

Australian vocational education and training statistics

Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2021

National Centre for Vocational Education Research



Highlights

Individual completion rates for apprentices and trainees commencing in 2017, the latest year for which final rates are available, were:

- 55.7% for all occupations, down 1.2 percentage points from those commencing in 2016
- 54.0% for trade occupations, down 3.0 percentage points from those commencing in 2016
- 56.9% for non-trade occupations, up 0.3 percentage points from those commencing in 2016.

An individual may complete their training under more than one contract if they change employers or take a break from their training.

Observed actual contract completion rates for apprentices and trainees commencing in 2017 were:

- 48.1% for all occupations, down 0.9 percentage points from those commencing in 2016
- 42.0% for trade occupations, down 1.9 percentage points from those commencing in 2016
- 54.2% for non-trade occupations, up 0.3 percentage points from those commencing in 2016.

Introduction

This publication presents completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees.

Apprentice and trainee completion and attrition rates are calculated by tracking the outcomes of individuals and contracts of training over time. For those in trade occupations, most complete within 4 years, while for those in non-trade occupations most complete within 3 years.

In this publication, we report both individual and contract completion rates.

- **Individual completion rates** are based on contract completion rates and adjusted for factors representing average recommencements by occupation.
- An individual may complete their training under more than one contract if they change employers or take a break from their training. Therefore, in addition to reporting on the completion rates of individuals, contract completion rates are also presented.

Observed actual rates are reported for contracts that commenced up to 2017 (for both trade and non-trade occupations), while observed actual rates for non-trade occupations commencing in 2018 are provided in the data tables.

For contracts commencing more recently, we estimate the proportion of contracts commenced in a given year that will eventually be completed by applying a ‘life tables’ methodology. **Projected rates** assume that the patterns of contract completion and attrition observed in the data for past quarters approximate the patterns that will occur for the most recent quarters. If the patterns of completion and attrition change slowly overtime, then this approximation will be valid. Conversely, if the patterns of completion and attrition for the most recent quarters turn out to be noticeably different from those seen in the past, then the reliability of the projected rates will decrease as the discrepancy between the patterns of completions and attritions increases. For example, projected rates will likely be impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and governments’ economic responses. Further details on this methodology may be found at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/estimating-apprentice-and-trainee-completion-and-attrition-rates-using-a-life-tables-approach>.

Information on the proportion of contracts that have been **completed to date** is provided in the *Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2021: state and territory data tables* <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/all-data/completion-and-attrition-rates-for-apprentices-and-trainees-2021-state-and-territory-data-tables>.

Individual completion rates

For apprenticeships and traineeships commencing in 2017, the individual completion rate was:

- 55.7% for all occupations (down 1.2 percentage points from those commencing in 2016)
- 54.0% for trade occupations (down 3.0 percentage points from those commencing in 2016)
- 56.9% for non-trade occupations (up 0.3 percentage points from those commencing in 2016).

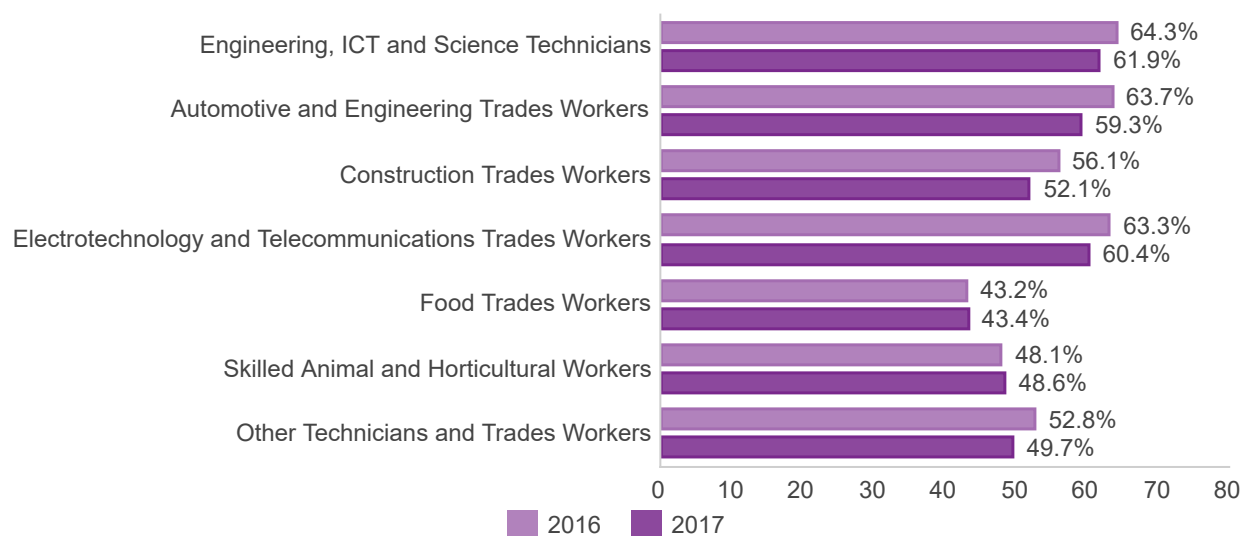
Figure 1 Individual completion rates for those commencing in 2016 and 2017 - Australia



