

RESEARCH MESSAGES 2022

| INFORMING + INFLUENCING
THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR



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Introduction

Research messages 2022 highlights the diverse range of research activities undertaken over the past year by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

This edition provides:

- key findings from our program of research
- details of conferences, presentations, webinars, podcasts and other NCVER research communications
- resources collated by NCVER designed to assist in illuminating the VET (vocational education and training) system and its related policies
- a summary of NCVER discussion papers and submissions to government reviews.

NCVER is the independent national body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing and communicating research and statistics relating to the VET sector.

NCVER's vision is to inform and influence VET policy and practice to assist governments, training and industry organisations to support the development of a skilled and capable Australian workforce and a strong economy. NCVER's strategic in-house research program contributes to this mission by delivering world-class research by harnessing the power of integrated data and analytics to provide insights that will be relevant and trusted by our stakeholders.

Our research, which is guided by the Australian Government and state and territory governments and other key stakeholders, aims to inform policy development and decision-making to ensure the delivery of high-quality VET. Given the rapid pace of technological development and changes to the workplace generated by the pandemic, our research needs to be more responsive than ever to provide key insights to support the changing needs of industry, government and the VET sector.

In 2022, the research program was shaped by both the VET reform agenda and issues emerging from the pandemic, many of which will be reflected in publications such as: *Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs, VET and higher education pathways: do outcomes differ for the same occupation?* and *Treading water: effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth transitions*.

NCVER continued to communicate our new research across a wide range of delivery platforms, including webinars and podcasts for Australian and international audiences, on diverse topics such as VET in Australia and India; building VET research capacity; and the implications of the pandemic on VET training delivery, among others.

NCVER held the *31st National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference* 'No Frills' online once again due to the ongoing uncertainties of travel under COVID-19 restrictions. The theme of the conference, 'VET's role in transforming the future', asked presenters to share their views on how VET might lead and keep pace with the ever-evolving skills needs and expectations of students and industry.

Research activity 2022





Key research areas

The 2022 national VET research agenda was overseen by the Australian Government and state and territory governments, with the objective of informing and guiding NCVER's research focus, along with the nature and focus of investigations identified as priorities for the nation. The research published during the year encompassed a range of themes and topics under three broad categories.



COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and policy responses impacted on many aspects of education and training in Australia. The research covered by this theme examined both the impact of the pandemic on the VET-skilled industry workforce and on youth transitions, as well as how VET delivery practices changed in response to the pandemic.

Key themes and topics under this area:



COVID-19



workforce development



training delivery



online training



youth transitions.



VET delivery and practice

Individuals may decide to access the VET system at different points in their lives for a variety of reasons. It is therefore important that the teaching, learning and assessment practices in the VET sector are meeting their needs.

The research covered by this theme explored how understanding the needs of learners underpins meaningful engagement in online training and examined the factors that contribute to high-quality outcomes and optimise the value of competency-based training (CBT).

Key themes and topics under this area:



online delivery



training delivery



quality



registered training providers



competency-based training.



VET student engagement and outcomes

Understanding how students are engaging in and benefiting from VET is important to monitoring performance, quality and accessibility. Exploring VET's impact on Australia's stock of skills, as well as students' access to education will provide greater insight for policymakers.

The research under this theme revealed how VET is being utilised as a second-chance education sector; how secondary students and students with disadvantage are engaged with the system; and the extent to which VET and higher education pathways intersect.

Key themes and topics under this area:



pathways



VET for secondary school students



foundation skills



higher education



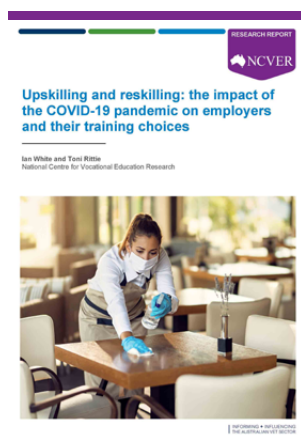
student equity.

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COVID-19 pandemic





Upskilling and reskilling: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers

Ian White and Toni Rittie

3 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57078

The COVID-19 pandemic has exerted a profound impact on Australian employers as a result of the social and economic restrictions imposed by governments to control the spread of the virus. In the initial stages of the pandemic, many businesses had to adjust rapidly to changed operating conditions and the reduced demand for their products and services. The most prevalent adjustments related to the way in which they provided their products and services, along with changes to staff roles or duties.

Using data from the *Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System* and other complementary sources, this report examined how employers fared in the COVID-19 pandemic and what this has meant for their current and future training requirements.

Summary of findings

The impact of COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions not surprisingly had a flow-on effect on employers' training requirements. Over 40% of employers in the 2021 Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System reported the emergence of new training requirements due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key messages

- The main reason given by employers for these new requirements was to enable them to operate effectively and safely in the COVID environment (83.6%). The next most common responses related to the requirement to train staff to undertake new tasks and responsibilities (32.8%) and the need to access training to help manage business operations in the COVID environment, for example, switching to online ordering of products (30.8%).
- COVID-19 restrictions forced employers to rapidly transition training to online forms of delivery and registered training organisations (RTOs) to transition a considerable amount of face-to-face training online. The consensus among employers was that the increase in this form of training delivery was here to stay. To meet these new training needs, employers tended to use informal or ad hoc training (55.5%) and unaccredited training, which was provided either in house by the organisation (50.3%) or delivered by an external provider (22.0%).
- The challenge for the VET system in Australia will be to ensure that it continues to adapt and innovate its services in a responsive way, one that meets employer skill needs.

Related publications

VET student outcomes 2020: impact of COVID-19 on domestic students

Ian White

19 May 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/202101



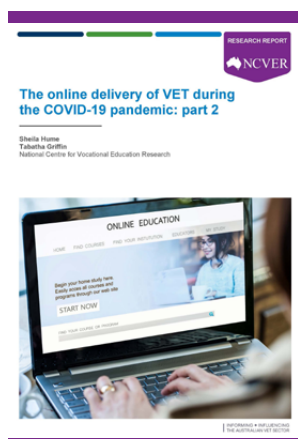
What VET can offer to COVID-19 youth unemployment recovery

J Waugh & M Circelli

13 May 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57063





The online delivery of VET during COVID-19 pandemic: part 2

Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin

23 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065-2

The coronavirus pandemic created unprecedented challenges for the VET sector. This report, the second of two, presented insights into the experiences of RTOs that transitioned to online delivery in response to the pandemic and described how their experiences may shape their intentions to deliver VET online in the future.

Summary of findings

The survey findings indicated the use of blended delivery modes in VET will likely increase. RTOs take many factors into consideration when determining the suitability of online training. While acknowledging the plans of many RTOs to expand their online training offerings, the effects on students must also be considered. Due to the extent of the shift to online training in response to the pandemic, it is likely that student outcomes data over the next few years will paint a much clearer picture of the true impact of the pandemic on students.

Key messages

- Many RTOs moved from face-to-face to online training delivery in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Of the RTOs surveyed that only delivered face-to-face training pre-pandemic, about two-thirds transitioned at least some training online in response to this health emergency.
- Transitioning delivery online was a complex exercise for RTOs. Determining the suitability of the material for online delivery needed to be considered at the micro level (that is, individual units), as opposed to the skill set, qualification or training package level.

