

Review of the Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System: outcomes from the discussion paper

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION RESEARCH



NCVER

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National Centre for
Vocational Education Research

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About the research

Review of the Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System: outcomes from the discussion paper

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Earlier this year, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) distributed a discussion paper on the Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System asking users of the survey to comment on the survey's content and methodology.

The survey has been in its current form since 2005 and, with the introduction of the new National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, NCVER considered it timely to review the survey to ensure that it would continue to meet future user needs.

This report discusses the feedback received and our suggested approach for future iterations of the survey.

Key messages include:

- Feedback from the review indicated that users can be grouped into two categories. The first comprises those who require the survey for performance reporting, where the accuracy and reliability of the survey are crucial. The second category of users is interested in not only how much training is being provided, but also why employers made the training decisions they do.
- NCVER considered a number of options to meet needs from users in both categories for the revised survey. The approach NCVER will adopt seeks to provide improved estimates on core data items, while supplementing these data with qualitative information (with current accuracy levels for these items). The aim is to maintain the current level of respondent burden.
- Users are satisfied with the current survey methodology. NCVER will explore the feasibility of introducing an online option to the survey.

NCVER will commence work on developing and testing the new questionnaire and revised methodology in late 2011. The next survey is due to be conducted in early 2013, with results available late in 2013.

Tom Karmel
Managing Director, NCVER

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Summary

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) received 26 submissions in response to a discussion paper on the future content and methodology of the national Survey of Employer Use and Views of the Vocational Education and Training System. Submissions tended to fall into two categories. Firstly, those who want the survey cut back to basics, asking only those questions needed for performance reporting and using any savings to increase the sample size and quality of estimates. The second category comprises those more interested in understanding employers' experiences, perceptions and decision-making processes in relation to the vocational education and training (VET) sector. They argue that it is as important to know the 'why' as well as the 'how many'.

There is resounding support for having a core set of questions (though disagreement on how many questions there should be) with an optional module on a particular topic of interest. This support was conditional on retaining the accuracy and reliability of the survey. Most felt having the flexibility to add a block of questions on current issues is a sensible approach, given the rapid pace of change across the VET sector.

Given the interest in increasing the quality of estimates of a core set of questions and the desire to retain contextual information, in 2013 NCVER will seek to conduct a ten-minute telephone interview with about 10 000 employers:

- All employers are asked a small set of core questions of approximately five minutes in length.
- These employers would then be split into two groups and each asked a different set of questions, no more than five minutes in length. The first group would answer questions on their choice of provider, with the second group providing detailed information on employee skill levels and employers' reasons for training.

This approach requires the approval of the Statistical Clearing House. Respondent burden would increase only marginally from that of the 2011 survey, which took 7500 employers an average of 12 minutes to complete.

Introduction

Purpose of the paper

This document provides a summary of the feedback received on a discussion paper on the Review of the Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System (SEUV) and our approach for future iterations of the survey. The discussion paper sought feedback from stakeholders on a range of issues relating to the content and methodology of the survey. The NCVET has used this feedback to identify and define the content and methodology of the survey from 2013 onwards.

Background

In its current form, the survey has been conducted every two years since 2005. The survey was designed to measure progress against key performance measures (KPMs) introduced by the Australian Government in 2004, one of which focused specifically on the proportion of Australian employers who:

- are aware of, and who have adopted VET as a strategy to meet the skill needs of their workforce
- are satisfied with VET in meeting the skill needs of their workforce.

In 2006, the Commonwealth dropped awareness of VET as a KPM. The survey followed suit in 2007, focusing solely on employers' engagement and satisfaction with the VET system.

The new National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD) superseded the KPMs for the VET sector in 2009. With this change, the NCVET considered it timely to review the survey and to ensure it would meet future user needs.

The review process

Progress to date

The first phase of the review involved identifying information needs from an employer survey and noting issues of concern with the current survey.

As a first step, in March 2011 NCVER distributed a discussion paper providing a framework for feedback and identifying key issues for consideration. In particular, it sought comments from stakeholders on:

- the purpose of the survey
- the data items currently collected in the survey
- the most suitable scope and methodology for ongoing surveys
- options for the 2013 survey and onwards.

