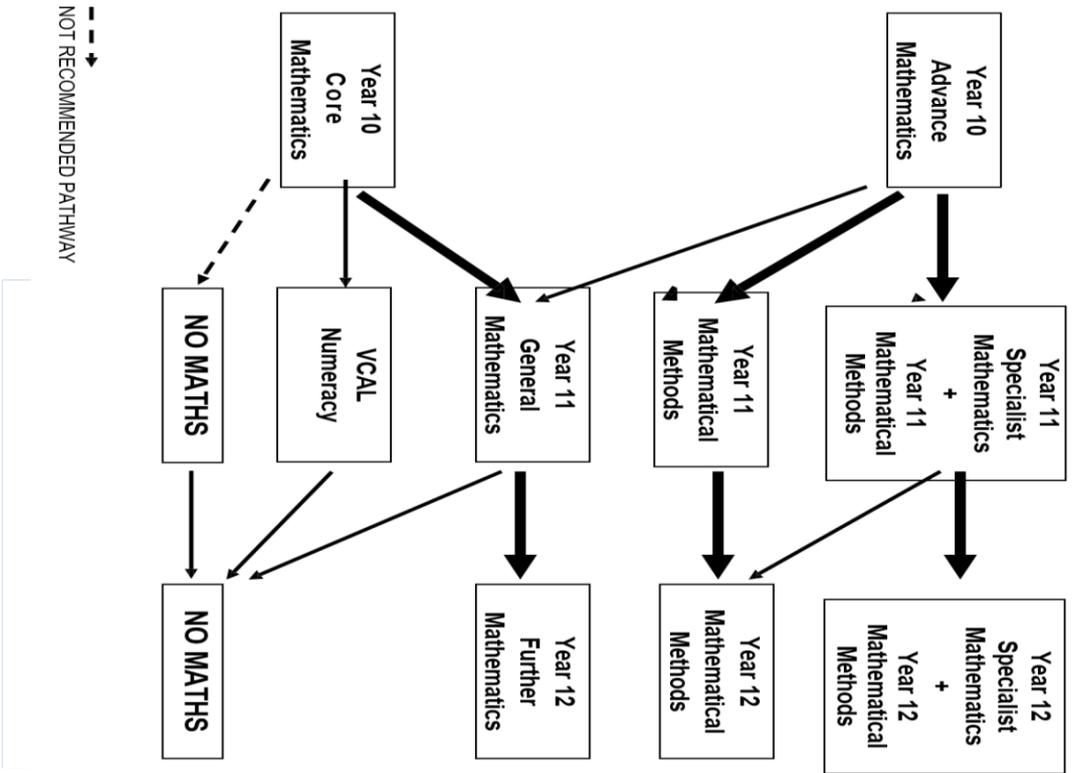
## Appendix 1: Learning Pathways



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## Appendix 2: VCE Mathematics Options



**Note:**  
Specialist Mathematics can only be taken in conjunction with Mathematical Methods. Satisfactory completion of Specialist Maths Units 1&2 is required for admission to Units 3&4.

**Note:**  
Even though Mathematics is NOT compulsory at VCE, many post-secondary courses require at least 2 units of VCE Maths. It is therefore recommended that students do Mathematics in Year 11.

**Note:**  
Students are required to find out what the entry prerequisites for their anticipated tertiary studies are.