- The suitability of online delivery extends beyond the practicalities of training and assessment.
 - Training in highly emotive topics, such as suicide risk, child protection, and family and domestic violence, can be traumatic for some students. RTOs raised concerns about their ability to provide a duty of care for students when delivering training of this nature online.
 - Face-to-face learning was deemed critical by RTOs delivering foundation skills, especially where students had learning comprehension difficulties.
- Not all students have the language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills required to learn effectively in an online context.
- Training courses that contained a high proportion of practical components were particularly challenging to transfer online, with many RTOs transitioning theoretical components online while delaying practical elements. This had implications for students' continuity of learning and placed additional pressure on trainers.
- Around three-quarters of RTOs surveyed agreed that the move to online delivery, while challenging, had provided opportunities to review the effectiveness of existing training/assessment delivery methods and encouraged creativity.
- 61.8% of RTOs surveyed intend to use more blended learning in the future, and 22.1% are likely to permanently transfer more units or parts of qualifications online. This raises questions on how to best support RTOs to ensure that their plans for online delivery reflect not only students' needs but also the suitability or otherwise of training material for online delivery.

Related publications

The online delivery of VET during COVID-19: part 1

Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin

24 August 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065





Treading water: effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth transitions

Cameron Forrest

10 November 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/63000

Economic downturns have pronounced impacts on young people. Using data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), this report examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education, employment, and social circumstances of young Australians.

Summary of findings

Comparisons with historical data suggest that the pandemic prevented young Australians from making the typical transitions for their age group, with adverse effects on their wellbeing.

Key messages

In general, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have prevented many young Australians from making the same transitions as previous cohorts at the same age. Between 2019 and 2020, there was:

- A significant increase, of 3.2 percentage points, in the proportion of young people who were engaged in higher education, which was not observed at the equivalent ages for previous cohorts. Research suggests that young people may 'retreat' to higher education in times of economic uncertainty, offsetting short-term losses of earnings with increased longer-term earning potential.

- No significant change in the employment rates of young people, when a small increase would have otherwise been expected. That no decrease was recorded, despite widespread restrictions, may be attributable to the JobKeeper payment, which kept employees connected with their employers via wage subsidies. In 2020, 23.7% of 20-year-olds reported they were in receipt of JobKeeper, representing 29.9% of those employed.
- No significant change in the proportions of young people who were in permanent or ongoing employment, when an increase of between 4.4 and 5.4 percentage points would have otherwise been expected. This may suggest that the labour market uncertainty resulting from the pandemic prevented young Australians from transitioning to more secure roles.
- A significant increase of 3.6 percentage points in the youth underemployment rate, compared with a decrease of 3.0 percentage points at the same ages for the previous cohort (2013–14). This suggests that the primary effect of the pandemic on youth employment was that young people were unable to work as many hours as they preferred.

Also, of note from the 2020 data were that:

- The pandemic appears to have had a pronounced effect on young people's mental health. In 2020, 23.3% of 20-year-olds met the criteria for probable serious mental illness, compared with 7.1% of 20-year-olds in 2014. Being female (29.4%), unemployed (45.8%), in no type of study (28.4%) and reporting no available forms of social support (51.0%) were associated with probable mental illness.
- Almost nine per cent (8.9%) of 20-year-olds reported having to move in with their parents or other relatives due to the government restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; 5.4% reported having to move elsewhere, such as with friends or a partner.



Delivery of VET: emerging trends in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

ABOUT
This interactive publication contributes to the growing body of work investigating online and blended delivery in vocational education and training (VET). It presents the delivery mode of subject-level enrolments in VET for 2019 (pre-pandemic), 2020 and 2021. The publication presents delivery mode by jurisdiction, funding source, training provider type, Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level and student remoteness. The publication also presents delivery mode by subject-level enrolment in VET for 2019 (pre-pandemic), 2020 and 2021.

BACKGROUND
The interactive publication contributes to our understanding of the delivery of VET that changed across the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Publication scope and content
The publication is based on data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) VET enrolment survey, which is a national survey of VET enrolments. The survey data is collected from all VET providers in Australia, including government, non-government and private providers. The survey data is collected from all VET providers in Australia, including government, non-government and private providers. The survey data is collected from all VET providers in Australia, including government, non-government and private providers.

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Delivery of VET: emerging trends in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin

1 December 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57077

This interactive publication contributes to the growing body of work investigating online and blended training delivery in VET. It presents the delivery mode of subject-level enrolments in VET for 2019 (pre-pandemic), 2020 and 2021.

Summary of findings

VET delivered through blended delivery (that is, online in combination with another delivery mode) has experienced sustained growth. In addition to overall subject-level enrolment figures, the publication presents delivery mode by jurisdiction, funding source, training provider type, Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level and student remoteness.

Key messages

- Almost all jurisdictions reported a decrease in subjects with no online delivery (that is, classroom or workplace-based) between 2019 and 2020.
- The proportion of government-funded and fee-for-service subject enrolments with no online delivery declined by similar proportions between 2019 and 2021.
- Online-only delivery increased in 2020 and 2021 for subjects associated with certificate I, certificate IV and diploma level qualifications, and, similar to previous trends, this increase was most pronounced in 2020.

- Across all regions, subjects delivered through blended delivery increased year on year, although most increases in 2021 were less than those recorded in 2020.

Related publications

Online delivery of VET qualifications: current use and outcomes

Tabatha Griffin & Mandy Mihelic

21 October 2019

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57027



The online delivery of VET during COVID-19: part 1

Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin

24 August 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065



The online delivery of VET during the COVID-19 pandemic: part 2

Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin

23 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065-2



Insights for delivering VET online

Deniese Cox

23 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065-3





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VET delivery
and practice





Insights for delivering VET online

Deniese Cox
TeachingOnline.com.au



KEY MESSAGES

High-quality online delivery is important for ensuring that the VET sector remains a reliable source of skills for the Australian labour market during and beyond the pandemic.

- There is no 'one size fits all' model of best practice online teaching and learning.
- Every training context is different and should remain responsive to the needs of the student cohort and the topic at hand.
- Good practice involves the incorporation of both instructional and participatory content, presented in either or both real-time and non-real-time formats.
- Regular training being for blended online, technology should never drive learning design. Technology should always support good practice.

In recent years, elements of the vocational education and training (VET) sector have been undergoing the use of more online and blended models of teaching. In 2019, NCVET 2020, The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated an accelerated and wide-ranging shift to online education, and research has found that many educators may not completely return to their pre-pandemic approaches (Pearce & Gaffin 2021). This means that VET delivery must adapt processes designed to ensure that quality learning opportunities are available for students who are accessing their learning online.

This publication offers insights for educators, organisations and institutions to consider when designing and implementing training that is fully or partially online.



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Insights for delivering VET online

Deniese Cox

23 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065-3

In recent years, elements of the VET sector have been moving towards the use of more online and blended models of teaching. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated an accelerated and wide-ranging shift to online education, and research has found that many educators may not completely return to their pre-pandemic approaches. This research explored the proven strategies to ensure that quality learning opportunities are available for students who are accessing their learning online.

Summary of findings

This publication offers 12 insights for educators, organisations and institutions to consider when designing and implementing training that is fully or partially online.

Key messages

High-quality online delivery is important for ensuring that the VET sector remains a reliable source of skills for the Australian labour market during and beyond the pandemic.

- There is no 'one size fits all' model of best practice online teaching and learning.
- Every training context is different and should remain responsive to the needs of the student cohort and the topic at hand.
- Good practice involves the incorporation of both instructional and participatory content, presented in either or both real-time and non-real-time formats.

- Despite training being facilitated online, technology should never drive learning design. Technology should always support good practice.