Here we present a summary of the submissions received on the discussion paper and our plans for the 2013 survey. Full submissions will be published on the NCVER website from those organisations who gave their permission for them to be published.

Next steps

NCVER will keep stakeholders informed and involved of the review's progress through a webinar on 21 September 2011. Table 1 outlines the review and development timetable for the 2013 survey.

Table 1 Survey review and development timetable

Phase	Timing
Written submissions invited	March to April 2011
Submissions published on NCVER's website	May 2011
Report on the outcomes from the discussion paper released	September 2011
Webinar	21 September 2011
Development and testing of 2013 survey instrument	October 2011 to May 2012
Pilot testing of survey instrument	August 2012
Fieldwork	February 2013 to June 2013
Publication of survey estimates	December 2013

Summary of feedback from the discussion paper

1. Purpose of the survey

The core purpose of the survey is to collect information on employers' engagement and satisfaction with the VET system. Employer satisfaction is required for reporting against the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD).

NCVER asked stakeholders to identify other areas of interest, from a policy or research perspective, related to employers' interaction with the VET system that they thought the survey should include. Responses covered the following areas of interest:

Use of skills, not just the acquisition of skills

The survey provides information on how many employers provide their employees with training, but not on how useful the skills they acquire are to the organisation. We also do not know whether the skills employees bring to an organisation through their formal vocational qualifications are suitable for the organisation. To understand such issues better, stakeholders asked that the survey collect information on:

- satisfaction with general skills for the job, not just the qualification
- the VET sector's ability to deliver language, literacy and numeracy training
- employees' deficiencies in language, literacy and numeracy, and how this affects their ability to undertake and complete VET
- the extent to which the VET system helps provide a suitable employment pool
- skill sets employees acquire through VET
- work readiness of apprentice/trainees.

Choice of provider

In previous iterations of the survey, we collected information on why employers chose the provider they used. A number of respondents indicated this information is important to them. Their suggestions include:

- employers' satisfaction with public versus private providers
- employers' views (satisfaction) with the quality of the VET workforce, the equipment/facilities used to deliver and assess training, cost of the training, flexibility and content of the training
- employers' views on the flexible delivery of training including online delivery, particularly in relation to regional and remote delivery
- how many registered training organisations (RTOs) employers use and whether they have changed provider in last 12 months
- whether enterprise registered training organisations purchase training from others and the proportion purchased.

How employers define and understand the VET system

Stakeholders are interested in what makes an employer use the system, what employers' expectations are of the VET system, and what barriers there are to engaging with the VET system. Their suggestions include:

- employer views on the responsiveness of the system
- preferred training methods and sources (e.g. E-learning options, training outside core business hours, on-the-job training etc.)
- proportion of training that is accredited versus unaccredited
- proportion of training that is full qualifications versus modules.

Workforce development and benefits

Stakeholders are also interested in exploring employers' training experiences and how training improved workforce development. There was particular interest in looking at whether training has made the labour market more effective and on assessing skill levels relative to organisational needs. Their suggestions include:

- identifying gaps in employees' skills base
- difficult-to-fill vacancies and possible areas of skills undersupply
- other approaches used by employers to meet skill needs (e.g. 'poaching' workers) and retention strategies, as well as the link between the use of training and the difficulty in recruiting staff
- monitoring current and emerging skill needs and what future skill requirements the organisation may have
- how employers determine their workforce development needs (including training) and whether this process is linked to their business planning
- the importance of full qualifications compared with limited customised skill sets as a means to improving business success.

Training expenditure

Since the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted the last Training Expenditure Survey in 1996, there has been little to no information on employers' expenditure on formal training. A number of submissions asked that the SEUV collect some data on training expenditure, specifically on:

- publicly versus privately funded training
- cost of training by employer, employee and government components
- estimated investment per employee, in terms of both direct assistance, such as payment of course fees, and informal support, such as through study leave arrangements
- access and importance of government funding/incentives
- employers' investment in training (time and financial)
- the alternative sources of funding that employers use to fund training.

NCVER does not consider the Survey of the Use and Views of the VET System a suitable vehicle for collecting this type of data because of the nature and complexity of the information required.

