

Student Handbook

Introduction to Senior Studies at Our Lady's College



*Inspiring young women
since 1964*



*Mutual
Respect*



*Conscious
Compassion*



*Creative
Courage*



*Intentional
Inclusivity*

2026 - 2027

Introduction to Senior Studies Contents

2 Message from the Principal

3 Expectations of Senior Learners

- 3 Building Independent Learning Habits
- 3 Why Attendance Matters
- 4 Part-Time Work and School Balance

4 Planning Your Future - Pathways After Year 10

- 5 Choosing the Right Subjects

5 Senior Education Profile

- 5 Statement of results
- 5 Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
- 6 Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA)
- 6 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
- 6 Senior Subjects
- 6 VET Offerings
- 7 Course Delivery Modes

7 General Syllabuses

7 Applied Syllabuses

7 Senior External Examination

7 Short Courses

8 Underpinning

8 General Syllabuses and Short Courses

8 Applied Syllabuses

8 Vocational Education and Training (VET)

9 General Syllabuses

10 Applied Syllabuses

12 Senior External Examinations (SEE)

12 Vocational Education and Training



Message from the Principal

Welcome to the Senior Years at Our Lady's College.

The class of 2027 is presented with a wide array of exciting learning opportunities to consider as you begin your journey into the Senior Years. Our Lady's College is committed to offering a diverse and flexible curriculum that supports all learners and helps guide decisions about future career pathways. In Years 11 and 12, students can choose from multiple pathways as outlined in this handbook, each designed to provide purposeful and meaningful learning experiences.



Selecting the right pathway requires thoughtful consideration—there are no shortcuts. Success in the Senior Years demands commitment, diligence, and focus. At Our Lady's College, we aim to graduate students who are well-educated, enriched by co-curricular experiences, and shaped by the values that define our community. Our motto, Ad Altiora - "Ever Higher" - encourages you to pursue excellence and make the most of your unique gifts.

Guided by the Josephite tradition, our College values will support you to grow academically, socially, and emotionally, helping you take ownership of your learning and prepare for future success.

Creative Courage – Approach learning with boldness and imagination. Success requires commitment, perseverance, and a willingness to work hard.

Mutual Respect – Honour your own strengths and those of others. Your attitude sets an example and reflects our College in the wider community.

Conscious Compassion – Engage with the support offered by our caring staff and contribute to a culture of empathy and kindness.

Intentional Inclusivity – Choose subjects that align with your interests, strengths, and learning preferences. Whether analytical or hands-on, there is a pathway for you.

Senior students are expected to embody these values in both your actions and attitudes. Your approach will influence your personal success, serve as a model for younger students, and reflect our College in the wider community. We challenge you to embrace the responsibilities of senior schooling, knowing that your chosen pathway will serve as a springboard for future learning, living, and employment.

This handbook also outlines the curriculum (subject) options available for Years 11 and 12. When selecting subjects, students should consider the following:

Subjects of Interest – Engagement and effort are more likely when students are genuinely interested in a subject.

Career Relevance – Choose subjects that align with potential career goals. For example, a student interested in fitness might consider the Certificate II/III in Sport and Recreation.

Learning Preferences – Consider how you learn best. Some subjects require extensive reading and analysis, while others focus on practical design and creation.

Demonstrated Aptitude – Prior success in a subject (or a similar one) is a strong indicator of future achievement.

The subject selection process concludes with the Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan interview later this term. This is a mandatory step that ensures each student has a well-considered and supported pathway. The completion of this process will enable a Senior Timetable, tailored to each student's personal pathway to be developed in readiness for 2026.

We wish you every success in this exciting phase and encourage you to use the resources available to make informed, confident choices for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Merrett
Principal



Expectations of Senior Learners

Year 10 marks an exciting new chapter as students transition into the senior phase of their education. It's a time for exploring future possibilities and starting to think seriously about career paths, further study, and personal goals. Throughout the year, students take part in a careers program designed to help them make informed decisions about what lies ahead.

As students begin this journey, it's a great opportunity to reflect on some important questions:

- What am I passionate about?
- What do I want to achieve?
- What are my strengths, and how can I make the most of them?

As well, our Teaching for Thinking strategies highlight important learner dispositions such as tenacity, courage, open-mindedness, autonomy and thoroughness. Consciously nurturing these dispositions helps to build essential learning habits.

Building Independent Learning Habits

Success in the senior years relies heavily on developing strong independent learning skills. This means regularly completing homework and study outside of class time. Research shows that independent work plays a big supporting role in academic achievement in secondary schooling and beyond, and helps students to become confident and self-directed learners.