Related publications

The online delivery of VET during COVID-19: part 1

Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin

24 August 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065



The online delivery of VET during the COVID-19 pandemic: part 2

Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin

23 February 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57065-2



Online delivery of VET qualifications: current use and outcomes

Tabatha Griffin & Mandy Mihelic

21 October 2019

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57027





Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs

Hugh Guthrie and Melinda Waters

22 March 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57056-2

This report was the second part of a project investigating the quality of delivery in VET and how it might be better defined and measured. A priority for governments is ensuring public confidence in the quality and value of vocational education and training available to learners throughout their lives. The delivery of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment is an important element of this and is known to directly impact on outcomes for students. However, little research has examined what high-quality training delivery looks like in practice and how it might be measured.

Based on consultations with RTOs from the public, private, adult and community education (ACE), and enterprise segments of the sector, this research investigated how the quality of delivery in VET is currently defined and measured. It also set out to identify the barriers to high-quality delivery, as well as approaches that might better encourage and sustain high-quality delivery into the future.

Summary of findings

Based on consultation with high-performing RTOs, the research finds that definitions of quality depend on an RTO's purpose, mission, student characteristics and operating context. RTOs use a wide range of information and data to build a comprehensive picture of delivery quality throughout the student life-cycle or learning journey, although the measures used vary by RTO type and size.

Key messages

- The definition of high-quality VET delivery differs among RTO types, depending on their purposes, missions and goals, their student types, the courses and qualifications they offer, and the context in which they operate.
- The key principles underpinning a definition of high-quality delivery in VET, which are common across the RTOs participating in this project, are that it is:
 - transformational: how well students are achieving
 - student-centred: how well students are supported and encouraged to learn
 - fit for purpose: how well stakeholders' needs and purposes are met
 - evolutionary: how well delivery adapts to changing stakeholder and workplace needs
- The size and type of an RTO influences the ability to define and measure the quality of VET provision.
 - Quality appears to be most easily described and measured in enterprise-based RTOs, smaller private RTOs and ACE providers, where the scope of delivery tends to be narrower and there is direct oversight of the teaching and learning environment. The resources and expertise required to collect and analyse data, however, can be limited in smaller RTOs.
 - Larger RTOs tend to have more resources to collect and analyse data, but monitoring quality in organisations supporting a broad spectrum of students with diverse backgrounds and needs, a large suite of courses and qualifications and multiple delivery sites, can be challenging.
- RTOs use a wide range of information and data to evaluate quality, including a mix of quantitative data, qualitative data, and information gained through informal ways.

- High-quality delivery depends on many factors, some of which are beyond the control of RTOs. The barriers identified by participating RTOs include a compliance view of quality, funding, the quality of training packages and difficulties in recruiting, developing and retaining teachers and trainers.

Related publications

Unpacking the quality of VET delivery (Part I)

Hugh Guthrie & Melinda Waters

8 September 2021

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57056

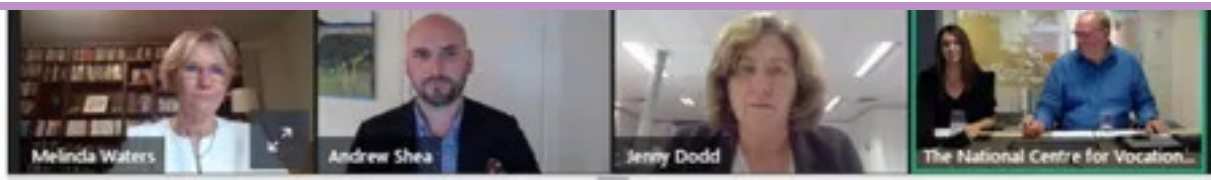


Are we all speaking the same language? Understanding 'quality' in the VET sector

Tabatha Griffin

11 December 2017

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2017



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Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs

Making delivery better: perspectives from RTOs a webinar conducted on 7 April 2022 covering the research in the report *Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs* and presented by Hugh Guthrie and Melinda Waters, with discussants Jenny Dodd and Andrew Shea, and chaired by Tabatha Griffin, NCVER.



INTRODUCTION

Competency-based training (CBT) is an approach to vocational education and training (VET) designed to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve competency in business or an individual's mastery of skill, competency standardisation is fundamental to the approach and is central to the approach. For the last three decades or so, CBT has been fundamental to how accredited VET is delivered in Australia, and over this time both advocates and critics of this approach have emerged.

For this research, we were interested in the strengths and weaknesses of CBT as it is currently applied to the Australian VET system and whether there is cause to consider a broader approach to defining and describing competence and hence considering how best teaching and learning in VET is most effectively delivered and assessed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The concept of the CBT approach to vocational education and training (VET) designed to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve competency in business or an individual's mastery of skill, competency standardisation is fundamental to the approach and is central to the approach. For the last three decades or so, CBT has been fundamental to how accredited VET is delivered in Australia, and over this time both advocates and critics of this approach have emerged.
- Research, a credible comparison of what is needed to be competent is needed, one that applies to knowledge, the experience or 'know-how' and the application, those such as critical thinking, learning from others, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and self-direction, and their role in training learners to master the knowledge and skills required to be competent in a particular area.
- The benefits of the current CBT approach to all types of vocational qualifications and all levels of learning, including apprenticeships, is not clear. It may be that a differentiated training and assessment approach, for some qualifications, for example, VET qualifications at the diploma level and above in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), or those in the creative and performing arts, where personal attributes and capabilities are more critical, is more of a challenge for the current approach to what is needed to be competent.
- The value of using graded or proficiency-based assessment as a means of differentiating levels of performance, as opposed to being assessed as competent or not competent as is done with CBT, is not clear. It may be that a differentiated training and assessment approach, for some qualifications, for example, VET qualifications at the diploma level and above in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), or those in the creative and performing arts, where personal attributes and capabilities are more critical, is more of a challenge for the current approach to what is needed to be competent.



Adding value to competency-based training

Josie Misko and Michelle Circelli

13 December 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57072

Competency-based training is an approach to VET designed to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve competency. It focuses on an individual's mastery of skill, whereby an individual is deemed competent or not yet competent in that skill. For the last three decades or so, CBT has been fundamental to how accredited VET is delivered in Australia, and over this time both advocates and critics of this approach have emerged.

This research examined the strengths and weaknesses of CBT as it is currently applied to the Australian VET system and whether there is cause to consider a broader approach to defining and describing competence and hence considering how best teaching and learning in VET is delivered and assessed.

Summary of findings

Suggesting novel solutions for how to add value to, improve or reform the Australian approach to CBT is a difficult endeavour. We should not ignore the considerable amount of thinking and research already expended in this area or, indeed, the reforms already underway or being considered, including reforms to the design of VET qualifications and to the system of industry engagement.

Key messages

- The strength of the CBT approach is that the technical skills a learner needs to achieve to be deemed competent in a workplace are clearly defined.
- However, a broader conception of what it means to be competent is needed, one that explicitly acknowledges the importance of 'non-technical' skills and capabilities, those such as critical thinking, learning from others, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and self-direction, and their role in helping learners to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired in one context to another.
- The benefit of the current CBT approach to all types of vocational qualifications and at all levels is becoming increasingly questionable. A case can now be made for a differentiated training and assessment paradigm for some qualifications; for example, VET qualifications at the diploma level and above in the Australian Qualifications Framework, or those in the creative and caring sectors, where personal attributes and capabilities are seen as more critical, in terms of establishing the key elements of what it means to be 'competent'.
- The value of using graded or proficiency-based assessment as a means of differentiating levels of performance, as opposed to being deemed competent/not yet competent as occurs with CBT, is an issue that needs further debate. While grading can impart greater clarity in relation to how well learners can perform a task, there are concerns about its potential to add further complexity to an already complex training and assessment system, including the need for well-constructed and agreed moderation frameworks to grade learners against.