How employers engage with the VET system

There are varying levels of engagement an employer can have with the VET system. Employers can use the system for training, but can also contribute to the system by actively participating and making meaningful contributions to policy formulation, training package development, and similar activities. This would also include contributions made through employer and industry associations. Of interest to some stakeholders is:

- ongoing communication and liaison between employers and registered training organisations, especially in relation to the supervision of apprentices and trainees.

Other areas of interest

Other ideas of interest identified by stakeholders include:

- strategies to address high withdrawal rates of employees (including apprentice/trainees) studying VET courses
- how to improve the take-up of VET in regional and remote areas of Australia
- the characteristics of the business condition environment
- the alignment of a number of questions with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) survey to allow for the benchmarking of data
- employers' views on recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- how employers access information about training options and the quality of providers. *These data items were dropped from the survey in 2011 due to low interest from stakeholders*
- investigation of employers' willingness to support work-based training
- the role of VET relative to other sectors in meeting employers' skill development needs, e.g. the schooling sector, adult community education and higher education
- the collection of data on individual training providers. The stakeholder had noted NCVER's statement that the survey was not designed, nor would it be possible in the future, to monitor employer satisfaction with individual registered training organisations. However, they would like it investigated to see what data might be possible.

2. Data items

Information used from the current survey

Engagement and satisfaction with the VET system, by type of training, are the most commonly used items from the survey. This information is required for a number of organisations for regulatory requirements.

In addition to information on the 'level of difficulty experienced in recruiting staff' and 'whether employee skills match employee needs' (currently listed as low priority), stakeholders in some organisations identified 'training providers used by type of training' and 'reasons employers used nationally recognised training' (currently listed as low priority) as necessary for reporting requirements.

Other items respondents indicated they have used from the survey include:

- difficulties experienced recruiting staff, including associated reasons
- what the organisation has done to address recruitment difficulties (deleted from the 2011 survey)
- reasons for not using or no longer using each of the types of training
- reasons why employers use type of training
- importance of training to meet the organisation's skill needs
- types of training providers used and the main type of provider used
- reasons for using the main type of provider (deleted from 2011 survey)
- level of satisfaction with the main type of provider
- reasons for dissatisfaction with the VET system
- importance of employing people with vocational qualifications
- whether jobs require full or part qualifications
- percentage of employers using unaccredited training and informal training
- reasons for choosing unaccredited training over nationally recognised training (deleted from 2011 survey)
- change in use of training in last 12 months
- expected use of training in the next 12 months.

Appendix B lists the full set of data items from the 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011 surveys.

Data items in future surveys

In the discussion paper, we sought feedback from stakeholders on the data items we identified as high, medium or low priority (see appendix C). While there was consensus among submitting organisations on keeping the high-priority data items as a top priority, there were many different views on the remaining data items. Most submitters felt that the medium-priority items should stay in the survey as they provide important contextual information for the high-priority items.

Some submitters suggested that a number of low- and medium-priority items should be classified as a higher priority, such as ‘reasons an organisation does not use a type of training’ (listed as medium priority) and ‘reasons why an organisation uses a type of training’ (listed as a low priority).

There was also strong interest in measuring employers’ satisfaction with the quality of training (listed as medium priority), but rewording the question to obtain more detailed information on what aspects of the training an employer was satisfied with, for example, the quality of teachers/assessors, cost, flexibility, course content etc. Submitters also endorsed keeping ‘reasons for dissatisfaction with the training in meeting the organisations skill needs’.

For low-priority items, there was a much more mixed response, but strong support for moving ‘reasons for recruitment difficulties’ and ‘rating of current skill level of employees relative to the needs of the organisation’ to high-priority items. There was also support for classifying ‘importance of formal vocational qualifications’ as a high-priority item, but not as strong for the other types of training.

Deleted from the 2011 survey was ‘Reasons for choosing main type of provider’. Many respondents would like this item reinstated in future surveys.

Optional modules

Most submitting organisations felt that having the flexibility to add a block of questions on topical issues is a sensible approach, given the rapid pace of change across the VET sector.

Stakeholders were asked to suggest topics that could be included in such a module should future surveys follow this approach. NCVER provided the caveat that, when considering topics, it is important to remember that space is limited and that the Statistical Clearing House must approve the content of the questionnaire, a process that currently takes about nine months.

