



School of Education

VCE Annual Report 2017



VCE At RMIT: Program Manager's Statement

The VCE program at RMIT provides a unique opportunity for students to complete their VCE in a university setting allowing for a smooth transition into university as well as preparing them for work and life. The program is delivered by the Vocational Education (VE) section of the School of Education and is registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and licensed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). The VRQA registration was renewed in 2016 for five years commencing 2017. Housed in Building 51 of the RMIT City Campus, situated on the Corner of Victoria and Cardigan Streets in Carlton for many years, the program was relocated at the end of 2017, to brand new facilities in Building 108 on Bourke Street right in the heart of Melbourne's CBD.

VCE has been taught at RMIT since its inception in Victoria in 1992 and with about 400 students enrolling each year, is currently one of the largest providers of adult VCE in the state. The program caters to a very diverse student cohort drawn from all around Melbourne and its suburbs. In addition we have about a 100 students enrolled for VCE in our partner school in Beijing, China. Epitomising the RMIT values, we are committed to making a difference both locally and globally by providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment to create a transformative student experience. With access to the all the facilities of RMIT, our students can avail of world class libraries, latest technology, RMIT microcredentials, dual sector pathways and a VCE extend program providing credit towards a bachelor degree. Every student enrolled with us has a unique story and our mission is to foster a sense of belonging and help students achieve their full potential irrespective of their age, gender, culture, socio-economic background or health status.



Dr Nancy Varughese
Program Manager



VCE At RMIT: Program Coordinators' Statement

An inclusive and accepting atmosphere is characteristic of the VCE program at RMIT and students develop a sense of belonging both within the program and the university. A sense of community is established on campus and many students thrive in the adult learning environment, reporting that their time in the VCE program has been one of their most positive educational experiences so far. Students are encouraged and supported throughout their studies and academic and course advice are provided to maximise their opportunities for successful completion. Many RMIT VCE students successfully proceed to further study at the university and, having completed their VCE in a more independent learning environment, they are well placed to smoothly transition into tertiary study. The team of VCE Coordinators and teachers are very experienced and committed to providing an engaging, supportive and productive learning environment for all students, across Units 1-4.



Ms Patricia Ellis
Units 1 & 2 Coordinator



Mr Damian Puglisi
Units 3 & 4 Coordinator



The Context of the VCE programs

In 2017 RMIT had an enrolment of 400 VCE students, 280 enrolled in Units 3 & 4 and 130 in Units 1 & 2.

A student is required to be 17 years of age before commencing a VCE program at RMIT. About two thirds of the students are adults returning to study after a break due to career, family, or health reasons while the remaining third are 17 year olds who wish to study in a university environment. A number of mature age students study part-time, opting to complete their Year 12 over two or more years, owing to their personal circumstances. This group forms 6 - 10% of total enrolments. Hence completion rates are often not reflective of the achievements made by the students despite their disadvantages. A few of the students also opt for satisfactory completion of the VCE without an ATAR or graded scores. While this may impact on the program's Study Score and ATAR statistics, RMIT is proud of the outcomes and success stories of many individuals who could not have made it without the supportive VCE program offered by RMIT.

In 2017 the program offered 23 studies at the Year 12 level and 19 studies at the Year 11 level. Classes were run in two hour blocks, twice a week for each study and students were only required on campus during class times. This flexible learning environment enables many adult learners to work around other commitments and complete their VCE.

Staffing

VCE at RMIT is taught by a team of expert teachers who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). The staff includes 27 teaching staff, three professional staff and a program manager (Principal). The teaching staff comprises 17 continuing, two fixed term and eight casual staff. This included leadership positions of two year level coordinators of Year 11 and 12, two curriculum coordinators for Humanities and STEM, two international coordinators for the international students onshore and offshore, a special needs coordinator and an attendance and pathways coordinator. The professional staff included a RMIT VCE administrator, a VASS administrator and an administrator for international students onshore and offshore.

Professional development of teachers is a priority at RMIT and they are well supported by the School of Education to maintain currency of knowledge, teaching practice and educational technologies. The school sponsors teachers in attending conferences and workshops run by subject associations, VCAA, or other educational bodies.



The Teaching Staff



Student Stories



Grant Mildwaters

Studying VCE at RMIT is the best option for me. Working for myself as a Jewellery Designer, the VCE program here allows me to both work and study fulltime. As a mature-age student, returning to a regular high school was not really viable: I couldn't find a school that offered such a program and being in a group of 16-17-year-olds was also NOT going to work. The more adult learning environment at RMIT suits me perfectly. We are treated as adults and, not being "spoon-fed", given greater agency in our learning – something that can be quite a surprise for the younger students!

The teachers here go out of their way to help us, actively striving to engage us in the topics. They know their subject well and are keen to get us involved. The limited class sizes mean the teachers are not stretched between 30+ students, and so can help more 1-on-1.