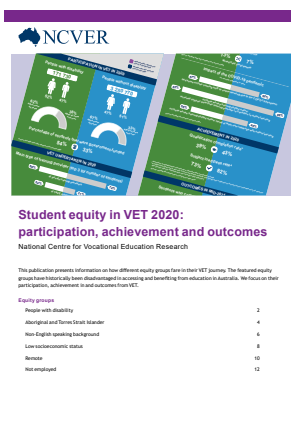


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VET student engagement and outcomes





Student equity in VET 2020: participation, achievement and outcomes

NCVER

3 March 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/47001

This publication, which is released annually, presents information on how different equity groups fare in their VET journey. The featured equity groups have historically been disadvantaged in accessing and benefiting from education in Australia. We focus on their participation, achievement in and outcomes from VET.

The featured equity groups in this publication are:

- people with disability
- Indigenous
- non-English-speaking background
- low socioeconomic status (SES)
- remote
- not employed.

Related publications

Student equity in VET 2020: participation, achievement and outcomes: data tables

NCVER

3 March 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/47001-dt





VET as a re-engagement pathway for early school leavers

Patrick Lim

9 March 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57030

School non-completion and non-completers' subsequent pathways into employment or back into education is an enduring issue for policymakers in Australia. Understanding the factors that increase the chance of early school leavers re-engaging with education can inform how best to support young people in their decision-making.

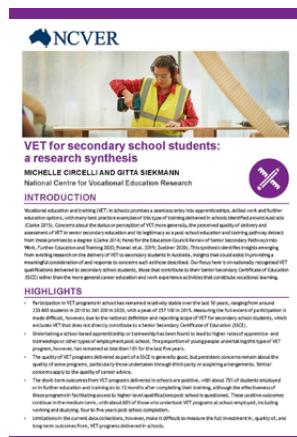
Summary of findings

An analysis of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) confirmed that VET is an important pathway to educational re-engagement for young people who leave school before completing Year 12. This analysis also highlighted the importance of providing career information not only to young people before and after they leave school, but also to their parents or guardians. For school leavers, having parents with aspirations for them is influential in determining whether early school leavers re-engage with education, demonstrating the value of ensuring that parents also have access to high-quality career information.

Key messages

- About 75% of the LSAY respondents who left school before completing Year 12 re-engaged with some form of education by the age of 25. About 63% re-engaged with education via VET.

- Of the LSAY respondents who re-engaged with some form of education after leaving school early, just over half (51%) entered into apprenticeships and traineeships (combining employment and training). Other VET courses (certificates and diplomas), not delivered as part of an apprenticeship or traineeship, made up 34% of all educational re-engagement.
- The career or educational plans of young people were important in predicting early school leaving. Other factors, such as mathematics and reading achievement, also had an influence, but these played a smaller role.
- Parents' plans for their child in the year after leaving school were important in predicting re-engagement with any form of education, especially through VET. Those early school leavers whose parents wanted them to go on to VET were more likely to do so than those whose parents had other plans for their child.
- The factors most important in predicting re-engagement with any form of education (not just VET) by the age of 25 were socioeconomic status and school sector.
 - Those with lower socioeconomic status were less likely to re-engage with education than those with higher socioeconomic status, although this impact could be overcome to some extent if their parents had post-school VET plans for their child
 - Those with higher socioeconomic status who attended Catholic or independent schools were more likely to re-engage with education than those who attended government schools (although the latter is still relatively high)
- The majority of LSAY respondents who re-engaged with education after leaving school early do so within six months. This, combined with personal and parental post-school plans, suggests that these young people are making conscious decisions about their learning and career pathways.



VET for secondary school students: a research synthesis

Michelle Circelli and Gitta Siekmann

30 March 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57070

The aim of this synthesis was to provide an overview of VET for secondary school students in Australia. The paper focused on reasons for choosing and participating in VET programs delivered in schools; models of delivery; quality of delivery; and outcomes, both short and medium-term, from these programs.

Summary of findings

This paper identified insights emerging from existing research on the delivery of VET to secondary students in Australia, insights that could assist in providing a meaningful consideration of and response to concerns such as those described. Current knowledge gaps are identified with areas for further research suggested.

Key messages

- Participation in VET programs in school has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years, ranging from around 233 800 students in 2010 to 241 200 in 2020, with a peak of 257 100 in 2015. Measuring the full extent of participation is made difficult, however, due to the national definition and reporting scope of VET for secondary school students, which excludes VET that does not directly contribute to a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE).
- Undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship has been found to lead to higher rates of apprentice- and traineeships or other types of employment post-school. The proportion of young people undertaking this type of VET

program, however, has remained at less than 10% for the last five years.

- The quality of VET programs delivered as part of an SSCE is generally good, but persistent concerns remain about the quality of some programs, particularly those undertaken through third-party or auspicing arrangements. Similar concerns apply to the quality of career advice.
- The short-term outcomes from VET programs delivered in schools are positive, with about 75% of students employed or in further education and training six to 12 months after completing their training, although the effectiveness of these programs in facilitating access to higher-level qualifications post-school is questioned. These positive outcomes continue in the medium-term, with about 80% of those who undertook VET programs at school employed, including working and studying, four to five years post-school completion.
- Limitations in the current data collections, however, make it difficult to measure the full investment in, quality of, and long-term outcomes from, VET programs delivered in schools.





Exploratory analysis of VET market segments

Bryan Palmer

6 April 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57059

This technical paper summarises the exploratory quantitative analysis undertaken to investigate how VET students cluster and segment in the Australian VET market. The paper outlines the clustering algorithms used and provides insights into the identified market segments, with case studies used to explore key segments (students in targeted English programs; students in social inclusion programs; and migrant students) in more detail.

Summary of findings

This analysis is outlined in three sections:

- The first section focuses on 'clustering' as a technique for grouping data and the three clustering algorithms used. These are then discussed in more detail to provide some insights into how they operate. Their specific data requirements, along with their strengths and weaknesses, are also considered.
- In the next section the outputs of the clustering approaches are considered. The resultant clusters are examined to better understand them, and meaningfully label and group them into segments.

- With the insights gained from the clustering process, the final section of this paper returns to the raw data. This step was necessary to further explore (in this case, only some of) the identified market segments. Here three key market segments are explored: students in targeted English programs; students in social inclusion programs; and migrant students.

Key messages

Two of the three clustering algorithms (k-means and agglomerative) were applied to the total VET activity (TVA) data.

- After considering the output across these two clustering algorithms, several segments within the Australian VET market were identified:
 - targeted English programs/students
 - overseas students (studying in Australia)
 - younger students (includes VET in Schools programs)
 - migrants
 - social inclusion programs/students
 - jurisdictional priorities
 - program enrolments not elsewhere identified (NEI)
 - subject-only enrolments NEI.
- The VET system collects largely categorical variables — with different levels of consistency and completeness — for millions of students, programs and subjects. As a result, it is not well suited to the application of clustering algorithms. Despite this, two clustering algorithms (k-means and agglomerative) were applied to the data, with a third (DBSCAN) unable to be applied successfully.
- While clustering algorithms can carve a dataset into clusters, identifying something that is meaningful to practitioners in a way that explains the clusters is not always guaranteed.

Sometimes it can be challenging to bring a useful human perspective or narrative to the clustered outputs. The approach taken in this paper was to look at the features in each cluster that were overly represented compared with all students.

- The algorithms applied assumed single-cluster membership to the exclusion of all others. This is an analytically useful (but unrealistic) simplification. In real life, the identified market segments are not mutually exclusive, and students may belong to more than one segment.
- The research approach was unable to conclusively use the clustering outputs to determine whether the identified clusters align with, or bring insights to, the other typologies for segmenting the Australian VET market that can be found in academic literature.





