This is an alternative text version of *Trends in VET:* *how has VET changed over the last 20 years? - infographic*. It is designed to be read via a screen reader and consequently has had all visual elements removed. Please see the online version available at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/infographics> if you wish to view the full version.

# Trends in VET: how has VET changed over the last 20 years?

This infographic is based on the following occasional paper: Atkinson, G, & Stanwick, J, 2016, *Trends in VET: policy and participation*, NCVER, Adelaide.

The publication and infographic present data from NCVER’s National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, and the National VET Provider Collection – government-funded students and courses.

## Labour market conditions

Employment trends, 15 to 24-year-olds and those 25 years and over, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 15 to 24-year-olds | | | 25 years and over | | |
|  | Full-time employed to population | Part-time employed to population | Unemployment rate | Full-time employed to population | Part-time employed to population | Unemployment rate |
| 1996 | 36.7 | 22.9 | 14.9 | 44.9 | 12.5 | 6.8 |
| 1997 | 33.5 | 22.7 | 15.7 | 44.4 | 12.8 | 6.5 |
| 1998 | 33.8 | 24.2 | 14.0 | 44.6 | 13.0 | 6.0 |
| 1999 | 34.3 | 24.5 | 13.0 | 44.6 | 13.1 | 5.3 |
| 2000 | 34.1 | 26.0 | 11.8 | 45.2 | 13.8 | 4.5 |
| 2001 | 32.8 | 27.2 | 12.7 | 44.0 | 14.4 | 5.2 |
| 2002 | 32.0 | 27.5 | 12.6 | 44.2 | 14.6 | 4.6 |
| 2003 | 31.7 | 28.4 | 11.2 | 44.3 | 14.8 | 4.3 |
| 2004 | 31.9 | 27.3 | 11.5 | 44.7 | 14.7 | 3.9 |
| 2005 | 33.6 | 28.5 | 9.6 | 45.4 | 15.3 | 3.6 |
| 2006 | 34.4 | 28.1 | 9.4 | 45.7 | 15.5 | 3.4 |
| 2007 | 34.5 | 27.7 | 9.3 | 46.4 | 15.6 | 3.0 |
| 2008 | 34.7 | 28.3 | 7.4 | 46.9 | 15.4 | 3.1 |
| 2009 | 30.1 | 28.6 | 11.3 | 45.4 | 16.2 | 4.3 |
| 2010 | 30.4 | 27.9 | 11.2 | 45.9 | 16.4 | 3.5 |
| 2011 | 30.6 | 28.4 | 10.8 | 45.7 | 16.3 | 3.9 |
| 2012 | 29.1 | 28.5 | 11.1 | 45.6 | 16.2 | 3.8 |
| 2013 | 27.7 | 29.1 | 12.3 | 45.1 | 16.2 | 4.3 |
| 2014 | 26.8 | 29.8 | 12.9 | 44.8 | 16.8 | 4.6 |
| 2015 | 26.2 | 30.3 | 12.9 | 44.7 | 16.7 | 4.8 |

Note: Population is civilian population aged 15–24 years, or civilian population aged 25 years and over.  
Source: ABS Labour force Australia, detailed electronic delivery, cat.no.6291.0.55.001, January 2016, cube LM1.

ABS labour force figures show the 15 to 64-year-old labour force has grown in absolute terms, from 8.9 million in 1996 to 12.0 million 2015, an increase of 35%.

For younger people, full-time employment rates have decreased, especially since the Global Financial Crisis, and has trended more to part time. This is in contrast to a relatively more stable environment for older workers.

