

Australian vocational education and training statistics

Apprentice and trainee completion rates 2024

National Centre for Vocational Education Research



Purpose

This publication provides an overview of completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees in Australia. It reports on both apprenticeships and traineeships undertaken within traditional trade-based occupations and non-trade occupations.

Definitions

Apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates are calculated at three levels:

- Individual: The proportion of people who have completed at least one apprenticeship or traineeship.
- Apprenticeship: The proportion of apprenticeships or traineeships that are completed, which may have involved one or more training contracts and employers.
- Contract: The proportion of individual training agreements between an employer and apprentice or trainee that are completed.

Completion rates in this report are presented in two ways:

- Fixed reference period: the proportion of completions that occur within a set time after commencement (e.g., four or six years).
- Ongoing or “to date”: the proportion of completions that have occurred so far, based on the most recent data.

A fixed reference period is suitable for comparing different commencing cohorts. For example, apprenticeships in non-trade occupations typically stabilise at three to four years, whereas apprenticeships in trade occupations can take up to six or more. NCVER recommends using the 6-year completion rate wherever possible to compare the different commencing cohorts of trade apprenticeships.

Written insights in the report describe national trends, not the specific selections made in the interactive charts. The publication is a summary only and uses an updated methodology - see NCVER’s Technical Paper and [DataBuilder <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/databuilder#appcr-apprenticeships>](https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/databuilder#appcr-apprenticeships) for more information.

Report

Completion rates

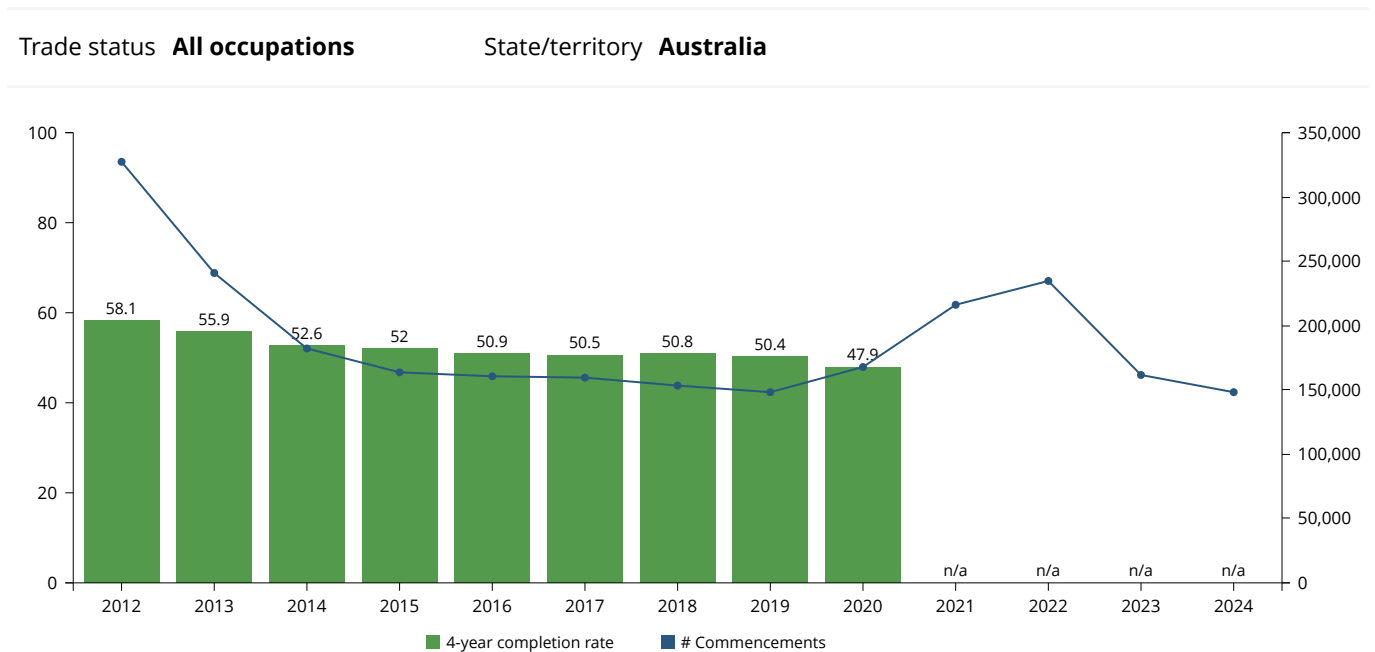
Across Australia, there were 167,785 commencements in an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2020, an increase from 2019. Of these, 75,115 apprenticeship commencements were in trade occupations and 92,660 in non-trade occupations.

