SUPPORT DOCUMENT

NCVER

Total VET students and courses 2023: explanatory notes

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Publisher's note

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Explanatory notes

Scope

1   This publication reports on onshore and offshore nationally recognised VET 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- subjects that were superseded part-way through training (reported with *outcome identifier - national* '61 - superseded training')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 arrangements[1] (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 (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>.

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[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 on in lieu of any administrative records provided by a sub-contracted training organisation.

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   Note that 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   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 per 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:

   a.   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 was reported in the current year with provider type of 'school' but in the previous year the same provider was reported as 'community education provider', NCVER will 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

   b.   Data may have been submitted to NCVER after the original reporting window has closed. These data would not have been included in that collection's publication. However, they will be included in the following year's publication

   c.   Program completions are revised annually

   d.   Changes made to the National Training Register (training.gov.au; e.g., changes to accreditation, program or unit/module details, training provider details) will be implemented in the current reporting year, with previous years' data also revised.

Student counts

11 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

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

13 When reporting on students, NCVER uses the student attributes as derived by the student counting methodology.

Training providers

14 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).

15 NCVER reports on training providers in *Total VET students and courses* as per their listed RTO type on the National Training Register.

16 There have been reductions in the number of TAFE institutes reported in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Queensland in recent years due to the implementation of reform measures in those jurisdictions. For example, from 1 January 2019 the number of TAFEs reported in New South Wales decreased from 11 to one as part of the One TAFE consolidation program.

Reporting derivations

17 *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'.

18 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

19 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.

20 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.

21 Data for 2023 have been classified using the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. This classification has also been applied retrospectively to data for 2021 and 2022 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.

22 Occupations are classified using the 2022 release of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).

23 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>.

24 *Total VET students and courses* reports on nationally recognised training delivered by Australian RTOs however it 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 2023, may not have reported 2023 training activity data

- Of the RTOs who reported 2023 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>.

New South Wales – Government-funded activity

25 NSW Private Providers reported locally developed skill sets for the first time in 2020. This training activity was previously reported as subject only enrolments.

26 The number of subject enrolments in 2022 for TAFE NSW with an outcome of '70 – Continuing activity' and an activity end date of 2023 is overstated by about 50%. Data on reporting hours and FYTEs are unaffected.

27 Some training activity submitted by TAFE NSW between 2015 to 2020 may have been reported with an outcome of '70 – Continuing activity' instead of activity not started, which is out of scope of reporting. TAFE NSW investigations to date have shown the impact on previously reported data is immaterial. Users of this information should be aware of this issue when making comparisons between years. Data on reporting hours and FYTEs are unaffected.

Victoria – Government-funded activity

28 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.

South Australia – Government-funded activity

29 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.

Western Australia – Government-funded activity

30 Western Australia has comparably high missing client demographic data across several attributes, including labour force status, Indigenous status, disability status, and previous highest education level.

Northern Territory – Government-funded activity

31 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.

'Not known' information

32 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.

33 Caution should be taken when using data that allow a 'not known' response.

34 For demonstrative purposes, the extent of 'not known' data, as submitted and before NCVER's counting student methodology has been applied, for selected student variables is illustrated in the table 1 below.

Table 1   Total VET clients with 'not known' data, before counting student methodology applied, 2019 – 2023 (%).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Disability status	13.5	14.5	13.2	13.9	14.2
Gender	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.1
Indigenous status	12.3	11.7	11.2	12.3	13.2
Labour force status	19.3	17.2	16.2	16.5	17.6
Previous highest education level	13.6	12.7	12.9	13.3	14.6
Prior education	13.9	13.3	11.4	13.7	14.1
School status	12.0	11.5	10.9	11.6	11.1
Student remoteness region	7.9	6.0	5.3	5.7	6.2

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

Note: Student remoteness region numbers for 2019 to 2022 have been revised due to '9 – No usual address' not being included in previous year calculations.

35 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 – 2023 (%).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Disability status	11.9	12.7	11.8	12.1	12.2
Gender	3.5	2.6	2.9	3.3	3.1
Indigenous status	10.1	9.5	9.1	9.9	10.5
Labour force status	21.9	20.3	19.3	19.2	19.6
Previous highest education level	11.4	10.7	10.8	10.9	11.8
Prior education	11.1	10.6	9.4	11.1	11.0
School status	11.7	10.7	10.5	11.1	10.5
Student remoteness region	10.8	9.0	8.3	8.9	10.0

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

Note: Student remoteness region numbers for 2019 to 2022 have been revised due to '9 – No usual address' not being included in previous year calculations.

Administrative outcomes

36 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 to 2023 ('000).

Administrative outcomes	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
60 – Credit transfer	2 015.8	1 926.6	2 182.2	2 469.4	2 593.9
61 – Superseded subjects	26.5	3.1	9	76.4	34.4
85 – Not yet started	172.1	170.1	414.2	441.1	265.2

Miscellaneous

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