



VIRTUAL  
ENTERPRISES  
INTERNATIONAL

# Program Implementation Guide

Preparing all students  
for the future of work

2023-2024

[veinternational.org](https://veinternational.org)





This guide provides schools and school districts with an orientation to the Virtual Enterprises International program model so that they (1) can decide whether the VE model is appropriate for them, (2) are aware of the resources and timelines needed for program implementation, and (3) understand how they will be supported after the program has been implemented.

The guide is divided into the following sections (*Click on links below to jump to specific sections*):

- 1** [Understanding the VE Model](#)  
Describes the VE model—program description, program goals, the VE approach, implementation options, U.S. and global networks—and will be useful in determining if VE is a good fit for your school and/or district.
- 2** [Program Components](#)  
Outlines the program components that comprise the VE program experience for students and teachers including curriculum, resource materials, technology tools, extended learning opportunities, assessments and support.
- 3** [Program Implementation](#)  
Outlines recommendations for determining whether VE is the right fit for your school and the steps to take to begin the process of implementation.
- 4** [Support Services](#)  
Describes the continued process of development, growth, and support before and after program implementation.
- 5** [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

# 1 Understanding the VE Model

## What is Virtual Enterprises International?

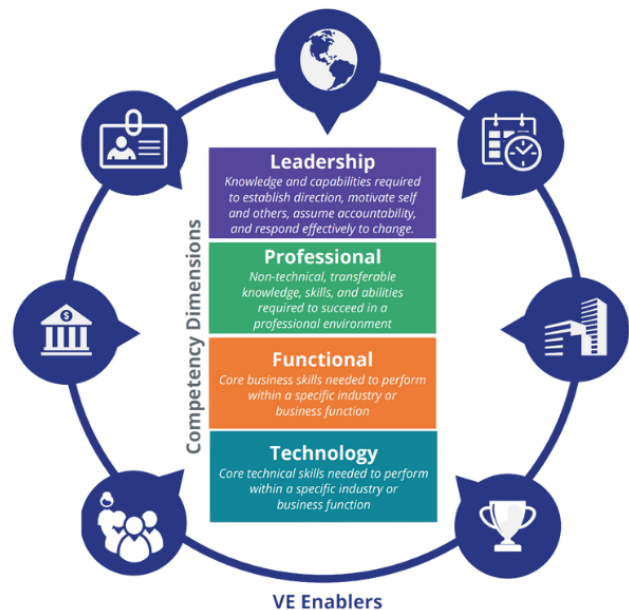
Virtual Enterprises International (VEI) is an educational nonprofit that provides a solution for schools to offer all students meaningful skills-based career experiences. Through our hands-on, task-based curricula, aligned to the VE Career Readiness Framework, students test drive potential careers and develop in-demand skills and competencies that post-secondary institutions and employers are seeking. By starting and managing the day-to-day operations of a company, students not only develop business skills, financial literacy, and an entrepreneurial mindset, they also identify careers that align with their interests, talents, and aspirations. Every VE student has the opportunity to experience a high-impact workplace apprenticeship during their time in the program. VE also reinforces students' academic skills and achievements, supports their interest in education and social and emotional learning, and bolsters their desire to pursue a career pathway. In 2015, VEI introduced the VE-JV Career Academy, a similar two-year program that enables middle school students to develop technology and entrepreneurial skills by starting and managing business ventures.

Since its inception in 1996, VEI has served over 225,000 high school students, including many from under-resourced communities. We annually support 27,000 students across the U.S. and are part of a global network spanning 43 countries and 7,500 student-run businesses.