Overall, 47.9% of apprenticeships and traineeships commenced in 2020 had completed by the 4-year mark. This is a decrease of 2.5 percentage points compared to the 2019 commencing cohort, which had a 4-year completion rate of 50.4%.

Non-trade and trade apprenticeships and traineeships fared differently. The non-trade apprenticeship completion rates for the 2020 commencing cohort declined by 5.7 percentage points to 48.7%, whereas trade apprenticeships rose 1.2 percentage points to 46.9%, however this cohort will need more time before their rates begin to stabilise.

The 2018 commencing trade apprenticeship cohort, the latest with a more stable rate, had a completion rate of 58.2% after 6 years. This represents an increase of 0.7 percentage points when compared to the 2017 cohort.

Figure 1: Apprenticeship completion rates (%) and commencement numbers from 2012, All occupations, Australia



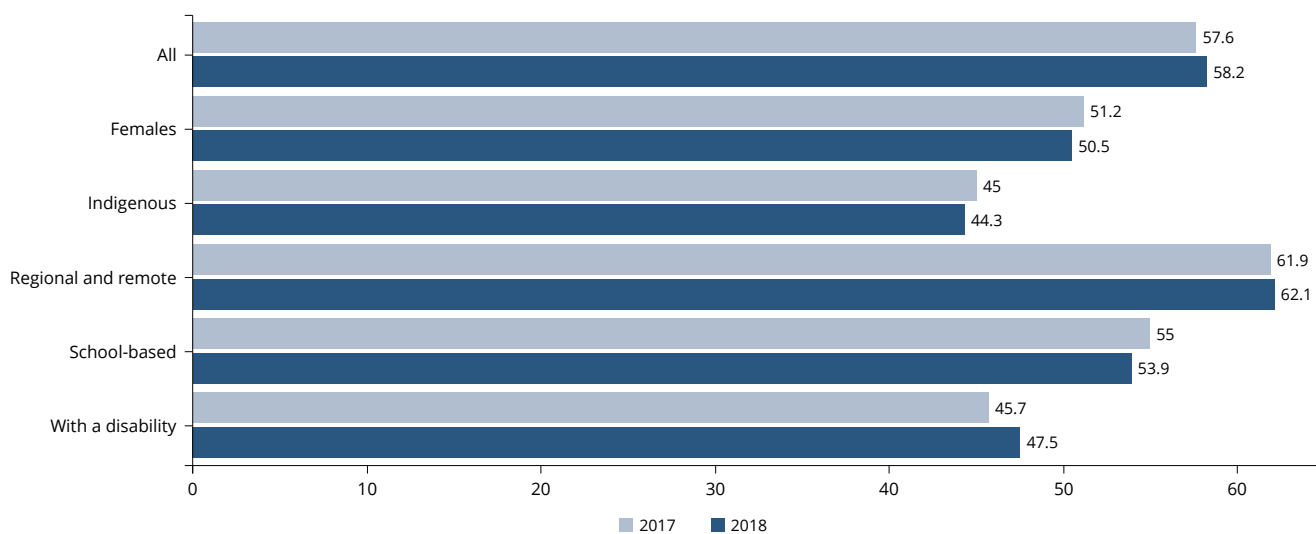
Trade completion rates

Apprenticeships in trade occupations can take up to six or more years to stabilise; the latest with a completion rate after 6 years is the 2018 commencing cohort.