## The ups and downs of VET participation rates

Rates of participation in government-funded VET, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Male | Female | Persons |
| 1996 | 11.3 | 10.4 | 11.0 |
| 1997 | 11.8 | 11.0 | 11.8 |
| 1998 | 12.3 | 11.6 | 12.2 |
| 1999 | 13.1 | 12.7 | 13.0 |
| 2000 | 13.7 | 13.3 | 13.5 |
| 2001 | 13.4 | 12.8 | 13.1 |
| 2002 | 13.3 | 12.5 | 13.0 |
| 2003 | 13.0 | 12.1 | 12.6 |
| 2004 | 12.3 | 11.1 | 11.7 |
| 2005 | 12.3 | 11.3 | 11.8 |
| 2006 | 12.5 | 11.2 | 11.9 |
| 2007 | 12.2 | 11.0 | 11.6 |
| 2008 | 12.2 | 11.0 | 11.6 |
| 2009 | 12.1 | 10.8 | 11.5 |
| 2010 | 12.5 | 11.3 | 11.9 |
| 2011 | 12.8 | 11.9 | 12.4 |
| 2012 | 13.1 | 12.2 | 12.7 |
| 2013 | 12.5 | 11.5 | 12.0 |
| 2014 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 11.5 |
| 2015 | 10.7 | 9.6 | 10.2 |

Note: The rate is expressed as students as a proportion of the 15 to 64-year-old population.  
Source: NCVER Historical time series of government-funded VET 1996–2015; ABS demographic  
statistics, cat.no.3101.0, September 2015.

There have been fluctuations in the rates of government-funded VET participation since 1996. The general increase in participation in the early period (1996–2000) coincides with the general expansion of VET, the introduction of ‘user choice‘ policy initiatives, broadening of the apprenticeship system and a rapid expansion in the number of registered training providers in this period (see [Korbel and Misko 2016](https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2871) available at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2871>).

Following the Global Financial Crisis, participation in VET increased driven in part by jurisdictional VET reforms including national training entitlement models introduced under the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (2012–16).

## The diversity of VET student participation across states and territories

Rates of participation in VET by state, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT |
| 1996 | 11.8 | 13.1 | 8.8 | 10.3 | 9.2 | 7.9 | 11.2 | 8.5 |
| 1997 | 12.2 | 13.7 | 9.6 | 14.6 | 9.1 | 8.6 | 12.1 | 8.5 |
| 1998 | 12.3 | 13.9 | 10.9 | 15.3 | 9.2 | 9.4 | 12.9 | 8.4 |
| 1999 | 12.6 | 15.3 | 12.6 | 13.6 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 13.8 | 8.4 |
| 2000 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 11.3 | 14.8 | 10.1 | 10.4 | 15.5 | 9.0 |
| 2001 | 13.1 | 14.8 | 12.5 | 14.5 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 15.4 | 9.1 |
| 2002 | 12.6 | 15.4 | 12.2 | 14.0 | 10.1 | 10.5 | 15.7 | 8.5 |
| 2003 | 13.2 | 14.3 | 11.8 | 11.4 | 9.8 | 11.4 | 14.0 | 9.4 |
| 2004 | 11.6 | 13.8 | 10.8 | 11.4 | 9.4 | 12.2 | 13.7 | 9.5 |
| 2005 | 12.2 | 12.9 | 11.0 | 11.6 | 9.5 | 12.4 | 14.5 | 9.7 |
| 2006 | 12.4 | 13.0 | 10.8 | 11.0 | 9.8 | 13.0 | 14.7 | 9.8 |
| 2007 | 11.9 | 12.9 | 10.3 | 11.1 | 9.9 | 13.6 | 15.0 | 9.8 |
| 2008 | 11.8 | 13.2 | 10.2 | 11.2 | 10.0 | 14.2 | 14.1 | 9.9 |
| 2009 | 11.6 | 12.9 | 9.9 | 11.4 | 10.2 | 13.1 | 14.6 | 10.4 |
| 2010 | 12.1 | 13.5 | 10.1 | 11.4 | 10.6 | 14.9 | 14.6 | 11.4 |
| 2011 | 12.1 | 15.5 | 10.1 | 11.3 | 10.4 | 14.2 | 14.7 | 11.2 |
| 2012 | 12.3 | 16.6 | 9.5 | 13.1 | 10.0 | 13.0 | 14.4 | 11.3 |
| 2013 | 11.5 | 16.1 | 8.1 | 15.1 | 9.5 | 13.0 | 13.2 | 10.7 |
| 2014 | 11.3 | 15.1 | 8.5 | 11.8 | 8.8 | 13.3 | 14.4 | 9.7 |
| 2015 | 9.5 | 12.7 | 9.0 | 9.8 | 8.3 | 11.2 | 13.9 | 8.6 |

Note: The rate is expressed as students as a proportion of the 15 to 64-year-old population in each state and territory.  
Source: NCVER Historical time series of government-funded VET 1996–2015; ABS demographic statistics, cat.no.3101.0, September 2015.

