



Total VET students and courses 2025: explanatory notes

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Revised: July 2026

This document was produced as an added resource for the *Total VET students and courses 2025* publication. The publication is available on NCVER's Portal: <<https://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

Publisher's note

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of NCVER and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government and state and territory governments. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author(s).

Comments and suggestions regarding this publication are welcomed and should be forwarded to NCVER by email to vet_req@ncver.edu.au with the subject "Feedback on total VET students and courses: explanatory notes".

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2026



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Department's logo, any material protected by a trade mark and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>> licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU licence <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/legalcode>>.

The Creative Commons licence conditions do not apply to all logos, graphic design, artwork and photographs. Requests and enquiries concerning other reproduction and rights should be directed to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

This document should be attributed as NCVER 2026, *Total VET students and courses 2025: explanatory notes*, NCVER, Adelaide.

This work has been produced by NCVER on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, with funding provided through the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Published by NCVER, ABN 87 007 967 311

Level 4, 191 Pulteney Street, Adelaide, South Australia
PO Box 8288 Station Arcade, Adelaide SA 5000, Australia

Phone +61 8 8230 8400 **Email** ncver@ncver.edu.au

Web <<https://www.ncver.edu.au>>

Follow us:

 <<https://x.com/ncver>>

Contents

Tables and figures	4
Tables	4
Explanatory notes	5
Scope	5
Data sources	5
Data treatment	6
Data revisions	6
Student counts	6
Student attributes	6
Training providers	7
Reporting derivations	7
Data quality and comparability issues	7
‘Not known’ information	10
Administrative outcomes	11
Miscellaneous	11

Tables and figures

Tables

1	Total VET clients with ‘not known’ data, 2019 - 2025 (%).	10
2	Total VET students with ‘not known’ data, 2019 - 2025 (%).	11
3	Total VET subject enrolments by administrative outcome, 2019 - 2025 (‘000).	11

Explanatory notes

Scope

- 1 This publication reports on onshore and offshore nationally recognised VET students, subject enrolments, program enrolments, and program completions delivered on a government funded and fee-for-service basis by Australian registered training organisations (RTOs). These include:
 - TAFE institutes
 - Universities
 - Community education providers
 - Enterprise providers
 - Private training providers
 - Schools.
- 2 This publication does not cover the following types of training activity:
 - non-nationally recognised training
 - credit transfer (reported with *outcome identifier - national '60 - credit transfer'*)
 - subjects that were superseded part-way through training (reported with *outcome identifier - national '61 - superseded training'*)
 - not yet started training (reported with *outcome identifier - national '85 - not yet started'*)
 - any activity where revenue was earned from another training provider in terms of subcontracting, auspicing, partnership or similar arrangements¹ (reported with *funding source - national '80 - revenue earned from another training organisation'*).

Data sources

- 3 Data are sourced from the administrative records reported to NCVER by:
 - State and territory training authorities
 - Boards of studies, or their agents
 - Registered training organisations.
- 4 The information contained in this publication is, unless otherwise stated, derived from the National VET Provider Collection and the National VET in Schools Collection. These collections are compiled under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 8.0. For further information on AVETMISS go to <https://www.ncver.edu.au/rto-hub/statistical-standard-software/avetmiss-vet-provider-collection-specifications-release-8.0>.
- 5 This publication also makes use of data and classification information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). For more information, refer to the fact sheet Use of Australian Bureau of Statistics

¹ Third party delivery is issued under the name and logo of the principal provider. The principal provider is expected to submit the administrative records to the National VET Provider Collection; it is this activity that is reported, in lieu of any administrative records provided by a sub-contracted training organisation.

(ABS) data in 'total VET activity' located at <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.

Data treatment

- 6 As these data are sourced from both the National VET Provider Collection and the National VET in Schools Collection, which may contain overlaps, NCVER applies a deduplication process to reduce instances of overcounting. For more information refer to NCVER's 'de-duplication of training activity in Total VET activity' fact sheet <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.
- 7 The percentages presented in this publication are reported to one decimal place.
- 8 Other numbers have been rounded, after aggregation, to the nearest five. Rounding can lead to situations where the sum of rows does not add up to the rounded totals.
- 9 Where relevant, students are counted distinctly against each by variable in a chart or table, including the total. This can lead to situations where the sum of rows or columns do not sum to the total (e.g., a student studying at multiple provider types is counted once for each type, but also only once in the total).

