

HIGHVIEW COLLEGE



2026

YEAR 9 COURSE HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared to assist students in selecting subjects they wish to undertake in Year 9 as part of their introduction to elective subjects. Students (and their parents) will find that in most cases the selection process is relatively straightforward if careful thought is given to appropriate selection criteria.

We urge all students to read the contents of this booklet carefully, to seek as much advice as they can from a variety of sources, and to then choose the subject options that best suit their individual abilities, hopes and ambitions.

If you require further details on specific units of study, please speak to your current subject teachers or the relevant Head of Faculty.

To discuss tailoring a course to suit your particular needs, or if you require any other information, please contact:

- Careers Practitioner
- Director of Learning and Innovation
- Head of Year 9

Dr Carolyn Moores

Director of Learning and Innovation

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SUBJECT SELECTION

It is important to choose Year 9 subjects carefully as your decisions may affect your success at school, your feelings about school, and also your level of preparedness or eligibility for particular training or tertiary study after school. Even though there are many factors to consider, choosing your program of study can be made easier if you go about the task logically, and follow a set of planned steps.

As an overall plan, students should select subjects based on three important considerations:

- Subjects that you enjoy studying
- Subjects in which you have already had some success
- Subjects that may be needed for further study

In order to assist your planning, this booklet provides a space to consider your options. It is important at Year 9 to determine the subjects that you enjoy and therefore selecting a range of options provides a breadth of learning experiences. It is from these experiences, you will gain a greater sense of subjects that you don't enjoy, and this will then help guide your choices into the following year.

In the Senior years, Highview College offers three pathways of study:

- a) The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) (ATAR)
- b) The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) (unscored) and
- c) The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Vocational Major

The following information is provided as some initial context for your future years.

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is the main senior secondary certificate in Victoria. It is administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), which sets the conditions to be met within individual units and awards the final certificate.

The VCE will prepare you for university, an apprenticeship or traineeship, further education and training or going straight into the workforce.

To obtain the VCE, you need to successfully complete at least 16 units.

These need to include the satisfactory completion of:

- 3 sequences of Unit 3 and 4 subjects (other than English), which may include a VET Unit 3 and 4 sequence.
- 3 units from an English subject group (including Unit 3 and 4).

Most students do their VCE over 2 years, completing between 20 and 24 units.

When you finish your studies, you'll get:

- an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score (if you meet the requirements)
- a Statement of Results from VCAA
- a Statement of Attainment from your TAFE (if you completed any VET units)
- your VET qualification (if you completed one)
- your Victorian Certificate of Education.

Difference Between Scored (ATAR) and Unscored

If students wish to undertake university studies directly after completing school, then they should take a scored (ATAR) pathway which will provide direct entry should they meet the eligibility requirements.

Some university studies require additional entry requirements such as a portfolio of work, an interview or audition to gain entry, and therefore an ATAR is not always necessary for this entry pathway.

VCE Vocational Major Program (VCE VM)

The VCE Vocational Major is a two-year **applied learning program** that's part of the VCE. It provides skills for work and life with hands-on experience. The VCE VM is a great choice for students, if you prefer to learn in a real-world environment.

The VCE VM will you prepare for an apprenticeship or traineeship, further education and training, university, through alternative entry programs or going straight into the workforce.

The four VCE VM study areas use a different form of assessment to other VCE studies. Your progress is assessed by your teachers who will support you to achieve the requirements through a range of activities. Your only exam is the General Achievement Test (GAT) (Part A only). Students enrolled in VCE VM subjects do not receive a study score, meaning these subjects do not count towards an ATAR, which is typically used for direct entry into most university courses. However, an increasing number of university programs no longer require an ATAR, offering alternative pathways for students who choose to pursue further study after Year 12.

To complete the VCE VM, you need to successfully complete at least 16 units.

This needs to include:

- 3 VCE VM Literacy or VCE English units (including a Unit 3 and 4 sequence)
- 2 VCE VM Numeracy or VCE Mathematics units
- 2 VCE VM Work Related Skills units
- 2 VCE VM Personal Development Skills units
- VET at a Certificate II level or above (180 nominal hours)
- 1 other Unit 3 and 4 sequence of your choice.