Students should aim for around 7–10 hours of homework each week, although this may vary depending on assessment deadlines and other commitments. Independent learning can include:

- Set exercises and completion of class work;
- Taking notes, and consolidating learning from the day's classes;
- Reading novels or articles ahead of time;
- Working on assignments and
- Preparing for oral presentations.

Teachers will guide students by setting clear expectations, offering feedback, and helping them to stay on track. The College also supports students through programs like Elevate, which offer guidance and resources to set up great learning habits.

Parents and caregivers, your support is incredibly valuable too! Encouragement, guidance, and helping your daughter balance school and other responsibilities, as well as solid learning habits, can make a big difference and reap huge benefits.

Why Attendance Matters

Being at school on time every day really counts. Research shows that missing more than 5 days a term (less than 90% attendance) can significantly affect learning and wellbeing. It's not just about academics—being present also helps students stay connected to the school community. As well, establishing good habits around punctuality helps your daughter to understand and prepare for community and work expectations.

Of course, sometimes absences are unavoidable due to illness or emergencies. In those cases, the College is here to help students catch up. But it's important to be mindful—missing just 2 days a month adds up to 4 weeks a year, which can mean 1.5 years of lost learning by the end of Year 12 if the pattern continues from Prep.



Families can help by:

- Encouraging daily attendance (every day) unless your child is genuinely unwell;
- Supporting healthy sleep and morning routines;
- Scheduling appointments and other commitments to outside of school hours;
- Not arranging holidays during term time (QCAA rules will not allow adjustments for family holidays and senior results can be drastically affected for non-compliance).
- Reaching out early if any issues arise.

Part-Time Work and School Balance

Many students take on part-time jobs during their senior years, which can be a great way to gain experience, independence, and earn some money. However, school should remain the top priority.

Queensland's **Child Employment Act 2006** and the **Child Employment Regulation 2016** sets clear rules about when school-aged children can work. On a day when students are expected to attend school, students are not permitted to work during school hours, and parents can also face penalties if they allow it.

Planning Your Future – Pathways After Year 10

Queensland's **Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance System** offers several pathways for students in Years 11 and 12:

1. University (ATAR) Pathway

- Study at least 4 General subjects
- May include 1 Applied subject or a Certificate III (or higher)
- Students must pass a General English subject (see English outlines for list of subjects)
- Leads to university entry

2. Further Training Pathway

- Mix of Certificate courses, Applied and/or General subjects
- Leads to TAFE or other training providers, or direct entry into the workforce

3. Work Transition Pathway

- Includes work experience, school-based apprenticeships or traineeships
- Certificate courses and Applied/General subjects support this path



Choosing the Right Subjects

Choosing a future pathway can be confusing, but ultimately the best advice is to:

- select subjects that you like,
- select subjects that you are good at,
- select subjects that may be a prerequisite for further study or careers,
- consider a balance of subjects.

When selecting subjects, students should consider:

- What interests them and where they're willing to put in the effort,
- Subjects that align with possible career goals,
- Their preferred learning style (e.g., reading vs. hands-on projects).

It's important to research each subject carefully:

- Read course outlines,
- Look at the materials and projects,
- Talk to teachers and other students.

Making informed choices now sets the foundation for success in the senior years and beyond.

Senior Education Profile

Students in Queensland are issued with a Senior Education Profile (SEP) upon completion of senior studies. This profile may include a:

- statement of results
- Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
- Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA).

For more information about the SEP see: <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior>

Statement of results

Students are issued with a statement of results in the December following the completion of a QCAA-developed course of study. A new statement of results is issued to students after each subsequent QCAA-developed course of study is completed.

Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)

Students may be eligible for a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) at the end of their senior schooling. Students who do not meet the QCE requirements can continue to work towards the certificate post-secondary schooling. The QCAA awards a QCE in the following July or December, once a student becomes eligible. Learning accounts are closed after nine years; however, a student may apply to the QCAA to have the account reopened and all credit continued.

Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA)

The Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) reports the learning achievements of eligible students who complete an individual learning program. At the end of the senior phase of learning, eligible students achieve a QCIA. These students have the option of continuing to work towards a QCE post-secondary schooling.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) has responsibility for ATAR calculations on a student's:

- best five General subject results or
- best results in a combination of four General subject results plus an Applied subject result or a Certificate III or higher VET qualification.