## The VE Experience

The VE experience is shaped by seven differentiating features that enable students to develop leadership, professional, functional, and core technology skills which form the basis of the [Career Readiness Framework](#). They include:

1. Assuming the Role
2. Global Perspective
3. Virtual Economy
4. Day-to-Day Business Dynamics
5. Teacher as Facilitator
6. Industry & College Partnerships
7. Competitions & Event



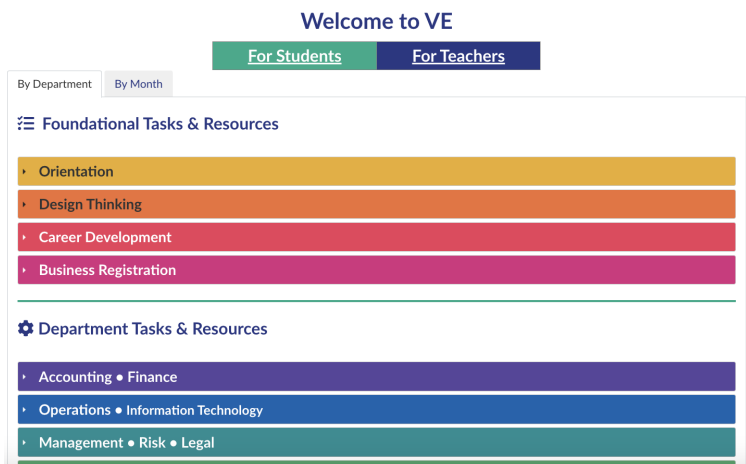
## 2 Program Components

The following program components provide teachers and students with skills-rich materials including department-specific tasks (projects) and resources, extended learning activities that engage students in authentic business experiences, and online assessments that measure student outcomes.

### Curriculum & Resources

**VE Task-Based Curriculum**, designed as a one-year course, and reviewed by a team of educators and industry experts, combines academic and project-based learning. Each task within the learning management system includes objectives, strategies, materials, and deliverables for completing the activity. This curriculum is aligned to Common Career Core Technical Standards, the Career Readiness Framework and State Standards. The task-based curriculum includes:

- units in Design Thinking, Career Development, Operations, Risk Management, Legal, Information Technology, Human Resources, Accounting/Finance, Marketing, Sales, Design and Personal Finance.
- access to curriculum units and instructional support for QuickBooks Online (QBO), TurboTax, Mailchimp, and Credit Karma.
- scoring guides for all competitions aligned to the **VE Career Readiness Framework**
- business plan resources
- instructional videos and Quick Guides
- portfolio requirements that support career readiness and work-based learning



**Technology Applications for the Entrepreneur Curriculum**, designed as a one-year course that provides technology application activities built around an entrepreneurial theme. Students use Microsoft and Google software platforms for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, web-development, and digital marketing software to develop projects and create materials used in business and needed to start a business. Included in the course is a unit on Personal Financial Management that introduces students to the fundamentals of personal finance and exposes them to the tools and knowledge to make sound personal decisions in life and in business.



### Tech Apps for the Entrepreneur

Dear Students,

*Tech Apps for the Entrepreneur* provides technology applications activities that are built around an entrepreneurial theme. You will use Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Web-development, and digital marketing software to develop projects and create materials used in business and needed to start a business.

Projects are designed to develop your skills in technology, research, communications, problem-solving, and critical thinking as well as provide you with an understanding of careers and the process of starting a business.

The culminating simulation projects allow you to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed in the course to effectively produce the project tasks at hand. The in-demand skills you develop after taking this course will help you throughout high school, college, and beyond. Good luck and enjoy the journey!

- ▶ Course Introduction & Content Overview
- ▶ Unit 1: Orientation
- ▶ Unit 2: Using Word & Google Docs
- ▶ Unit 3: The Entrepreneur
- ▶ Unit 4: Using Excel, Google Sheets, & Google Forms

Projects are designed to develop students' technology, research, communications, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, allow them to explore careers, and provide an understanding of the process to start a business. The culminating simulation projects allow students to apply the knowledge and skills they developed in the course to produce the project tasks at hand.

Tech Apps for the Entrepreneur serves as a foundation for VE, particularly for students who have not developed technology application skills. The course can be part of a two- or three-year sequence in business or entrepreneurship.