Journeying through VET: a case study of foundation skills learners

Michelle Circelli, Michelle Hall, Zhenyuan Li, Adrian Ong and Patrick Lim

4 August 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57053

Adult language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, as well as employability skills (for example, collaboration, problem-solving), often referred to as foundation skills, are key ingredients that help people get a job, remain employed, look after their mental and physical health, and participate in their community.

Using Total VET Activity and National Student Outcome Survey data, this exploratory research explored the enrolment paths, program completions and employment and further study outcomes of learners who had enrolled in nationally recognised foundation skills programs between 2016 and 2019.

Summary of findings

The research identified four distinct groups of foundation skills learners, each featuring varying student, program and provider characteristics:

- 'foundation skills only' learners, who enrolled in an LLND or employment skills program in 2016 and only enrolled in LLND or employment skills programs subsequently
- 'foundation skills followed by other VET' learners, who enrolled in an LLND or employment skills program in 2016 and enrolled in other VET programs in subsequent years
- 'foundation skills and other VET concurrently' learners, who enrolled in an LLND or employment skills program and another VET program concurrently in 2016

- 'other VET followed by foundation skills' learners, who enrolled in a VET program in 2016 (not LLND or employment skills) and enrolled in an LLND or employment skills program in subsequent years.

Key messages

- Foundation skills learners often embark on complex journeys through the VET system, with these involving multiple enrolments in LLND or employment skills programs and, in many cases, other VET programs.
- Learners who enrol in foundation skills programs in some combination with other VET programs are more likely to complete any nationally recognised VET program than those who only enrol in foundation skills programs.
- Learners who complete a foundation skills qualification have poorer employment outcomes than their non-foundation skills qualification completer peers. This is not to say the training is not beneficial. For example, the foundation skills qualification completers who were employed after training were significantly more likely than their non-foundation skills peers to indicate that they found the training relevant to their current job.
- There are a broad range of reasons why learners enrol in foundation skills programs: understanding their underlying intention or motivation for enrolling must also be considered when gauging a program's success or otherwise.



VET and higher education pathways – do outcomes differ for the same occupation?

Bridget Wibrow

7 September 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/57067

This report explored occupations that can be entered via either a VET pathway or a higher education pathway. It examined whether these individuals do the same job tasks and roles; if there are differences in how well the qualifications prepare them for the role and whether they have the same occupation and employment outcomes, such as salary and career pathways.

The first-stage of the research explored data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, which contains information on the educational and labour market activities for individuals over time. The second stage of the research consisted of 20 interviews with employers to investigate their perspectives on both VET and higher education qualifications as entry pathways to occupations, and the values they place on these qualifications.

Summary of findings

The first stage analysis found that graduates with VET qualifications have similar rates of employment, including full-time employment, and levels of job satisfaction as those with higher education qualifications. However, VET graduates tend to have lower wages, fewer opportunities for career progression and less autonomy than higher education graduates.

Findings from the interviews indicate that: employers regularly hire both VET- and higher education-qualified people in the same occupations; VET graduates have more practical skills and are more job-ready in the short-term; and that, for most occupations, the job pathways of VET- and higher education-qualified workers differ.

Key messages

- Overall, VET- and higher education-qualified individuals in the same occupation undertake the same tasks and receive the same salary initially (with the exception of childcare workers), but over time their differing qualifications lead to different job outcomes and career pathways. Higher education qualifications tend to lead to higher pay, more autonomy, supervisory responsibilities and more opportunities for career progression.
- Employers actively recruit for and employ both VET- and higher education-qualified individuals. When assessing candidates for positions, experience, skills and fit with the company are often more important than the qualification.
- Due to their technical nature, VET qualifications enable new workers to ‘hit the ground running’ when entering occupations compared with those with higher education qualifications. VET graduates have more experience in using tools, equipment and software in their courses.
- Receiving credit for VET qualifications and workplace experience when transitioning to a degree is important in creating pathways from VET to higher education in assisting individuals to build upon previous study and transition to higher-skilled occupations, and to support lifelong learning.
- Enhanced and more accurate career guidance is needed to enable people to better understand the qualifications required for an occupation and the pathways available to them. This will help individuals such as those starting their careers, those transitioning between occupations and those engaging in lifelong learning to make more informed choices.

4



Promotions, resources and events





Webinars

NCVER hosted webinars on a broad range of topics relevant to the tertiary education and training sector. The following webinars were presented during 2022, recordings of which are available on the NCVER Portal at ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/events/webinarseries.

The best of both worlds? Integrating VET and higher education

24 February 2022

Presented by Dr Lizzie Knight, Victoria University, and Dr Steven Hodge, Griffith University, and chaired by Tabatha Griffin, NCVER

There is renewed interest in better aligning VET and higher education. This webinar presents key findings and issues from a recent NCVER research report *The best of both worlds? Integrating VET and higher education* (2021).

Making delivery better: perspectives from RTOs

7 April 2022

Presented by Hugh Guthrie and Melinda Waters, with discussants Jenny Dodd and Andrew Shea, and chaired by Tabatha Griffin, NCVER

This webinar reviewed the findings of the NCVER report - *Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs*.

RTOs come in many shapes and sizes, with a wide variety of missions, courses and students, but all have many aspects of quality delivery in common (good is good!), despite some fundamental differences between RTO types (TAFEs, privates, community education and enterprise). What they also all have in common is needing to be able to measure quality effectively – how well they are doing things, both to help them improve and to convince others of how good they are.

Do outcomes differ for VET and higher education-qualified workers in the same occupation?

20 September 2022

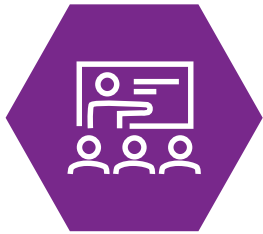
Presented by Bridget Wibrow, NCVET, and Dr Cain Polidano, University of Melbourne

This webinar was based on the report: *VET and higher education pathways – do outcomes differ for the same occupation?*, which was released on 7 September.

Some occupations can be entered into via either a VET qualification or a higher education qualification, for example surveying, but are the outcomes the same for people who choose a VET pathway over higher education?

Using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey and interviews with employers in four occupations – childcare workers; surveyors; graphic designers; and medical laboratory technicians – this webinar explored whether these individuals are undertaking the same tasks and receiving the same job outcomes, such as salary and career pathways, as their higher education counterparts.





NCVER presentations

Presenter: Rose-Anne Polvere and Michelle Circelli

Event: Online presentation at Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) – 2022 stretched conference

Host: Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)

Topic: VOCEDplus and NCVER update on adult literacy research and resources

Presenter: Cameron Forrest

Event: DESBT Secondary Schools VET Forum

Host: Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Topic: 'Soft skills' in vocational education and training

Presenter: Cameron Forrest

Event: Data Insights at DESE (DIAD) seminar series

Host: Australian Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Topic: 'Soft skills' in vocational education and training

Presenter: Michelle Circelli and Melinda Lees

Event: Austrade bilateral country dialogue with South Africa's trade recognition council (virtual)

Host: Austrade South Africa and the Quality Council for Trade Occupations (QCTO)

Topic: NCVER's role in VET research and statistics

Presenter: Ronnie Semo

Event: AIFS 2022 conference

Host: Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

Topic: Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth: data user workshop

Presenter: Phil Loveder

Event: World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference - 2022, Tianjin PRC (virtual)

Host: Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China

Topic: Skills for green and sustainable Innovation



Phil Loveder at UNESCO International Conference at the launch of their TVET strategy 2022-29 held in Bonn, Germany.