Our cohort comes from a range of cultural backgrounds, social groups and life experiences, as well as different interests and goals. Far from disadvantaging us, this lack of homogeneity benefits us as a group. Rather than all being about the same, we are ALL different, and so we are more considerate of others' differences, we still gather in our groups, but they are far more open – new people can come and join-in easily, and we are happy to help/support each other more.

I am looking forward to completing my VCE studies here and continuing into the main RMIT university community.



Anna Kimura

I was born in Japan but raised in Victoria, and was homeschooled all the way from Year 1 up to Year 11. I left my last school where I was studying Year 11 in 2016 for personal reasons, and moving to RMIT at the beginning of 2017 turned out to be a better choice for me. In addition to the benefits of being an RMIT student, my teachers are wonderful and I really feel that they make an effort for us. The atmosphere in VCE at RMIT is really good - it's casual so it's not intimidating, but still a conducive learning environment, and I love having variance, especially practical approaches, when it comes to learning (which I do get). Myself and every one of my classmates who I've asked really enjoy VCE here!

I currently live in a small town called Darraweit Guim in Victoria, which is about 30 minutes north of Craigieburn. It takes me roughly 2 hours to get to RMIT. I currently study Year 12 Literature, Legal Studies, Psychology, Sociology, and International Studies and Development (an RMIT Extend subject). After I finish VCE, I really want to go into interpreting - studying languages has always been a hobby for me (I know some/a little Swedish, French, Japanese, and Russian), so it would be fantastic if I could make it my career, specifically interpreting between Japanese and English, working either here in Australia or Japan.



Offshore Partnership

2017 saw the first cohort of VCE students at RMIT's partner school in Beijing, complete the two-year program with all 30 students satisfactorily completing the program and graduating with the VCE. These students had commenced in the pre-VCE Gateway Program in September 2015. In 2017 there were approximately 80 students enrolled in Years 11 and 12 with an additional 50 students enrolling in the Gateway Program in September 2017.

There is ongoing communication between RMIT Melbourne and the partner school with the mentoring program having been strengthened in 2017, RMIT Mentors attending the annual VCE Transnational Conference in Nanjing and making a school visit to Beijing to work both with students and their Beijing counterparts. RMIT provides induction to new staff either in Melbourne or in Beijing and hosts a study tour of students to Melbourne with three days spent at RMIT. The Program Coordinator VCE International continues to liaise between RMIT, the partner school and the VCAA, overseeing academic and administrative processes.



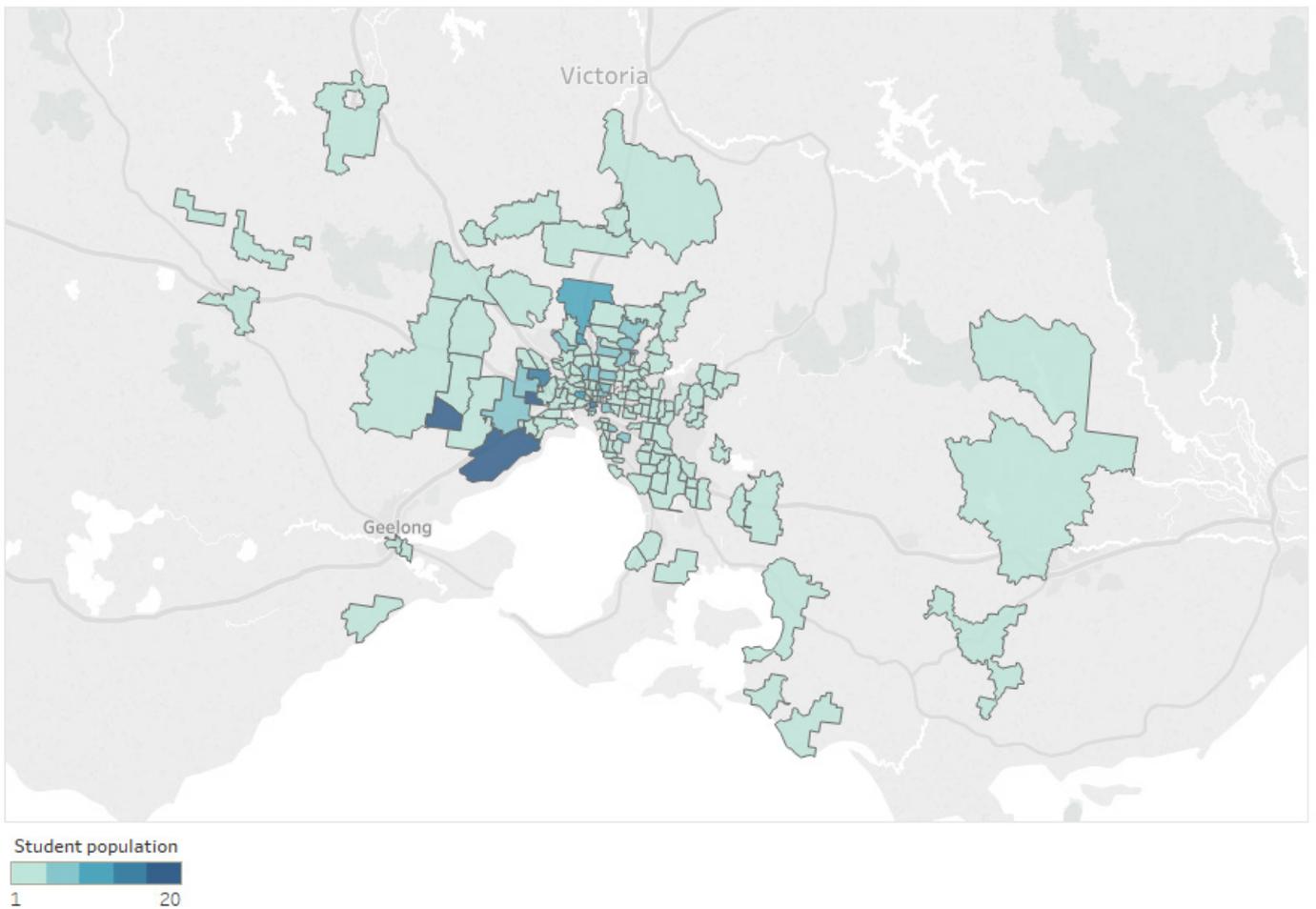
At the first Year 12 Graduation of BZFLS