You could also spend time learning in a workplace as part of your VET. This is known as Structured Workplace Learning Recognition. You can also add other VCE studies to your VCE VM program.

When you finish your studies, you'll get:

- a Statement of Results from VCAA
- a Statement of Attainment from your VET training provider
- your VET qualification (if you completed one)
- your Victorian Certificate of Education with the additional words 'Vocational Major'.

Career Action Plan

A Career Action Plan is a confidential document that a student develops, in consultation with their parents/carers and their school, to map their learning and career pathways. This is usually completed in Year 9 or 10.

The purpose of the plan is to help students:

- Set and achieve their learning goals in their senior years
- Include flexible and coordinated pathway options in their course of senior study
- Think about their education, training and career options after Year 12 and make decisions about their learning pathways
- Structure their learning around their abilities, interests and ambitions
- Communicate with their parents, teachers, Careers Practitioner and the Director of Learning and Innovation about their learning pathways and post-school plans.

In their plan, students will be able to list a variety of different learning pathways, some of which may be accessed outside the current formal structure of school. This provides more options and flexibility in learning.

Once a student's plan has been developed, everyone involved in developing the plan should sign and date the plan to show agreement.

YEAR 9 STUDIES

In Year 9, all students will study the core subjects, English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, Humanities, Science and Duke of Edinburgh.

Students select four (4) electives that are completed in one semester from a range of learning areas. Students are advised to nominate 6 preferences, in order of interest. Students wanting to continue their language studies should note that this will be a year long program.

The Duke of Edinburgh Bronze program is studied by all students, and includes the four components of Physical Recreation, Skills, Voluntary Service, and an Adventurous Journey.

CORE SUBJECTS

ENGLISH

The study of English sees students developing a range of skills including:

- the ability to experiment with various forms of writing
- confident and competent speaking and listening skills
- creative and critical thinking
- reading and responding to a range of texts
- vocational and life language skills
- an awareness of the media and the role of media in our society
- an enjoyment of, and broadening experience with literature.

The units provide a comprehensive foundation to enable students to continue their academic education and to participate effectively in the workforce and society.

Students in Year 9 English are guided to explore and interpret different perspectives on increasingly complex issues and to construct spoken and written responses relating these perspectives to a personal understanding of the contemporary world. Students develop a critical awareness of language and how it both shapes and is reflected in texts. This knowledge is the foundation of further study of the English language.

MATHEMATICS

The broad aim of the Year 9 Mathematics Program is to encourage the development of important ideas in more depth, and to promote the interconnectedness of mathematical concepts.

A common core of topics from each of the Mathematics strands include Number, Algebra, Measurement, Space, Statistics and Probability. Year 9 Mathematics units offer a range of learning experiences which include

skills practice and applications, modelling activities, problem solving and investigations, and technology applications.

Mathematics classes are structured into ability groups and provide an opportunity for students to work with others of similar ability. Teachers are able to move students more quickly toward understanding when they can shape their teaching to meet the needs of the group.

Access Mathematics is a special program which runs at Years 7-9 to support students who find Mathematics challenging. We also offer Extension Mathematics and General Mathematics mainstream classes which are tailored to the learning needs and confidence of students.

SCIENCE

Science provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of important science concepts and processes. Students will explore practices used to develop knowledge of Science's contribution to our culture and society and its applications in our lives. The curriculum supports students to develop scientific knowledge, understandings and skills to make informed decisions about local, national and global issues.

Science understanding at Year 9 level covers Atoms & Chemical Reactions, Nervous & Endocrine Systems, Disease, Electricity, Reproduction, and Earth Systems. Students are exposed to the process of designing, reporting and evaluating practical investigations along with the design of research projects.

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Year 9 Physical Education students participate in a variety of activities that aim to refine previous skills and further develop their self-confidence, independence and leadership qualities. They experience a wide range of sporting activities as well as the 'Sport Education Physical Education Program' (SEPEP), Sports Coaching experience, and other similar sports-initiative Programs.

Personal Development education assists students to perceive and value themselves and others, to enter into personal relationships and to make practical decisions and take actions that are personally and socially responsible. The subject matter of Personal Development focuses on personal and social health, movement and fitness, safety in the outdoors, responsibility and leadership skills within the sporting community.

