



# VCE Pathways and Acceleration Policy

## Context

St Patrick's College is a Catholic day and boarding school for boys in the Edmund Rice tradition, established in 1893. St Patrick's College is committed to providing a caring, supportive, and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Edmund Rice Education Australia is committed to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person.

## Background

Edmund Rice Education Australia – Victorian Schools Limited (EREA-VSL), as St Patrick's College's governing authority, sets the policy framework for all EREA-VSL schools. These policies have been contextualised for St Patrick's College's particular school environment so that our policies reflect the needs of our students\*.

\*Student includes any person enrolled in the College, either as a day pupil or as a boarder.

## Preamble

St Patrick's College strives to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for its students. The College views education as both holistic, and formative; we encourage students to participate fully and apply their best effort to all dimensions of the educational process – spiritual, academic, social, emotional, and physical.

All students in Years 11 and 12 at St Patrick's College participate in either the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), or the Victorian Certificate of Education – Vocational Major (VCE-VM). Students who complete their work requirements and demonstrate learning in each outcome, with the appropriate subject sequences, will qualify for the VCE or VCE-VM.

Overlaid on the VCE is a system of examinations conducted by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), whose results are used for calculating a rank, known as an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank). The ATAR enables tertiary institutions to compare the overall achievements of all students who have completed Year 12. In Victoria, ATARs are calculated by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) when a student completes the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

This policy has as its primary focus, each student's wellbeing, and academic progress, whilst seeking to maximise their ATAR. We acknowledge that, as a school in the Edmund Rice tradition, Inclusive Community is one of our four touchstones. This means that we celebrate all abilities that make up our diverse community. Academic success is primarily of relevance for the choice it provides our students, in their post-schooling pathways.

### **VCE-VM Pathway**

If a student intends to pursue a vocational pathway immediately after finishing school, then the VCE-VM may be the most suitable course of study. It prepares students to move into apprenticeships, traineeships, further education and training, or directly into the workforce. The program has flexibility, in that it enables students to select a range of VCE, VCE-VM or VET (Vocational Education) subjects, without having to complete the associated external examinations. A student will still complete all School Assessed Coursework/training for each subject. This pathway provides opportunity for students to qualify for their Victorian Certificate of Education – Vocational Major, without the associated ATAR score. Further information regarding the VCE-VM pathway can be found in the 2025 VCE Subject Selection booklet, or you can contact the College and speak to the Head of Senior School, Head of Curriculum, or the Assistant Principal – Learning Innovation.

### **VCE Acceleration**

When it comes to subject selection, it is critical that a student selects and completes subjects that they enjoy and find motivating. This is the greatest indicator of future success; a significant amount of time and effort will go into every subject, and intrinsic motivation will be the greatest driver in student achievement.

For some VCE students, it may be beneficial for them to ‘accelerate’ beyond their regular year, to complete a subject (or subjects) earlier. Students wishing to accelerate may complete one or two Unit 1 and 2 subjects, or one or two Unit 3 and 4 subjects.

Students are not accelerated automatically at St Patrick’s College. The College reserves the right not to accelerate a student, if that course of action is deemed not to be in the best interests of that student.

The College will only allow a student to be accelerated if the student has shown they can manage the extra workload that arises out of studying a subject ahead of their regular year group.

This would occur only after documented evidence of consultation with the Head of Senior School, Heads of Faculty, current subject teacher, parent/s and the student.

Each year is important in setting up and preparing every student for success. Applying to study a subject ahead of their regular year needs to be supported by evidence of capacity and preparation. It is important that the student not only achieves highly within the accelerated subject, but that other subjects studied are not adversely affected.

Acceleration is best suited to students who are already excelling in a related subject area. For this reason, the following criteria applies, for VCE acceleration of one subject:

#### **Criteria for One Accelerated Subject:**

- 80% or above, when all subjects are averaged from Semester 1 outcomes AND
- 80% or above, in the subject seeking to be accelerated (or similar subject) AND
- 80% or above, in EITHER any English study (excluding Foundation English) OR any Mathematics Study (excluding Foundation Mathematics).

In exceptional circumstances, a student may wish to undertake two accelerated VCE subjects within a year; in this instance, the following criteria applies:

**Criteria for Two Accelerated Subjects:**

- 90% or above, when all subjects are averaged from Semester 1 outcomes AND
- 90% or above, in the subjects seeking to be accelerated (or similar subject) AND
- 90% or above, in EITHER any English study (excluding Foundation English) OR any Mathematics study (excluding Foundation Mathematics)

**The following subjects do not require a student to have met all the acceleration criteria:**

- All VET in the VCE subjects (following an interview with the VET Coordinator and Head of Faculty)
- VCE Industry & Enterprise (following an interview with the Head of Humanities)
- All VM (Vocational Major) subjects

Please note, the College reserves the right not to accelerate a student if that course of action is deemed not to be in the best interests of that student.

**Acceleration Process**

1. Complete a VCE Acceleration Application Form by the end of Week 4 in Term 3, via the link on the Subject Selection page of the College website
2. Students and their parents or caregivers attend a Subject Selection interview with one of our Academic Advisors. At the interview, they discuss their acceleration plans with the Academic Advisor. These interviews are:
  - Optional for future Year 10 students (current Year 9)
  - Compulsory for future Year 11 students (current Year 10)
3. The student completes the appropriate online subject preferences in the normal manner and prints a Web Preferences Receipt
4. The Head of Senior School and Head of Curriculum and Assessment will assess the applications for acceleration based on the acceleration criteria – any follow up communications will take place as required
5. The Head of Senior School and Head of Curriculum and Assessment will advise the student as to whether the application has been successful
6. If the application is unsuccessful, the Assistant Principal – Staff and Culture will make the required changes to the student's web preferences; if the application is successful, the subject choice will remain and be included in the student's timetable for Head Start

### Status of Policy

This policy has been downloaded from CompliSpace, is endorsed by EREA-VSL and is reviewed annually.

Policy owner	St Patrick's College - Ballarat
Approving authority	Principal
Approval date	June 2024
Risk rating	<b>HIGH</b>
Date of next review	June 2026
Publication details	School website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned TERA Board Framework	Child Safety
Related policies	<a href="#">Assessment and Reporting Policy</a> <a href="#">Curriculum Framework (Senior Secondary) Policy</a> <a href="#">Homework Policy</a> <a href="#">School Based Assessment Policy</a> <a href="#">Teaching and Learning Policy</a>
Superseded documents	<a href="#">Replaces previous policy for MO870</a>