Demographics

VCE student home locations

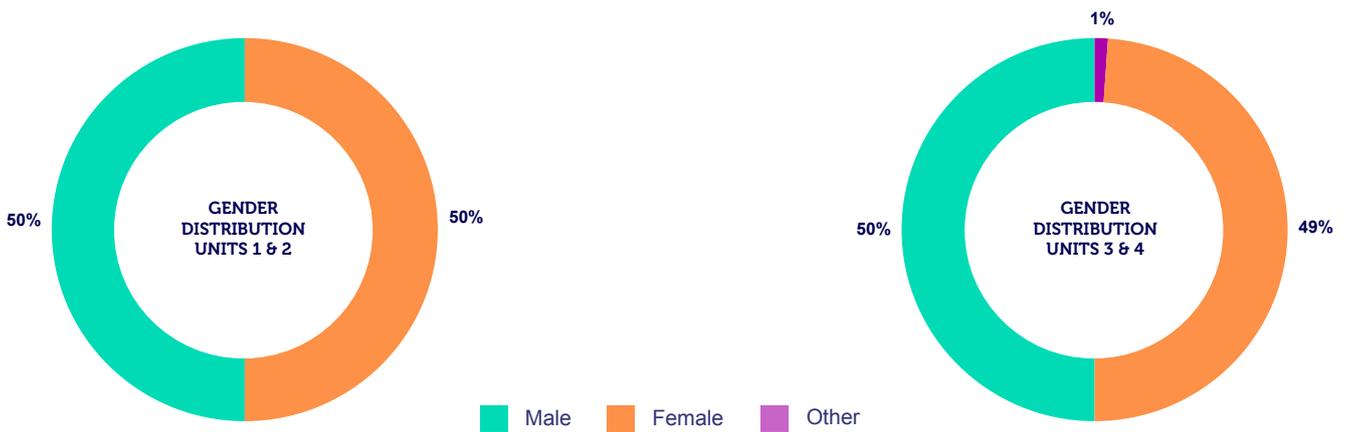
RMIT VCE's prime location enables it to service a wide range of students from across Melbourne. Easy travel allows our mature age students to fit in this program around their work and family commitments, thus providing an opportunity to many who could not otherwise have achieved this. The home locations of the 2017 cohort are shaded with the darker shades indicating denser population of students from the suburb.