In addition to the information already identified in the first section, ‘Purpose of the survey’, stakeholders suggested the following topics could be included in a modular approach:

- employer satisfaction with specific VET policy initiatives: Productivity Places Program and successive funding programs such as Critical Skills Investment fund
- VET students without English as a foundation language
- how employers are assisting employees to recognise career pathways established through VET qualifications
- the level of industry engagement with skills councils and training packages
- employer views on the value of VET qualifications vs university qualifications
- employer use and satisfaction with VET in Schools
- reasons for a particular organisational approach to training and employment
- whether training provided value for money
- key barriers to accessing formal VET and how to overcome them
- workforce development and productivity outcomes from skilling
- the proportion of people employed at or above level of qualification by field of study.

Topics added to the survey must be compatible with the scope of the survey, which is all employing businesses in Australia. NCVER does not consider this survey to be an appropriate instrument to measure employer satisfaction with specific policy initiatives such as the Productivity Places Program. Designing surveys that target only those employers involved in such programs would be a better way of collecting this type of information.

3. Scope and methodology

Scope

Most submitting organisations were keen to retain the current scope of the survey to maintain a time series back to 2005. The current scope is all organisations in Australia with at least one employee, where an employee is defined as ‘a person working in, or operating from, this organisation including full time, part time and casual employees’. An owner/operator is not classed as an employee, regardless of whether they pay themselves a wage.

There was little interest in expanding the scope. Those who did wanted to explore:

- the relationship between an organisation with only self-employed contractors to understand whether the relationship is fully divorced from an employer-employee relationship
- self-employed workers who do not have employees, particularly in the building and construction industry.

One submitter suggested linking the Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System with the national Student Outcomes Survey (SOS), also conducted by NCVER. It was felt that a more robust assessment of employer perceptions of recent VET output could be achieved by linking the SEUV sample to employers of recent VET graduates and VET module completers identified through the Student Outcomes Survey. While this idea has merit as a separate survey, NCVER considers this option not viable for the SEUV, as it would mean a change in the scope of the survey, and for most submitters retaining the time series was of prime importance.

Given the views of the majority of submitting organisations, NCVER will retain the current scope for 2013.

Mode of interview

There was strong support for conducting a mixed-mode survey; that is, introducing an online survey option to the current computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) survey. A third of respondents to the 2009 survey indicated they would like to do the survey online. Supporters assumed that introducing an online option would reduce the overall cost of the survey, allowing NCVER to contact more employers and thus increase the quality of estimates. There was concern that changing the methodology would affect data comparability with previous iterations of the survey or lead to respondent bias.

With an online approach, submitters were also concerned about how to ensure that the most appropriate person completed the survey. Currently, interviewers ask to speak to the person best suited to answer questions on the organisation’s staff training and development. When moving to an online option, providing a good explanation of survey parameters and the intent of the questions will be necessary.

Nearly all submitters stressed the importance of testing any changes to the methodology. As with all our surveys, NCVER will test fully and evaluate any changes before incorporating them into the survey methodology. NCVER's main objective, while aiming to cater to stakeholder needs, is to maintain the survey's time series by ensuring any change to the methodology has minimal impact on the estimates.

Sample size and reliability

Users have become increasingly concerned about the accuracy of the estimates and the ability to measure progress over time, particularly at the state and territory levels. In response to these concerns, NCVER increased the number of interviews achieved in the 2011 survey from 5000 to 7500. This should achieve the design parameters of relative standard errors (RSEs) of:

- 8% for state level estimates
- 16% for industry level estimates
- 6% for employer size level estimates
- 3% for Australia level estimates.

Despite increasing the number of interviews in 2011, some submitters are still concerned that the survey estimates will not provide the level of accuracy required for performance monitoring at the state and territory levels. Some states have asked that the survey be designed to achieve relative standard errors (RSEs) of between 3% and 5% for core items such as employer engagement and satisfaction as they require more confidence that changes measured over time are real changes. More accurate industry estimates were also a point of issue, as was the desire for reliable industry estimates at the state level.