## Extended Learning Opportunities

Local, regional, and national events provide opportunities for students to present their work, experience real-world competition, network with peers, and connect with college and business partners. VE provides numerous extended learning opportunities throughout the year:

- **Conferences, Exhibitions & Competitions**

Exhibitions, which are held annually in different cities across the U.S. and around the world, provide students with opportunities to present and market the products/services of their virtual businesses in a competitive trade show style marketplace with both local and global VE colleagues. Students may also engage in various competitions at the event to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and diverse talents in marketing, communications, technology and global business.



- **Leadership events**
- **Local and regional business plan competitions**
- **Online competitions** - judged by industry experts for Elevator Pitch, Company Branding, E-Commerce Website, Company Newsletter, and Video Commercial.

## Assessments & Evaluation

There are several assessments available to measure student outcomes:

- Pre/Post assessment - administered by VE
- Access to NOCTI VE National Assessment (# 8985) administered by NOCTI - *Enables students to earn college credit at a number of colleges listed by NOCTI.*
- Access and alignment to industry certifications including MOS, QBO, ESB, D4D.

- Student portfolios associated with curriculum tasks
- In-person and online competitions and awards at the local, regional and national level - *Provides students unique opportunities to develop and demonstrate career readiness competencies in different business domains, generate business for their VE firms, garner real-world feedback from a diverse pool of judges, and evaluate performance on a regional and/or national level.*
- Scoring guides for all deliverables aligned to the Career Readiness Framework

### 3 Program Implementation

#### Program Pathway Options

VE may serve as a capstone course to a career academy, STEM academy, small learning community, CTE or business program of study such as accounting, architecture, digital media, e-commerce, entrepreneurship, technology, finance and marketing, but can also be implemented as a standalone course. In some schools, VE is classified as a high intensity work-based learning experience.

Designed as a one-year class, the VE program provides flexible delivery options allowing schools to run the program in a variety of manners that best suit the school. Pacing guides are available to customize the curriculum tasks as desired for the time available, including daily courses running between 45- and 90 minutes and/or block scheduling. Due to the goals and objectives of the program and the timing of different engagement opportunities, it is difficult to deliver the full curriculum in a single semester.

#### Review Program Needs and Assess Capacity

A critical part of the VE development process is to consider the programs and resources that exist in your school, review the school/district's mission and vision, and assess whether your school/district has the capacity and commitment to pursue VE program implementation.

*Issues to consider:*

#### Program of Study to Support VE

To take full advantage of the contextualized learning opportunity VE provides, students need foundation skills in technology and business. Many of the projects in the VE task-based curriculum require facilities with spreadsheets, presentation and word-processing software. Schools are strongly encouraged to implement a business-related sequence of study (accounting, entrepreneurship, e-commerce, finance, technology) that provides students with the foundation skills necessary for success in VE. In many states, schools that implement a two-, three- or four-year CTE program of



study that culminates with VE and includes work-based learning opportunities are eligible to receive accreditation and state endorsement.

### **Teacher-Facilitator Selection**

The ideal candidate for a VE teacher/facilitator position has an *in-depth understanding of technology and a background in business and/or economics*. Because the curriculum is task-based and depends on a tight schedule of activities, the ideal candidate also has both time-management and project-management skills. It is recommended that teacher-facilitators participate in the summer National Teachers Conference to become familiar with day-to-day business operations. In schools implementing VE as a capstone to a CTE program of study, VE teachers must state certification for the content areas they are implementing.



### **Building an Advisory Board (recommended)**

An advisory board is a group of external partners, including community business leaders, volunteers, and representatives from post-secondary institutions and government, who can provide guidance and support to the VE program and its students. An advisory board provides the school with a pipeline of partners who can provide opportunities for students and teachers.

### **Securing Post-Secondary Articulations (recommended)**

Post-secondary partnerships should be created by forming alignments/articulations with local colleges and universities. Providing opportunities for students to take college coursework while in high school opens the door to earning advanced placement and/or college credit and makes for a smooth transition from high school to college. We recommend speaking with your district CTE offices to secure post-secondary articulation agreements.

