

Exploring the recognition of prior learning in Australian VET

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About the research

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Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of assessing someone's relevant prior learning and existing skills to grant formal recognition.

In the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system, RPL is an important mechanism for people with pre-existing skills to gain formal recognition without having to undergo the traditional training process. In theory the RPL process saves time and money for individuals and business, but in practice it can be costly and lengthy, with training providers often finding it difficult to organise and manage.

This report explores, from a variety of perspectives, the volume and nature of RPL currently granted in the Australian VET system. Of particular interest are the areas where most RPL is taking place, including the qualifications being completed with high rates of RPL. The report also includes an analysis of the factors that most affect the likelihood of RPL being granted to a student.

Key messages

- There is limited granting of RPL in the Australian VET system and this has declined between 2015 and 2018.
- In 2018, less than 5% of all successful subject results were granted through RPL and less than 3% of all students successfully completed any subjects through RPL.
- A small number of niche qualifications are being predominantly issued solely through RPL, including over 90% of completions in the Diploma of Government Security, Advanced Diploma of Government (Workplace inspection/Investigations/Fraud control) and Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management)
- There appears to be no single student or program characteristic that strongly predicts an individual being granted RPL. In the granting of RPL, many different factors come into play, including those at the student level (such as employment status) and those at the program level (such as field of study or the level of the program).

Simon Walker
Managing Director, NCVET

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Executive summary

Through an analysis of the current levels and distribution of RPL results, this report presents insights into the recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system.

Over the last four years, the rate of RPL being granted has fallen. During this time, the completion of subjects through RPL has only represented a small proportion of all successful results. In 2015¹, 6.5% of all successfully completed subjects were achieved through RPL. By 2018 this rate had fallen to 4.8%. In terms of actual figures, of the approximately 19 256 000 subjects successfully completed in 2018, around 930 600 subjects were completed through RPL.

Some general trends are identified in the areas where the rate of RPL granted is higher. In 2018, a higher proportion of successfully completed subjects with an RPL result (7%) was found in training package qualifications, compared with less than 1% for any other program type. A higher rate of RPL (5.1%) was found in training programs that did not form part of an apprenticeship or traineeship compared with those in apprenticeship and traineeship programs (2.5%). The potential reasons for these trends are explored in the report.

Significant differences in the granting of RPL among the Australian states and territories are evident. In 2018, the highest rate of RPL granted was in Queensland (almost 9%), while the lowest was in the Australian Capital Territory (below 2%). Between 2015 and 2018 the trends in granting RPL also differed between the states and territories, with some rising or falling, while others remained stable.

For those training packages with the highest rates of RPL (Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector, and Aeroskills), approximately 38% of the subjects successfully completed as part of a qualification were granted through RPL, a figure significantly different from that of the training packages with the lowest proportions of RPL (Printing and Graphic Arts; Manufacturing; Sustainability; Foundation Skills; Floristry; Textiles, Clothing and Footwear; and Creative and Culture). For these, less than 1% of successfully completed subjects were granted RPL. The qualifications and subjects with the highest rates of RPL come from a mix of fields, including hospitality, government, construction, and engineering.

The student perspective on the granting of RPL is also examined in the report. Around 96 100 students were granted some amount of RPL in 2018, which represents 2.7% of all students who had successfully completed at least one subject (down from 4.2% in 2015). There are generally small variations in the proportion of students being granted RPL, these variations are based on factors such as gender, age, Indigenous status or disability status. Greater variation was found between students of various levels of remoteness or students with different prior education levels. Overall, the student analysis found that no single element of a student's background or characteristics was a strong determinant in the granting of RPL.

How RPL fits into completed programs is also investigated in the report. Of the approximately 650 000 program enrolments commenced in 2017 that resulted in completions in either 2017 or 2018, around 9% were completed with some amount of RPL, and almost 4% were completed entirely with RPL, with the latter translating to around 24 600 programs.

1 The first year in which Total VET Activity data are available through the National VET Provider Collection.

The overall analysis demonstrated that no single element stood out as a predictor of RPL being granted, with the results confirming that the granting of RPL relies on a complex interplay of factors. While some factors might be more likely to predict an RPL outcome than others, no one single factor can be relied upon to explain RPL outcomes.



Background

Within the formal vocational education and training (VET) context, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning to grant a subject completion. In the Australian VET system, RPL enables those with workplace experience and/or prior training to receive formal recognition of the skills already held. Essentially, RPL is a way of acknowledging the value of skills acquired outside formal VET.

The potential benefits and challenges with RPL are described below.

Benefits

- saving the individual time and/or money by reducing the amount of training needed to attain a formal qualification (although RPL is not always quicker or cheaper than the equivalent training)
- improving workplace productivity by reducing the time an employee needs to be off the job attending formal training
- enabling skill recognition for those with limited formal training or qualifications, and re-engaging those who have left formal education (Ulicna, Nevala & Hawley 2011); for example, students who have had limited access to post-school training but have developed skills on the job
- fostering closer links between training providers and industry (Bateman & Knight 2003)
- improving self-esteem and motivation in the individual who has been granted RPL (Hargreaves 2006); having their existing skills recognised formally can make students see themselves more positively and even provide motivation for further study.

Challenges

- Due to the time and expertise involved, RPL can be costly and is sometimes more expensive than the alternative formal training process (Hargreaves & Blomberg 2015).
- Concerns associated with the quality and nature of some RPL can lead to a lack of confidence in the outcomes (Cameron 2011).
- Knowledge of RPL as an option is limited among students, meaning many may not consider it. Even students who have knowledge of the process may be deterred by the complexity of the assessment process (Hamer 2010; Hargreaves 2006).
- Each RPL assessment is determined according to the individual being assessed, which means each is different. Assessments therefore require tools and experiences different from those used in traditional assessment. Some practitioners feel that they have insufficient frameworks or training to undertake RPL effectively (Hewson 2008).
- Some providers see RPL as having higher risks than traditional training, given that assessment usually occurs over a smaller period of time and uses more limited evidence sources (Hargreaves 2006).

RPL in the Australian context

The formal recognition of prior learning is accepted by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)² and regulated under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (Commonwealth of Australia 2015). Once a student applies, registered training organisations (RTOs) are able to assess students and grant them competency in subjects, based on recognition of their prior learning. The process for RPL begins with enrolment and a student request for RPL for one or more subjects. The assessor then reviews a variety of evidence to determine whether the specific competency requirements of the subject(s) have been met. Subjects might be assessed simultaneously or sequentially.

The evidence used might include: formal reports from previous employers; records of previously completed training; interviews with the student; observation of the student demonstrating a task and/or operating in an existing workplace; and more (Misko et al. 2014). The student may also be required to complete a test. The time and cost of the assessment varies drastically, with assessments that quickly determine a student is not competent being the cheapest to conduct (Misko et al. 2014). Since there is no specific restriction on the amount of RPL that can be granted in a qualification, some qualifications are awarded entirely based on RPL. See p27 for more analysis of this.

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Commonwealth of Australia 2015) require that providers offer RPL, unless there is a specific training package or licence requirement that prevents this. This does not mean a provider is obligated to *grant* RPL, and providers can influence student choice to apply for RPL; for example, providers might charge more for assessing RPL than the alternative traditional training process (to account for the effort involved). Furthermore, providers are not required to encourage students to be assessed for RPL, and a student might never request this option.

Recognition of prior learning is distinct from ‘credit transfer’. Where the former involves assessment to recognise existing skills, the latter is an institutional transfer of credit for training undertaken in a different course or institution. By way of example, someone may learn to perform basic first-aid through informal tutoring and some hands-on experience in their workplace, which is then recognised by a training organisation. This is RPL. If a student starts a qualification at one organisation and then transfers to another, the acceptance of the completed subject by the second organisation is a credit transfer.