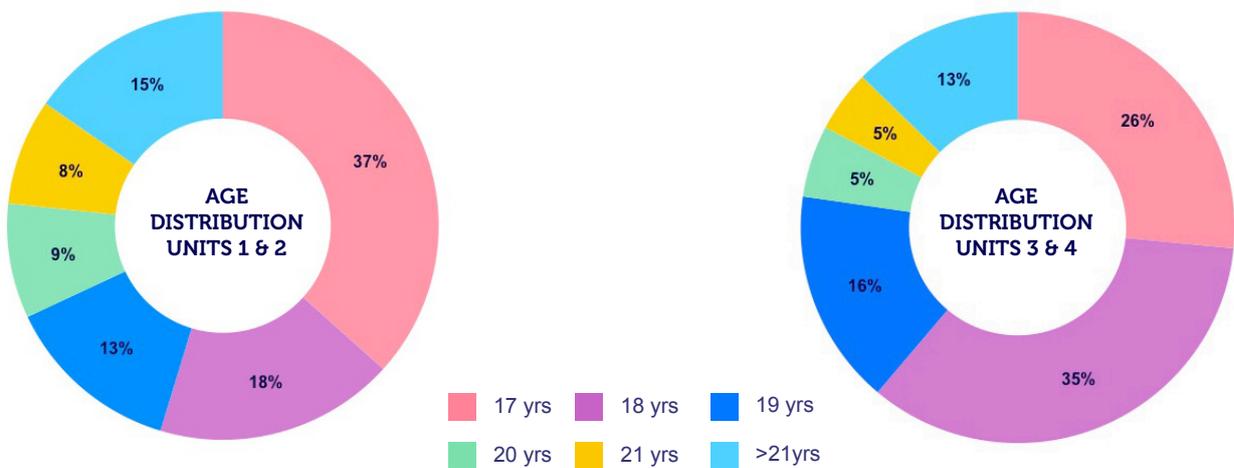
Gender Distribution 2017

While gender has no bearing on selection into VCE at RMIT, gender parity is clearly demonstrated by the 2017 cohort.



Age Distribution 2017

The age distributions of the Units 1 & 2 cohort and the Units 3 & 4 cohort vary slightly and the overview is shown in the graph overleaf. A larger proportion of the cohort are 17 and 18 year olds who have opted out of the school system and preferred to study in a university setting either due to health/personal reasons, or with the intention of a smooth transition into tertiary education. About 20% of the cohort comprises students returning to study aged 21 years or above.





Special Needs

The RMIT VCE program provides access for students with special needs. The cohort includes students with physical and mental health issues, as well as personal, family or financial circumstances that pose substantial disadvantage. These students receive support and guidance from the year level coordinators who direct them to appropriate support services at RMIT. In 2017 the students with health related special needs were well supported by a Special Needs Coordinator, who liaised with the student, their parents (where appropriate) and medical practitioners, RMIT's Equitable Learning Services (ELS) and the VCAA. The flexibility afforded by the RMIT VCE program enabled many students to complete their VCE despite these disadvantages.

In 2017, a number of students in Year 12 had various health related special needs of whom 28 (approximately 14% of the cohort) were granted special examination arrangements (SEAs) by VCAA. Of these, seven students were approved with special rooms for their assessments and end of year examinations.

Support services

Student wellbeing is a priority at RMIT and a range of policies and procedures are in place to support students who need assistance. Areas of wellbeing include assistance with the following matters:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander,
- Accommodation,
- Chaplaincy,
- Childcare,
- Counselling,
- Disability,
- Finance,
- Health and safety,
- International students and
- Legal matters.

Details of student wellbeing can be found at <http://www1.rmit.edu.au/student/wellbeing>

Child Safety

RMIT is committed to the safety of children and is actively involved in implementing the legislative requirements of the Child Safe Standards (CSS). VCE staff are all well informed of the new legislations and well aware of their responsibilities. VIT registration of teaching staff ensures they have a current Working With Children Check.



2017 Year 12 Outcomes

As a non-secondary provider of VCE, the RMIT VCE program results outperform the results of the TAFE sector every year. In 2017, despite many special needs students struggling with severe disadvantages, our students have again performed better than the TAFE sector average. We have had a number of success stories of people completing their VCE under many difficult circumstances.

Six students received ATARs above 90 placing them in the top 10% in the state, with the top score being ranked in the top 3% in the state. Another ten students received ATAR scores above 80 placing them in the top 20% of the state.