Under the National Partnership Agreement for Skills Reform (2012–2016), the jurisdictions are responsible for implementing their own entitlement models.

Factors contributing to recent declines include:

* refinements to entitlement models, with a sharper focus of government funding in support of priority skills to match local job opportunities
* students attending private VET providers (refer to *Total VET Students and Courses 2014 and 2015 available at* <https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/total-vet-activity>) and growth in government-funded VET going to private providers (particularly for diploma and above qualifications due to VET FEE-HELP)
* decline in apprentice and trainee numbers, especially since 2012
* higher education reforms, particularly since 2009, resulting in rapid expansion under a demand driven funding model that supported growth in higher education enrolments, as seen below.

## Trends in education participation: higher education and VET

Rates of participation in higher education and government-funded VET as a   
proportion of the 15–64 year old population, Australia 2001–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Higher education | VET |
| 2001 | 5.3 | 13.1 |
| 2002 | 5.4 | 13.0 |
| 2003 | 5.4 | 12.6 |
| 2004 | 5.3 | 11.7 |
| 2005 | 5.3 | 11.8 |
| 2006 | 5.3 | 11.9 |
| 2007 | 5.4 | 11.6 |
| 2008 | 5.4 | 11.6 |
| 2009 | 5.6 | 11.5 |
| 2010 | 5.8 | 11.9 |
| 2011 | 5.9 | 12.4 |
| 2012 | 6.1 | 12.7 |
| 2013 | 6.4 | 12.0 |

Source: NCVER National Student Provider Collection and Australian Department of Education and   
Training Higher Education Statistics (Department of Education and Training, 2016).

## The growth of higher level qualifications

Rates of participation in VET by qualification level, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Certificate III and above | Certificate I/II | Non AQF level |
| 1996 | 4.0 | 0.9 | 6.1 |
| 1997 | 4.5 | 1.5 | 5.8 |
| 1998 | 4.9 | 2.1 | 5.2 |
| 1999 | 5.5 | 2.7 | 4.8 |
| 2000 | 5.6 | 2.9 | 5.0 |
| 2001 | 5.9 | 2.9 | 4.3 |
| 2002 | 5.9 | 2.9 | 4.2 |
| 2003 | 5.9 | 2.6 | 4.1 |
| 2004 | 5.7 | 2.4 | 3.5 |
| 2005 | 5.8 | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| 2006 | 5.8 | 2.8 | 3.3 |
| 2007 | 5.9 | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| 2008 | 6.1 | 2.6 | 2.9 |
| 2009 | 6.4 | 2.6 | 2.4 |
| 2010 | 7.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 |
| 2011 | 7.8 | 2.6 | 2.0 |
| 2012 | 8.3 | 2.6 | 1.8 |
| 2013 | 7.9 | 2.4 | 1.7 |
| 2014 | 7.8 | 2.1 | 1.6 |
| 2015 | 6.8 | 1.8 | 1.5 |

Note: The rate is expressed as students as a proportion of the 15 to 64-year-old population.  
Source: NCVER Historical time series of government-funded VET 1996–2015; ABS demographic statistics,  
cat.no.3101.0, September 2015.

Policy emphasis since the late 2000s has been increasing participation in higher level VET qualifications at certificate III level and above including:

* targets in the Council of Australian Governments' National Agreement for Workforce Development
* the entitlement for a government subsidised certificate III qualification for those who do not currently have a qualification to that level.