Presenter: Michelle Circelli and Zhenyuan Li

Event: 31st National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills'

Host: NCVER

Topic: Journeying through VET: a case study of foundation skills learners

Presenter: Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin

Event: 31st National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills'

Host: NCVER

Topic: Where to from here? Implications of a pandemic on VET training delivery

Presenter: Ian White

Event: 31st National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills'

Host: NCVER

Topic: Upskilling and reskilling: the impact of COVID-19 on employers and their training choices

Presenter: Ian White

Event: 31st National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills'

Host: NCVER

Topic: Live Q&A Talk Show featuring Steve Davis (Host), Kira Clarke and Ian White

Presenter: Tracy Gamlin

Event: 31st National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills'

Host: NCVER

Topic: Let me introduce you to VOCEDplus!

Presenter: Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin

Event: CQ University Retention Community of Practice

Host: CQ University

Topic: The online delivery of VET during the COVID-19 pandemic: research insights

Presenter: Phil Loveder

Event: Mekong Region Vocational Education and Training Senior Leaders Congress, Vientiane Laos (virtual)

Host: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (through Griffith University)

Topic: Labour market information and skills anticipation systems in the Australian context

Presenter: Phil Loveder

Event: Australia Awards, Bangladesh Senior Managers' Program

Host: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (through ESCALIER Consulting)

Topic: Building professional research, analysis and evaluation capability across Australia and internationally

Presenter: Phil Loveder

Event: Bilateral meeting of national VET agencies in Australia and Germany on the Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) initiative

Host: German (Federal) Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and NCVER

Topic: Skills anticipation systems for green skills and professional profiles in high-technology industries

Presenter: Michelle Circelli

Event: Presentation at WAVE National Forum 2022

Host: Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE)

Topic: Empowering women and girls through adult and vocational education – Women in vocational education and training: participation and outcomes

Presenter: Phil Loveder

Event: International Research

Forum: Forms of collaboration in training and fostering the next generation of VET researchers, Bonn Germany

Host: German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

Topic: Building VET research capacity: A case study of Australia

Presenter: Michelle Circelli and Zhenyuan Li

Event: Online webinar at Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)

Host: Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL)

Topic: Journeying through VET: a case study of foundation skills learners

Presenter: Tracy Gamlin

Event: TDA Convention 2022

Host: TAFE Directors Australia

Topic: Understanding courage, change and challenge in VET in Australia and around the world: learning through knowledge sharing

Presenter: Joy de Leo

Event: LDSC RTO Forum

Host: WA Logistics & Defence Skills Council (LDSC)

Topic: The VET workforce

Presenter: Michelle Circelli

Event: Public webinar

Host: Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne

Topic: VET in Australia and India

Presenter: Emerick Chew

Event: 8th Biennial ACSPRI Social Science Methodology Conference 2022

Host: Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Inc.

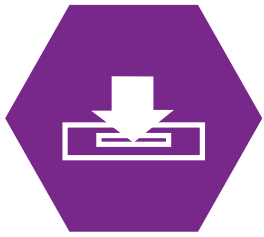
Topic: Understanding the linked LSAY-NAPLAN data

Presenter: Michelle Circelli

Event: Invite-only panel

Host: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

Topic: Foundation Skills Advisory Group Submissions



Submissions

NCVER's submissions to parliamentary inquiries and public consultations are available at www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/submissions/submissions-2022.

Delivery of vocational education and training (VET) in regional, rural, and remote Queensland, House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training



23 May 2022

Special submission for the Queensland Parliament Education, Employment and Training Committee, Review of the delivery of VET in regional, rural, and remote Queensland, chaired by the Hon. Ms Kim Richards, MP.

www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=166&id=4214

House of Representatives Inquiry into Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022 [Provisions] and the Jobs and Skills Australia (National Skills Commissioner Repeal) Bill 2022 [Provisions]



19 August 2022

NCVER's submission focuses on the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill [Provisions] 2022 to establish Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). This submission briefly outlines the governance and functions of previous statutory bodies responsible to Ministerial Councils or Ministers for VET over the last 30 years.

www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/JSABill2022



‘NO FRILLS’ 2022



The *National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference ‘No Frills’* is a well-known annual national conference, which brings together diverse perspectives in relation to policy and practice from across the VET sector through sharing, discussing, and presenting on priority issues.

The 31st ‘No Frills’ conference was hosted online due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

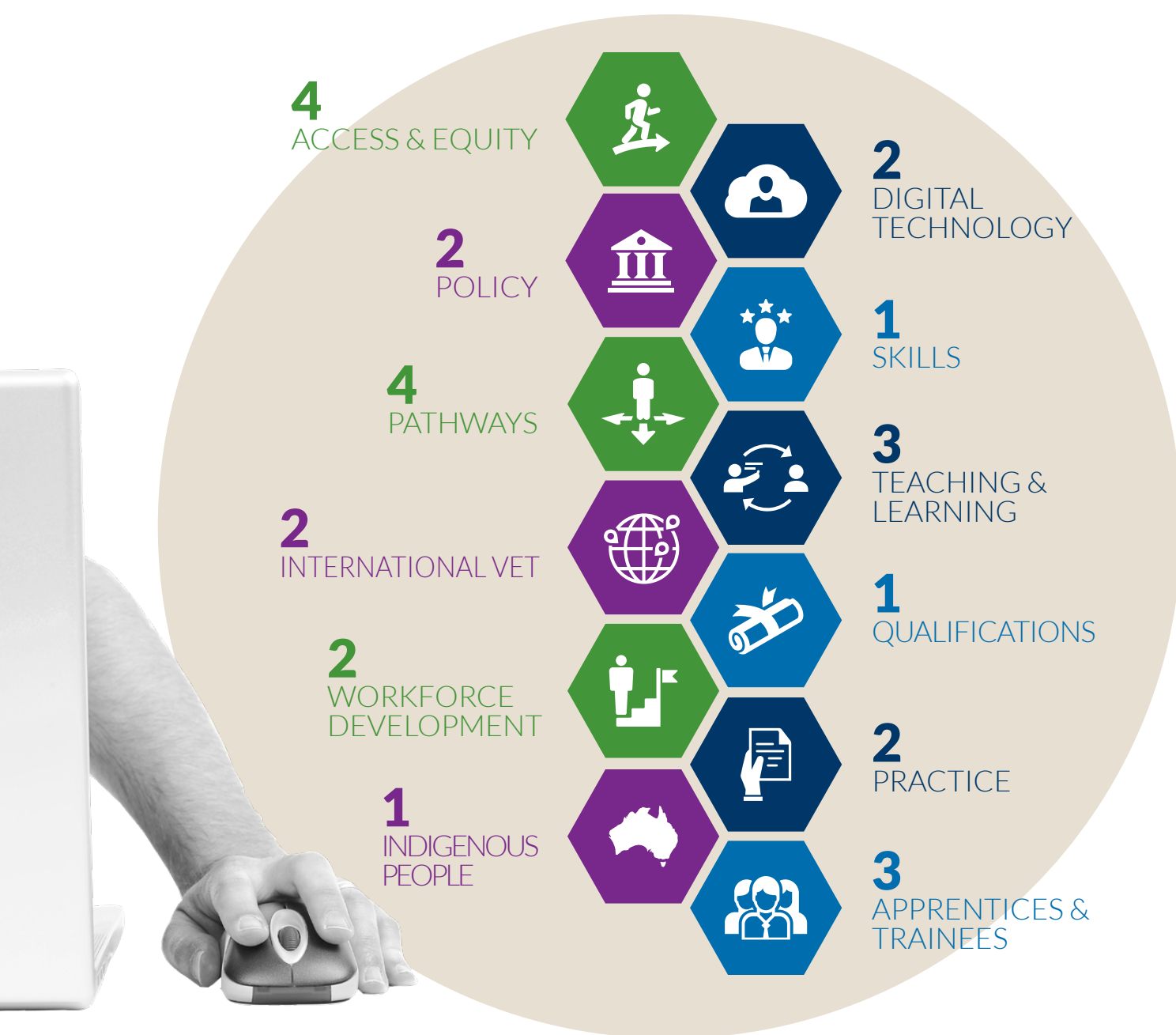
The theme, *VET's role in transforming the future* asked presenters to examine issues relating to the ways by which VET is adapting, anticipating and activating change in response to shifting future skill demands. The conference program outlined the areas that need to be addressed, including how to forecast future skill needs, qualification development and design, micro-credentials, ensuring quality, and building the capacity of our VET educator workforce.