The range of economic, societal and personal benefits of RPL has the potential to make it a valuable topic for investigation. For administrators, knowing the providers and industry sectors where RPL is taking place will assist in assessing where the risk of this being administered incorrectly exists. For policy-makers, information on RPL can help with workforce planning and guide funding decisions. More insight into the RPL currently being granted is crucial to understanding how best to support quality RPL and the students who undertake it.

² The AQF is the national policy framework for regulated qualifications in Australia and includes all levels of learning, from schools to VET and higher education.



Trends in the recognition of prior learning

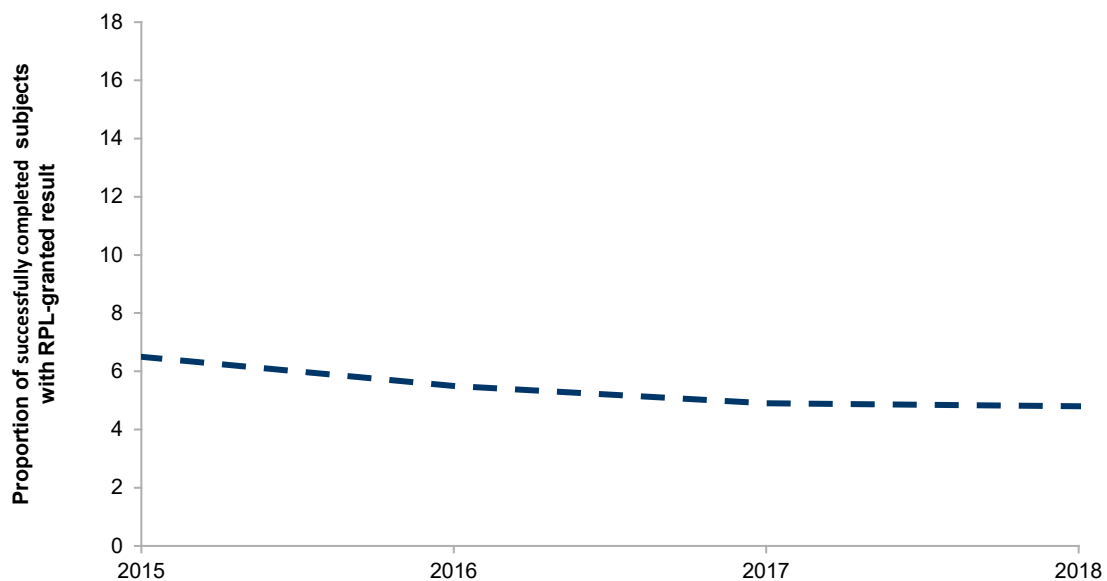
To understand the extent of RPL and compare its usage across different subjects, programs, training packages and time periods, a measure, or ‘rate’, is needed. The rate here is defined as the proportion of subjects that received an RPL result out of all successfully completed subjects. For example, if in a single year 100 subjects were successfully completed and 20 of these received an RPL-granted outcome, this would result in an RPL rate of 20%.

To calculate the RPL rate in a training package, the number of subjects in that package with an RPL result was divided by all successfully completed subjects belonging to that package. This is regardless of the program the subjects were part of. For the calculation of an RPL rate in programs, the approach adopted was similar. Programs are defined as training package qualifications, accredited qualifications and courses, and training package skill sets. Training package qualifications and accredited qualifications are collectively termed qualifications.

Only successfully completed subjects are relevant since RTOs might not report on instances where RPL is not granted, either rejecting the student before any formal assessment has taken place or moving students into training to achieve the qualification. The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Commonwealth of Australia 2015) require that subject outcomes are reported to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). However, if a student begins RPL but subsequently completes the subject in a traditional manner, only the standard ‘Competency achieved/pass’ result would be reported.

The rate of RPL granted has been falling over the past four years (figure 1). In 2015, 6.5% of successfully completed subjects had an RPL-granted result, compared with 4.8% in 2018.

Figure 1 Rate of RPL granted in successfully completed subjects¹, 2015–18, %



Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was ‘RPL – granted’ or ‘Competency achieved/pass’.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

This means that in 2018, approximately 930 600 successfully completed subjects had a result of ‘RPL – granted’ (table 1). In other words, around one in 20 subjects successfully completed in 2018 were granted through RPL.

Table 1 Successfully completed subjects¹, 2018

Subject outcome	Successfully completed subjects	
	N ('000)	%
RPL – granted	930.6	4.8
Competency achieved/pass	18 325.4	95.2
Total	19 256.0	100.0

Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was ‘RPL – granted’ or ‘Competency achieved/pass’.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

This analysis offers a useful view of the broad volume of RPL being granted and shows that RPL is still part of the VET system, albeit a small part. Another useful perspective can be gained by examining the context in which RPL is granted. Table 2, which shows the proportion of associated subjects with RPL granted by different types of program, indicates that RPL is much more common for subjects in training package qualifications (7%) than in other program types such as accredited qualifications and courses (1.0%), training package skill sets (0.9%) or subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program (0.9%).

Table 2 Successfully completed subjects¹ by program type and subject outcomes, 2018, %

Program type	Successfully completed subject outcome		Total
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	
Nationally recognised programs			
Training package qualifications	7.0	93.0	100
Accredited qualifications and courses	1.0	99.0	100
Training package skill sets	0.9	99.1	100
Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program²	0.9	99.1	100

Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was ‘RPL – granted’ or ‘Competency achieved/pass’.

2 Includes stand-alone nationally recognised subject enrolments and enrolments in subjects that are delivered as part of a non-nationally recognised program.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Since the process of assessing and granting RPL can involve significant work for both the provider and the student, higher RPL rates in training package qualifications may point to RPL being pursued when the alternative course of action is more onerous. For example, RPL might be more appealing when it will shorten the time to complete a diploma from 12 to nine months, but if the student is only studying a single unit for a month, RPL may take as much or more time to complete than the study. It is important to note that simultaneous assessment of RPL for multiple subjects is possible.

Another point of comparison is the granting of RPL in Australian apprenticeships or traineeships. Previous research has shown that rates of RPL in these programs was lower than for programs that were not apprenticeships or traineeships (Hargreaves & Blomberg 2015). The findings in table 3 are in line with this, where around 2.5% of subjects that were part of an apprenticeship or traineeship were successfully completed with RPL in 2018, compared with 5.1% outside these arrangements.

Table 3 Successfully completed subjects¹ by apprentice and trainee status and subject outcomes, 2018, %

Apprentice and trainee status	Successfully completed subject outcome			
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass
	(N '000)	(N '000)	(%)	(%)
Not part of an apprenticeship or traineeship	880	16 324	5.1	94.9
Part of an apprenticeship or traineeship	51	2002	2.5	97.5

Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was 'RPL – granted' or 'Competency achieved/pass'.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Considering the traditionally younger cohort involved in apprenticeships and traineeships (NCVER 2019a), differences in RPL for this group are to be expected (see p23 for analysis of RPL by age). Apart from this, previous work has suggested reluctance among industry and employers to embrace RPL (and the associated reduction in training time) for apprentices and trainees (Hargreaves & Blomberg 2015). Further investigation of the current relationship between the apprentice and trainee system and RPL is out of the scope of this work but may be worth pursuing.

Geographic factors

The employment and training market and policy structure for VET vary in each state and territory, creating different environments for the granting of RPL. This is evident from figure 2, which shows the rate of RPL granted in each state and territory over the 2015–18 period.

Figure 2 Rate of RPL granted in successfully completed subjects¹ by state and territory, 2015–18, %

Note: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was 'RPL – granted' or 'Competency achieved/pass'.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The data show that, while some states and territories, such as New South Wales and Queensland, are experiencing consistent drops in the rate of RPL granted, others have a rate that is more stable, such as Tasmania or Victoria.