Data revisions

- 10 Data from previous collections, represented within this publication, may differ from those presented in prior publications as:
 - 11 Data may have been rebased. Data revisions take place to facilitate comparisons across collection periods and years based on current data. For example, if a training provider were reported in the current year with provider type of 'school' but in the previous year the same provider had been reported as 'community education provider', then NCVER would adjust the previously reported provider type to match that of the current year. Improvements to the student counting methodology may also lead to minor variations in data reported between years
 - 12 Data may have been submitted to NCVER after the original reporting window had closed. These data would not have been included in that collection's publication. However, they will be included in the following year's publication
 - 13 Program completions are revised annually
 - 14 Updates to the National Register of VET at training.gov.au (such as changes to accreditation, program or unit/module details, training provider information) have been applied to data for both the current and previous years.

Student counts

- 15 NCVER applies a methodology to distinctly count students who may be enrolled at multiple training providers within the state or territory. For further information, refer to the fact sheet Counting Students in 'total VET activity' located at <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.

Student attributes

- 16 When reporting on training activity - subject enrolments, program enrolments, or program completions - NCVER uses the student attributes as reported with the training activity.

- 17 When reporting on students, NCVER uses the student attributes as derived by the student counting methodology (see note 11).

Training providers

- 18 Training providers in *Total VET students and courses* are a distinct count of providers who delivered nationally recognised training and had an active registration for the calendar year as at the point of collection, per the National Register of VET (training.gov.au). For further information, refer to the fact sheet Training providers in 'total VET activity' located at <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.
- 19 NCVER reports on training providers in *Total VET students and courses* as per their listed RTO type on the National Training Register.

Reporting derivations

- 20 *Total VET students and courses* only reports on nationally recognised training. Nationally recognised training is listed on the National Training Register and must be delivered by an active RTO.
- As part of NCVER's type of training derivation, stand-alone nationally recognised subjects are grouped together with nationally recognised subjects associated with non-nationally recognised programs as 'Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program', and interchangeably referred to as 'Stand-alone subjects'.
- 21 By using a two-stage matching process, first with a Unique Student Identifier and then with a client's details, it is possible to set commencing status values. NCVER provides two types of commencing status: *Commencing student status* and *Commencing program status*.
- *Commencing student status* identifies whether this is the first time a student has been reported to NCVER as part of the total VET collection irrespective of the training they undertook, provider with which they were enrolled, or submitter of the data.
 - *Commencing program status* identifies whether this is the first time a student has been reported to NCVER as participating in a particular program and RTO as part of the total VET collection.

Data quality and comparability issues

- 22 The COVID-19 pandemic, and states and territories' economic responses, may have impacted training activity, particularly from March 2020 onwards; any comparison with previous years' data should be made with caution.
- 23 Training products may be retrospectively added to the National Training Register, taking effect from a previous year. Once these products are added to NCVER's classification and reference management system, data from previous years will be rebased and data previously classified as non-nationally recognised training may be re-classified as nationally recognised. For this reason, data on subject enrolments, program enrolments, and students may differ from those presented in prior publications.
- 24 As of 2023 the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 classification is based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. This classification has also been applied retrospectively to data from 2021 onwards and so figures may differ from those published previously by statistical area, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), and/or Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+). Earlier editions of the ASGS have been applied to data prior to 2021.

- 25 Occupations are classified using the 2022 release of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).
- 26 Caution should be used when comparing data in the *Total VET students and courses* with those in the *Government-funded students and courses* and *VET in schools* publications. For more information on the differences between these publications, refer to the fact sheet 'Comparing data from other national VET collections with total VET activity' <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.
- 27 *Total VET students and courses* reports on nationally recognised training delivered by Australian RTOs but may not include all activity. NCVER is unable to estimate the completeness of the data reported or quantum of missing activity. Some collection coverage issues are outlined below:
 - RTOs, whose registration period ended in or after 2025, may not have reported 2025 training activity data
 - Of the RTOs who reported 2025 training activity, it is not known whether they reported all their training activity. For example, some may have only reported their government funded activity and not their fee-for-service activity. Furthermore, some data on training activity delivered in offshore locations are likely to be missing
 - Some RTOs who delivered nationally recognised training may have a valid exemption from reporting full data to the National VET Provider Collection. For more information refer to the fact sheet 'How much training did exempt RTOs report' <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-activity-tva-fact-sheets>>.
- 28 Significant remediation was undertaken on training activity in the period 2020 to 2024. See 28, below.
- 25 From 2022-2024, a large number of students enrolled in Certificate III in Correctional Practice were incorrectly reported with the gender value 'X - Other'. This was due to the implementation of a new learning management system from one RTO, which defaulted gender to X - Other. This has been resolved and 2025 data reflects corrected reporting.