Despite an increase overall in trade apprenticeship completion rates after 6 years, some priority groups such as school-based apprenticeships and Indigenous students experienced declines in the 6-year completion rate between 2017 and 2018.

Figure 2: 6-year trade apprenticeship completion rates for selected priority groups, 2017 and 2018 commencing cohorts, All occupations, Australia (%)

State/territory **Australia**



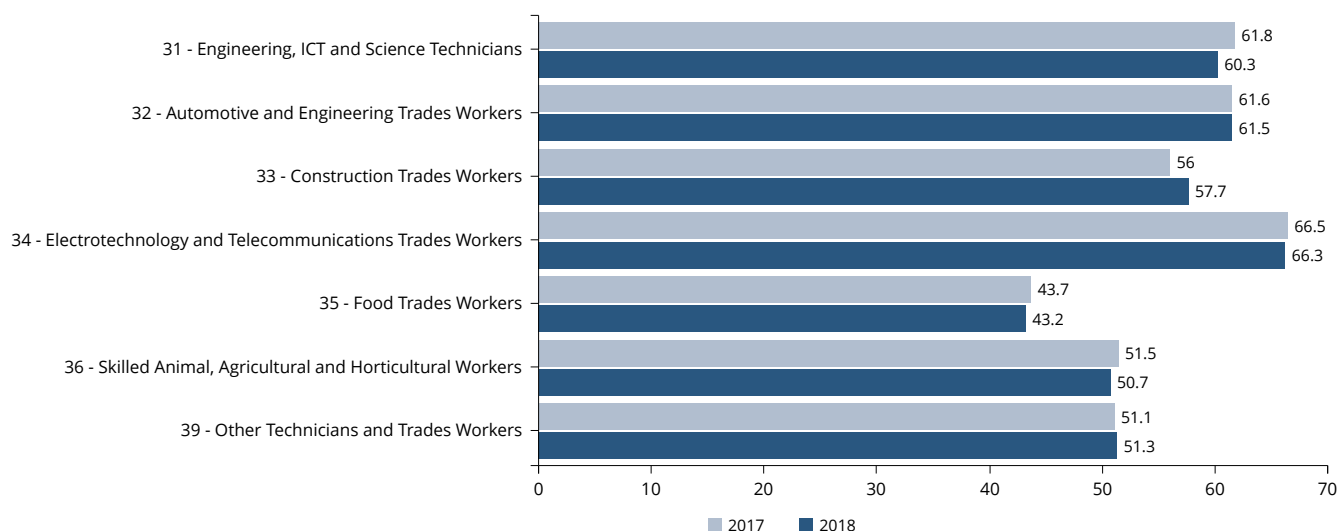
Percentage point changes are calculated from unrounded rates and then rounded to one decimal place. This can lead to situations where a value generated by a user comparing two rates differs from the value presented in the charts.

The trade apprenticeship 6-year completion rate declined between 2017 and 2018 for most occupational groups. Only 'Construction Trades Workers' and 'Other Technicians and Trade Workers' occupational groups saw increases between 2017 and 2018.

Most occupational groups maintained 6-year completion rates above 50%, while 'Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers', 'Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers', and 'Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians' apprenticeships were above 60%.

Figure 3: 6-year completion rates for trade occupations (ANZSCO 2-digit), 2017 and 2018 commencing cohorts, Australia (%)

State/territory **Australia**



Percentage point changes are calculated from unrounded rates and then rounded to one decimal place. This can lead to situations where a value generated by a user comparing two rates differs from the value presented in the charts.