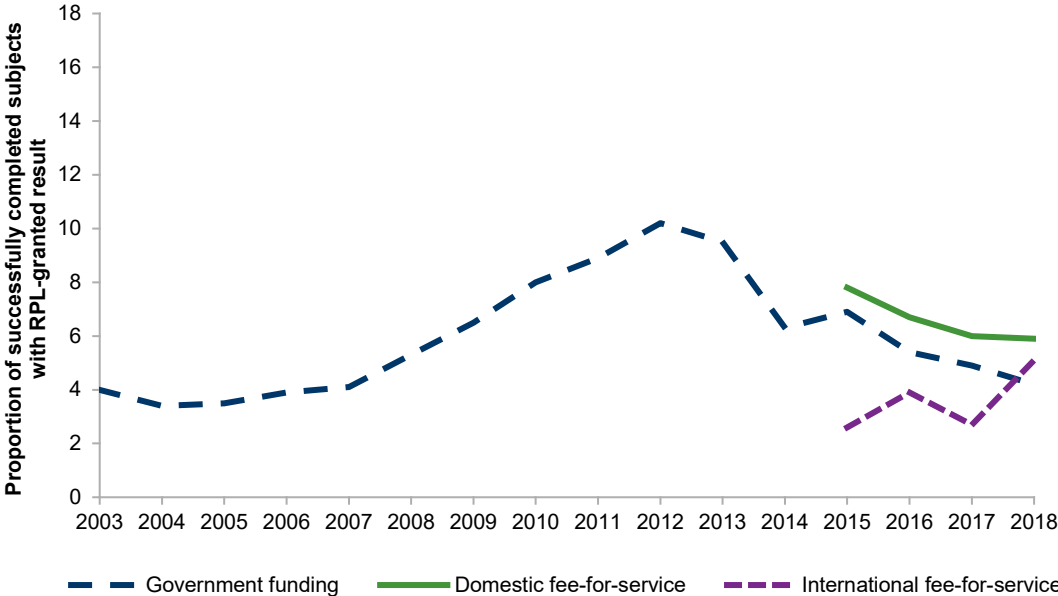
The rate of RPL granted can be affected by the availability of government programs that specifically encourage or fund RPL, and these effects are potentially more prominent when looking at the detailed

state/territory level. Figure 2 shows the striking differences between Queensland, which has the highest rate of RPL (8.8% in 2018), and Victoria or the ACT, which have the lowest rates (2.9% and 1.7% respectively in 2018). There are also different funding options or industry sizes at the state and territory level, which may affect RPL. For example, one state may only fund 50% of the subject cost when RPL is being granted, where others will fund 100% of the subject cost. RPL is more relevant for certain industries (such as construction), which are concentrated in certain locations. Further work could investigate the specific funding settings or policies affecting RPL in specific jurisdictions and explore the data more specifically at the state/territory level.

Funding source

In the Australian VET system, there are three broad funding source categories: government funded; domestic fee-for-service; and international fee-for-service.³ The activity taking place in each funding source is often different. Figure 3 shows the RPL rate in successfully completed subjects for different funding sources.

Figure 3 Rate of RPL granted in successfully completed subjects¹ by funding source, 2003–18, %²



Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was 'RPL – granted' or 'Competency achieved/pass'.
 2 Data from domestic or international fee-for-service subjects are only available from 2015 onward.
 Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

As figure 3 demonstrates, the rates of RPL granted were higher in domestic fee-for-service subjects than subjects with other funding sources. The RPL rate in government-funded and domestic fee-for-service subjects has been falling over the past few years, but the rate in international fee-for-service subjects rose strongly, from 2.6% in 2015 to 5.1% in 2018 (despite falling in 2017).

³ Government funding relates to Commonwealth and state/territory-funded activity delivered by registered training providers; domestic fee-for-service funding is the revenue provided by a student whose citizenship status is Australian, New Zealand or permanent resident for the purpose of undertaking education and training; and international fee-for-service funding is the revenue provided by a student who holds a student visa, or a temporary residency permit or who resides in an overseas country for the purpose of undertaking education and training.

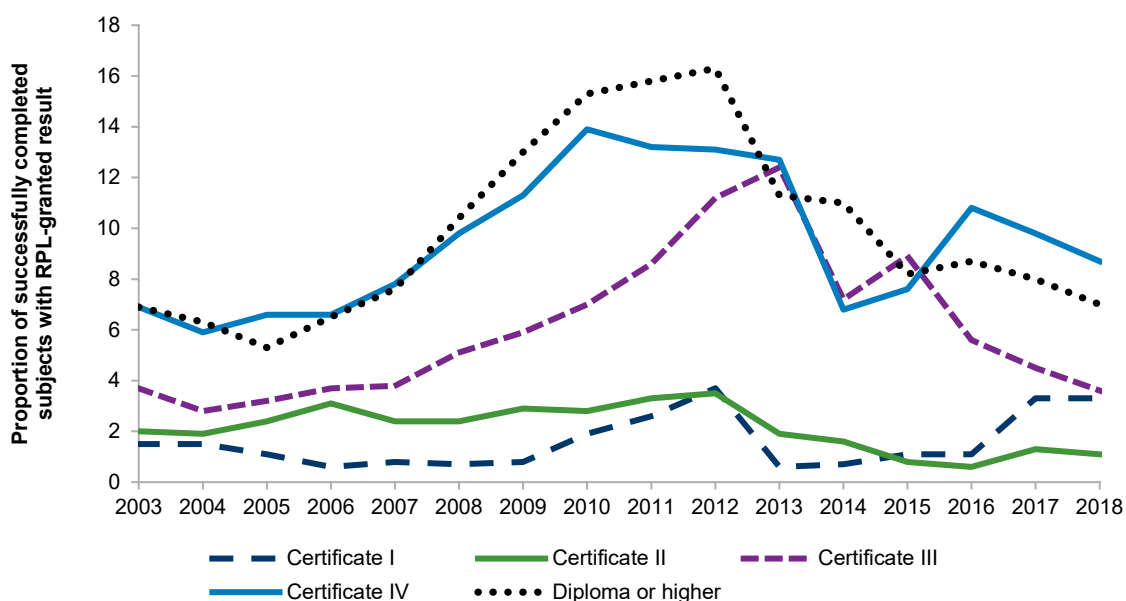
Between 2003 and 2013, the rate of RPL within government-funding subjects rose, followed by a sustained fall. In the wider context, this accompanies many different program and policy changes, including:

- the 2008 National Partnership Agreement on the Productivity Places Program,
- the 2009 National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development,
- the 2007-2016 VET-FEE HELP program and its 2017 replacement by VET Student Loans, and
- the post 2012 implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, which included a change to student training entitlements and funding contestability.

For more details on the many changes over this period, see the timeline of Australian VET policy initiatives 1998-2019 (NCVER 2019b).

A better understanding of the trends in government-funded RPL (as presented in figure 3) becomes possible if the various AQF levels of the relevant qualification are identified. The nature and volume of the government funding available can vary according to the AQF level of the qualification (NCVER 2019c). Figure 4 shows the rate of RPL granted by the AQF level of the specific qualification.

Figure 4 Rate of RPL granted in government-funded successfully completed subjects¹ by AQF level of the associated qualification, 2003–18, %²



Notes: 1 Includes subjects where the outcome was 'RPL – granted' or 'Competency achieved/pass'.
2 Only includes subjects with an associated qualification level of certificate I or above.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The trend for most AQF levels mirrors the overall trends in government-funded RPL rates (figure 3), rising between 2003 and 2012 and falling after this. The exceptions to this are qualifications at the certificate I, II or other levels, along with a rise in RPL granted at the certificate IV level between 2014 and 2016. As mentioned previously, many of the trends are likely related to the ongoing changes in the structure of the VET sector, including the introduction of a student loan program (VET-FEE HELP, now VET Student Loans).

Training providers

Training providers have the most direct influence over whether a student receives RPL, since they conduct the assessment and provide the student with the appropriate certification (or not).