English requirement

Eligibility for an ATAR will require satisfactory completion of a QCAA General English subject. Satisfactory completion will require students to attain a result of "C" or better in one of five subjects — English, Essential English, Literature, English and Literature Extension or English as an Additional Language.

While students must meet this standard to be eligible to receive an ATAR, it is not mandatory for a student's English result to be included in the calculation of their ATAR.

Please be aware that some tertiary institutions may not accept Essential English for entry to some courses. The careful selection of the English course should be made in the context of the wider pathway consideration and the ability / interest of the learner.

Senior subjects

The QCAA develops four types of senior subject syllabuses — General, Applied, Senior External Examinations and Short Courses. Results in General and Applied subjects contribute to the award of a QCE and may contribute to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) calculation, although not more than one result in an Applied subject can be used in the calculation of a student's ATAR.

Extension subjects are extensions of the related General subjects and are studied either concurrently with, or after, Units 3 and 4 of the General course.

Typically, it is expected that most students will complete these courses across Years 11 and 12. All subjects build on the P-10 Australian Curriculum.

VET Offerings

As part of our commitment to providing diverse and practical learning pathways, our school offers a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs for Senior students. These programs allow students to gain nationally recognised qualifications while still at school, enhancing their employability and preparing them for further education or entry into the workforce. VET courses are available both on campus and through external providers, covering areas such as business, hospitality, health services, and more. Participation in VET can contribute to a student's Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and may include structured workplace learning. Students are encouraged to explore these opportunities and discuss their suitability with the VET Coordinator during subject selection.



Course Delivery Modes

The QCAA subjects listed in this book include General and Applied courses which are delivered in face-to-face mode on campus, and external online courses delivered by registered providers. Course fees for all external providers are set by the providers and may be subject to change. Online QCAA courses provided through external providers are studied on campus at Our Lady's College.

Our Lady's College offers the Certificate II in Tourism and III in Business, and Certificate II/III in Sport and Recreation (Binnacle RTO). These courses are taught by OLC staff and are scheduled within the normal school timetable on campus. Other VET courses are taught by external providers (TAFE or other RTOs) and are completed off campus during the week. The exception to this is Diploma of Business (Barrington RTO). VET courses replace a regular school subject, and students are expected to keep up to date with all normal coursework and assessments for both school and VET.

All external provider courses are subject to availability limits, course fees and engagement expectations (attendance requirements, assessment completion etc) and may have registration cut-off dates.

General syllabuses

General subjects are suited to students who are interested in pathways beyond senior secondary schooling that lead primarily to tertiary studies and to pathways for vocational education and training and work. General subjects include Extension subjects.

Applied syllabuses

Applied subjects are suited to students who are primarily interested in pathways beyond senior secondary schooling that lead to vocational education and training or work.

Senior External Examination

The Senior External Examination consists of individual subject examinations provided across Queensland in October and November each year by the QCAA. QCAA expects students to have completed their own studies with external providers (eg Saturday School etc) in preparation for these exams.

Short Courses

Short Courses are developed to meet a specific curriculum need and are suited to students who are interested in pathways beyond senior secondary schooling that lead to vocational education and training and establish a basis for further education and employment. They are informed by, and articulate closely with, the requirements of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). A grade of C in Short Courses aligns with the requirements for ACSF Level 3.

For more information about the ACSF see:

<https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework>



Underpinning factors

All senior syllabuses are underpinned by:

- literacy — the set of knowledge and skills about language and texts essential for understanding and conveying content
- numeracy — the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations, to recognise and understand the role of mathematics in the world, and to develop the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.

General syllabuses and Short Courses

In addition to literacy and numeracy, General syllabuses and Short Courses are underpinned by:

- 21st century skills — the attributes and skills students need to prepare them for higher education, work, and engagement in a complex and rapidly changing world. These include critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, and information & communication technologies (ICT) skills.

Applied syllabuses

In addition to literacy and numeracy, Applied syllabuses are underpinned by:

- applied learning — the acquisition and application of knowledge, understanding and skills in real-world or lifelike contexts
- community connections — the awareness and understanding of life beyond school through authentic, real-world interactions by connecting classroom experience with the world outside the classroom
- core skills for work — the set of knowledge, understanding and non-technical skills that underpin successful participation in work.

Vocational education and training (VET)

Students can access VET programs at Our Lady's College via:

- Binnacle Training (Business and Sport & Recreation) timetabled
- TAFE study – external attendance
- Barrington – after school, external provider
- a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

General syllabuses

Structure

The syllabus structure consists of a course overview and assessment.