New South Wales – Government-funded activity

- 26 The increase in training activity for New South Wales in 2020 is due to the introduction of fee-free online short courses by TAFE NSW to people wanting to upskill during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of these fee-free short courses are locally developed skill sets.
- 27 NSW Private Providers reported locally developed skill sets for the first time in 2020. This training activity was previously reported as subject only enrolments.
- 28 A proportion of NSW training activity reported between 2020 and 2024 has been remediated to correct subject enrolments. This remediation has had material impacts on NSW subject enrolment trends; minor impacts on program enrolment and student trends; and no impacts on reported hours, Full-Year Training Equivalent or program completion trends.

For further details, contact NCVER.

- 29 Training demand in the 2024 calendar year was impacted by a range of factors, including changes to the Fee Free TAFE program, changes to employer incentives for apprenticeships as well as tight labour market conditions in 2024 in NSW.
- 30 Challenges with the derivation of commencing program status, see 17, are evident in New South Wales elevated 2019 TAFE commencement figures. This was the first year of data following the One

TAFE NSW modernisation program, where a network of ten institutes was consolidated under one registered training organisation identifier.

Victoria – Government-funded activity

- 31 The number of program completions over the years 2015 to 2022 was previously overstated and has now been rectified. As such, figures for Victoria may differ from those published previously.

Victoria – VET in Schools

- 32 Over 308,000 client (student) records were appended with Unique Student Identifiers (USI), that were previously blank, in the VET in Schools collection spanning 2015 to 2024. This will improve the de-duplication of training activity within the Total VET Activity (TVA) dataset.

South Australia – Government-funded activity

- 33 The number of apprentices and trainees undertaking off-the-job training in 2021 in South Australia has been underreported. As a result, caution should be used when making comparisons between years.

South Australia - International fee-for-service activity

- 34 Where students undertake training with more than one RTO, they may be reported as both domestic and international students. This results in a mixture of funding sources recorded for the same student, as well as both domestic and overseas addresses. When the data is merged for national reporting, the most recently reported address is used. As a result, some international students may be assigned a South Australian address and therefore appear in South Australia. These students have not been reported as international students when viewing South Australia in the publication, however are in the Total student number figures.

Western Australia – Government-funded activity

- 35 Western Australia has comparatively high amounts of missing client demographic data across several attributes, including labour force status and previous highest education level.
- 36 Western Australian figures for 2025 have been affected by reporting changes associated with the transition to non-accredited literacy and numeracy support ('foundation skills') introduced in January 2025. This change impacts comparability with previous years at the overall program enrolment level, and specifically amongst short course enrolments.
- 37 Two previous Western Australian accredited courses are no longer recorded in national enrolment statistics due to the expiry of their accreditation in December 2024 - the Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS) and the Course in Underpinning Skills for Industry Qualifications (USIQ). These courses were primarily delivered at TAFEs.
- 38 TAFEs have developed an enhanced non-accredited foundation skills support model; however, this activity is not recorded in the national collection. Western Australia's funding and level of effort for foundation skills has not changed.

Northern Territory – Government-funded activity

- 39 The decline in training activity in the Northern Territory between 2018 and 2019 was partly due to improvements in reporting practices in 2019. Previously, some students were enrolled in their training activity prior to commencing the actual training component, and their participation was

reported as 'continuing'. Using the '70 - continuing' outcome identifier meant that the student and their training activity were 'in scope' for reporting purposes. This practice changed in the January-March 2019 period, and their participation was reported as 'not yet started'. This '85 - not yet started' outcome identifier was introduced in AVETMISS release 8.0, for reporting from 2018 onwards. Subjects with an outcome identifier of '85 - not yet started' are not in scope of this publication.

Australian Capital Territory – Government-funded activity

- 40 ACT Private Providers have improved their collection and reporting of client demographics from 'not known' to known values. Observed data shifts range between 20 - 30 percentage points.