An analysis of all providers reporting 100 or more successfully completed subjects is presented in table 4. Each year between 2015 and 2018, around half of training providers granted some RPL. In each year there were 22 or fewer providers who provided RPL only, that is, no other training with a successful completion.

Table 4 Number of training providers with 100 or more successfully completed subjects reporting at least one RPL-granted subject result, 2015–18¹

Year	No RPL granted	Mix of RPL granted and Competency successfully completed/pass	100% RPL granted	Total
2015	1747	1664	17	3428
2016	1746	1661	14	3421
2017	1743	1591	22	3356
2018	1754	1510	18	3282

Note: ¹ Includes subjects where the outcome was 'RPL – granted' or 'Competency achieved/pass'.

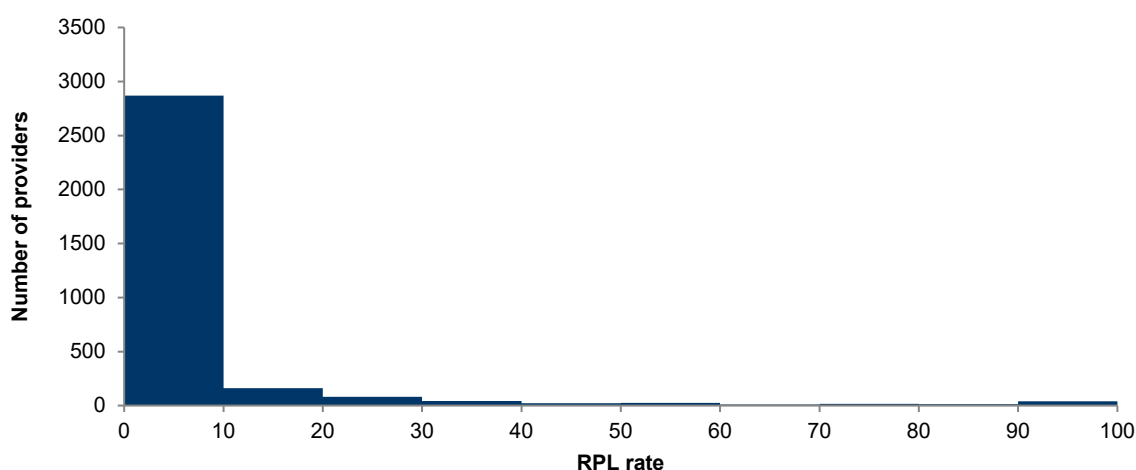
Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

In 2018, 1528 providers with 100 or more successfully completed subjects granted RPL, and for 18 of them all of the successfully completed subjects recorded by them were granted RPL. This indicates that a small but significant number of providers operate entirely based on assessing RPL. Indeed, some providers advertise themselves expressly for this purpose, suggesting that a niche market for RPL assessment exists.

On the other hand, large numbers of providers never grant any RPL. As discussed earlier, providers, through the information and advice they offer, have the capacity to influence whether students seek RPL. A provider might also have a student cohort that is largely ineligible for RPL, for example, in the case of providers who deliver foundation skills training.

Figure 5 provides a different view of RPL, with the number of providers by their rate of RPL granted for 2018 shown. This figure indicates that, for most providers, only a small proportion of successfully completed subjects were granted RPL.

Figure 5 Number of training providers with 100 or more successfully completed subjects by rate of RPL granted in successfully completed subjects, 2018



Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Figure 5 shows that, of the 3282 providers who reported successfully completed subjects in 2018 (seen in table 4), the majority (2869 providers or 87%) granted RPL for less than 10% of successfully completed subjects. Interestingly, 39 providers granted RPL for 90% or more of successfully completed subjects in 2018. These figures suggest that there is an advantage to specialising, in that it may be easier to find efficiencies in the assessment of RPL when providers focus solely on this.

Training packages

The field of study undertaken also has the potential to affect the granting of RPL. Some industries are more conducive to the use of RPL, for example, the electricity industry. In other industries, those where formal training to gain skills is necessary, applying RPL may be more problematic. An analysis of the National VET Provider Collection indicates that certain industries and fields of training appear to have more RPL granted in the relevant training packages. Table 5 shows the training packages with the highest rate of RPL granted in 2018. A rate indicating the extent of RPL granted is more useful than the number of subjects with RPL granted, given that the most popular training packages have many more enrolments than the rest (NCVER 2019d).

Table 5 Top 10 training packages by rate of RPL granted in associated successfully completed subjects, 2018, %^{1,2}

Training package	Successfully completed subject outcome		
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	Total
UEP – Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector ²	37.7	62.3	100
MEA – Aeroskills	37.5	62.5	100
UEG – Gas Industry	26.9	73.1	100
NWP – National Water	24.1	75.9	100
TAE – Training and Education	23.7	76.3	100
MEM – Manufacturing and Engineering	20.5	79.5	100
CPC – Construction, Plumbing and Services	15.8	84.2	100
PMA – Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Refining	15.5	84.5	100
UET – Transmission, Distribution and Rail Sector	15.2	84.8	100
AUR – Automotive Retail, Service and Repair	14.8	85.2	100

Notes: 1 The POL – Police Training Package and the DEF – Defence Training Package were excluded from this analysis due to data-reporting exemptions for many providers using these packages.

2 This package had fewer than 500 program enrolments in 2018.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

For the training packages with the highest rates of RPL granted, the differences between the highest (37.7%, Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector Training Package) and the lowest (14.8%, Automotive Retail, Service and Repair Training Package) rates of RPL granted are striking. Most training packages in table 5 are related to utilities, manufacturing and construction. The training packages with the highest rates of RPL in 2018 were:

- Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector, which covers occupations involved in the electricity generation supply, such as plant or systems operations, and electrical and mechanical maintenance
- Aeroskills, which is related to occupations involved in aviation manufacturing and maintenance
- Gas Industry, which covers occupations involved in the manufacturing and distribution of domestic gas.

These results suggest that these industry sectors may have pathways for workers that involve some level of skill development and experience before qualifications are needed. If working in an entry-level position before receiving formal training represents an accepted industry pathway, this would then lead to higher rates of RPL in training associated with that industry. For example, little formal qualification is needed to work as a labourer or assistant in the construction industry, which may then grant students the on-the-job experience needed to receive RPL.

In some cases, the higher rates of RPL may be a consequence of requirements to undertake the study. Many of the units with higher rates of RPL in the Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector package are part of the high voltage switching skill set. This skill set requires students to hold a Certificate III in Electrical Fitting or equivalent. As this training is designed for those already qualified and working in the field, higher rates of RPL come as no surprise. There are similar skill sets in many of the trades and utilities training packages that are designed for existing, qualified workers.

The Training and Education Training Package (TAE) comprises qualifications for those delivering and assessing VET. It is not surprising that there are higher rates of RPL in this package (23.7%), as the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (section 1.13) require trainers and assessors to hold qualifications from this package; the standards also require trainers to hold relevant vocational competencies and current industry skills. This increases the likelihood that those seeking this qualification have prior skills that might be relevant to receiving RPL.

The 10 training packages with the lowest proportions of RPL are presented in table 6. Some of these represent smaller ‘niche’ industries, such as printing/graphic arts or floristry, which may mean students have fewer opportunities to gain relevant experience, leading to lower rates of RPL.

Table 6 Lowest 10 training packages by rate of RPL granted in associated successfully completed subjects, 2018, %¹

Training package	Successfully completed subject outcome		
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	Total
ICP – Printing and Graphic Arts	0.2	99.8	100
MSM – Manufacturing	0.4	99.6	100
MSS – Sustainability	0.5	99.5	100
FSK – Foundation Skills	0.6	99.4	100
SFL – Floristry	0.6	99.4	100
MST – Textiles, Clothing and Footwear	0.8	99.2	100
CUA – Creative Arts and Culture	0.9	99.1	100
ICT – Information and Communications Technology	1.4	98.6	100
FBP – Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical	1.8	98.2	100
MSL – Laboratory Operations	1.8	98.2	100

Note: ¹ The POL – Police Training Package and the DEF – Defence Training Package were excluded from the analysis due to data-reporting exemptions for many providers using these packages. The LMT – Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package was removed from this table as it is in the process of being superseded.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Table 5 and table 6 indicate a vast difference in the extent of RPL being granted across different training packages. A mix of industry perception, typical student background and level of training likely affects this, alongside other factors. Future work may investigate training packages more specifically to determine the factors responsible for particular trends.