## The growth and decline of apprenticeships and traineeships

Trade and non-trade apprenticeship commencements to labour force rates by sex, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Male trade occupation | Male non-trade occupation | Female trade occupation | Female non-trade occupation |
| 1996 | 0.67 | 0.39 | 0.17 | 0.41 |
| 1997 | 0.69 | 0.55 | 0.17 | 0.69 |
| 1998 | 0.75 | 0.77 | 0.17 | 1.06 |
| 1999 | 0.87 | 1.33 | 0.20 | 1.91 |
| 2000 | 0.90 | 1.44 | 0.20 | 1.73 |
| 2001 | 0.77 | 1.56 | 0.20 | 1.97 |
| 2002 | 0.84 | 1.79 | 0.23 | 2.22 |
| 2003 | 0.97 | 2.01 | 0.30 | 2.58 |
| 2004 | 1.07 | 1.66 | 0.22 | 2.16 |
| 2005 | 1.11 | 1.66 | 0.23 | 2.08 |
| 2006 | 1.15 | 1.63 | 0.23 | 2.07 |
| 2007 | 1.20 | 1.55 | 0.24 | 2.08 |
| 2008 | 1.29 | 1.55 | 0.27 | 2.15 |
| 2009 | 1.06 | 1.47 | 0.24 | 2.03 |
| 2010 | 1.25 | 1.51 | 0.27 | 2.18 |
| 2011 | 1.30 | 1.63 | 0.26 | 2.40 |
| 2012 | 1.34 | 2.04 | 0.29 | 2.79 |
| 2013 | 1.19 | 1.03 | 0.24 | 1.48 |
| 2014 | 1.25 | 0.90 | 0.25 | 1.28 |
| 2015 | 1.14 | 0.70 | 0.20 | 0.96 |

Notes: Commencements are based on financial year starting from July 1995 to June 1996 and ending with July 2014 to June 2015. The rate is expressed as commencements as a proportion of the 15 to 64-year-old labour force.  
Trades are classified as all occupations listed under ANZSCO major group ‘3 – Technicians and trades workers’ and ‘Non-trades’ are classified as all other ANZSCO groups.   
Source: NCVER National Apprentices and Trainees Collection 1995–2015; ABS Labour force Australia cat.no.6291.0.55.001, cube LM1.

The increase in commencements over 1996–2003 aligns with the general broadening of the system, and boost in the incentives policy, resulting in a sharp rise in non-trade apprenticeships (traineeships) for both males and females.

The significant drop in commencements from 2012 onwards, particularly in non-trade apprenticeships (traineeships), coincides with reductions in the incentives in mostly traineeships not on the National Skill Needs List.

## The influence of accelerated completion for trade apprenticeships

Trade completions by age by duration of two years or less, 1996–2015 (%)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 24 and under | 25 and over |
| 1996 | 22.5 | 27.7 |
| 1997 | 19.5 | 33.4 |
| 1998 | 18.8 | 31.8 |
| 1999 | 18.7 | 29.8 |
| 2000 | 20.1 | 38.3 |
| 2001 | 21.4 | 37.0 |
| 2002 | 22.3 | 39.4 |
| 2003 | 23.7 | 48.7 |
| 2004 | 24.1 | 47.5 |
| 2005 | 25.3 | 43.3 |
| 2006 | 24.8 | 40.4 |
| 2007 | 23.7 | 44.1 |
| 2008 | 22.9 | 39.0 |
| 2009 | 23.7 | 41.5 |
| 2010 | 23.3 | 46.5 |
| 2011 | 24.9 | 50.3 |
| 2012 | 27.1 | 54.8 |
| 2013 | 30.2 | 60.5 |
| 2014 | 30.4 | 66.2 |
| 2015 | 29.8 | 59.8 |

Notes: Completions are based on financial year starting from July 1995 to June 1996 and ending with   
July 2014 to June 2015.    
The rate is expressed as completion by duration of two years or less as a proportion of all completions.    
Source: NCVER Apprenticeship and Traineeship Collection 1995–2015.

From 2008 onwards, there have been increases in the proportion of trade training taking two years or less, particularly prominent for adult apprentices aged 25 years and over. These trends can possibly be attributed to the introduction of the Australian Accelerated Apprenticeships initiative (2011–2016), as well as the wider sectoral promotion of competency-based training, recognition of prior learning and other mechanisms for enabling quicker completion.

See the full paper *Trends in VET: policy and participation* at  
<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2882> for more information on the history and development of these policies, and their influence on participation trends.

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