HUMANITIES

Humanities is an essential part of every student's learning journey from Years 7 to 9, and remains a valued and enriching option in Year 10. Year 9 Humanities builds on the foundation provided through the Years 7 and 8 programs. Each term remains a different topic: Geography; History; Civics and Citizenship; and Economics and Business. Humanities has been purposefully developed to provide students with the skills they need for senior studies, and Year 9 is the capstone to students' junior school learning. Assessment and activities are designed to reflect real world applications where practical, linking learning to skills for life, and their VCE journey.

In Year 9, students begin to investigate the complexities and interconnections of the modern world. Each term is designed to challenge students to think critically about global change, justice, and sustainability:

Geography: Students focus on food security, biomes and the interconnected nature of our world. They explore how food is grown and distributed, how the natural environment sustains (or fails to sustain) global populations, and the impact of global trade and tourism. They analyse geographic data and propose solutions to real-world challenges.

History: This term examines the rise of the modern world, focusing on the Industrial Revolution, colonisation, and social change. Students consider the long-term impacts of imperialism, revolutions, and migration, particularly in the Australian context. They develop more advanced skills in historical interpretation, evaluating cause and consequence.

Civics and Citizenship: Students explore how democratic values are maintained, how laws are enforced, and how civic participation can shape society. They investigate contemporary legal and political issues, considering how power is exercised and how rights are protected or challenged in Australia and abroad.

Economics and Business: Students learn how the economy works through the circular flow model. They examine the role of government, the Reserve Bank, and global trade. Students also analyse how businesses create competitive advantage and explore their own business ideas through activities that build entrepreneurship.

Year 9 is all about developing deeper thinking: Why do societies change? Who has power and how is it used? What does it mean to be connected globally?

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

The Duke of Edinburgh is an exciting year-long course. It focuses on two components:

1. Outdoor Education Program

Students examine the local environment and its surrounds, developing an understanding of related Aboriginal and European history and how sustainability affects the township of the greater Maryborough region. Students will be involved in activities in the surrounding environment and will begin to identify the importance of the local environment from a past, present and futuristic perspective.

This elective provides opportunities for participation in activities beyond the normal range of the school Physical Education program. Activities are meant to be challenging and are structured to extend the individual.

2. Completion of the international award of Duke of Edinburgh (Bronze)

The Duke of Edinburgh International Award embraces individual challenge. The course is designed to encourage young people to develop maturity and active citizenship. It presents a balanced, non-competitive and enjoyable program of voluntary activities that encourage personal discovery, growth, resilience, perseverance, responsibility and service to the community. Students will be expected to work through the following four award sections within the Year 9 course.

AWARDS SECTIONS

Service (developing a sense of community), Physical Recreation (encouraging physical performance), Skill (developing personal interests) and an Adventure Journey (encouraging a spirit of adventure and discovery)



ELECTIVES

A materials levy will apply to all Elective subjects, with the exception of LOTE and Music.

ART

Education in Visual Arts involves students creating and responding to artworks using the world around them as inspiration. Students develop artistic skills and knowledge of various art forms, styles and contexts through exploring traditional and contemporary art making process.

Students also reflect critically on their own experiences and the work of others to deepen their understanding. As they progress, students engage with a range of artists, ideas, histories, and practices. This learning fosters creativity, self-expression, and critical thinking.

DRAMA

A continuation of the skills developed in Year 7 and 8 Drama, this course is designed around the theatrical style of Horror and Suspense. Mood and tension is created through the students' use of lighting and sound technology. The practical workshops are supported by some theory lessons. Special effect makeup is also taught in this unit to allow students to creatively apply makeup to create a character e.g. Frankenstein. The unit culminates in a student devised horror performance that demonstrates their understanding of the style and how lighting and sound can be used for dramatic effect.

FOOD STUDIES

Students explore advanced food production and preparation methods from a diverse selection of cuisines and cultures throughout this unit of study. They utilise traditional and modern cookery methods whilst developing a further understanding of the safe and hygienic preparation of ingredients and flavour combinations.