Training package qualifications

Moving from training packages to specific qualifications, once again the volume of enrolments means that the most popular qualifications will necessarily have the most subjects successfully completed using RPL. A more useful measure is the proportion of subjects with RPL or no RPL outcomes, which were part of a qualification, although this does create the risk of including qualifications with negligible use, thereby distorting the results. For this reason, qualifications with fewer than 1000 successfully completed subjects are excluded from table 7.

Table 7 Top 10 training package qualifications by rate of RPL granted in associated successfully completed subjects, 2018, %^{1, 2}

Qualification	Successfully completed subject outcome		Total
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	
SIT40816 – Certificate IV in Asian Cookery	89.5	10.5	100
PSP60116 – Advanced Diploma of Government (Workplace inspection/Investigations/Fraud control)	85.9	14.1	100
UEP40212 – Certificate IV in ESI Generation – Operations	83.0	17.0	100
PUA60112 – Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management)	79.1	20.9	100
CPP50611 – Diploma of Security and Risk Management	76.6	23.4	100
AUR20218 – Certificate II in Automotive Air Conditioning Technology	75.7	24.3	100
MEM30405 – Certificate III in Engineering – Electrical/Electronic Trade	72.9	27.1	100
CPP31212 – Certificate III in Swimming Pool and Spa Service	69.9	30.1	100
BSB60615 – Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety	68.8	31.2	100
CHC42215 – Certificate IV in Social Housing	65.9	34.1	100

Note: 1 Qualifications with fewer than 1000 subject enrolments were excluded from this analysis.

2 Qualifications in the POL – Police Training Package or the DEF – Defence Training Package were excluded from the analysis due to data-reporting exemptions for many providers using these packages.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The qualifications with the highest rates of RPL granted are from a diverse mix of fields and range from higher-level public service training to traditional trade areas. It is likely that some of the qualifications have contextual circumstances that lead to more applications for RPL or higher rates of RPL being granted. For example, some government departments offer employees salary benefits when they gain a higher-level qualification. If existing employees propose to undertake a qualification such as the Advanced Diploma of Government, it is likely they will be eligible for RPL. An analysis of detailed trends in specific qualifications is out of scope in this report but could be considered as part of future work.

Another perspective examined is the *amount* of RPL granted in the most popular qualifications. Table 8 shows the proportion of RPL in the qualifications with the most program enrolments in 2018.

Table 8 Qualifications with most enrolments, by rate of RPL granted in associated successfully completed subjects, 2018, %¹

Qualification	Successfully completed subject outcome		Total
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	
CHC33015 – Certificate III in Individual Support	1.9	98.1	100
CHC50113 – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	9.4	90.6	100
CHC30113 – Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	1.4	98.6	100
CPC32413 – Certificate III in Plumbing	5.0	95.0	100
CPC30211 – Certificate III in Carpentry	20.0	80.0	100
BSB20115 – Certificate II in Business	0.4	99.6	100
BSB30115 – Certificate III in Business	1.3	98.7	100
FSK20113 – Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways	0.4	99.6	100
CPP20212 – Certificate II in Security Operations	2.7	97.3	100
SIS30315 – Certificate III in Fitness	2.6	97.4	100

Note: 1 Qualifications in the POL – Police Training Package or the DEF – Defence Training Package were excluded from the analysis due to data-reporting exemptions for many providers using these packages.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Table 8 shows that the Certificate III in Carpentry (20%) and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (9.4%) have the highest rates of RPL granted. As with the trend present in table 6, lower-level qualifications, such as the Certificate II in Business and the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways, have the lowest rates of RPL granted. The exception to this is the Certificate II in Security Operations, which had an RPL rate of 2.7% in 2018.

Subjects

The most detailed perspective on RPL data can be gained at the subject level. Table 9 shows the 10 subjects with the largest number of RPL-granted results in 2018; that is, where the most RPL is happening at the subject level.

Table 9 Top 10 successfully completed subjects with RPL-granted results, 2018

Subject	Successfully completed subjects with RPL granted
CHCDIV001 – Work with diverse people	6334
CPCCOHS2001A – Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry	5154
CPCCCM1014A – Conduct workplace communication	5025
CPCCCM1013A – Plan and organise work	5014
CPCCCM1012A – Work effectively and sustainably in the construction industry	4976
CPCCCM1015A – Carry out measurements and calculations	4957
CPCCCM2001A – Read and interpret plans and specifications	4815
HLTAID003 – Provide first-aid	3702
SITXFSA001 – Use hygienic practices for food safety	3624
CHCLEG001 – Work legally and ethically	3469

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Most of these subjects are from the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package (CPC) and relate to entry-level tasks in the industry, such as applying occupational health and safety requirements. This is in line with the general trend of RPL granted in the construction industry, as shown in table 5.

The subjects with the highest rate of RPL granted are shown in table 10, although only subjects with 500 or more enrolments in 2018 are included. An examination of fewer enrolments than this can result in far less meaningful proportions. Nonetheless, all but one of the subjects in table 10 had fewer than 1600 enrolments in 2018.

Table 10 Top 10 successfully completed subjects by rate of RPL granted, 2018, %¹

Subject	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	Total
TAETAS401 – Maintain training and assessment information	98.8	1.2	100
BSBSMB301A – Investigate micro business opportunities	86.3	13.7	100
TAEASS301 – Contribute to assessment	75.9	24.1	100
TLIC4019 – Drive train to operational requirements	74.1	25.9	100
CPCCCM2008A – Erect and dismantle restricted height scaffolding	73.0	27.0	100
TLIB3026 – Prepare for train operation	64.8	35.2	100
AURSCA003 – Apply sales procedures in an automotive workplace	63.7	36.3	100
CHCSOH010 – Work with clients in the social housing system	62.7	37.3	100
TLIC3027 – Stable a motive power unit	60.4	39.6	100
CPPSEC5004A – Prepare security risk management plan	60.2	39.8	100

Notes: 1 Only includes subjects with a total of 500 or more enrolments in 2018.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The subject with the highest rate of RPL granted in 2018, ‘Maintain training and assessment information’, was from the Training and Education Training Package (TAE). With a rate of 98.8%, this subject was almost always granted through RPL. Subjects such as those listed in table 10 are therefore being used primarily to assess existing competency and less often for conducting traditional training. This is a useful perspective for those creating and managing these subjects in the training package system.