For trade apprenticeships and traineeships commencing in 2017, the highest individual completion rates by occupation were:

- Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians at 61.9% (down 2.4 percentage points from those commencing in 2016)
- Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers at 60.4% (down 2.9 percentage points from those commencing in 2016).

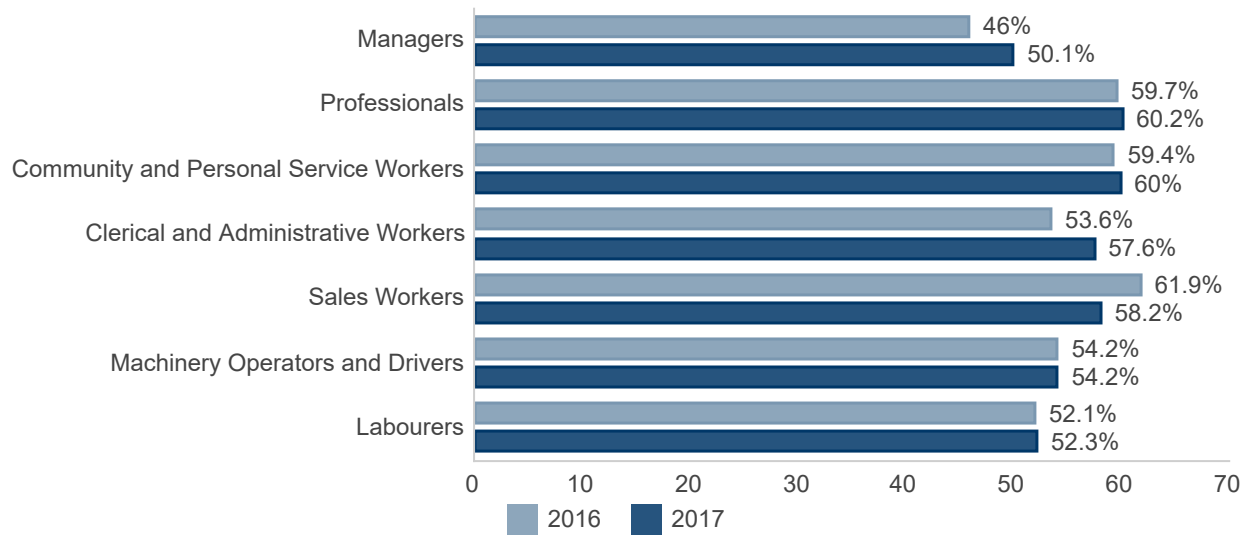
Figure 2 Individual completion rates of trade occupations for those commencing in 2016 and 2017 - Australia



For non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships commencing in 2017, the highest individual completion rates by occupation were:

- Professionals at 60.2% (up 0.5 percentage points from those commencing from 2016)
- Community and Personal Service Workers at 60.0% (up 0.6 percentage points from those commencing from 2016).

Figure 3 Individual completion rates of non-trade occupations for those commencing in 2016 and 2017 - Australia



Observed actual contract completion rates

Observed actual contract completion rates for apprentices and trainees commencing in 2017 were:

- 48.1% for all occupations, down 0.9 percentage from 2016
- 42.0% for trade occupations, down 1.9 percentage from 2016
- 54.2% for non-trade occupations, up 0.3 percentage from 2016.

Figure 4 Observed actual contract completion rates for those commencing in 2016 and 2017 - Australia



Difference between individual and contract completion rates

Nationally, the difference between individual and observed actual contract completion rates is greater in trade occupations (12.0 percentage point difference for 2017 commencements) than in non-trade occupations (2.7 percentage point difference). This indicates that contract recommencements and movement between employers is higher in the trades than in non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships.