### **Selecting a Business**

Students will be introduced to Design Thinking, a problem-solving process that will help them identify a business idea that solves a problem for their school, community, or the world. The business idea could align with a school's theme, mission, academy or small learning community. Service businesses should be able to perform the services. It is possible to establish a real business within the VE model; regional staff can provide guidance for doing so.



## Building a VE Laboratory

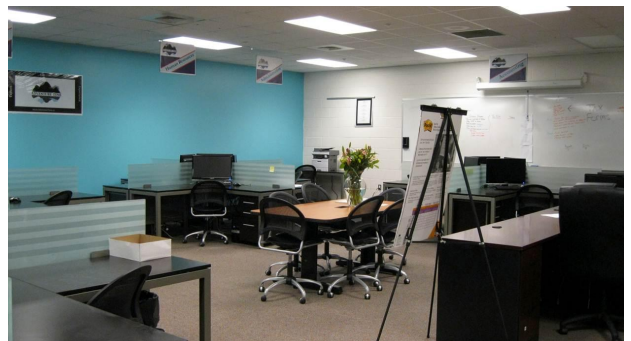
The VE laboratory simulates the workplace and is a key component of the VE experience. The classroom should include workgroup clusters of furniture to reflect company departments. Facilitators should be creative in their efforts to convert a traditional classroom space into a simulated workplace for the VE program

Ideally the VE laboratory should include:



### Furniture and Equipment

- A class of laptop or desktop computers with Internet connectivity – each student must have their own computer daily (*Chromebooks can be used to launch a program, however laptop or desktop computers provide a more productive workflow*)
- conference table with up to 8-10 chairs or space for students to conduct small-group business meetings
- printer
- Smart Board or other projection device
- Ideation board (white boards)
- Desks set up in workgroups (*Flexible seating arrangement to allow students to work in department workgroups - this can be done with movable desks or tables, or by grouping students by department in a fixed furniture lab*)



### Software

- Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and/or Google Suite (Docs, Sheet, Slides)
  - Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) or Canva
- Note: Local businesses or branch banks replace furniture frequently and are often willing to donate items to schools. Many schools reconfigure an existing computer lab using donated furniture and existing computer equipment. **Students must have access to computers during every class period!***



## Move Forward with Program Implementation

### Visit a VE Classroom

Reach out to your Regional Director/Program Coordinator to arrange a visit to a VE classroom. Observe a class, speak with the teacher-facilitator, principal and guidance staff about the program.

### Review Timeline for Program Implementation

Timelines may vary depending on the school and district. The timeline below is a general guide.

Timeline for Program Implementation	
Month/Date	Action
January/February	Meet with key stakeholders to review program and determine whether it supports school/district goals/objectives
February	Identify room for VE laboratory and resources to equip it. Develop budget for program according to outlined program costs
March-April	Principal discusses program implementation guidelines with the business chair/supervisor/guidance. Principal submits the Program Registration Form. The VE Central Office will follow up with information about professional development.
May	Register teacher(s) for summer professional development
June <i>(after classes end)</i>	Begin building laboratory site (if applicable)
Summer	Attend professional development (required for new VE teachers)
August 15	Payment due for program participation.

Sample Program of Study in Entrepreneurship with VE as a Capstone <i>(meet with your VE Regional Director to see how VE can fit into multiple CTE Pathways)</i>		
Year 1	Fall	Technology Applications
	Spring	
Year 2	Fall	Entrepreneurship
	Spring	
Year 3	Fall	Virtual Enterprise
	Spring	

## Submit Program Registration

By submitting the online Program Registration form (found at [veinternational.org](http://veinternational.org) beginning April 1, 2023) you are indicating your commitment to implement a VE program. Upon receipt of this form, VE will send you a confirmation and begin the onboarding process. After submitting, you will be contacted by your Regional Director and notified about account access, dates and registration information for teacher training, and links to program resources.