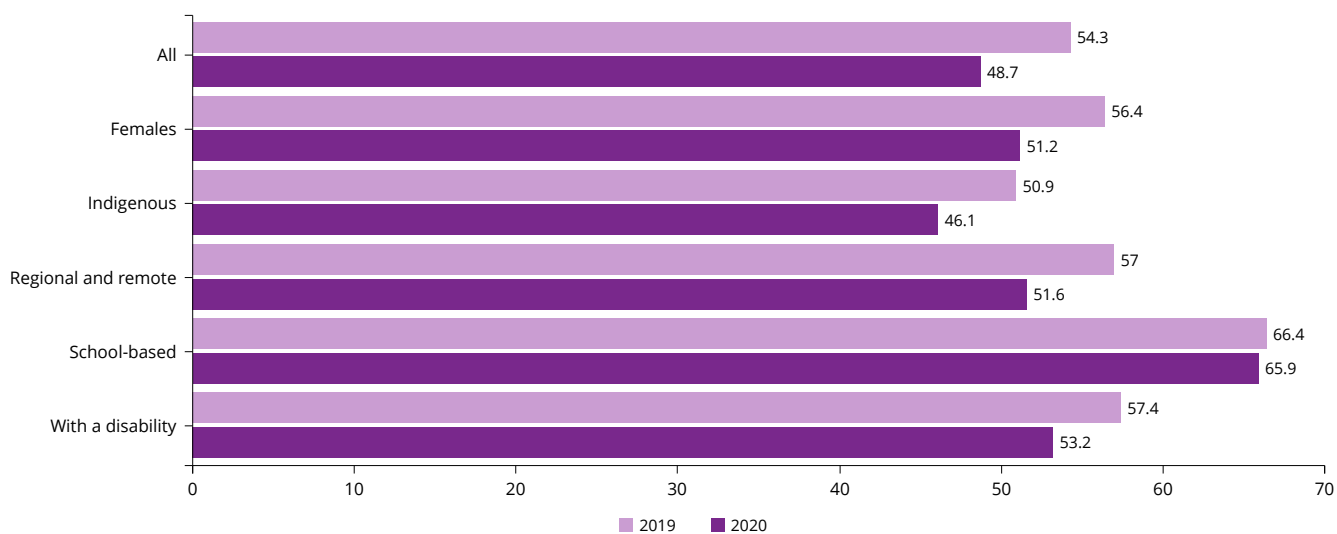
Non-trade completion rates

Apprenticeships in non-trade occupations typically stabilise at three to four years; the latest with a completion rate after 4 years is the 2020 commencing cohort.

The non-trade apprenticeship 4-year completion rate for all priority groups decreased between the 2019 and 2020 commencing cohorts. The largest declines were evident for females and students from regional or remote locations.

Figure 4: 4-year non-trade completion rates for selected priority groups, 2019 and 2020 commencing cohorts, All occupations, Australia (%)

