

Employers' use and views of the VET system FACT SHEET

How to interpret survey results

The Survey of Employers' Use and Views of the VET System is undertaken as a randomly selected sample, stratified by state/territory, employer size and industry. Survey responses are weighted to population benchmarks from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Business Register. The estimates in this publication are subject to sampling variability, as they are based on a sample rather than a population; that is, they may differ from the estimates that would have been produced if all employers had been included and responded to the survey.

Because estimates are based on a sample instead of a survey of the entire population, any estimate is unlikely to be exactly equal to the true population value. How close the estimate is likely to be to the true value is reflected in the confidence interval. The confidence interval can be calculated for any confidence level, but usually a level of 90%, 95%, or 99% is used. For this publication we use a confidence level of 95%, which means the probability that the confidence interval contains the true population value is 95%.

The confidence interval can be shown graphically using a black bar around the estimate. Smaller bars correspond to more accurate estimates. The confidence interval is sometimes expressed as *Estimate +/- margin of error*.

That is, the margin of error is half the width of the confidence interval. For example, in figure B, Estimate A is equal to 70% and the margin of error (using a confidence level of 95%) is 5%. The confidence interval for this estimate is 65% to 75%, which means we can be 95% confident the true value is between 65% and 75%.

Figure A Confidence interval and margins of error

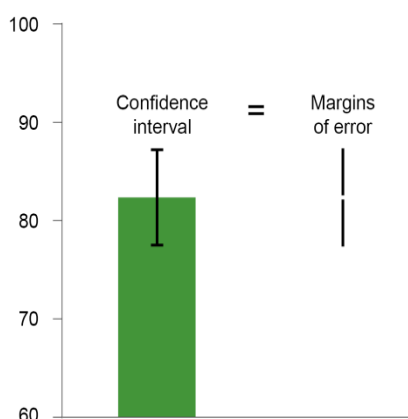
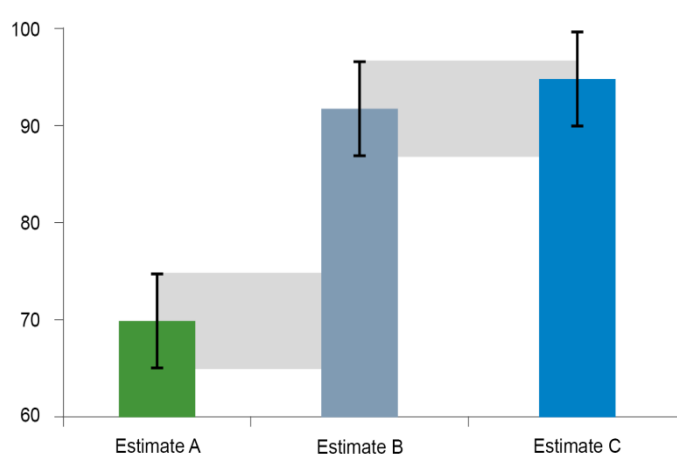


Figure B Confidence intervals





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It is important to consider the margin of error when comparing between groups and years, particularly when the results are close. Data users are encouraged to use the margin of error to determine if a difference between groups is statistically significant.

In figure B, the black bars for Estimate A and Estimate B do not overlap. This means that it can be concluded with a 95% level of confidence that there is a difference between Estimate A and Estimate B. However, the error bars for Estimate B and Estimate C overlap. This means that it cannot be concluded with a 95% level of confidence that there is a difference between Estimate B and Estimate C.

For further technical details, please refer to technical notes at <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system>>.