



Tech Schools – Frequently asked questions

This document outlines frequently asked questions about Tech Schools.

Do Tech Schools charge schools or students?

No. Tech School programs are **entirely free** for schools and students. **Free transport** is provided from the secondary school to the Tech School (and back). There are no costs for parents or carers of students who attend.

Tech Schools also offer **free professional learning** for teachers and in some circumstances can provide casual relief teacher reimbursements.

Are Tech Schools the same as Victoria's technical schools/colleges?

No. Tech Schools are not the technical or vocational education schools of the past, nor are they contemporary vocational schools like Kerang Technical High School, Harvester Technical College or Peter Lalor Secondary College. They are high-tech STEM centres of excellence.

Tech Schools provide hands-on and immersive STEM learning experiences to secondary school students, sparking their aspirations to pursue future pathways and careers in STEM. Students remain enrolled in their local school but attend the Tech School for single or multi-day programs linked to the curriculum at their home school.

Tech Schools use the latest technology to deliver immersive, practical and future career-linked education that Victorian school students need to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy.

At Tech Schools, experts guide students and teachers in the use of 'design thinking' processes to solve real-world problems. They combine this with technology such as artificial intelligence, 'smart agriculture' equipment, robotics, virtual and augmented reality, nanotechnology, motion capture suits and clean energy technologies in a dynamic and energising environment that empowers students to develop solutions and create the futures they want.

Who can access a Tech School?

Tech Schools provide free access to all government and non-government schools with secondary students and other providers of secondary education (e.g. a TAFE that provides Years 9 to 12 education) in their local government area.

In some instances, Tech Schools provide access to schools outside of their local government area. [Your closest Tech School](#) can tell you which schools have access. You can also check with the Department of Education at tech.schools@education.vic.gov.au.

Why do we need Tech Schools?

Tech Schools are part of the Victorian Government's commitment to prepare secondary students with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue STEM careers in new and emerging industries.

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Technology is changing our world and the nature of our workforce. Young people need to learn a different range of skills to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow – jobs that perhaps don't even exist at the moment.

Students will need to be able to grasp new ideas quickly and move easily between industries and occupations.

Tech Schools help students stay ahead of the game. They give students from all backgrounds free access to industry-standard technologies and tailored opportunities for STEM learning that have not been available before.

How long have Tech Schools existed?

The Tech Schools initiative commenced following a 2014 Victorian Government commitment of \$128 million to establish 10 Tech Schools. Since the opening of the first Tech School in 2017, further investments have been made to renew high-tech equipment at the Tech Schools over time and increase the reach of industry-linked STEM programs and facilities for school and community use.

In 2023, the Victorian Government invested a further \$116 million to build 6 new Tech Schools and establish a Clean Energy Equipment Fund.

Where are the Tech Schools?

Tech Schools are built on TAFE or university campuses to help introduce students to different pathways into post-secondary education and employment opportunities. [The existing and new Tech Schools](#) and their TAFE/university institutions are:

10 existing Tech Schools:

- Ballarat Tech School – Federation University (Ballarat)
- Banyule Nillumbik Tech School – Melbourne Polytechnic (Greensborough)
- Bendigo Tech School – La Trobe University (Bendigo)
- Casey Tech School – Chisholm Institute (Berwick)
- Geelong Tech School – Gordon Institute (Geelong)
- Gippsland Tech School – Gippsland TAFE (Gippsland) note: Gippsland Tech School is also piloting a mobile Tech School serving East Gippsland
- Monash Tech School – Monash University (Clayton)
- Whittlesea Tech School – Melbourne Polytechnic (Epping)
- Wyndham Tech School – Victoria University (Werribee)
- Yarra Ranges Tech School – Box Hill Institute (Lilydale).

6 New Tech Schools:

- Brimbank Tech School
- Dandenong Tech School
- Frankston Tech School
- Hume Tech School
- Wangaratta Tech School
- Warrnambool Tech School.



Who owns and operates the Tech School?

Tech School facilities each belong to a TAFE or university institution (with the exception of Monash Tech School, which is operated by Monash University and John Monash Science School). The Department of Education provides funds to the TAFE/university to operate and manage the Tech School for a 20-year term.

