Comparing data from other national VET collections with ‘total VET activity’

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) manages four national collections on different aspects of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. These are:

- National VET Provider Collection (from which data on Government-funded students and courses and Total VET students and courses [‘total VET activity’] are reported)
- National VET in Schools Collection (data from which are also reported in Total VET students and courses)
- National Apprentice and Trainee Collection
- National VET Finance Collection.

The diagram below illustrates how data are submitted, collected and reported for the National VET Provider Collection and the National VET in Schools Collection. There are a number of differences in the collections and publications, some of which relate to scope and others to the way fields are classified and reported. As a result some data reported on ‘total VET activity’ (TVA) may differ from data reported in other NCVER publications.
 Government-funded students and courses
The diagram above highlights some of the differences in scope between the Government-funded students and courses and Total VET students and courses. The main differences are:

- **Government-funded students and courses** includes:
  - only domestic VET training delivered by Australian training providers
  - only Commonwealth and state/territory government-funded training (since 2016 and backdated to 2003).

- **Total VET students and courses** includes:
  - domestic and overseas VET training delivered by Australian training providers
  - all training delivered by Australian training providers (not just that resulting from government funding)
  - VET in Schools activity
  - a small amount of Commonwealth specific purposes activity submitted direct from registered training organisations (RTOs) to NCVER.

Table 1 provides a comparison between the scope of the two publications with respect to student numbers, average hours per student and average subjects per student.

### Table 1  Comparison of data from Government-funded students and courses 2016 with Total VET students and courses 2016 highlighting differences in publication scope

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government-funded students and courses 2016</th>
<th>Total VET students and courses 2016</th>
<th>Government-funded students and courses 2016 as a proportion of Total VET students and courses 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average subjects per student</strong></td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>377.4</td>
<td>815.9</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average hours per student</strong></td>
<td>298.2</td>
<td>193.9</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>377.4</td>
<td>815.9</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average hours per subject</strong></td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that in 2016, Government-funded students and courses reported 1.3 million students, compared with 4.2 million students reported for Total VET students and courses 2016 (representing 30.1% of total VET students in 2016).

The table also shows that on average, government-funded students enrol in 9.1 subjects (on average 2 more subjects than total VET students) and undertake on average 298.2 hours of training per student (on average 104.3 more hours than total VET students).
Table 2  
Total VET students and courses 2016 subject enrolments by funding source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total VET students and courses 2016 (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total subject enrolments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth/state funded subject enrolments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion Commonwealth/state funded (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of Total VET students and courses subject enrolments that are Commonwealth/state funded (47.8%, table 2) is higher than the proportion of government-funded students (representing 30.1% of total VET students, table 1) as government-funded students, on average, enrol in more subjects that take longer to complete than fee-for-service students.

The number of Commonwealth/state-funded subject enrolments reported in Total VET students and courses 2016 (14.4 million, table 2) is higher than the number of subject enrolments reported in Government-funded students and courses (11.5 million, table 1) as Total VET students and courses includes VET in Schools activity and a small amount of Commonwealth specific purposes activity submitted direct from RTOs to NCVER.

In addition to differences in scope between the two publications, the way some fields are classified and reported varies in some instances, further limiting the ability to make comparisons between the two publications.

Classification and reporting of fields

State and territory
The state/territory used in Government-funded students and courses is the state/territory of funding, whereas in Total VET students and courses it is reported based on the:

- state or territory where the training was delivered
- state or territory of training provider’s head office
- state or territory of student residence.

For further information refer to the fact sheet: What is ‘state or territory’ in ‘total VET activity’ reporting?

Training provider type

In Government-funded students and courses training delivered by a TAFE provider in its own jurisdiction is reported as being delivered by a TAFE provider. However, if the TAFE provider successfully contests funding contracts in other jurisdictions, then any training delivery is reported as being delivered by an ‘other registered provider’ in that jurisdiction. In Total VET students and courses, all TAFE institutes are reported according to their training organisation type (TAFE), irrespective of where the funding was delivered or who funded the training.

In Government-funded students and courses some states/territories submit separate data submissions specifically for TAFE institutes, community education providers and private training providers. The training providers in these submissions are all allocated a single organisation reporting type, such as a TAFE, Contestable funded — ACE or Contestable funded — Other, irrespective of their actual registered organisation type. However, in Total VET students and courses, all training providers are reported according to the organisation type included in their data submission.
De-duplication in student counts

In addition to de-duplication of training activity (as denoted by the dotted line in the above diagram), a two-step de-duplication process has been applied to Total VET students and courses 2016 to better estimate student counts. This process has not been applied to student counts in Government-funded students and courses. For further information refer to the fact sheet: De-duplication in training activity and students counts in ‘total VET activity’ 2016.

VET in Schools students

The VET in Schools publication covers the VET undertaken by school students as part of their senior secondary certificate of education (SSCE) where the training is delivered by schools or other training providers. According to this definition, in 2016, there were 243 300 VET in Schools students.

In 2016, Total VET students and courses reported 370 800 VET students with an ‘at school’ status (table 3). This number is higher than the 243 300 students reported in VET in Schools as Total VET students and courses scope includes any VET undertaken by school students, not just VET that contributes to their SSCE as per the VET in Schools publication scope outlined above.

Table 3 Comparison of VET in Schools students and Total VET students and courses students with ‘at school’ status, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET in Schools students</td>
<td>243 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total VET student and courses students with ‘at school’ status</td>
<td>370 800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to differences in scope between VET in Schools and Total VET students and courses, there are other factors that may contribute to differences in the reported data between the two publications, such as:

- the de-duplication of training activity and student numbers between the VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, which may remove some duplicate data. For further information refer to fact sheet: De-duplication in training activity and student counts in ‘total VET activity’ 2016.
- the VET in Schools data are submitted and reported by Boards of Studies in each state and territory. The TVA data are reported by the state or territory (either via the state training authority or RTO) in which the training was delivered.
- In some jurisdictions, schools are registered training organisations and they deliver VET in Schools programs. In other jurisdictions, the training is delivered by other training providers such as TAFE institutes and private training providers.

Apprentices and trainees

The number of apprentices and trainees undertaking off-the-job training in 2016 in TVA (336 500) exceeds the number of apprentices and trainees in-training as at 31 December 2016, derived from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection. The key reasons for differences between the collections include:

- The TVA data are based on an estimated count of students enrolled in the VET system at any time during the 2016 calendar year. This figure can include apprentices and trainees who later cancelled or withdrew from their training contract.
- ‘In-training’ data derived from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection refer to apprentices and trainees who are actively training under the terms of their training contract at a point in time (such as 31 December 2016). For example, there were 287 200 apprentices and trainees in-training in the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection at 31 March 2016. However, the number had declined to 265 000 by 31 December 2016 due to the cancellation/withdrawal, expiry and completion of contracts.