State/territory **Australia**



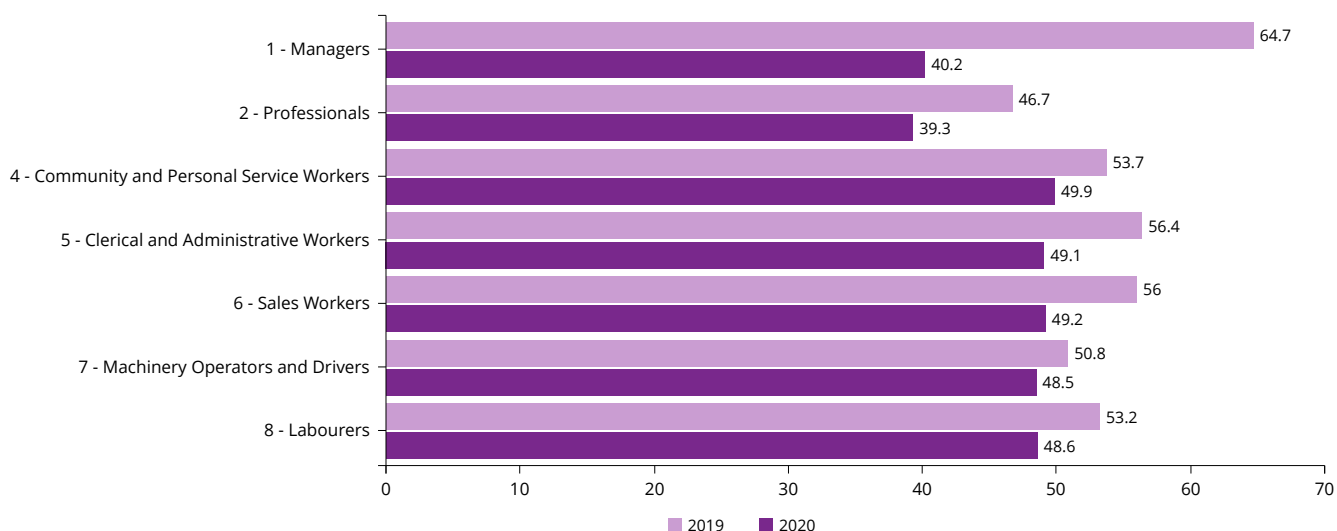
Percentage point changes are calculated from unrounded rates and then rounded to one decimal place. This can lead to situations where a value generated by a user comparing two rates differs from the value presented in the charts.

All non-trade occupation apprenticeships and traineeships across Australia had a decline in 4-year completion rates between 2019 and 2020 cohorts.

The greatest decline was for apprenticeships and traineeships in ‘Manager’ occupations, which was down 24.5 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, coinciding with a near doubling in commencements.

Figure 5: 4-year completion rates for non-trade occupations (ANZSCO 1-digit), 2019 and 2020 commencing cohorts, Australia (%)

State/territory **Australia**



Percentage point changes are calculated from unrounded rates and then rounded to one decimal place. This can lead to situations where a value generated by a user comparing two rates differs from the value presented in the charts.