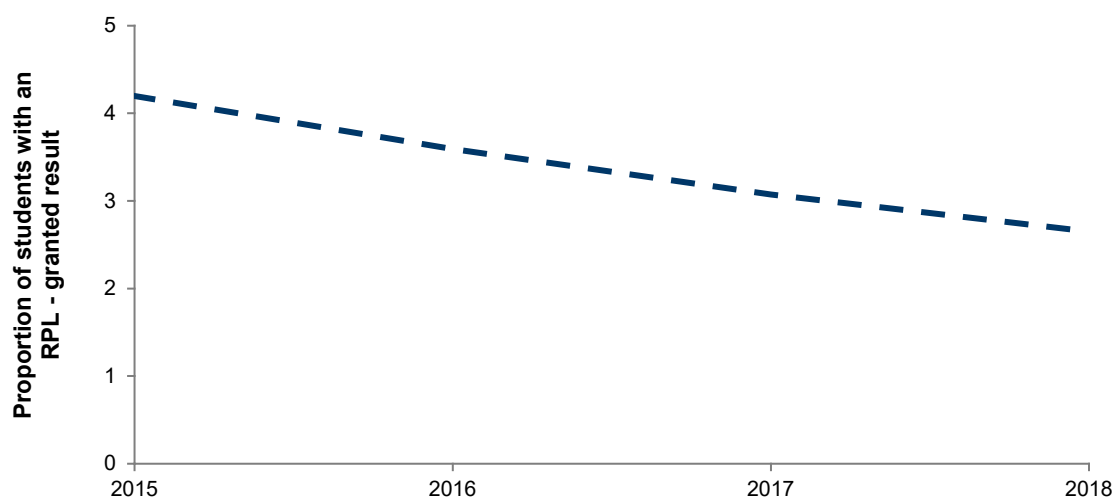


Students and RPL

Another perspective on RPL can be found at the student level. Program or subject enrolments do not necessarily equate to individual students, who might be enrolled in more than one program and most likely in multiple subjects. The following analysis includes all unique students in the scope of the Total VET Activity data collection between 2015 and 2018, classified by receipt of RPL for subjects. This means that a student who is enrolled in more than one subject will only be counted once in this analysis and they do not need to have completed an entire program, just one or more subjects. Here the rate is calculated as the number of students with one or more RPL-granted subject results, divided by all students who successfully completed one or more subjects.

Figure 6 shows that the proportion of students receiving RPL declined from 4.2% in 2015 to 2.7% in 2018. This aligns with the trend seen in the rate of RPL granted in successfully completed subjects shown in figure 1 (pg. 11), representing a decrease in the rate of RPL granted from around 134 600 students in 2015 to around 96 100 students in 2018 (table 11).

Figure 6 Students with an RPL-granted subject result, as a proportion of students with one or more subjects successfully completed, 2015–18, %



Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

It is interesting that the *rate of RPL* granted in successfully completed subjects was 4.8% in 2018 (figure 1, pg.11), representing almost double the *rate of students* receiving RPL in the same year (figure 6). This means that some students must have received RPL for more than one subject. Closer examination reveals there were almost 10 successfully completed subjects with an ‘RPL – granted’ result for every student in 2018 (table 11). Note that this doesn’t mean every student had 10 successfully completed subjects with ‘RPL – granted result’, but rather that overall there were many more subjects with RPL results than students with RPL results.

Table 11 Subject enrolments and students with an RPL-granted subject result, 2015–18

Year	Successfully completed subjects with an RPL granted result ('000)	Students with one or more RPL granted subject results ('000)
2015	1254.0	134.6
2016	1104.1	126.1
2017	991.4	111.8
2018	930.6	96.1

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

An analysis of the demographic characteristics of students with at least one successfully completed subject is presented in table 12.

Table 12 Students with one or more subjects successfully completed by student characteristics and subject outcome, 2018, %

Student characteristics	Successfully completed subject outcome		
	RPL granted	Competency achieved/pass	Total
Gender			
Males	3.2	96.8	100
Females	2.1	97.9	100
Not known	1.1	98.9	100
Age group			
19 years and under	1.2	98.8	100
20 to 24 years	2.1	97.9	100
25 to 44 years	3.4	96.6	100
45 to 64 years	3.0	97.0	100
65 years and over	1.8	98.2	100
Not known	0.4	99.6	100
Student remoteness region			
Major cities	2.6	97.4	100
Inner regional	2.7	97.3	100
Outer regional	3.4	96.6	100
Remote	4.7	95.3	100
Very remote	2.9	97.1	100
Overseas	2.0	98.0	100
Not known	1.9	98.1	100
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	2.9	97.2	100
Non-Indigenous	2.8	97.1	100
Not known	1.5	98.5	100
Disability status			
With a disability	2.2	97.8	100
Without a disability	2.9	97.1	100
Not known	1.6	98.4	100
Employment status			
Employed	3.5	96.5	100
Unemployed	1.5	98.5	100
Not in the labour force	1.6	98.4	100
Not known	1.3	98.7	100
Prior educational achievement			
Bachelor degree or higher	2.6	97.4	100
Advanced diploma	3.7	96.3	100
Diploma	3.8	96.2	100
Certificate IV	4.9	95.1	100
Certificate III	4.3	95.7	100
Year 10, 11 or 12	2.6	97.4	100
Certificate II	2.5	97.5	100
Certificate I	1.1	98.9	100

Notes: See appendix A for details on how students were assigned to a level of prior educational achievement.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The proportion of Indigenous students granted RPL (2.9%) and non-Indigenous students granted RPL (2.8%) was very similar. There was also only a small difference between students with a disability being granted RPL (2.2%) and those without a disability (2.9%). Although these two equity groups experience lower completion rates and poorer post-study employment outcomes than other students (Windley 2017; Griffin & Beddie 2011), the findings show no evidence of significant barriers preventing these students from being granted RPL.

Students with prior education at the certificate III or IV level had the highest proportions of RPL granted compared with other education levels. It can be assumed that those who had previously undertaken more education would have existing skills relevant to their training.

From table 12, the trends based on the age and gender of students are certainly in line with expectations: the proportion of male students receiving RPL was slightly higher than female students (3.2% and 2.1% respectively) and the age groups with the highest proportions of RPL are 25 to 44 years and 45 to 64 years (3.4 and 3%, respectively). Given that RPL is more common in areas of study related to male-dominated industries (such as the utilities industry, table 5), it is unsurprising that proportionally more men than women are receiving RPL. It is interesting that, even among students aged 19 years and under, RPL occurs (1.2%). The characteristics of the RPL received by these students is presented in table C1 in appendix C.



RPL in completed programs

Discovering how much RPL is used in general, or how many students have been granted RPL is useful, but there is another dimension to the RPL picture, and this is the proportion of programs that have been completed using RPL and the composition of those qualifications. Program enrolments commenced in 2017 that were completed in either the same year or the following year were included in this analysis. Hence, this analysis does not include any continuing, withdrawn or not successfully completed programs, or any programs containing 2018 enrolments.

Table 13 Program enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed in 2017 or 2018, by proportion of subjects with RPL granted

	N	%
No RPL subject results (0%)	589 830	90.7
Any RPL subject results (>0%)	59 406	9.1
Some RPL in results (>0% & <100%)	34 763	5.3
All subject results are RPL (100%)	24 643	3.8
Unknown	795	0.1
Total	650 031	100.0

Note: Included are the 41% of enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed during 2017 or 2018. Proportion of RPL subject results was calculated by dividing the number of RPL-granted results in a program by all subjects associated with that program, including any non-successfully completed results in order to maintain a complete picture of the activity in programs.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The results in table 13 show that around 9.1% of the completed programs in the analysis timeframe contained some level of RPL. At the same time, 24 643 (3.8%) of all completions were RPL only. This means that if only programs that *contained* some RPL are considered, 42% were awarded entirely based on RPL. These programs represent a unique part of the VET system, one that doesn't involve training. The qualifications issued are simply based on the assessment of existing skills – the recognition of skills development that has already taken place.

This is important in a workforce planning context. If there are 100 new Certificate III in Commercial Cookery qualifications awarded in a year, the tendency is to assume this represents the entry of 100 new chefs to the market. If these are totally RPL-based qualifications, no new workers may be entering the economy and no new skills have been added.

In order to understand the distribution of RPL activity in training packages, table 14 shows the packages with the highest proportions of RPL-only qualifications completed. Note that this table is based on subjects in completed qualifications, including in this case some non-successfully completed subjects.