## Register for the National Teachers' Conference

- Information for the National Teachers' Conference will be included in your registration email and on the VE website in early Spring. Keep checking the site for new information.
- Teachers new to the VE program are highly recommended to participate in professional development.

## 4 Support Services

### Professional Development

Workshops, New Teacher Tuesdays, and open office hours are provided for teachers through the national and regional offices on program goals, instructional methods, academic content and technology, and are delivered by veteran VE instructors, school partners, and industry/university partners.

- The central office provides professional development through its annual **National Teachers' Conference**, a 3-day professional development conference held each July in-person for VE teachers from across the country.
- Local and/or regional VE facilitator meetings providing professional development and program updates.
- After-school workshops, webinars, open office hours and other professional development opportunities are available throughout each school year to support program implementation.

## Technology Tools

Support is provided to teachers and students through VE's online Hub ([hub.veinternational.org](http://hub.veinternational.org)), which contains all program resources including a teacher admin dashboard, curriculum, competitions manager, and marketplace tools.



**Learning Management System (Canvas)** includes access to find task-based curriculum, activities, resources, readings, videos, and rubrics



**Online Competition Manager**, a tool for students and teachers to submit work deliverables such as company newsletters and video commercials to get star-ratings and feedback from volunteer business professionals and leaders



**Online global banking system** with accounts for companies, student-employees, and teachers



**International directories** of all student-run businesses worldwide along with resources to conduct international trade with over 40 countries



**Market Insights** for VE teachers and students to get at-a-glance dashboards on firm performance, industry statistics, and market trends



The **Teachers' Lounge** contains facilitation tools, techniques resources and tips by teachers, for teachers – all designed to help run a successful VE program.

## Ongoing Support

VE regional offices provide support throughout the year through ongoing:

- professional development, student activities, and consultation
- on-demand support from regional staff as needed by phone, email, video chat, school visits and in-person meetings (when possible) for all support needs including answering implementation questions, providing facilitation guidance, and technical support

## 5 Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Can I implement a VE program without a specialized lab?

A successful VE laboratory simulates the workplace, and classroom design is a key component of the VE experience. While a specialized lab is not required, the classroom should be converted to a space that replicates the workplace as much as possible to separate students from the traditional high school classroom setting. Each student must have their own computer or device each day.

### 2. Can I implement a VE program without prerequisites?

Unless students come into VE with an understanding of basic business concepts and basic technology applications skills, it will be difficult for the instructor to play the role of “guide on the side” rather than “sage on the stage.” The role of a teacher as a disseminator of information is contrary to the student-directed learning model.

### 3. Are all students eligible for internships?

All students can be eligible for internships with their local CTE offices or school work based learning coordinators.

### 4. Do certain types of businesses work better than others in VE?

In general, service businesses are more difficult to implement than merchandising businesses. Service firms’ customers sometimes resist paying for services that are not rendered and have difficulty conceptualizing the nature of the service being offered. Service businesses should be able to truly perform the service.

### 5. What kind of expenses do VE firms and employees incur in the virtual world?

VE firms are required to pay rent, utilities, payroll and taxes and are expected to purchase from any virtual firm in the network anything that the firm needs to be in business. Additionally, students will receive virtual paychecks and will engage in personal finance activities that also replicate



real-world living. All simulated payments are handled through VE's online banking system.

**6. Can I establish a real business (i.e. school store, coffee shop, etc.) as part of the VE network?**

Yes. Regional staff can provide the necessary guidance.

## PROGRAM REGISTRATION FOR 2023-24

To request a [new program](#), do the following:

1. Go to **veinternational.org**
2. Select the Program Registration option at the top of the page.
3. Follow prompts to start a new program.
4. Follow prompts to enter required information.

*Please submit Program Registration for SY 2023-24 by June 1, 2023. For more information, contact your Regional Director.*