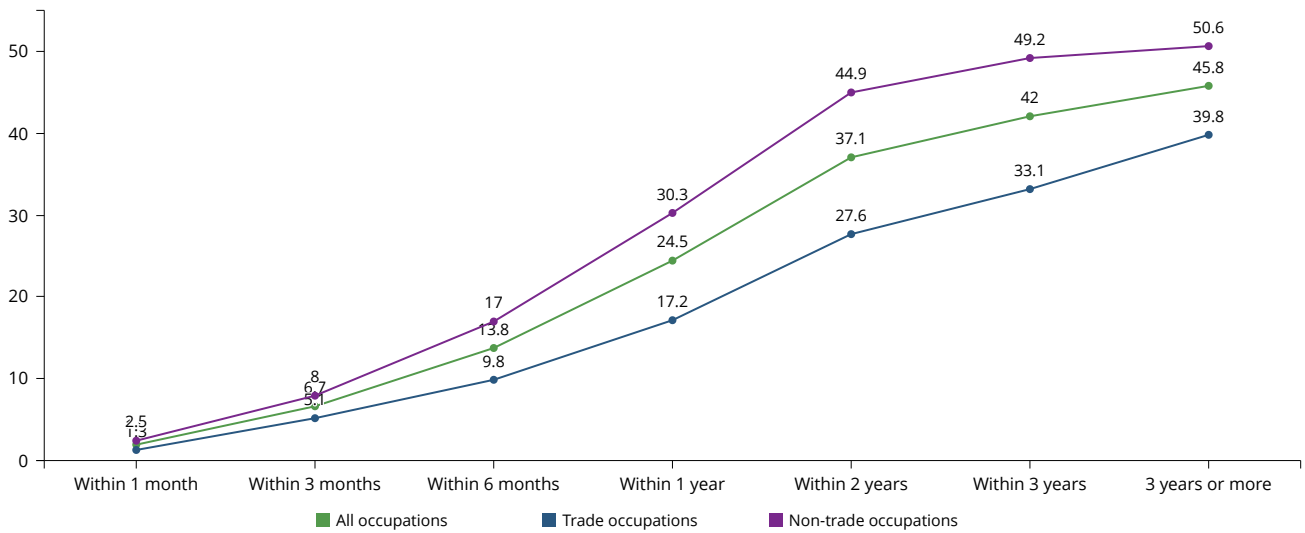
Attrition rates

The apprenticeship attrition rate represents the proportion of commencements with an unsuccessful status at the point of comparison. This does *not mean permanent withdrawal*; apprentices and trainees may recommence later, often with a new employer.

For 2020-commencing apprenticeships across Australia, less than a fifth (17.2%) of all trade apprenticeships ended without completion within the first year, compared to just under a third (30.3%) of non-trade apprenticeships.

Figure 6: Apprenticeship attrition rates by time to attrition, 2020 commencing cohort, All occupations, Australia

State/territory **Australia**



To-date attrition rates used, categorised by time to attrition.

Contract completion rates

In 2020, 194,635 contracts of training between apprentices and employers commenced across Australia.

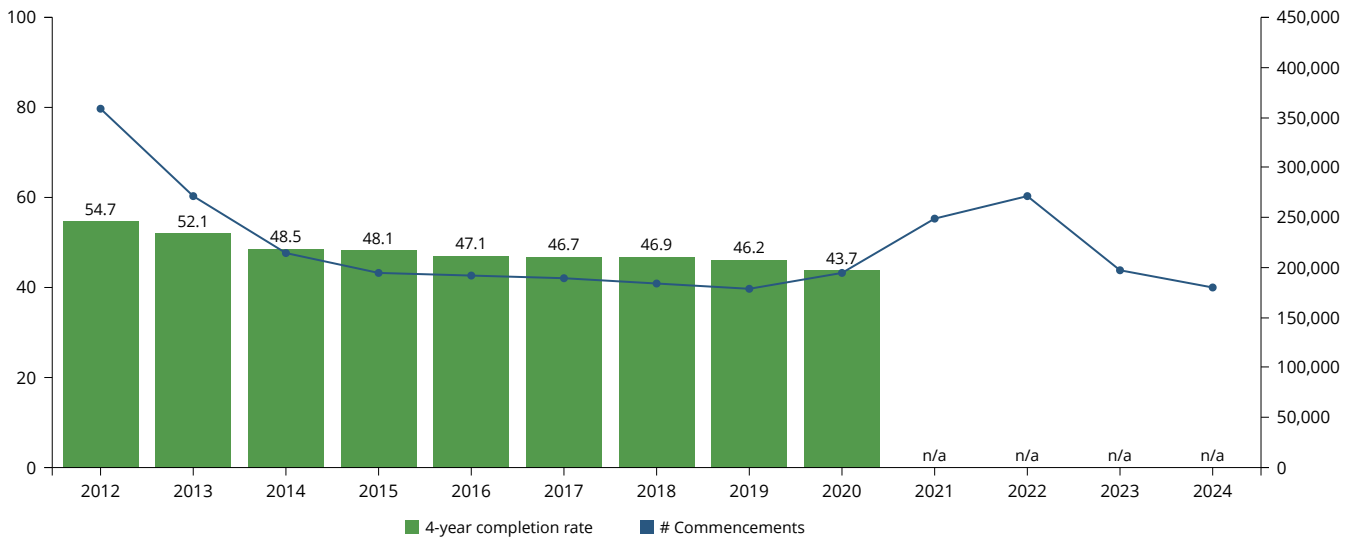
The 4-year completion rate for contracts commenced across Australia in 2020 was 43.7%, down from 46.2% the previous year. The 4-year completion rate for trade contracts was 40.2% and for non-trade contracts was 47.3%.