General syllabuses course overview

General syllabuses are developmental four-unit courses of study.

Units 1 and 2 provide foundational learning, allowing students to experience all syllabus objectives and begin engaging with the course subject matter. It is intended that Units 1 and 2 are studied as a pair. Assessment in Units 1 and 2 provides students with feedback on their progress in a course of study and contributes to the award of a QCE.

Students should complete Units 1 and 2 before starting Units 3 and 4.

Units 3 and 4 consolidate student learning. Assessment in Units 3 and 4 is summative and the final student results contribute to the award of a QCE and to ATAR calculations. All results in Units 3 & 4 are paired – ie there is only one result for the pair of units.

Assessment

Units 1 and 2 assessments

Schools decide the sequence, scope, and scale of assessments for Units 1 and 2. These assessments should reflect the local context. Teachers determine the assessment program, tasks and marking guides that are used to assess student performance for Units 1 and 2.

Units 1 and 2 assessment outcomes provide feedback to students on their progress in the course of study. Schools should develop at least two but no more than four assessments for Units 1 and 2. At least one assessment must be completed for each unit.

Schools report satisfactory completion of Units 1 and 2 to the QCAA, and may choose to report levels of achievement to students and parents/carers using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4 assessments

Students complete a total of four summative assessments — three internal and one external — that count towards the overall subject result in each General subject.

Schools develop three internal assessments for each senior subject to reflect the requirements described in Units 3 and 4 of each General syllabus.

The three summative internal assessments need to be endorsed by the QCAA before they are used in schools. Students' results in these assessments are externally confirmed by QCAA assessors. These confirmed results from internal assessment are combined with a single result from an external assessment, which is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment result for a subject contributes to a determined percentage of a students' overall subject result. For most subjects this is 25%; for Mathematics and Science subjects it is 50%.



Instrument-specific marking guides

Each syllabus provides instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs) for summative internal assessments.

The ISMGs describe the characteristics evident in student responses and align with the identified assessment objectives. Assessment objectives are drawn from the unit objectives and are contextualised for the requirements of the assessment instrument.

Schools cannot change or modify an ISMG for use with summative internal assessment.

As part of quality teaching and learning, schools should discuss ISMGs with students to help them understand the requirements of an assessment task.

External assessment

External assessment is summative and adds valuable evidence of achievement to a student's profile. External assessment is:

- common to all schools.
- administered under the same conditions at the same time and on the same day.
- developed and marked by the QCAA according to a commonly applied marking scheme.

The external assessment contributes a determined percentage (see specific subject guides — assessment) to the student's overall subject result and is not privileged over summative internal assessment.

Applied syllabuses

Structure

The syllabus structure consists of a course overview and assessment.

Applied syllabuses course overview

Applied syllabuses are developmental four-unit courses of study.

Units 1 and 2 of the course are designed to allow students to begin their engagement with the course content, i.e. the knowledge, understanding and skills of the subject. Course content, learning experiences and assessment increase in complexity across the four units as students develop greater independence as learners.

Units 3 and 4 consolidate student learning. Results from assessment in Applied subjects contribute to the award of a QCE and results from Units 3 and 4 may contribute as a single input to ATAR calculation.

A course of study for Applied syllabuses includes core topics and elective areas for study.



Applied syllabuses use four summative internal assessments from Units 3 and 4 to determine a student's exit result.

Schools develop at least two but no more than four internal assessments for Units 1 and 2 and these assessments provide students with opportunities to become familiar with the summative internal assessment techniques to be used for Units 3 and 4.

Applied syllabuses do not use external assessment with the exception of Essential English and Essential Mathematics where IA2 is a statewide (CIA) Common Internal Assessment.

Instrument-specific standards matrixes

For each assessment instrument, schools develop an instrument-specific standards matrix by selecting the syllabus standards descriptors relevant to the task and the dimension/s being assessed. The matrix is shared with students and used as a tool for making judgments about the quality of students' responses to the instrument. Schools develop assessments to allow students to demonstrate the range of standards.

Essential English and Essential Mathematics — Common internal assessment

Students complete a total of four summative internal assessments in Units 3 and 4 that count toward their overall subject result. Schools develop three of the summative internal assessments for each senior subject and the other summative assessment is a common internal assessment (CIA) developed by the QCAA.

