# Reflective checklist Celebrating pathways equally

Tool for school leaders, program coordinators, awards coordinators and teachers

Victorian schools have many varied and excellent approaches to celebrating students.

However, the department’s research found that only 27% of Victorians (and 32% of secondary school staff and senior secondary students surveyed\*) think all senior secondary education pathways in schools are celebrated equally.

Reforms to senior secondary education mean that students’ learning and achievement is becoming more diverse. Students should see that all forms of success are worthy of celebration.

Your school can address this by evaluating its approach to celebrating learning and achievement.

We have consulted with schools and investigated existing approaches to develop principles and opportunities for celebrating pathways equally. Each school community can adapt them to their context.

This checklist will help you consider how you might apply these principles and act on these opportunities in your school.

## Quick reference

### Guiding principles

1. **Student motivation:** By focusing on students’ goals when celebrating their achievements, we prevent stigma
2. **Student parity:** By giving all learning programs equal visibility and emphasis in our school, we prevent bias in pathway selection
3. **Student unity:** By treating students in all programs as parts of one cohort, we strengthen our school community
4. **Frequency:** By regularly celebrating achievements of all sizes, we foster respect and self-belief
5. **Partnership:** By working with our VET providers and cluster, community, employers and Head Start, we identify and celebrate all forms of achievement

### Opportunities

1. **Documenting success**:   
   How we make informed decisions about school-based and external achievement, beyond competent/completed
2. **Communication:**   
   How and when we talk about our programs and students
3. **Student recognition:**   
   How and when we celebrate awards, at school and beyond
4. **Student leadership:**How we involve and elevate current and former students

\*Senior Secondary Education Perceptions Research, Department of Education, 2023

## Reflective checklist

Use these prompts to evaluate your approach to celebrating students.

As the role of vocational and applied learning in your school changes, you can return to this checklist and re-evaluate your approach.

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| **Guiding principles** | |
| 1. When our school celebrates student achievement, is our focus on how that achievement supports the student’s goals? |  |
| 1. Do all forms of learning and achievement have equal visibility in our school? |  |
| 1. Is there balance in the emphasis we place on scored and non-scored achievement? |  |
| 1. Do our VCE Vocational Major students feel like VCE students? |  |
| 1. Do we treat all students in each year level as part of one peer cohort? |  |
| 1. Is celebration a consistent or regular part of all our senior secondary learning programs? |  |
| 1. Do we work with our VET cluster and providers, community organisations, employers and Head Start to identify student achievement? |  |
| 1. Are we including these partners in our celebrations of students? |  |
| **Opportunities** | |
| 1. Do we record student excellence in vocational and applied learning (formally or informally)? |  |
| 1. Do we know when students are excelling in externally-delivered VET? |  |
| 1. Do we collect feedback and success stories from work-based learning employers and community project partners? |  |
| 1. Do we have the information we need to explain and celebrate achievements, with school awards or in nominations for external awards? |  |
| 1. When we meet as colleagues and with students, do we talk regularly about success and achievement in all learning programs? |  |
| 1. Does our communication with families (including our newsletter, social media, council meetings, events, and school management system e.g. Compass) give equal visibility and emphasis to students and achievements in all learning programs? |  |
| 1. Does our school website have information about the VCE Vocational Major, VET and VPC that is easy to find and understand? |  |
| 1. Are all learning programs represented with photos on our website? |  |
| 1. Does our school’s approach to student awards (including dux awards, study awards, impact awards) place equal emphasis on scored achievement and achievement in vocational and applied learning? |  |
| 1. Do the physical displays of awards (trophies, honour boards, banners, flags) in our school demonstrate equal emphasis on scored achievement and other achievement? |  |
| 1. Do we regularly take opportunities for teacher or student-led recognition or reflection around small achievements? |  |
| 1. Do we celebrate when students are recognised or celebrated by our partners (such as our VET cluster and providers, Head Start, employers for work-based learning, community organisations)? |  |
| 1. Do we nominate students for VCE award (including VCE Season of Excellence, VCE Leadership Awards) and Victorian Training Awards categories? |  |
| 1. Are students in all pathways visible as leaders and role models in our school? |  |
| 1. Are students in vocational and applied learning represented in our student leadership groups? |  |
| 1. Are we working with our school’s alumni to highlight diverse forms of student success and pathways? |  |