NCVER determines the sample size for the survey by balancing data accuracy with the survey budget, which is determined largely by the length of the questionnaire. Any increase in the size of the sample selected would need a considerable increase in budget as well as approval from the Statistical Clearing House (SCH).¹ The Australian Statistician would also need to approve providing a larger sample from the ABS Business Register for the survey.

There was also a request to investigate the distribution of the sample within states, particularly for smaller states. There are concerns that the sample drawn does not represent the employment pattern in those states.

One submitter wanted NCVER to investigate whether NCVER could increase the frequency of the survey from biennial to annual to help with reporting and accountability requirements. Due to budget constraints, this would not be possible.

¹ The purpose of the SCH is to ensure the survey is of sufficient importance in terms of national or state interest to warrant the reporting load on businesses. This includes assessing the information proposed to be collected in the survey as well as the proposed sample size.

Length of survey

There is strong support for reducing the length of the survey, particularly if it leads to estimates that are more accurate. To reap the cost savings needed to achieve the desired RSEs would mean cutting the contextual information from the survey.

Not everyone is convinced of the merits of such an approach. Some users acknowledge this is the only survey of its kind and as such provides the only opportunity to obtain industry level or employer views on training delivery and their involvement in training. These users would prefer a more comprehensive set of data items with a smaller sample size. While reducing the survey to just core items may produce indicators that are more robust (e.g. satisfaction with training providers), it would significantly reduce the amount of information captured on organisational needs. One user also points out that satisfaction with VET (for individuals) is already adequately captured in the Student Outcomes Survey, whereas questions about why employers make the choices they do are not currently captured by any other Australian survey.

If the survey were to be offered both via the telephone and online, this may provide some of the cost savings needed to extend the sample and keep the required data items, but the effect on the response rates from offering an online version is an unknown at this stage.

The 2013 survey and onwards

4. Options considered for 2013

Given the feedback and the interest from submitters in understanding why employers make the training decisions they do, as well as the amount of training provided, we considered a number of options for 2013 onwards balancing cost and respondent burden. These were to:

1. Retain the current model and conduct a 12-minute interview with approximately 7500 employers to maintain the time series with 2005, 2007 and 2009.
2. Increase the size of the survey sample to produce higher-quality estimates for a core set of data items that are required for performance monitoring by various users relating to employer use and satisfaction. We estimate interviews would average five minutes in duration with approximately 15 000 employers.
3. Use a split approach, whereby we could either:
 - a. Conduct a five-minute interview with approximately 10 000 employers, asking them all a core set of questions. With a subset of 5000 employers, conduct an extended interview of ten minutes duration collecting qualitative information on their experiences, perceptions and reasons for making their training decisions.
 - b. Conduct a five-minute interview with approximately 10 000 employers, asking them all a core set of questions. Split these employers into two groups and give each a set of questions averaging five minutes in length. The first group would answer questions relating to their choice of training provider, with the second group answering questions on employee skill levels and employers' reasons for training.

We consider the last option (option 3b) the most suitable as it spreads the burden across all respondents. We believe such an approach would satisfy the needs of most stakeholders by providing improved estimates for a core set of data items as well as supplementing the core data items with qualitative information. Note this approach requires the approval of the Statistical Clearing House. Respondent burden would increase only marginally from that of the 2011 survey, which took 7500 employers an average of 12 minutes to complete.

5. Data items for 2013

Based on the responses of submitting organisations and our objective of containing the length of the survey, which determine both respondent burden and cost, we have identified a core set of data items to be asked of approximately 10 000 employers in 2013 (table 2).

Table 2 Core data items for 2013

Organisation characteristics
Industry (ANZSIC 06)
State of operation
Total number of employees
Training strategy
Whether organisation experienced any difficulties recruiting staff in past 12 months
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement
Whether organisation ever had jobs that require vocational qualifications
Level of satisfaction with vocational qualifications in providing employees with skills required for job
Apprenticeships/traineeships
Whether organisation ever had employees undertaking apprenticeships/traineeships in last 12 months
Level of satisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs
Nationally recognised training
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months
Level of satisfaction with nationally recognised training in providing employees with required skills
Unaccredited training
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months
Level of satisfaction with unaccredited training in providing employees with required skills

From a subset of 5000 employers, we will collect information on their choice of training provider (table 3).