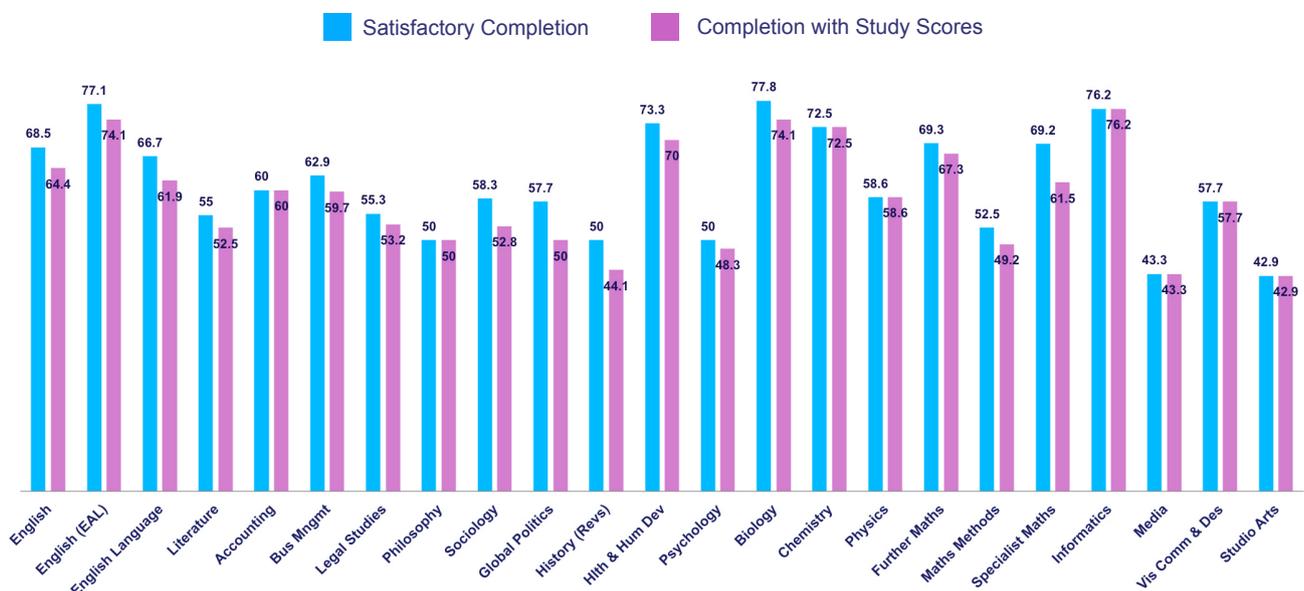
Completions by Studies

In 2017 RMIT enrolled 277 students in Units 3 & 4. 151 of these students were eligible to complete VCE in 2017. The remaining 126 students were either doing part time study planning to complete over two or three years and others were completing Units 1 & 2 and also intend to continue their VCE in 2018. While some attrition is inevitable due to health or personal circumstances, of the 151 eligible students 137 received an ATAR and at least seven students opted to complete without an ATAR, meaning more than 95% of those eligible completed their VCE.

An analysis of percentage completion by studies shows a general trend of higher completion rates in the STEM, Health and Business studies as compared to Humanities, Art and Design studies. It is also clear that English as an Additional Language (EAL) has a higher completion rate than any other English.

A few students opted for satisfactory completion of VCE and did not take examinations or graded assessments. With a few exceptions most studies show higher rates for satisfactory completion compared to completion with study scores. While completion without scores has not been actively promoted in the program, it is of value for students who are struggling due to health issues and may otherwise have given up and dropped out.

