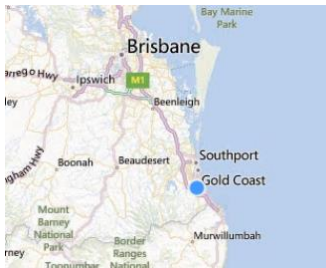




## Varsity College



### Overview

**Country or Region:** Australia

**Industry:** Education

### School Profile

Varsity College is located south of Brisbane along the Gold Coast of Australia. It focuses on academic excellence, leadership, and encouraging the development of values that will apply to all aspects of life beyond school.

**Number of Students:** 3,200

**Gender:** Mixed

**Age Range:** 4–18

**School Leader:** Jeff Davis

**School Website:**

<https://varsitycollege.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Varsity College has been selected to join the Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour for its exemplary approach to the following Innovation Topics:

- 1:1 learning environments.** Students work on their own devices and can use technology at any time to access educational tools.
- Personalized learning environments.** Use of systematic continuous assessment to change the course of student learning and for remediation.
- Project-based learning environments.** Students work in groups to solve problems, make decisions, and go on knowledge quests, while the teacher acts as facilitator.





“Microsoft’s latest technology has completely changed the educational paradigm at Varsity College. Pen- and touch-enabled computers are now used by all 3,200 students, and the increase in engagement and enjoyment for students involved in the learning process is incredible. Without the support of the Microsoft Partners in Learning program, this level of educational evolution could not have been achieved. Thank you, Microsoft.”

Jeff Davis, Executive Principal,  
Varsity College

## 1:1 learning environments

Varsity College has incorporated 1:1 learning since 2007, supporting an environment of more than 3,000 devices.

In 2014, all of the devices will be pen-enabled, allowing for annotating, prototyping, and complex visual thinking. Pen technology is one of the most significant aspects of Varsity’s 1:1 learning program, used every day and in all subjects.

The students use Microsoft OneNote note-taking program to create their student plans, upload and store assignments, collaborate with fellow students, and receive grades and assignments from teachers. Students maintain extensive notebooks that contain all their work and assessments done throughout their 13-year school experience at Varsity. Flipped classroom ideas form the basis of learning in a new and different way at Varsity College, with students able to self-navigate their way through the learning program.

Students are able to access Community Clips and other similar software to enhance their learning and create content. The use of digital recording is becoming more and more popular as skills in digital learning are enhanced. Students also find content and tools on their own and incorporate those into their learning.

Varsity’s 1:1 program prepares students to explore new ideas and less-traditional learning techniques.

### **Key Technology**

*Tablets, laptops, and slates are used throughout the entire school. Varsity makes device decisions for each grade level based on the pedagogical output it is hoping to achieve. Figure 1 illustrates why pen-*

*enabled tablet PCs were chosen for most grade levels.*

## Personalized learning environments

Varsity College is personalizing the learning journey for each student and pushing students to take control of their experiences, which starts at the primary level and carries on throughout their education. The planning of goals and achievements is a joint action between teachers and students, particularly for students in grades 4-10.

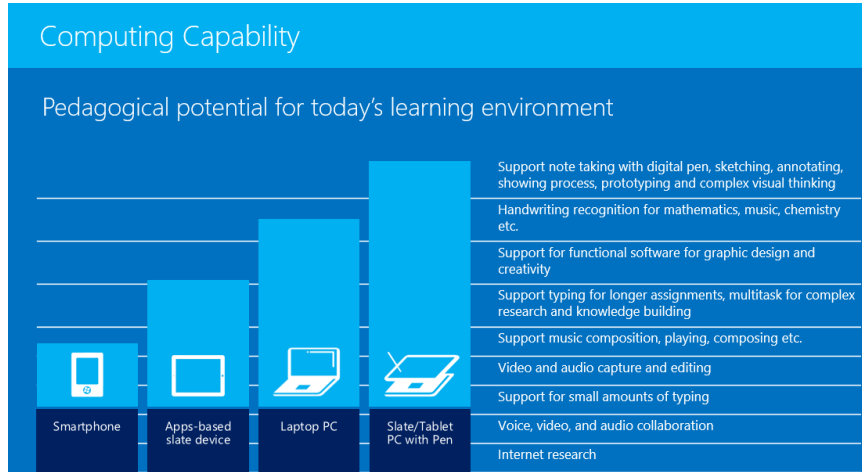
In the primary school (grades P-6), students use Office Web Apps and other software programs to enhance the learning environment and develop critical skills in reading, writing, listening, and mathematics.

In the secondary school (grades 7-12), student ownership is a key focus along with ability-based learning. Students may engage in many extra-curricular activities and arrange them around their own schedule. This encourages creativity and allows independence. In grades 10-12, all students have personalized plans and pathways to success, based on course selections and aspirational goals.

Varsity insists on students getting the best “collective IQ” from all teachers, who work collaboratively in both preparation and assessment to maintain consistency. Teachers have 1:1 sessions with their students to determine progress toward goals and levels of capability. It is very rare to see a lecture format except at the start of the day when expectations are established so that students understand what they need to achieve for the day. The personalized nature of the 1:1 program has been especially beneficial for students who



Figure 1. Tablets, laptops, and slates are used throughout the entire school. Varsity makes device decisions for each grade level based on the pedagogical output it is hoping to achieve.



have learning and behavior challenges because it leads to timely remediation, assistance, and encouragement. It has also allowed high performers to expand themselves without traditional classroom restraints.

#### Key Technology

All students have access to high-level digital technology. OneNote is used to store all data and plans. Students in grades 4–12 use their own devices running the Windows operating system, while students in grades P–3 share Windows 8 tablets.

#### Project-based learning environments

The curriculum at Varsity College is based around VIPs, (Varsity Integrated Projects). The VIPs allow for strong student ownership of learning and are designed to be suitable for students at all levels.

Students work in groups on projects but are assessed through a range of different rubrics that take into account the learning outcomes required for each project. Students complete a core element of learning and then progress to a digital project that stretches their core

understanding. VIPs have been measured and seen to produce significant growth in student performance across all grade levels.

#### Key Technology

Varsity's curriculum is completely based on a OneNote platform with students able to collaborate during group projects. Students in grades 7–12 use pen-enabled tablet technology, so all of their lessons are designed to work around an interactive digital approach.

#### Improving student outcomes

Varsity College students have continually performed at high levels. As one of the largest public schools in Australia, it prides itself on being ahead of similar schools and comparable to the most elite private schools. It maintains a strong focus on collecting data to ensure its digital platform is improving student learning outcomes.

#### Driving leadership and a culture of innovation

Leadership is the most significant driver of innovation at this school. There is a very distinctive leadership development program, resulting in an overall philosophy





## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft in Education, visit:

[www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx)

For more information about Varsity College, visit:

<https://varsitycollege.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx>

of improvement through innovation. Educators, curriculum developers, and the overall leadership team is able to trial ideas and then test their assumptions using quality assurance practices to ensure reliability.

## Technology Infrastructure