The largest adjustment factors (indicating the highest levels of recommencements and movement between employers) were for Trade apprenticeships and traineeships in Hairdressers, Construction, Electrotechnology and telecommunications and Food trades workers, where:

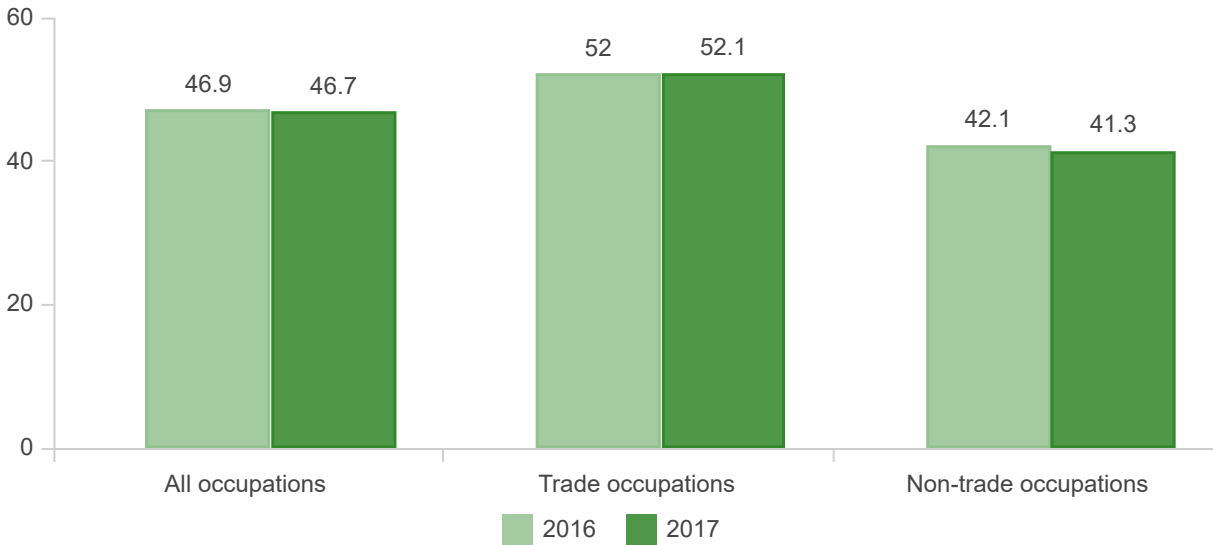
- the individual completion rate for Hairdressers commencing in 2017 was 46.3% compared with a observed actual completion rate of 32.0%
- the individual completion rate for Construction trades workers commencing in 2017 was 52.1% compared with a observed actual completion rate of 37.2%
- the individual completion rate for Electrotechnology and telecommunications trades workers commencing in 2017 was 60.4% compared with a observed actual completion rate of 45.9%
- the individual completion rate for Food trades workers commencing in 2017 was 43.4% compared with an observed actual completion rate of 32.9%.

For more information on adjustment factors please refer to the *Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2021: state and territory data tables* <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/all-data/completion-and-attrition-rates-for-apprentices-and-trainees-2021-state-and-territory-data-tables>.

Observed actual contract attrition rates

The observed actual attrition rate for contracts commencing in 2017 was 46.7%, 0.2 percentage points decrease from 2016.

Figure 5 Observed actual contract attrition rates, for contracts commencing in 2016 and 2017 - Australia