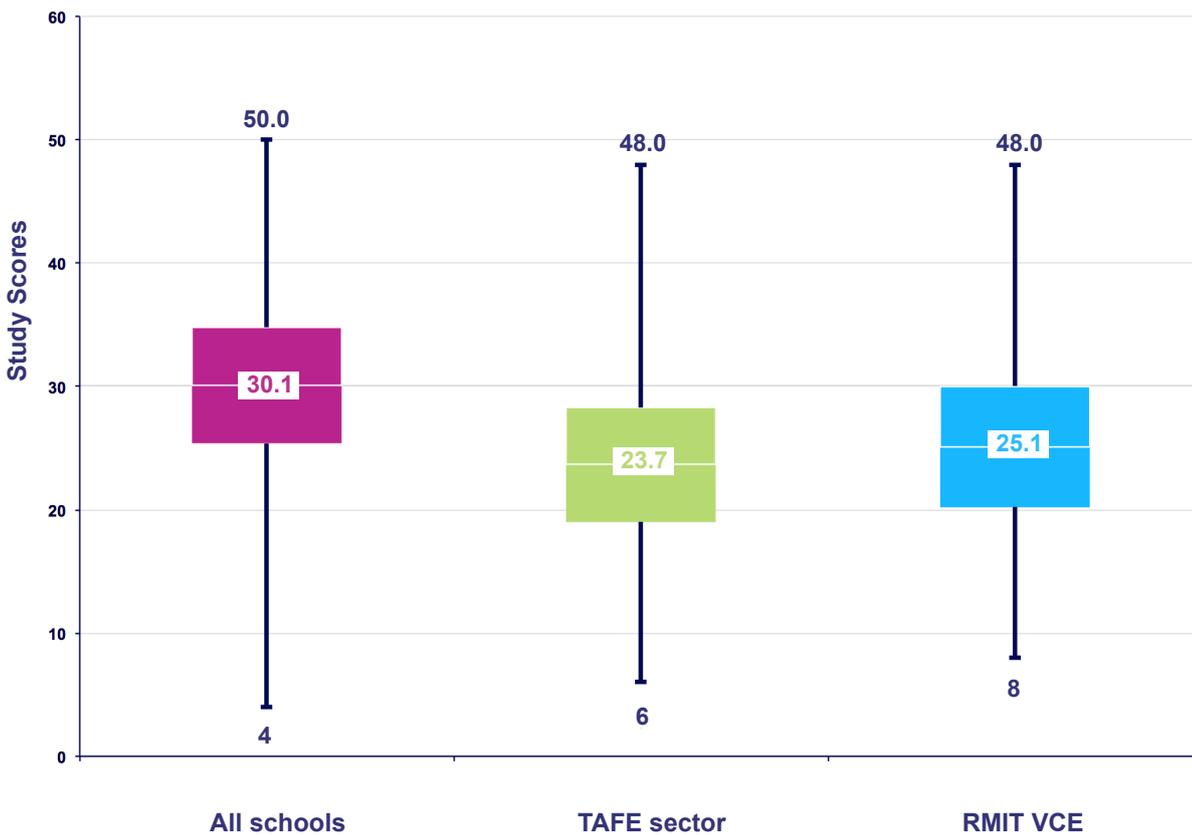
SATISFACTORY COMPLETION VS STUDY SCORES





Data from VASS (the Victorian Assessment Software System) reports generated from VCAA data were used for the following analysis of performance. The boxplots below represent the distribution of all the study scores of all the students and are a comparison of all schools in Victoria and the TAFE sector against RMIT VCE. The data shows that RMIT VCE has performed better than the TAFE Sector and not far below the state averages despite the disadvantages faced by a large number of the students. This is demonstrated by the maximum study score of 48 at RMIT compared to the state's highest of 50 and RMIT's median score of 25.1 compared to the TAFE Sector's median score of 23.7. At the lower end, RMIT had no score less than 8 this year.