Table 14 Top 10 training packages by proportion of RPL in completed qualifications, for program enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed in 2017 or 2018, %

Training package	No subjects granted RPL	Some subjects granted RPL (>0% & <100%)	All subjects granted RPL	Total
UEG – Gas Industry ¹	34.7	13.6	51.7	100
MEA – Aeroskills ¹	56.7	19.4	23.9	100
PUA – Public Safety	63.2	13.9	22.9	100
PMA – Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Refining	79.1	4.7	16.1	100
CPC – Construction, Plumbing and Services	72.4	13.0	14.6	100
UET – Electricity Supply Industry – Generation Sector	74.5	11.6	13.9	100
FWP – Forest and Wood Products ¹	81.3	6.6	12.1	100
TAE – Training and Education	77.4	11.9	10.7	100
MSA – Manufacturing ¹	81.3	11.0	7.7	100
MEM – Manufacturing and Engineering	79.9	12.8	7.4	100

Note: 1 Training package had fewer than 500 completions in the analysis dataset. Included for analysis are the 41% of enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed during 2017 or 2018. The LMT – Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package was removed from this table as it is in the process of being superseded. Superseded training packages were excluded from this table. Proportion of RPL subject results was calculated by dividing the number of RPL – granted results in completed qualifications in a training package by all subjects associated with completed qualifications in that package, including any non-successfully completed results in order to maintain a complete picture of the activity in qualifications.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

It is the utilities, manufacturing and other trade areas that tend to have the highest proportion of completed qualifications being awarded based solely on RPL granted. In other words, every successfully completed subject in the qualification was completed through RPL. In the Gas Industry Training Package (UEG), just over half of all qualifications commenced in 2017 and completed in 2017 or 2018 were based entirely on RPL (51.7%) (table 14). This does appear to be an exception, however, with other training packages containing a high proportion of these RPL-only qualifications granting between 7% and 24% of their qualifications this way.

Since some qualifications are completed over a longer time period than others, the 2017–18 period of opportunity to commence and complete may affect the number of non-RPL qualifications completed. If a training package contains many qualifications that take two or more years to complete and few that can be completed in less time, the rate of RPL-only qualifications will be high as RPL-only qualifications are likely to be completed quicker than their non-RPL or mixed counterparts. A more detailed analysis of the duration of qualifications, on a package-by-package level, would be necessary to explore this.

Further investigation reveals the qualifications with the highest rate of RPL-only completions (table 15).

Table 15 Top 10 qualifications by proportion of RPL in completed qualifications, for program enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed in 2017 or 2018, %¹

Qualification	No subjects granted RPL	Some subjects granted RPL (>0% & <100%)	All subjects granted RPL	Total	Total completed qualifications
PSP50316 – Diplomas of Government Security	2.0	2.0	96.0	100	50
PSP60116 – Advanced Diploma of Government (Workplace inspection/Investigations/Fraud control)	0.0	7.2	92.8	100	69
PUA52312 – Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management)	6.3	1.3	92.4	100	79
CPP50611 – Diploma of Security and Risk Management	13.0	1.0	86.0	100	301
FNS30215 – Certificate III in Personal Injury Management	24.4	0.0	75.6	100	78
PUA60112 – Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management)	23.3	4.7	72.1	100	86
UET30612 – Certificate III in ESI – Power Systems – Distribution Overhead	18.3	13.3	68.3	100	60
10280NAT – Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education	19.2	18.6	62.2	100	156
SIR40212 – Certificate IV in Retail Management ²	36.3	2.5	61.3	100	240
FNS51815 – Diploma of Financial Services	40.8	0.0	59.2	100	174

Notes: 1 Qualifications with fewer than 50 completions in the analysis dataset were excluded from this analysis.

2 This qualification was non-equivalently superseded in 2016.

Proportion of RPL subject results was calculated by dividing the number of RPL-granted results in a completed qualification by all subjects associated with those completed qualifications, including any non-successfully completed results in order to maintain a complete picture of the activity in qualifications.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

At the extreme end, the analysis indicated that in qualifications such as the Diploma of Government Security, the Advanced Diploma of Government (Workplace inspection/Investigations/Fraud control) and the Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management) over 92% of the completed qualifications were based only on RPL being granted. Since each of these qualifications had fewer than 80 completions in the timeframe analysed, this only represents a limited number of qualifications.

Another dimension of this aspect of the analysis is the funding used to achieve qualifications entirely through RPL, shown in table 16.

Table 16 Highest program funding source by proportion of RPL in completed programs, for program enrolments commencing in 2017 and completed in 2017 or 2018, %

Highest program funding source	No subject results RPL	Some subject results RPL (>0% & <100%)	All subject results RPL
Government-funded	34.6	48.8	76.1
Domestic fee-for-service	52.9	48.1	22.5
International fee-for-service	12.5	3.1	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Highest program funding source is calculated on the plurality of funding sources for all subjects associated with that program enrolment. Proportion of RPL subject results was calculated by dividing the number of RPL-granted results in completed programs for each funding source by all subjects associated with those completed programs, including any non-successfully completed results in order to maintain a complete picture of the activity in programs.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The analysis showed that most qualifications being completed through RPL only were primarily government-funded (76.1%). For reference, in 2017 around 51% of program enrolments were primarily government-funded, compared with around 41% with a domestic fee-for-service funding source (NCVER 2019d). Interestingly, about the same proportion of completions with some RPL (but not 100% RPL) were government-funded (48.8%) or provided under a domestic fee-for-service arrangement (48.1%) (out of those programs which commenced in 2017 and were completed in either 2017 or 2018).

This retrospective analysis raises the question: if these are the characteristics of RPL as it is taking place now, can any of these factors be used to predict RPL being granted in the future? The next section addresses this topic.



Factors affecting RPL in program enrolments

In order to further explore the relationship between the various program and student attributes and the propensity to grant RPL, multivariate logistic regression was used. This form of analysis is used to predict the probability of an outcome, given a set of independent factors. Multivariate logistic regression has been used in this report to predict a student in a specific program context being granted RPL for one or more subjects in their program of study, based on student and program characteristics. The RPL outcome is the dependent variable and is used in the logistic regression analysis to identify which of the independent variables (that is, all other student and program attributes) demonstrate a change in the propensity for the dependent variable to occur.

The analysis is based on data from the National VET Provider Collection, over the period 2015–18, and includes specific variables (presented in table B1, appendix B). These constraints mean this is not a definitive assessment of the effects that different student and program attributes have on the likelihood of RPL; rather, it is a general indicator of whether the likelihood of RPL occurring is a result of the strong effects of a few factors or, alternatively, the broad, mixed effect of a combination of factors.

The logistic regression analysis identified numerous student and program attributes that were significant (Sig. or p-value < 0.05) to RPL being granted; however, no attributes were shown individually to exert a substantial effect on the likelihood of RPL being successfully completed. This indicates that there is no single factor, such as gender or field of study, which by itself is a strong predictor of RPL. According to this analysis, therefore, a student being granted RPL appears to be the result of a mix of student and program attributes.

Based on the findings of the initial logistic regression, attributes were also clustered (for example, student age was clustered into two ranges: 35 years or less and older than 35) to determine whether the clustered attribute had a more meaningful influence on the likelihood of RPL being granted. By using broader groupings, there is more opportunity to see any general effects of a specific attribute. The results of clustering attributes, and the effect on the likelihood of RPL being successfully completed, are outlined in table 17.

Note that where the logistic regression coefficient is 0, this means that this attribute has been used as the reference to generate the coefficient for all other attributes in that category; for example, a regression coefficient of 0 when student gender is male and -0.2855 when gender is female means the likelihood of being granted RPL is less for female students when compared with male students.