Table 3 Non-core data items relating to choice of training provider

Organisation characteristics:
Whether organisation is a registered training organisation
Apprenticeships/traineeships:
Types of organisations used to conduct formal training for apprentices/trainees
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of formal training for apprentices/trainees
Reasons for using main type of training provider
Satisfaction with main type of training provider (training content, equipment and facilities, cost, flexibility, trainers)
Nationally recognised training:
Types of organisations used to conduct nationally recognised training
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of nationally recognised training
Reasons for using main type of training provider
Satisfaction with main type of training provider (training content, equipment and facilities, cost, flexibility, trainers)
Unaccredited training:
Types of organisations used to conduct unaccredited training
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of unaccredited training
Reasons for using main type of training provider

From the second subset of about 5000 employers, we will collect information on their employees' skill levels and employers' reasons for training (table 4).

Table 4 Non-core data items relating to employee skill levels and employers' reasons for training

Training strategy:
Rating of current skill level relative to the needs of the organisation
Satisfaction with general skills for the job (e.g. language, literacy, numeracy)
Reasons for dissatisfaction with general skills for the job
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement:
Reasons organisation has specific jobs that require vocational qualifications in last 12 months
Reasons for dissatisfaction with vocational qualifications in providing employees with skills required for job (if dissatisfied)
Whether jobs require full or part qualifications
Reasons for having jobs that require part rather than full qualifications
Apprenticeships/traineeships:
Reasons organisation has had apprentices/trainees in last 12 months
Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs
Nationally recognised training:
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months
Reasons for dissatisfaction with nationally recognised training in providing employees with required skills
Unaccredited training:
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months
Whether comparable nationally recognised training available when choosing unaccredited training
Reasons for providing unaccredited training to employees over accredited training

Testing will be carried out to determine the suitability of these data items for the survey and the time taken to ask such topics. This testing will take place in 2012. **Note the survey length is constrained to a maximum length of ten minutes. For these topics to be included, the time taken for these questions, along with the time taken for the core items, must not exceed ten minutes.**

In summary, in 2013 NCVET will:

1. Retain the current survey scope.
2. Explore the feasibility of introducing an online option to the survey.
3. Conduct a ten-minute interview with about 10 000 employers in which:
 - a. Each employer will be asked a core set of questions to take approximately five minutes to answer.
 - b. Employers will then be split into two groups, with each group asked a different set of questions, averaging five minutes in length. The first group will answer questions pertaining to choice of provider and reasons why they made their choice. The second group of employers will answer questions that focus on the employees' skill levels and employers' reasons for training. Where possible, questions used in previous iterations of the survey will be used. New questions will be developed where required.
4. Work on developing the 2013 questionnaire will commence in late 2011.

Appendix A

The following organisations gave permission for their review submission and organisation name to be published on the NCVET website.

1. ACT Department of Education and Training
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics
3. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
4. Central Institute of Technology
5. Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council
6. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)
7. Innovation and Business Skills Australia
8. Minerals Council of Australia
9. National Institute of Labour Studies
10. NSW Department of Education and Training
11. Office of the Training and Skills Commission
12. Productivity Commission
13. SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology
14. Skills Tasmania
15. Skills Australia

Appendix B

Table B1 List of data items available from the 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011 surveys and to be included in the 2013 survey

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013		
					Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Organisation characteristics:							
Industry (ANZSIC 93)	✓	✓	✓				
Industry (ANZSIC 06)		✓	✓	✓	✓		
State of operation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sector	✓	✓	✓				
Total number of employees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Number of permanent employees	✓	✓	✓				
Number of full-time employees	✓	✓	✓				
Occupational distribution of organisation	✓	✓					
Whether organisation is a registered training organisation (RTO)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
If RTO, whether mainly provide training to own employees or to other organisations	✓	✓	✓				
Training strategy:							
Whether organisation has business plan	✓						
Staff training part of business plan	✓						
Importance of training to overall business strategy	✓						
Ways organisation currently determines training needs of staff	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Rating of current skill level of employees relative to needs of the organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Whether organisation experienced any difficulties recruiting staff in past 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons for recruitment difficulties	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Occupations of recruitment difficulties		✓					
What has organisation done to address these difficulties	✓	✓	✓				

