The importance of good design has long been recognised. The essential feature of design, the transformation of ideas or intent into reality, can be found in a vast array of existing key design industries – engineering and product design, graphics and multimedia, and interior, urban, landscape and architectural design.

In Victoria, we have been fortunate to have enjoyed a strong design base across many industries, which the State Government is keen to build upon. As part of its efforts to locate Victoria as an innovative economy, the Government has launched a major undertaking - “Developing Victoria’s Design Capabilities”.

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The framework will create a set of “craft plus” pathways. This will increase the ability of skilled trade workers to extend their repertoire of skills in preparation for a career change in the direction of design, small business, retail and other areas.

Initially, pilot programs in four industry areas will be conducted, with further refinement to be undertaken following extensive consultation with industry, design associations, professional bodies, educational providers, and others.

Design opportunities at Years 11 and 12 will also benefit. A mapping of design courses across the senior years will be undertaken, along with a further enhancement in coherence between courses, and the forging of stronger links between such studies and vocational courses in VET and higher education. Close collaboration with other related projects and organisations has already begun among specialist centres, the various TAFE institutes, the proposed Design Centres of Excellence, the Melbourne Museum, the various Industry Training Boards, as well as other industry and professional forums.

Frances Lamb has recently been appointed Project Officer for the design qualifications framework. Should you require further information please contact Frances on 9637 2127, or email lamb.frances.m@edumail.vic.gov.au.

The VQA's proposed 'credit matrix' could offer a new way of describing and recording educational achievement which could be uniformly applied across the range of qualifications available in Victoria.

The VQA Board believes the idea of a credit matrix is an exciting one for a number of reasons. Having a common approach should, for example, make it easier for users to understand the system of qualifications. It should also make it easier for students to keep track of achievements they have gained, and to plan their future pathway. And when students move from one qualification to another, it should help ensure they don't have to start from scratch and repeat learning they have already completed.

Before starting any development work, the VQA is keen to know whether the community believes the idea of a ‘credit matrix’ is one worth pursuing.

A consultation paper explaining the ‘credit matrix’ is currently being developed. The VQA will be organising a number of workshops to explain the ‘credit matrix’.

Both the consultation paper and information about the workshops will soon be available on www.vqa.vic.gov.au. Watch out for details - we want to hear what you think of the idea.

If, in the meantime, you would like to hear more about the ‘credit matrix’ please contact Madeleine Jenkins on 9637 3136 or email jenkins.madeleine.m@edumail.vic.gov.au.

The aim of a ‘credit matrix’ would be to provide a common currency for qualifications - just as the dollar provides a common way of valuing different goods and services.
More than 5000 students are expected to participate in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) this year, following the successful pilot of the qualification in 2002.

As the first phase of the roll-out gets underway in 168 government schools, 32 Catholic schools, 18 TAFE institutes and four adult and community education centres, a further nineteen VCAL Further Development pilot projects are gearing up around the State.

Introduced in response to the independent evaluation of the VCAL, which recommended that culturally specific and industry specific VCAL programs be developed and trialed in 2003, the pilots include 13 ‘Themed VCAL’ projects, four ‘VCAL and Diverse Needs’ projects and two ‘VCAL Extension’ projects.

VCAL’s flexibility makes possible the development of programs that directly accommodate the needs of specific cultural groups (e.g. Indigenous Australians and refugees). It also enables the design of tailored learning programs capable of creating smoother pathways into specific industries.

Each provider selected to offer the pilot projects has received funding for a 1.0 EFT teaching position as well as $2,000 to develop resources for the project. Additional resources and support will be provided through workshops, the VCAL Professional Development Strategy, the VCAL Moderation Strategy, VCAL Assessment Kit and ongoing support from VQA staff and VCAL regional consultants.

Themed VCAL Projects

‘Themed VCAL’ pilot programs offer learning focused around specific industries such as automotive, construction, hospitality and land based industries. The ‘Themed VCAL’ programs are suited to students who have a particular interest in an industry sector and want to broaden their industry specific knowledge while developing employability skills.

‘Themed’ programs will also help students make informed decisions about their future pathways which may include an apprenticeship, VET qualification or employment.

The 13 schools and TAFEs participating in the ‘Themed VCAL’ pilot have developed programs that are linked to priority areas in the labour market and/or to job opportunities in the local area. Programs have the support of local employers and industry partners who can provide students with experience within the workplace.

VCAL and Diverse Needs

‘VCAL and Diverse Needs’ pilots will develop approaches that are specifically suited to the needs of groups such as refugees and young Koori people, ensuring that the new qualification is culturally inclusive.

‘VCAL and Diverse Needs’ pilots will be offered at:

1. Woolum Bellum/Kurnai College
   Koorie student learning needs

2. Sunraysia TAFE
   Koorie student learning needs

3. Adult Multicultural Education Service
   Refugee student learning needs

4. Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE
   Koorie student learning needs

VCAL Extension Pilots

The ‘VCAL Extension’ pilot program is an extension of the VCAL Senior level and is for students who have successfully completed either Senior VCAL or VCE and who wish to undertake an intensive preparation (for example folio enhancement) in order to enter a high-level TAFE or university course.

‘VCAL Extension’ pilots will be offered at:

1. Hawthorn Secondary College
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The VQA’s office is situated in the precinct of State Government offices near Melbourne’s Treasury Gardens. 41a St Andrews Place East Melbourne, VIC 3002 (Melway reference 2F K3)
Phone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9637 2422
Email: vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

For further information visit the VQA’s web site www.vqa.vic.gov.au

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