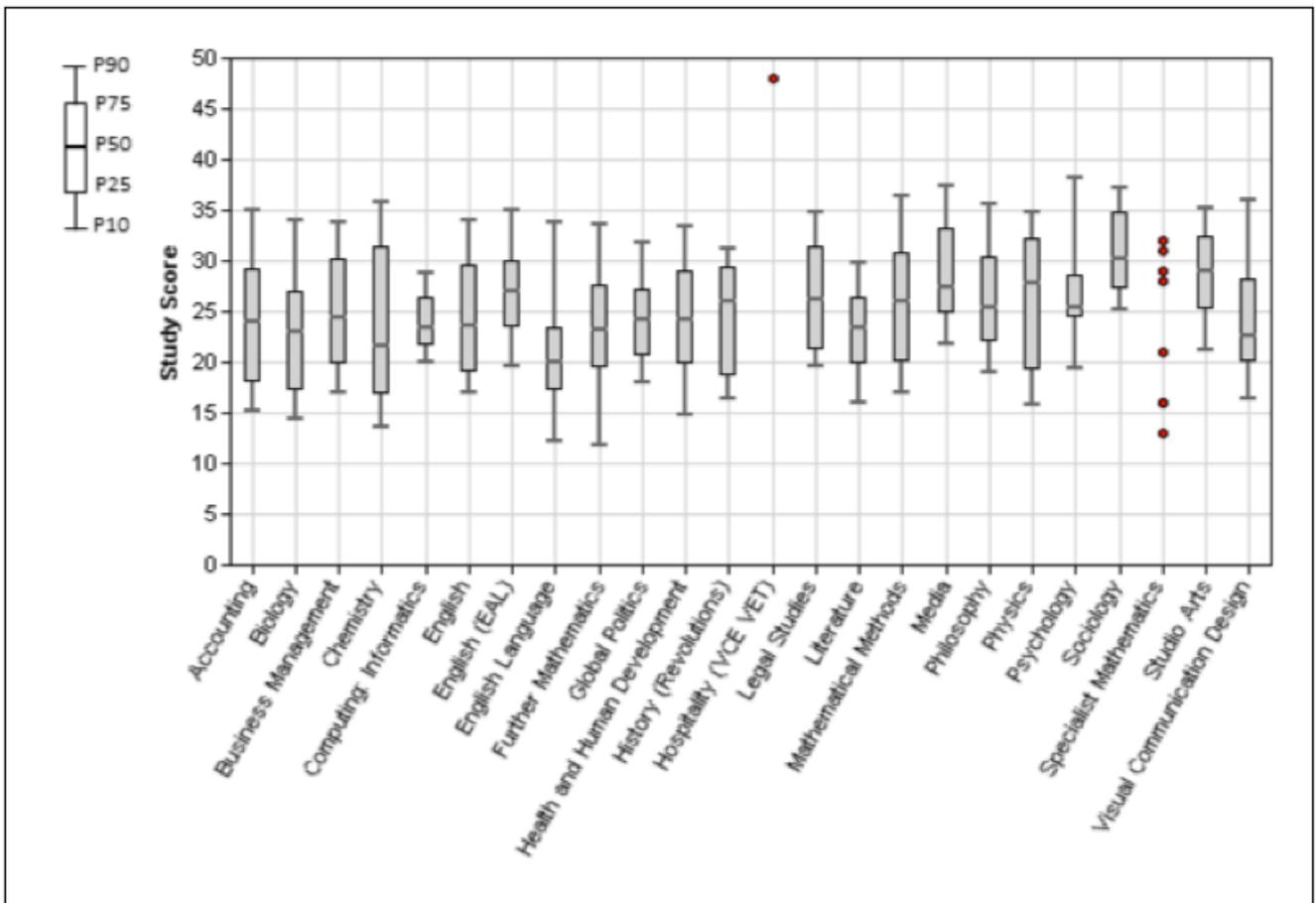
Comparison of All VCE Study Scores 2017





2017 RMIT VCE Spread of Study Scores

The graph below displays the spread of study scores of all the studies offered by RMIT VCE. It is to be noted that VCAA analysis shows the 90th percentile and the 10th percentile as the ends points unlike general box and whisker plots that use the maximum and minimum scores. This highlights the range of study scores obtained and the median score of each study. It can be seen that with a few exceptions, studies with higher completion rates include lower scores while the studies with higher scores had low completion rates.



* Note that selected studies indicates all the 23 Studies offered at RMIT selected from the VCAA list to run this report and a VET subject completed at another school by a single student.



Student Destination Data

Based on data available to date, of the 151 students eligible to complete VCE in 2017, 133 students put in Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) applications for tertiary study. Of these 103 students received offers into Higher Education or Vocational Education programs in Victoria. Six students applied direct to institutions, one has decided to take a gap year and one has joined the workforce. Two students have moved interstate and five are not doing further study.

The majority of students included RMIT in their VTAC Preferences as shown below:

- Students who put in preferences through VTAC - 133
- Students with RMIT as 1st preference – 62
- Students with RMIT as 1st or 2nd preference - 75
- Students with RMIT in the first three preferences - 84
- Students with RMIT in their preference list - 107