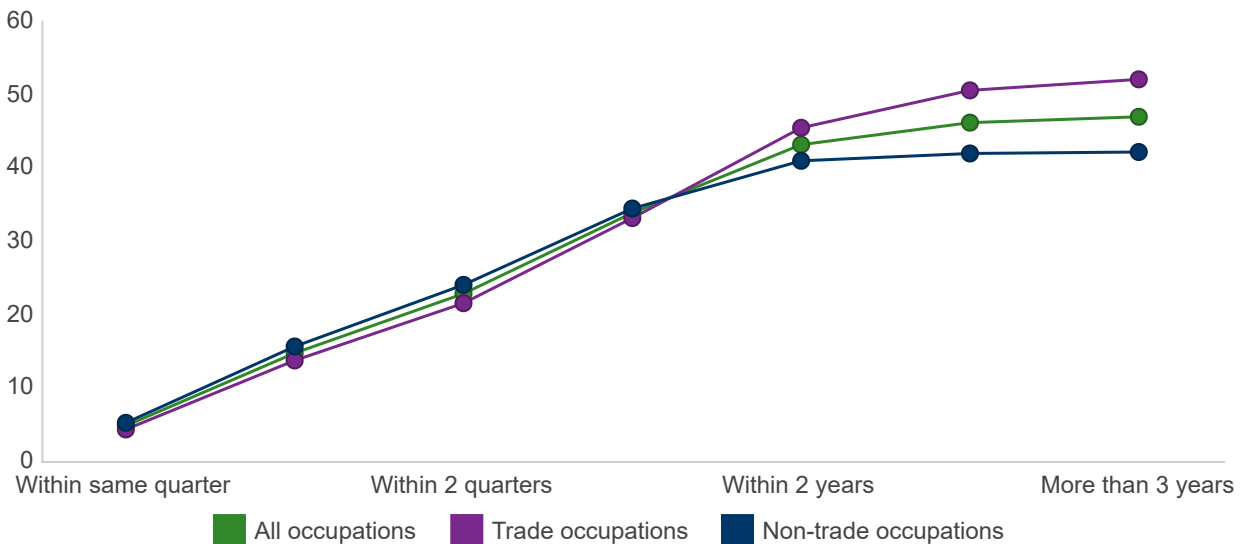


Observed actual contract attrition rates for those commencing in 2016

For contracts commencing in any given year, reliable attrition rates cannot be calculated until enough time has elapsed for most of those contracts to report an outcome. Some contracts, especially in the trade occupations, can be for periods of four or more years. In addition, there is a time delay in reporting contract outcomes to the national collection. 2016 has been selected as a comparison year for the observed actual attrition rates graph because the time elapsed since commencements has been long enough to enable reliable estimation of attrition rates.

33.8% of apprentice and trainee contracts that commenced in 2016 were cancelled/withdrawn within the first year.

Figure 6 Observed actual contract attrition rates for those commencing in 2016 - Australia

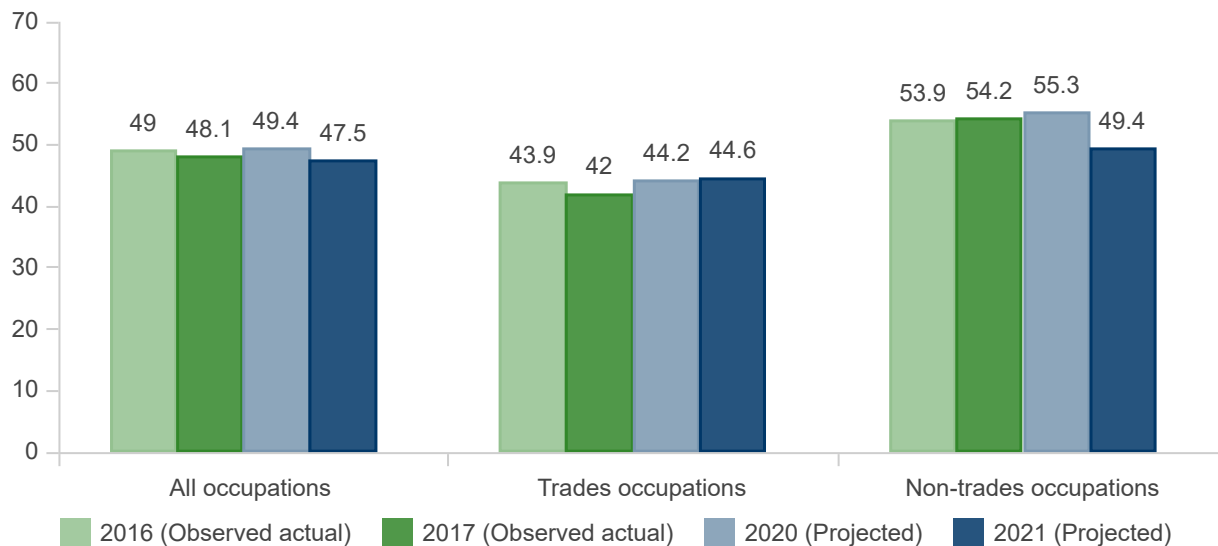


Projected completion rates

Looking forward, the completion rate for apprentice and trainee contracts that commenced in the December quarter 2021 is projected to be:

- 47.5% for all occupations, a decrease from the observed actual rate of 48.1% in 2017
- 44.6% for trades, an increase from the observed actual rate of 42.0% in 2017
- 49.4% for non-trades, a decrease from the observed actual rate of 54.2% in 2017.

Figure 7 Projected contract completion rates, for contracts commencing in 2020 and 2021, compared with actual observed contract completion rates for those commencing in 2016 and 2017 – Australia



NOTE: The accuracy of these projections will likely be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic responses.

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