Accordingly, NCVER publicly released a discussion paper VET’s role in transforming the future (see page 49) which explores how the VET sector can transform the future by adapting to changing skill needs, helping learners to adjust and responding to unpredictable events.

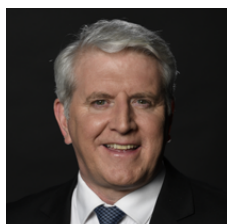
NCVER's third online conference attracted excellent numbers with delegates attending from every Australian state and territory, along with three international presenters/delegates.

Presentations

Twenty-seven presentations were given on the following topics, as well as one focus session, a ministerial address, three keynote presentations, seven featured speakers, and three live Q&A talk shows.



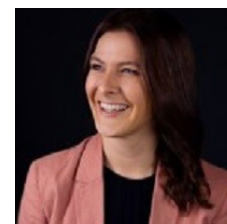
Keynote speakers



The Hon Brendan O'Connor, MP, Minister for Skills and Training, opened the program and discussed how VET can enable Australians to future-proof their livelihood, boost productivity and make the country competitive on the world stage.



Sophie Renton, trends analyst and Managing Director at McCrindle Research, discussed how the world of work is changing and the need to invest in lifelong learning to prepare students and future proof careers.



Alex Jackson, Executive Designer at ThinkPlace, discussed how to integrate creative behavioural design and gamification in VET.

Simon Walker, Managing Director of NCVER, discussed how big data are being used globally and locally to inform the VET sector, along with the future data innovations that will benefit VET students, RTOs, regulators and policymakers.



Steve Davis, Creative Director, Talked About Marketing, interviewed a collection of featured presenters during three live Q&A sessions at 'No Frills'. Topics covered during these the lively panel discussions included why business leaders are turning to education and training for the solutions; the future skill needs of service-based industries; upskilling and reskilling and the impact of COVID-19 on employers and their training choices; strengthening skills pathways to work for disadvantaged youth; quality VET delivery; and VET course pathways.

View the conference presentations

Presentations from the 31st National VET Research Conference 'No Frills' are available on VOCEDplus, NCVER's international tertiary education research database.





'No Frills' discussion paper

VET's role in transforming the future

Bridget Wibrow

Published 30 June 2022

www.ncver.edu.au/publications/nofrillspaper22

'VET's role in transforming the future' was the theme for the 31st National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills'.

In this discussion paper, we explore how the VET sector transforms the future by adapting to changing skill needs, helping learners to adjust and responding to unpredictable events.

'Transforming the future' can have different connotations in different contexts, but here we focus on the way in which the VET sector is adapting, and anticipating and activating change in response to future skill demands. We also explore how the sector assists learners to skill, upskill and reskill, which in turn actively contributes to the Australian economy. Without a doubt, the past few years have been both difficult and unpredictable for many, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other natural disasters such as bushfires and floods. This paper therefore also considers how the VET system has been able to adapt to these unforeseen events and what can be learnt from these responses and adapted for the future.

Presenters to the conference have been asked to consider how VET can continue to support Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to the country's shifting future skill demands, by exploring issues such as delivering future skills now, innovative RTO—industry partnerships and empowering disadvantaged learners, among many others.

The theme for 2022 builds upon last year's theme of the 'past informing the future' to investigate what we can do now to ensure that the sector continues to play a role in transforming the future.



Podcasts – Vocational Voices



‘Vocational Voices’ is the official podcast of NCVER. Join host and broadcast journalist Steve Davis and Managing Director NCVER Simon Walker and listen to leading experts discuss current trends in VET.

Listen, follow and subscribe via your favourite podcast apps.



Season 7

S7 Ep 4: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on VET

Steve Davis, Simon Walker, Jenny Dodd, Brian Rungie

Published on 14 December 2022

Apart from the health and economic impacts, the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected Australia’s VET sector. The full extent of these effects, however, has just started to emerge.

In what ways did the first waves of the pandemic affect the VET workforce – including trainers, resource developers and administrative staff? What changes and innovations occurred? More importantly, what were the impacts on students and their practical learning, particularly those in industries with a high skills shortage?

Steve Davis talks to Jenny Dodd, CEO, TAFE Directors Australia, and Brian Rungie, CEO, PEER, and Simon Walker, Managing Director, NCVER about the varying impacts of the pandemic, as well as the COVID-19-related opportunities and challenges being faced by Australia's VET sector.

The discussion partially draws from NCVER research in progress which will be published in early to mid-2023.



◀ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

www.ncver.edu.au/vocational-voices-s7ep4

S7 Ep 3: VET's role in transforming the future

Steve Davis, 'No Frills' 2022 featured speakers

Published on 8 August 2022

Steve Davis interviews a collection of presenters from three panel discussions at the 31st National VET Research Conference 'No Frills' held on 6–8 July 2022.

The conference theme was 'VET's role in transforming the future'. Topics covered in the lively discussion include why business leaders are turning to education and training for the solutions; the future skill needs of service-based industries; upskilling and reskilling and the impact of COVID-19 on employers and their training choices; strengthening skills pathways to work for disadvantaged youth; quality VET delivery; and VET course pathways.

Speakers are Ms Megan Lilly, Australian Industry Group; Ms Silvia Munoz, SkillsIQ; Mr Ian White, National Centre for Vocational Education Research; Ms Kira Clarke, Brotherhood of St Laurence; Mr Hugh Guthrie, Lusid Pty Ltd, and Mr Damian Oliver, National Skills Commission.



◀ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

www.ncver.edu.au/vocational-voices-s7ep3

S7 Ep 2: VET and higher education: should we push for integration?

Steve Davis, Simon Walker Megan Lilly

Published on 6 June 2022

Both VET and higher education (HE) offer the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed to equip students to progress their careers and also to participate in lifelong learning.

But given the difficulty and huge costs associated in integrating VET and HE, how do we harness the best of both sectors and maximise their benefits to students, employers and industry?

Megan Lilly, Executive Director of Ai Group's Centre for Education & Training, and Simon Walker, Managing Director, NCVER, talk to Steve Davis about why greater connectedness and fluidity between the sectors might be better than integration.

The discussion draws from *The best of both worlds? Integrating VET and higher education*, published by NCVER on 25 November 2021.



◀ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

www.ncver.edu.au/vocational-voices-s7ep2

S7 Ep 1: VET in Schools and the shadow of ATAR

Steve Davis, Simon Walker, Professor Peter Shergold AC

Published on 28 April 2022

Participation in higher education by school leavers has increased significantly in the last decade. VET participation has lagged by comparison. Are students headed for university accorded higher status at school than those who prefer to pursue a trade apprenticeship or traineeship?

While the general outcomes for students who participate in VET in Schools is good, choosing the right VET course or VET pathway is critical, as some pathways are undoubtedly better than others in terms of employment outcomes.