Because an individual can participate in more than one contract related to an apprenticeship, the contract-level completion rate will tend to be lower than the apprenticeship-level rate. This is because the various contract commencements and finalisations are summarised up to a single value at the apprenticeship-level.

Figure 7: Contract completion rates (%) and commencement numbers from 2012, All occupations, Australia

Trade status **All occupations**

State/territory **Australia**



Individual completion rates

Of the 124,670 individuals new to the Australian apprenticeship system in 2020, 49.9% had completed an apprenticeship within 4 years. For individuals who first began in a non-trade occupation, 51.7% had completed an apprenticeship within 4 years, whereas for individuals who began in a trade occupation the 4-year completion rate was 47.6%.

Breaks in training, such as changes of employer, suspensions, or a move to another apprenticeship can extend the time between commencement and completion. As a result, some apprentices will take longer than four years to finish their first apprenticeship; individual completions rates for the 2020 commencing cohort are likely to continue to rise over the coming years.

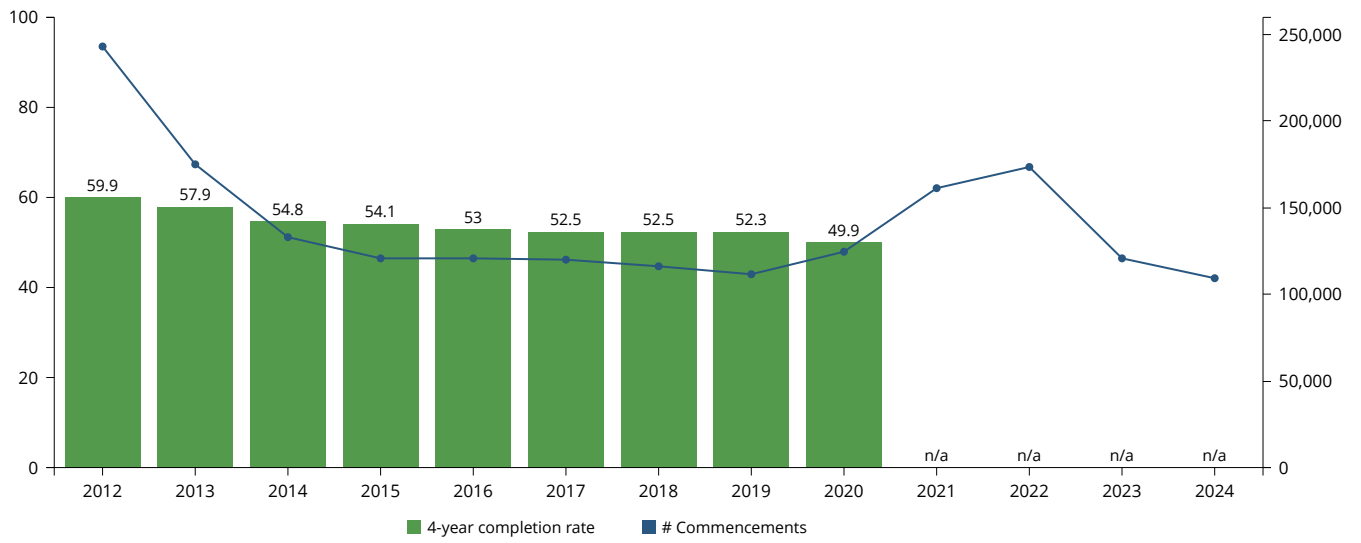
The stable 6-year completion rate for the 52,635 individuals who first began in a trade occupation in 2018 was 62.6%.

Both the attrition and in-training rates, available via the [DataBuilder <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/databuilder#appcr-individuals>](https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/databuilder#appcr-individuals) , should be considered when interpreting the success of a given cohort.

Figure 8: Individual completion rates (%) and commencement numbers from 2012, All occupations, Australia

Trade status **All occupations**

State/territory **Australia**



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For details and exceptions visit the [NCVER Portal](#).

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