

Register an Independent School



Information sheet

Overview

This information is provided for those seeking to register a new independent school. This includes applications where two or more registered schools are proposing to amalgamate to form one school.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority does not accept direct applications from Catholic or government schools. Catholic and government schools should speak to the Department of Education and Training or Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd.

Registration requirements

A school is a place that provides education to children of compulsory school age (6–17 years). A school must be registered as one or more of the following types:

* primary school
* secondary school
* co-educational school
* single sex school
* specific purpose school such as a school that provides an alternative educational program
* specialist school that caters mainly for students with disabilities or with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

It is an offence under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act) to operate a school without being granted registration by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

All applicants for school registration must comply with:

* Division 1 of Part 4.3 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act).
* Part 5 and Schedules 4 and 5 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (ETR Regulations).
* Division 3 of Part 4.3 of the Act, and Schedule 8 of the ETR Regulations if proposing to deliver foundation secondary or senior secondary qualifications.

Before registering an independent school, the VRQA must be satisfied that the school complies with the requirements under section 4.3.1 of the Act, including the minimum standards.

Schools offering the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC), the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, or part of any of these accredited foundation secondary or senior secondary courses, must also meet additional requirements. These are explained in the *Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration* (the Guidelines).

Applicants seeking approval to deliver courses to overseas students are required to meet additional requirements and are advised to email [vrqa.international@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.international@education.vic.gov.au) for further information.

The minimum standards

The Guidelines set out evidence required to demonstrate compliance with the minimum standards and requirements for school registration. The Guidelines must be used as a reference when preparing your application.

The application process

Before you apply

You should expect to spend 12–18 months preparing to submit your application to register a new school.

The VRQA recommends you attend a pre-registration briefing session before applying to register a new school. VRQA briefing session dates are available on the VRQA website:

For more information, see:

* [Events](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au./events)

In addition, the VRQA strongly recommends you attend a pre-application meeting with a VRQA Senior Quality Assurance Officer. This meeting can help to identify any issues early in the process and to ensure your application is complete. Information about booking a pre-application meeting can be found on the VRQA website.

For more information, see:

* [Registering an independent school](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/registering-an-independent-school.aspx)

Completing the application form

Ensure all sections relevant to your application are completed, and the required evidence is included. To help you meet all evidence requirements of the application, you will find evidence prompts throughout the application form, as indicated in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evidence prompt** | **Indicates that** |
| Please provide | documentation is to be included as evidence |
| Please complete, and include | hyperlinked document is to be downloaded, completed, and included in your application |
| ▼ | information can be submitted after the closing date, once available, but prior to registration |

The application form also contains an **evidence checklist** located in *Part C – Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance*. Please ensure that:

* the evidence checklist is completed and included in your application
* electronic files are named as per the item number in the evidence checklist, e.g., C.1.5.i\_Philosophy.docx

Submitting the application

Collate your evidence into a portfolio and submit an electronic copy to the VRQA Schools inbox as a zip file or via a file sharing platform, such as Dropbox:

[vrqa.schools@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.schools@education.vic.gov.au)

Use the format below when naming your electronic files:

**<checklist\_number>\_<school\_name>.docx**

When naming your electronic files:

the file names should be named as per the item numbers in the evidence checklist

keep the filenames short and do **NOT** use apostrophes, ampersands (&) or dashes

use the school initials rather than full school name

if your application contains multiple documents for the same item number, include a modifier (i.e. a, b, c…) at the end of the item number.

if the documents contain images, please ensure size does not exceed 50 MB

limit any folder to 1-2 sub-folders.

Consider the following examples:

C.1.5.ia\_Philosophy \_WPS.docx

C.1.5.ib\_Philosophy \_WPS.docx

**Disclaimer**: While the applications will only be accepted in electronic format, the VRQA may request paper copies of documents during the assessment process.

Once your application is assessed as complete, an invoice will be sent to your nominated contact for invoicing and as soon as the application fee is paid, the assessment phase will commence.

Closing dates

Closing date for applications is the 30 June in the year prior to intended commencement.

For more information, see:

* [Dates and timelines for school applications](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/dates_and_timelines.aspx)

Accepting your application

The VRQA will only accept applications that:

* have all the required evidence and declarations
* are well organised.

Incomplete or disorganised applications will not be accepted.

Once the completed application has been received, the VRQA will issue an electronic invoice for the application fee to acknowledge your application.

Paying the application fee

The VRQA cannot assess your application until the application fee is paid in full. Fees can be paid online by:

* credit card (MasterCard or Visa)
* BPay
* Post BillPay.

Assessing your application

Once your completed application is received and the application fee is paid in full, the VRQA will start assessing your application.

The VRQA may provide you with written feedback during the assessment stage, and request that you meet with the VRQA to discuss your application.

If applicable, you will have one further opportunity to submit additional documentation to support your application. Note: This does not include the items on the evidence checklist that can be submitted at a later date.

Financial assessment

The VRQA will undertake a financial capability assessment of your organisation to ensure compliance with the minimum standards for school governance, not-for-profit requirements, and to assess your proposed school’s financial viability. This will be conducted by a member of the VRQA’s panel of contracted service providers. No additional fee is charged for this assessment.

Foundation secondary or senior secondary registration

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) / Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC)

If you are seeking registration to deliver the VCE or VPC, relevant sections of the application will also be assessed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

Applicants will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their capacity to deliver the curriculum and assessment and manage the administrative requirements associated with delivery of a foundation secondary or senior secondary certificate. Applicants are required to provide relevant evidence and completed templates which can be accessed through the application form.

All completed documentation and templates must be submitted to the VRQA with this application.

The VCAA must first authorise applicants to deliver the VCE or VPC before the VRQA can grant registration. The VRQA manages this process and will liaise with the VCAA.

IB Diploma Programme

If you are seeking registration to deliver the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme you must first obtain approval from the International Baccalaureate Organisation before the VRQA can register your school.

Application outcome

A decision on your application will be made by an authorised delegate of the VRQA.

Successful applicants: if your application is approved, a certificate of registration will be issued.

Unsuccessful applicants: if registration is refused, you will be notified and provided with the reasons for the VRQA’s decision.

Important notes

You must inform the VRQA of any changes, including changes that relate to your supporting documentation, within 14 days.

You should ensure that there are no outstanding compliance issues with other registrations held prior to making an application.

Schools seeking multiple registrations as a registered training organisation (RTO) and/or to deliver courses to full fee-paying overseas students (in addition to school registration), should email [vrqa.schools@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.schools@education.vic.gov.au) for further information.

Marketing and communication

You must ensure that during the application process, any marketing material, promotion or publicity regarding the proposed school clearly states that its establishment and operation is subject to registration being granted by the VRQA.