Professor Peter Shergold, AC, who chaired a major review for Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers of Education on senior secondary school pathways (*Looking to the future*), and Simon Walker, Managing Director, NCVER, talk to Steve Davis about whether people are overestimating the impact of ATAR on a student's future career prospects, and the proliferation of pathways that can be followed to find a future career.

The discussion draws from *VET for secondary school students: insights and outcomes*, published by NCVER on 14 October 2021.



◀ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

www.ncver.edu.au/vocational-voices-s7ep1

Seasons 1-6

Seasons 1-6 is a full back catalogue of 28 episodes recorded prior to 2022. Visit the NCVER Portal for more information.





VOCEDplus

In 2022, 3210 new titles were added to VOCEDplus, NCVER's free international research database for tertiary education relating to workforce needs, skills development, and social inclusion, taking the total number of items in VOCEDplus at the end of the year to 93 721.

Over 445 000 users from 235 countries and territories visited VOCEDplus 550 689 times, viewing 870 315 pages and conducting 31 274 unique searches.

2022 activity





VOCEDplus research



Our research

As well as managing VOCEDplus, NCVER's Knowledge Management branch also produce a set of research products that explore topical issues related to vocational education and training (VET), workforce needs and skills development.



Focus on...

Using references found in VOCEDplus and elsewhere, the aim of *Focus on...* is to provide an up-to-date 'snapshot' of research on topical issues in the tertiary education sector. *Focus on...* presents relevant and quality information including research analysis, policy, commentary, multimedia and statistics that introduce the topic and provide a guide to key resources.



What if?

What if? papers are designed to outline and compare recent insights into popular topics relating to vocational education and training (VET). Starting with an overview of the topic, these papers then ask the question 'What if...?' to create a space for readers to revisit these topics with a fresh perspective, and consider contrasting ideas and alternative possibilities.

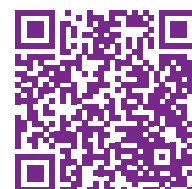
NCVER's Knowledge Management branch produces a set of research products that explore topical issues related to VET, workforce needs and skills development.

What if?

'What if?' papers are designed to outline and compare recent commentary on popular topics relating to VET. Beginning with an overview of the topic, these papers then ask the question 'What if ...?' to create a space for readers to revisit these topics with a fresh perspective and to consider contrasting ideas and alternative possibilities.

■ What if we could eliminate the stigma of VET?

The view of VET by students and their families, school staff and faculty, career advisors, employers and the broader public encompasses a range of perceptions. Image, awareness, quality, and relevance are four major and interrelated aspects of these perceptions, some of which are negative and misguided, creating a stigma associated with choosing a VET pathway. In this paper we give a broad overview of the perceptions involved and some of the approaches being taken to address them. We then ask, what if we could eliminate the stigma?



Focus on...

The 'Focus on' pages offer up-to-date quality information on topics of current importance in the sector. The pages present research analyses, policy, commentary, multimedia, and statistics that introduce the topic and provide a guide to key resources.

- **Apprenticeships and traineeships:
an update on key issues**

In 2015, our first issue of 'Focus on' provided an overview of apprenticeships and traineeships, with links to relevant research and resources. In this issue, we revisit this topic, focusing specifically on recent research that explores return on investment in apprenticeships and traineeships and the benefits for employers, apprentices, and society; issues that affect completions, including the impact of COVID-19; and an overview of recent policy in Australia and the UK.



- **Refugees and VET**

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) defines refugees as people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and who have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. They have often been forced to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones. The UNHCR has estimated that more than 100 million individuals have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations. This is the highest level of displacement on record and includes 27.1 million refugees worldwide — the highest number ever recorded. This issue of 'Focus on' outlines the role VET plays in helping refugees and displaced persons integrate into their new communities. It also discusses the barriers and obstacles refugees face and the potential role of technology in improving access to VET and delivering innovative educational solutions.

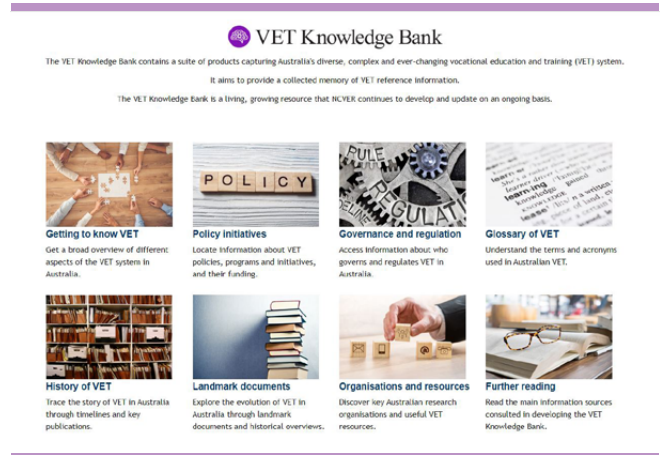




VET Knowledge Bank

The VET Knowledge Bank is a living, growing resource that aims to be a memory bank of VET reference information for Australia.

Through a suite of complementary products, it captures Australia's diverse, complex and ever-changing VET landscape. It contributes to an understanding of Australia's VET system and provides access to historical and current VET information such as milestones in the history of VET; information about government departments, ministers and committees responsible for skills and training, and state and territory training authorities; and highlights from federal, state and territory budgets that relate to VET.



Landmark document historical overviews

Two new essays have been added to the topical overviews examining the impact of the landmark documents. As presented in the VET Knowledge Bank, the VOCEDplus landmark documents are key documents now considered by historical and authoritative commentary to have influenced the development of the VET system, by providing vision and/or leading to significant reforms or widespread cultural/attitudinal change. The historical overviews describe the impact of the landmark documents on various aspects of the VET system. The two new additions to the historical overview are:



- **Apprenticeships and traineeships**

This overview focuses on the influence of four significant and central landmark reports on the development of the apprenticeship system in Australia, along with a consideration of the important role played by two later reports, which extend past the landmark documents timeline but which are included because of their significance and specific focus on apprenticeships.

Three key themes relating to the apprenticeship system are explored with reference to these six core reports: (1) system size; (2) gender participation in the system; and (3) the key concerns of the reports. A brief overview of a further six landmark documents with a secondary emphasis on apprenticeships rounds out this overview.

- **Funding**

This overview considers the history of the funding of VET across five decades. It draws on a range of reports, reviews, statistical data and relevant landmark reports to examine public and private funding and its distribution among public and private providers, employers, and students. The overview also explores evidence on the effects of various government policies on the use of funds in relation to the goals of the VET system.

Updates to timelines in the VET Knowledge Bank

- **Australian VET policy initiatives**

This timeline helps in understanding the scale of change in the VET sector, along with the individual policies, programs or initiatives that have shaped VET at both the national and state and territory levels. The timeline was updated in early 2022 to include all 2021 initiatives.

- **Milestones in the history of VET**

This timeline highlights key events in the history of VET in Australia, starting with the 1952 Commonwealth-State Apprenticeship Inquiry, the first national review of apprenticeships. The timeline has now been updated to include initiatives up to 2021.

- **Governing VET in Australia**

This timeline provides a record of Australian Prime Ministers and Commonwealth Ministers with skills and training portfolios. In the wake of the 2022 federal election, this timeline has been updated to include the new Labor government.



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Acknowledgement of Country

NCVER acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continued spiritual connection to land. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors/project teams and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government or state and territory governments.

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This document should be attributed as National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2023, *Research messages 2022*, NCVER, Adelaide.

IMAGES: GETTY & NCVER

ISSN 1838-8515 print version
1838-8531 web edition

TD/TNC 151.07

Published by NCVER, ABN 87 007 967 311

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