Table 17 Student and program attributes – likelihood of RPL being granted

Attribute	Regression coefficient	Likelihood of RPL being granted
Gender		
Male	0	
Female	-0.2855	Decreased
Funding source		
Government-funded	0	
Domestic fee-for-service	0.0355	Increased
International fee-for-service	-0.5079	Decreased
Highest prior education level		
Certificate II or below	-0.3215	Decreased
Certificate III or above	0	
Age		
35 years or under	-0.5629	Decreased
Over 35 years	0	
Disability status		
With a disability	0	
Without a disability	0.2842	Increased
Indigenous status		
Indigenous	0	
Non-Indigenous	0.1735	Increased
Apprenticeship status		
Apprenticeship or traineeship	0	
Not an apprenticeship or traineeship	0.498	Increased
Labour force status		
Employed	0.8894	Increased
Not Employed/Unpaid/Unknown	0	
Program level		
Certificate I or below	-1.4673	Decreased
Certificate II or above	0	
Field of education		
Natural and physical sciences	0.3422	Increased
Information technology	-0.6463	Decreased
Engineering and related technologies	0.2798	Increased
Architecture and building	0.5197	Increased
Agriculture, environmental related studies	0.1875	Increased
Health	-0.0483	Decreased
Education	0.4582	Increased
Management and commerce	-0.1539	Decreased
Society and culture	-0.0321	Decreased
Creative arts	-0.5376	Decreased
Food, hospitality and personal services	0.1101	Increased
Mixed field programmes	-1.0978	Decreased
Unknown	0	

Note: Results are based on RPL having been granted and recorded as of the end of 2018. As all variables used in the analysis dataset are categorical; they have not been standardised.

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Of all the attributes in table 17, being employed had the greatest effect on the likelihood of RPL being granted. This means that being employed is the strongest predictor of someone being granted RPL, but only from among those examined.

Field of education being studied (based on the program) is another attribute with one of the greatest effects on RPL likelihood, with the top five fields of education where RPL is most likely to be granted being:

- architecture and building
- education
- natural and physical sciences
- engineering and related studies
- agriculture, environmental related studies.

However, individually none of these attributes have a noticeable effect on the likelihood of RPL being granted: it is the combination of attributes that can have a meaningful effect.

To illustrate this, table 18 shows two extreme scenarios and the different probability of RPL being granted. Neither scenario refers to an actual student and is for illustration purposes only. Student A is an Indigenous female student with a disability, who is 35 years old or under, who is not employed and is studying a certificate I or below in the field of information technology. Student B is a non-Indigenous male student more than 35 years old and without a disability, who is employed and studying a certificate II or above in the field of architecture and building. The probability of a student with the same set of attributes as student A receiving RPL is 0.13%, whereas the probability for a student matching student B is 18.99%. In other words, all of the attributes of student B, in combination with their program of study, increase the probability of receiving RPL by 18.86% by comparison with student A.

Table 18 Comparison scenario – probability of an RPL-granted subject result

	Student A	Student B
Gender	Female	Male
Funding source	Government-funded	Domestic fee-for-service
Highest prior education level	Certificate II or below	Certificate III or above
Age	35 years or under	Older than 35 years
Disability status	With a disability	Without a disability
Indigenous status	Indigenous student	Non-Indigenous student
Apprenticeship status	Not an apprenticeship or traineeship	Not an apprenticeship or traineeship
Labour force status	Not employed/Unpaid/Unknown	Employed
Program level	Certificate I or below	Certificate II or above
Field of education	Information technology	Architecture and building
Probability of RPL being granted	0.13%	18.99%
Likelihood estimate	1 in every 763 students	1 in every 5 students

Of course, in practice each student will have some mix of factors, and extreme cases such as those in table 18 will rarely occur. Additionally, the probabilities and likelihoods generated by this analysis have been derived using a dataset with a limited time series and limited attributes. A student will have other attributes (including those that are not or cannot be collected, such as interest in the topic), which will ultimately affect the student’s propensity to be granted RPL.

The result of this regression analysis shows that there is no single factor that is the key to predicting RPL and no easy policy lever that could be relied upon to increase or reduce the granting of RPL.



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Appendix

Appendix A

Hierarchy for highest prior education level

Where a student reports more than one prior education level, the following schema is used to assign them a highest prior education level, with level 1 (Bachelor or higher degree) considered the highest, and level 14 (Not known) considered the lowest.

- 1 Bachelor degree or Higher degree level
- 2 Advanced diploma or Associate degree
- 3 Diploma
- 4 Certificate IV
- 5 Certificate III
- 6 Year 12
- 7 Year 11
- 8 Certificate II
- 9 Year 10
- 10 Certificate I
- 11 Miscellaneous education
- 12 Year 9 or lower
- 13 Did not go to school
- 14 Not known

For more information see NCVET 2019, *Students and courses: terms and definitions*, NCVET, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/government-funded-students-and-courses-2018>>.

Appendix B

Factors included in initial logistic regression analysis (not all factors were kept for final analysis). Target variable was the presence of 'RPL – granted' in the program for one or more subjects.

Table B1 Factors included in initial logistic regression analysis

Student attributes	Program attributes
Gender	Year
Age	Program
Disability status	Current qualification level
Highest prior education level	Field of education (broad)
Highest school level completed	Field of education (narrow)
Indigenous status	Type of accreditation (nationally recognised qualification, nationally accredited course etc.)
Labour force status	Training package
Prior educational achievement flag (Yes – student has previously successfully completed post-secondary education, np – student has not previously successfully completed post-secondary education)	Nominal intended occupation (ANZSCO) major group
Year highest school level achieved	Nominal intended occupation (ANZSCO) sub-major group
Student residential state/territory	Nominal intended occupation (ANZSCO) minor group
Apprentice/trainee status	Nominal intended occupation (ANZSCO) unit group
Student remoteness (ARIA+) region	Nominal intended occupation (ANZSCO) identifier
Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)	Industry group identifier
	Highest funding source
	Training organisation type (Private provider, TAFE institute etc.)
	Training organisation
	Training organisation location (state/territory)
	Delivery location (state/territory)

For more information see NCVER, 2019, *Students and courses: terms and definitions*, NCVER, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/government-funded-students-and-courses-2018>>

Appendix C

Students under 19 receiving RPL

Investigating the under-19 cohort further, table C1 shows the subjects for which students aged 19 and under are most often receiving RPL. These are very similar to the results showing the subjects with the most RPL granted results generally.

Table C1 Top 10 subjects by enrolments with RPL-granted results, students aged 19 and under, 2018

Subject	Subject enrolments with RPL-granted
SITXFSA001 – Use hygienic practices for food safety	520
BSBWOR203 – Work effectively with others	500
SITXWHS001 – Participate in safe work practices	463
CPCCOHS2001A – Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry	457
BSBWHS201 – Contribute to health and safety of self and others	456
CPCCCM1014A – Conduct workplace communication	447
CPCCCM1013A – Plan and organise work	444
CPCCCM1012A – Work effectively and sustainably in the construction industry	429
HLTAID003 – Provide first-aid	406
CPCCCM2001A – Read and interpret plans and specifications	387

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

Programs in construction, hospitality and outdoor recreation contained the highest number of RPL-granted results for those aged 19 and under, as seen in table C2.

Table C2 Top 10 programs by associated subject enrolments with an RPL-granted outcome, students aged 19 and under, 2018

Program	Associated subject enrolments with RPL-granted
CPC10111 – Certificate I in Construction	3614
SIT10216 – Certificate I in Hospitality	1624
SIS20213 – Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation	1602
AHC20116 – Certificate II in Agriculture	1377
SIT30616 – Certificate III in Hospitality	1167
CUA31015 – Certificate III in Screen and Media	1125
AHC21016 – Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management	980
BSB30115 – Certificate III in Business	891
HLT33115 – Certificate III in Health Services Assistance	884
SHB30416 – Certificate III in Hairdressing	868

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.

The RPL-granted to those aged 19 and under in programs in 2018 was mainly at the certificate I or II level (table C3).

Table C3 Associated subject enrolments with an RPL-granted outcome by program level of education, students aged 19 and under, 2018

Program level	Associated subject enrolments with RPL granted
Advanced diploma	382
Diploma	2 194
Certificate IV	2 840
Certificate III	13 669
Certificate II	12 485
Certificate I	7 636

Source: National VET Provider Collection, 2019.



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