Australian Capital Territory – VET in Schools

- 41 Since 2018, a number of subject enrolments have been submitted by ACT Board of Studies (Submitter ID 860) with incorrect program IDs.

Normally, one single program is made up of multiple subject enrolments, all linked to the same program ID (e.g. eight subject enrolments belonging to a single program for a student). However, if a student's subject enrolments are reported against different program IDs, it appears as though that student is enrolled in multiple programs rather than one.

This inflates program enrolment counts, misrepresents apprentice and trainee assigned program IDs and may also lead to understated program completions.

'Not known' information

- 42 Data are reported as 'not known' for the following reasons:
- information was not collected
 - a student has not responded to a question on the enrolment form
 - invalid information was supplied.
- 43 Caution should be taken when using data that allow a 'not known' response.
- 44 For demonstrative purposes, the extent of 'not known' data, as submitted and before NCVER's counting student methodology has been applied, is illustrated in Table 1 below for selected student variables.

Table 1 Total VET clients with 'not known' data, before counting student methodology applied, 2019 - 2025 (%).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Disability status	13.5	14.5	13.2	13.9	14.3	14.6	15.4
Gender	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.1	3.3	4.4
Indigenous status	12.3	11.7	11.2	12.3	13.2	14.4	14.9
Labour force status	19.3	17.2	16.2	16.5	17.6	18.4	18.4
Previous highest education level	13.6	12.7	12.9	13.3	14.6	15.1	15.2
Prior education	13.9	13.3	11.4	13.7	14.1	14.2	12.4
School status	12	11.5	10.9	11.7	11.1	12.5	13.8
Student remoteness region	7.9	6	5.3	5.7	6.2	6	6

Student remoteness region 'not known' includes '9 – No usual address'.

45 NCVER's counting student methodology can impact the rates of 'not known' responses either positively or negatively. For comparison, the extent of 'not known' data once the counting student methodology has been applied are illustrated in Table 2.

- In the event of conflicting demographic information, the value will be set to 'not known'; for example, where the same student is reported as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.
- In the event of a combination of known and unknown information, the value will be set to the known value; for example, where the same student is reported as Indigenous and 'Not known' the value will be set to Indigenous.

Table 2 Total VET students with 'not known' data, after counting student methodology applied 2019 - 2025 (%).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Disability status	11.2	12	11.1	11.5	11.7	12.3	12.9
Gender	3.5	2.6	3	3.3	3.1	3.2	4
Indigenous status	10.2	9.6	9.2	10	10.6	11.8	12.2
Labour force status	21.3	19.7	18.8	18.7	19.2	20.1	20.2
Previous highest education level	11.4	10.7	10.8	11	11.8	12.4	12.6
Prior education	10.5	9.8	8.8	10.6	10.5	11.1	9.9
School status	11.9	10.8	10.7	11.2	10.6	12	12.8
Student remoteness region	10.9	9.1	8.3	9	10.1	9.6	9.5

Student remoteness region 'not known' includes '9 – No usual address'.

Administrative outcomes

46 Administrative outcomes are those that represent a procedural state of a subject rather than a period of active delivery or of assessment. These *outcome identifier - national* values include '60 - Credit Transfer', '61 - Superseded subject' and '85 - Not yet started'. Data on these outcomes are not included in NCVER's publications as they are considered out of scope. Table 3 shows the quantum of this activity that is reported to NCVER.

- **Credit transfer:** This identifies that a student has received credit for a subject they have completed previously.
- **Superseded subject:** This identifies a subject that was started but not completed before the student was transferred to a superseding subject. The final outcome will be recorded against the superseding subject.
- **Not yet started:** This indicates a student is enrolled in a subject, but training activity or assessment has not yet started. Reporting subjects with this outcome to NCVER is not mandatory.

Table 3 Total VET subject enrolments by administrative outcome, 2019 - 2025 ('000).

Administrative outcomes	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
60 – Credit transfer	2015.8	1926.6	2182.2	2469.4	2594.6	2747.5	2506.4
61 – Superseded subjects	26.5	3.1	9	76.4	34.4	10.4	1.4
85 – Not yet started	172.1	369.6	524.6	587.6	572.3	773.3	401.2

Miscellaneous

47 In tables containing student remoteness, 'offshore' refers to the overseas postal addresses of students studying in Australia.