The ongoing operation of the Tech School is governed by an Operating Agreement between the department and the TAFE/university. The Operating Agreement sets out the financial delegations and operational expectations between the parties, as well as the employment terms for Tech School staff, who are employed by the TAFE/university to design, develop and run programs, engage with new industry partners and ensure annual performance targets are met.

Tech Schools receive operational and strategic advice from a governance committee, made up of representatives from local partner schools, community, industry, the department and the TAFE/university.

Do Tech Schools link their programs to the Victorian Curriculum and the learning experience at school?

Yes. Tech Schools work with their local partner schools and industry partners to co-design immersive programs that are linked to the Victorian Curriculum and to the partner school's teaching program. Programs are designed with ongoing input from teachers at partner schools to enhance the curriculum and meet students' needs. This ensures students continue learning outside of the classroom through real-life examples that inspire them to pursue STEM pathways.

During their visit to a Tech School, students are supported by a teacher from their home school, who provides supervision and additional learning support as needed.

Can students receive recognition for their participation in Tech School programs?

Some Tech Schools issue microcredentials or digital badges to students who have completed specific programs, such as industry immersions. Tech School microcredentials verify the learning outcomes, experiences or competencies that students have developed through the program. They represent skills or achievements valued by employers and can be added to resumes or professional profiles such as LinkedIn.

Students can also be nominated, or self-nominate, to participate in Tech School student ambassador programs. Student ambassadors may advocate for Tech School programs among student groups, coordinate local events or help to shape the programs and operations of the Tech School. Students can add ambassador roles to their resumes, demonstrating leadership, teamwork and communication skills.

Tech Schools can also work with their TAFE/university institution to develop in-depth programs that link to learning outcomes within courses (e.g. TAFE certificates) at that institution. Students who have completed these programs may be able to receive recognition of prior learning if they go on to attend that institution.

What industry areas do the Tech Schools focus on?

Each Tech School focuses on at least one industry sector and works with industry representatives to provide students with relevant programs and access to leading technology.

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Tech Schools equip students with knowledge and skills across the industry sectors that are expected to provide strong economic and employment growth in the future. Tech Schools work with local industry and communities to provide learning experiences that specifically link to STEM learning and careers in the local area.

Industry growth areas that are supported by Tech Schools include:

- clean energy
- advanced manufacturing
- agriculture
- digital technologies
- health
- infrastructure
- social services.

How is industry involved in the Tech Schools?

Industry involvement, collaboration and participation are key to the success of Tech Schools.

Ongoing collaboration between local industry partners ensures that the development and operation of each Tech School is driven by industry knowledge, insight and needs – with a focus on skills and training for future jobs.

Examples of industry involvement in program development and design include:

- a local industry partner providing resources (hemp) to a Tech School from which students design and create hemp bricks, quality test their bricks, and collate and analyse the data
- a major chocolate manufacturer supplying a Tech School with ingredients that students use to produce sustainable food with First Nations bushfood flavours
- a major regional urban water company partnering with a Tech School on a design challenge that asks students to design a robot that solves blocked water pipes
- a motor vehicle company partnering with a Tech School on a program for female students to design and build an electric vehicle.

Can students or parents/carers access a Tech School without going through a school?

Each Tech School has strong ties to their local community and often run programs that are accessible to students and parents/carers who do not have access through their schools.

Check with your [local Tech School](#) for available programs. Some examples may be:

- remote and virtual programs
- after school and holiday programs
- career education events with industry partners
- open days, maker faires and community information sessions.

How do Tech Schools differ from other STEM facilities?

Tech Schools are a key part of a growing network of STEM education facilities which aim to lift student engagement and aspirations in STEM learning.

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The [Knox Innovation Opportunity and Sustainability Centre](#) and the [STEM Centre of Excellence](#) at the University of Melbourne both deliver programs in a similar way to Tech Schools (e.g. free for secondary students including free bus transportation).

Victoria's 6 [Science and Mathematics Specialist Centres](#) provide access to all Victorian primary and secondary schools. Schools from rural, regional or disadvantaged areas can access their programs for free. Other government and non-government schools may also be eligible for subsidised access.

How do Tech Schools differ from Trade Training Centres?

Trade Training Centres are facilities for specialised vocational education and training for students in Years 9 to 12.

Tech Schools do not focus specifically on trades or delivery of vocational qualifications. They deliver high-tech STEM learning through immersive programs which connect students to a range of STEM pathways.

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