The CIA for Essential English and Essential Mathematics is based on the learning described in Unit 3 of the respective syllabus. The CIA is:

- developed by the QCAA
- common to all schools
- delivered to schools by the QCAA
- administered flexibly in Unit 3
- administered under supervised conditions
- marked by the school according to a common marking scheme developed by the QCAA.

Summative internal assessment — instrument-specific standards

The Essential English and Essential Mathematics syllabuses provide instrument-specific standards for the three summative internal assessments in Units 3 and 4.

The instrument-specific standards describe the characteristics evident in student responses and align with the identified assessment objectives. Assessment objectives are drawn from the unit objectives and are contextualised for the requirements of the assessment instrument.

Senior External Examinations (S.E.E)

Senior External Examinations course overview

Applications open at the beginning of Year 12 (final year).

A Senior External Examination syllabus sets out the aims, objectives, learning experiences and assessment requirements for each of these subjects.

The Senior External Examination is for:

- low candidature subjects not otherwise offered as a General subject in Queensland
- students in their final year of senior schooling who are unable to access particular subjects at their school
- adult students (people of any age not enrolled at a Queensland secondary school)
- to meet tertiary entrance or employment requirements
- for personal interest.

Senior External Examination results may contribute credit to the award of a QCE and contribute to ATAR calculations.

For more information about the Senior External Examination, see: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/see

Assessment

The Senior External Examination consists of individual subject examinations that are held once each year in Term 4. Important dates and the examination timetable are published in the Senior Education Profile (SEP) calendar, available at: <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/sep/sep-calendar>

Results are based solely on students' demonstrated achievement in the examinations. Work undertaken before an examination is not assessed. Results are reported as a mark and grade of A–E. For more information about results, see the QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook, Section 10.

Vocational Education Training (V.E.T)

Courses offered by TAFE at School

Students who study approved units outside of Our Lady's College would spend a whole day each week at the relevant study centre for the course. This course would normally replace a subject at school and students would use this free time to catch up on any work missed whilst away offsite studying for their Certificate.



Our TAFE at School programs give Year 11 and 12 students an important head start on their career, a chance to complete a certificate qualification and possible credit towards further study.

Benefits of completing a TAFE course:

- Gain valuable skills and complete a Certificate II or Certificate III while still at school.
- Receive direct entry into certain TAFE Queensland programs upon successful completion of high school.
- Gain credits for a diploma program or university studies.
- Learn from qualified trainers with current industry knowledge.
- Gain real employment skills relevant to the workplace.
- There are a variety of programs available.

Entry requirements

Students must be enrolled in Year 11 or 12 and attend a Queensland high school for the duration of the program. You also need to have a Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan in place.

Enrolment into TAFE at School is completed through the College's VET Middle Leader. Information regarding course availability is published each semester in the College newsletter and College portal.

Students undertaking a nationally accredited qualification at TAFE Queensland as part of their senior studies pay substantially reduced or, in some cases, no tuition fees at all. However, there are material fees for all programs and an administration fee per calendar year. Interested students can obtain information regarding relevant costs from the VET Middle Leader.

For more information and course guide visit <https://tafeqld.edu.au/courses/ways-you-can-study/tafe-at-school.html>

School-Based Traineeships

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SATs) allow high school students (usually in Years 10, 11 or 12) to earn a wage, train towards a nationally recognised qualification and study towards their Queensland Certificate of Education at the same time.

Use your SAT to kick-start your career and learn invaluable, real-life workplace skills and hands-on industry experience.

Specific requirements

There are specific requirements for SATs that apply to:

- age limits
- paid work and minimum hours
- parental consent
- school support and timetables.

Some of the training and/or work must take place during school hours.

Read more about eligibility here: <https://www.qld.gov.au/education/apprenticeships/school-based/requirements/eligibility>

The Queensland Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) is in the process of finalising the transition from the VET in Schools (VETiS) funding model to the new **Career Ready** and **Career Taster** funding frameworks, scheduled for implementation from 1 January 2026.

Please note that not all information regarding Career Ready programs and funding is currently finalised or publicly available. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented in this guide, changes may still occur, including updates to eligibility rules, program availability, and funding arrangements. Key elements, such as the **Career Ready Provisional Qualification List**, are subject to change pending ministerial approval and ongoing contractual negotiations between the Department and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Schools, students, and families are encouraged to refer directly to the Queensland Government's Career Ready website (qld.gov.au/education/training/subsidies/career-ready) and the latest Career Ready Provisional Qualification List for the most up-to-date information. Further advice should be sought from school VET coordinators or career advisors to ensure informed decision-making.