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Forensic Science is offered in addition to Core Science. Forensic Science is a rapidly expanding field that utilises the skills and information from a very broad range of sciences: physical sciences, chemical sciences and biological sciences. It presents the opportunity to cover a very broad range of both theoretical and practical skill development in its investigations. It encompasses the practice of crime-scene investigation, applying skills and knowledge, reinforced by laboratory analysis. Students will apply their knowledge and skills learnt throughout the semester to investigate and solve a simulated crime scene.

LOTE: INDONESIAN

Indonesian is a year-long subject in which students continue to develop their language skills and cultural understanding through an engaging and immersive program focused on the topics of Travel & Taste and Environment. Students explore complex grammatical structures, expand their vocabulary and engage in regular conversations, enabling them to refine their communication skills. The move from a personal perspective to a more functional understanding of the language is facilitated through the use of diverse texts, multimedia resources and interactive activities within a group-based format. Students will learn practical skills relating to preparing for a trip, ordering food and describing the weather and environment around them. They will also gain insights into Indonesian society, traditions and values, fostering global awareness and intercultural competence.

MEDIA

Media focusses on the skills involved with photography, film making, special effects, sound editing and animation. Students explore photographic studio techniques such as three-point lighting, green screen photography and portraiture. Students learn about handling equipment such as cameras, tripods, lighting equipment and backdrops. Students will use film making process such as storyboarding, production and post-production editing, camera angles and movements and sound editing techniques. Through the study of these areas, students will develop a digital folio of their work.

MUSIC

Music in Year 9 is a predominately practical based subject that concentrates on exploring a variety of different styles and has a high emphasis on performing. Students will choose an instrument to focus on and prepare solo and group works for performance. There will also be opportunities for students interested in recording and mixing songs to further their skills in these areas.

Students will demonstrate their learning through: solo and group performance; song analysis using the elements of music; arranging music for a small group; and covering songs, including mash ups and reimagining songs in different styles.

This subject is for anyone with an interest in music, not only for students already experienced in playing an instrument.

PRODUCT DESIGN

This unit creates an opportunity for students to extend their practical skills, whilst using specialised equipment. Students will create a design brief for a client and manufacture a product that serves a practical need. Materials include wood, metals and plastics.

This unit requires students to demonstrate advanced skills in building from a plan, manufacturing to a time limit and to client specifications, using Safe Operating Practices in the workshop, and competently using various specialised tools.

Students will produce a set project using the Design Process to improve their skills. Product evaluation will reflect on the success of the production processes as well as the suitability. Laser cutting and etching, 3D printing and CNC routing are all at the student's disposal during this unit of work. Students will also refine their Computer Aided Design (CAD) skills by utilising Fusion360, MetalCut and VCarve Pro.

SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

This unit focuses on the development of problem-solving and critical and creative thinking required for the design, production and evaluation of different engineering projects. Students will learn using cutting-edge equipment how the digital age will transform processes and production to improve efficiency whilst still learning critical traditional skills with a variety of specialised tools. In particular, this subject focuses on; design projects using Fusion 360, the ability to program an extensive range of sensors and other electronic components via the use of a suite of Arduinos, 3D print models, and laser cut components to achieve a variety of engaging projects.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

Year 9 Visual Communication Design is a continuation of the skills developed in Year 8. Students will focus on the production of visual communications and design by exploring the design process using a range of methods, media and materials. Students also learn technical drawing systems such as isometric and planometric projections and learn how to draw using one and two vanishing points. In addition, students will learn about digital manipulation skills such as Photoshop and Illustrator.

YEAR 9 ELECTIVES PLANNING SHEET

Most Electives run for one Semester which allows students to experience four of these electives over the year. Each of these electives is explained in this Handbook.

Students need to list six preferences (number 1 being the most desired choice and 5&6 being reserve choices) from the following Electives:

ELECTIVES	PREFERENCES
ANY LOTE Distance Education Indonesian class may be delivered at Highview, dependent on numbers. Requires two semester units	
ART	
DRAMA	
FOOD STUDIES	
FORENSIC SCIENCE	
MEDIA	
MUSIC	
PRODUCT DESIGN	
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING	
VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN	