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013		
					Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Informal training:							
Organisation done any of following in last 12 months:	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervisors provided informal training as required • provided/arranged for relevant training for new technology/equipment • provided training manuals or software for self-directed study • contributed to cost of university study • contributed to cost of VET study 							
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement:							
Whether organisation ever had jobs that require vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation (does not have/no longer has) specific jobs that require vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Percentage of employees in organisation that had jobs requiring vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Whether jobs require full or part qualification		✓	✓	✓			✓
Occupations of employees that had jobs requiring vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓					
Reasons organisation has specific jobs that require vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Importance of employing people with vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Level of satisfaction with vocational qualifications in providing employees with skills required for job	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓						
Apprenticeships/traineeships:							
Whether organisation ever had employees undertaking apprenticeships/traineeships in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation does not have apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Whether know where to look for information about recruiting apprentice/trainee		✓	✓				
Percentage of apprentices/trainees who undertook formal training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Expect number of apprentices/trainees to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓				
Whether number of apprentices/trainees increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓			
Expect number of apprentices/trainees to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓			
Occupations of apprentices/trainees in last 12 months	✓	✓					
Reasons organisation has had apprentices/trainees in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013		
					Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Method of hiring apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Reasons for using a group training organisation to hire apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓				
Types of organisations used to conduct formal training for apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of formal training for apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Importance of apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Level of satisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓						
Nationally recognised training:							
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation does not have employees who have undertaken nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Whether know where to look for information about nationally recognised training		✓	✓				
Percentage of employees provided with nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Whether nationally recognised training was for full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓	✓				
If both, was the majority for a full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓	✓	✓			
Expect amount of nationally recognised training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓				
Whether amount of nationally recognised training increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓			
Expect amount of nationally recognised training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓			
Occupations of employees provided with nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓					
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Who conducted MAJORITY of nationally recognised training (external provider or internally)	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Types of organisations used to conduct nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓			✓	

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013		
					Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Importance of training leading to a nationally recognised qualification	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Level of satisfaction with nationally recognised training in providing employees with required skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓						
Unaccredited training:							
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Percentage of employees provided with unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Expect amount of unaccredited training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓				
Whether amount of unaccredited training increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓			
Expect amount of unaccredited training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓			
Occupations of employees provided with unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓					
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Who conducted MAJORITY of unaccredited training (external provider or internally)	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Types of organisations used to conduct unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Whether comparable nationally recognised training available when choosing unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Reasons for choosing unaccredited training over nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓				✓
Level of satisfaction with unaccredited training in providing employees with required skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Overall improvements to the VET system:							
Suggestions for improvements to the VET system		✓	✓				

Appendix C

Items from the 2011 survey assigned a priority by NCVER in the discussion paper.

Table C1 High-priority data items

Apprenticeships/traineeships:
Types of organisations used to conduct formal training for apprentices/trainees
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of formal training for apprentices/trainees
Reasons for using main type of training provider
Nationally recognised training:
Types of organisations used to conduct nationally recognised training
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of nationally recognised training
Reasons for using main type of training provider
Types of organisations used to conduct unaccredited training
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of unaccredited training
Reasons for using main type of training provider

Table C2 Medium-priority data items

Medium priority data items
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement
Reasons organisation (does not have/no longer has) specific jobs that require vocational qualifications
Reasons for dissatisfaction with jobs that require vocational qualifications in meeting skill needs
Apprenticeships/traineeships
Reasons organisation does not have apprentices/trainees
Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs
Nationally recognised training
Reasons organisation does not have employees who have undertaken nationally recognised training
Reasons for dissatisfaction with nationally recognised training in meeting skill needs

Table C3 Low priority data items

Low priority data items
Training strategy
Rating of current skill level of employees relative to needs of the organisation
Reasons for recruitment difficulties
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement
Reasons organisation has specific jobs that require vocational qualifications in last 12 months
Importance of employing people with vocational qualifications
Apprenticeships/traineeships
Reasons organisation has had apprentices/trainees in last 12 months
Importance of apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs
Nationally recognised training
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake nationally recognised training
Importance of training leading to a nationally recognised qualification
Unaccredited training
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake unaccredited training



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