



Licensed by Copyright Agency. You may only copy or communicate this work with a licence.



BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Dual education backgrounds are growing in popularity, writes Lauren Ahwan

UNIVERSITY students increasingly are looking to undertake vocational qualifications as part of their degree to forge better employment outcomes.

Many courses provide pathways from TAFE to university, allowing students guaranteed entry and to fast track bachelor degree study if they obtain a vocational qualification first.

Meanwhile, demand for TAFE-embedded university programs currently exceeds supply, with available places filling within minutes.

TAFE Gold Coast community services, health and nursing director Debbie Blow says the response from university students seeking a VET qualification has been overwhelming.

"When we opened (registrations)

up for (university students) to put their name down, we had to close it within 10 minutes," Blow says.

"Within that 10 minutes, (students) had filled (the intake quota) and we had a waiting list."

Blow says the VET qualifications give students the practical skills necessary to enter the workforce – and they can do so even before they finish their degree.

"Taking blood is not a part of (what students enrolled in a biomedical science degree) would necessarily learn but, in the certificate III (pathology qualification) they have to perform eight live bleeds," she says.

"Some will get jobs that require those skills, so doing this just makes sense. It really opens up their employment opportunities."

TAFE Gold Coast manager Karen Dickinson expects the concept of combining VET and university will expand significantly in coming years.

"We have successfully identified where the two sectors can come together and complement each other instead of being seen as two separate higher education pathways," she says.

Skilling Australia Foundation general manager Andrew Sezonov says

he "wholeheartedly" embraces the partnership between VET and university. "This is what industry wants," he says. "VET should be embedded into as many (university) programs as possible."

Biomedical Science student Kate Sullivan has completed a vocational pathology qualification and is working while she finishes her degree.

"Doing the Certificate III in Pathology Collection has set me apart from other bachelor students as I have honed in on job-ready skills to enhance the theory-based learning at university," she says.

"Doing the vocational placement ... has been monumental to my career and, as a direct result, I have been fortunate in securing employment with a leading pathology company."