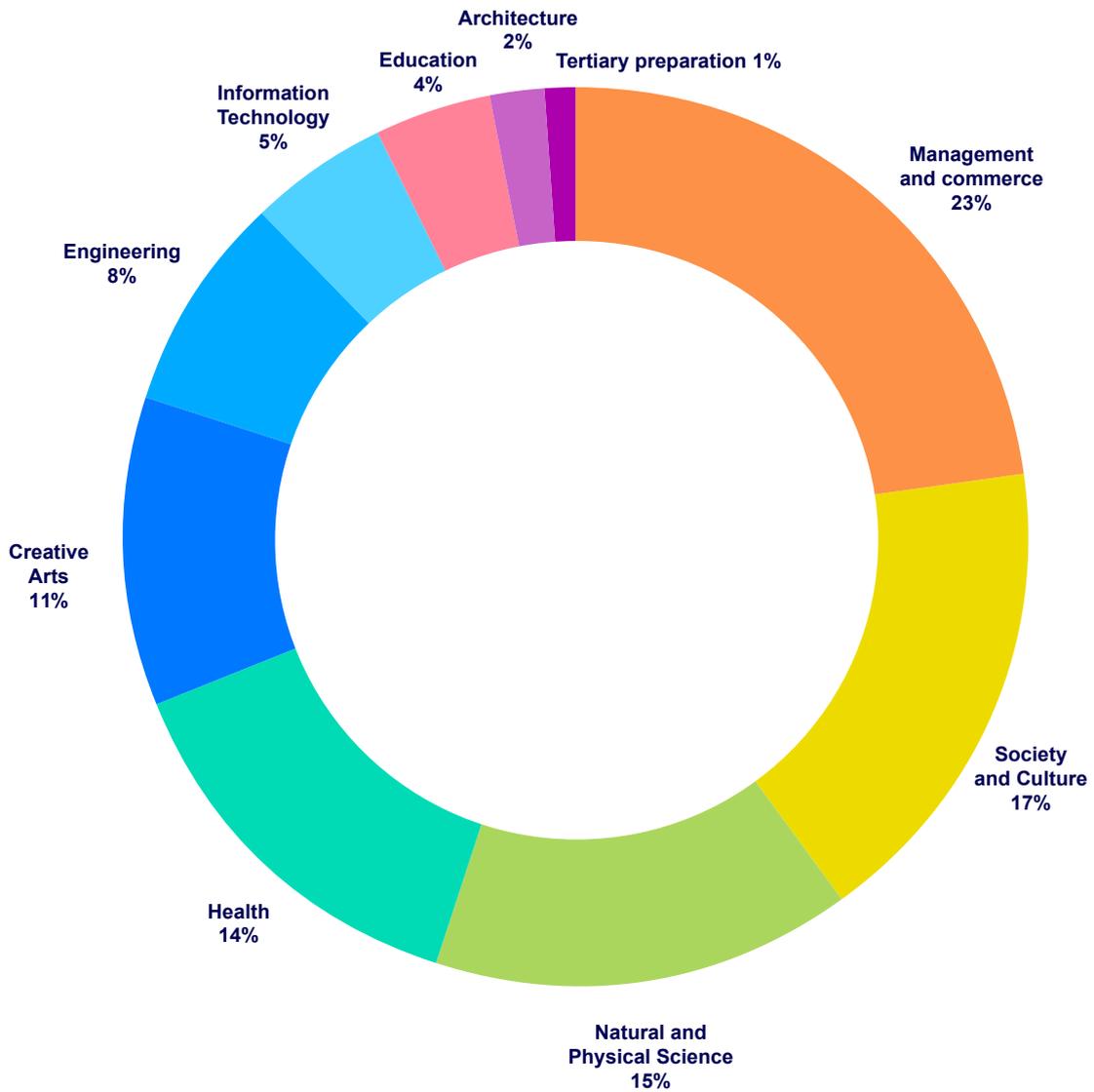
Offers by Institution

INSTITUTE	TOTAL	%
Deakin College	4	3
Deakin University	6	5
Homesglen Institute	1	1
Federation University	2	2
Latrobe Melbourne	3	2
Latrobe University	9	7
Melbourne Institute of Technology	1	1
Melbourne Polytechnic	1	1
Monash University	10	8
Photography Studies College	1	1
RMIT University	53	44
Swinburne University	12	10
University of Melbourne	6	5
Victoria University	12	10
	121	

As per information available at the time of publication of this report, 53 students have received offers into programs at RMIT. This makes up 44% of the students with offers which is a 10% increase on the previous year with 34% of offers being to RMIT.



Offers by area of interest



Distribution of offers by interest area in alignment with RMIT College disciplines showed:

- Science, Engineering and Health areas: 42%
- Business areas: 23%
- Design and Social Context areas: 35%

Further destination information will be available on the Government website 'On Track' during the second half of 2018.



Offers by Institution: VCE China Cohort

As per information available to date, all the 30 students who completed Year 12 from BZFLS are intending to take up tertiary or pathway programs in Australia and 18 of them are expected to be at RMIT.

INSTITUTE	TOTAL
Australian National University	2
Deakin University	4
Monash University	4
Newcastle University	1
RMIT University	18
Swinburne University	1
	30



The First cohort of BZFLS students at their graduation



Plans implemented in 2017

In 2017 a number of initiatives were put in place to improve student experience.

- New student spaces comprising a student lounge and a special needs room were set up in Bld 51 Level 5 which enhanced the students' sense of belonging.
- New staff spaces were allocated or rearranged to provide an optimum working environment.
- RMIT values student feedback and feedback received from Course Experience Surveys (CES) and the Student and Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings for VCE was actioned as soon as possible. One of the major changes implemented based on student feedback was the complete revamping of the VCE timetable allowing for improved selection of VCE studies. This new timetable was put in place in 2017.
- A greater emphasis on curriculum, quality and student outcomes was initiated with the appointment of two curriculum coordinators for the first time.
- Liaising with several schools of RMIT to inform and implement smoother transitions and pathways into tertiary education at RMIT is an ongoing process already beginning to show results with an increase in entry into RMIT programs.
- Strengthened the partnership with RMIT's MTP (Masters of Teaching Practice) program to the mutual benefit of both programs commenced in 2017 with more pre-service teacher placements in RMIT VCE and the VCE teachers' involvement in a few of the MTP teaching Methods courses. This is a work in progress as the VCE and MTP move into the same location in 2018 and more areas for collaboration are explored.
- The partnership with the Beijing school has strengthened with greater collaboration between RMIT and BZFLS. 2017 saw an increase in the number of students in the Beijing school and the first cohort successfully completing VCE in China and taking up tertiary education in Australia.
- VCE was one of the first programs to embrace RMIT's Belonging project to the benefit of its students. With direct meetings of the project staff and VCE staff, areas of need have been identified. CAS calculators and textbooks for disadvantaged students were the first initiatives to go ahead and more initiatives such as a VCE students club with team activities are planned for 2018.



Plans for 2018

- Move to Bld 108 on Bourke Street with new facilities dedicated to VCE.
- Set up a new Science laboratory meeting VCAA and RMIT standards for the exclusive use of VCE.
- Set up a new Art studio providing proper facilities for the Art and Design students.
- Optimum use of new student, staff, and teaching spaces to foster a greater sense of belonging.
- Encourage best practice in pedagogy and learning technologies in the new teaching spaces.
- A greater emphasis on curriculum, quality and student outcomes.
- More initiatives in collaboration with the Belonging Project Team.
- Further strengthening of the partnerships with MTP and BZFLS.
- Focus on a number of new initiatives through microprojects by the staff.
- Set up a strategic plan for the next three years.



In conclusion, VCE at RMIT is set to go from strength to strength, providing opportunities for hundreds of students to achieve their dream of completing their secondary schooling in a mature learning environment. The beautiful new spaces featured above will go a long way towards helping achieve these aims.

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Report Produced by:

Dr. Nancy Varughese
Program Manager (Principal)
VCE Programs
School of Education
RMIT University
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