



# VET qualification completion rates 2024: explanatory notes

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Revised: November 2025

This document was produced as an added resource for the *VET qualification completion rates 2024* publication. The publication is available on NCV ER's Portal: <<https://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

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This document should be attributed as NCVER 2025, *VET qualification completion rates 2024: 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

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# Contents

Tables and figures	4
Explanatory notes	5
Scope	5
Data sources	5
Data treatment	6
Student identification	6
Supersession	7
Enrolments	7
Matching enrolments to completions	7
Enrolment statuses	7
Other treatments	7
Data quality and comparability issues	7
Methodologies	8
Observed completion rate.	8
Projected completion rate	8

# Tables and figures

Figure 1 Associating submitted records with a Master Student Key

6

# Explanatory notes

## Scope

- 1 This publication provides information on completion rates for nationally recognised VET qualifications delivered by Australian registered training organisations (RTOs) to students in both onshore (Australia) and offshore locations, 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:
  - completions of programs below Certificate I level
  - non-nationally recognised training
  - qualification enrolments with **only** the following activity
    - 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    - subjects that were superseded part-way through training (reported with *outcome identifier - national '61 - superseded training'*)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<sup>1</sup> (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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

(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 NCVET has developed a Master Student Longitudinal Construct, from these collections, which enables the tracking of students and their associated training over time. The Master Student Longitudinal Construct facilitates the comprehensive analysis for various measures including subjects, programs, training organisations, and students.
- 6 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>>.

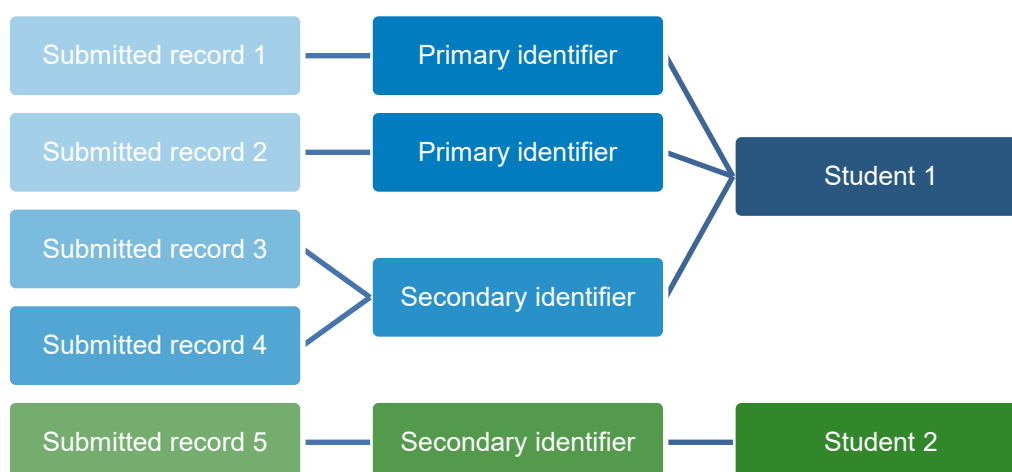
## Data treatment

- 7 As these data are sourced from both the National VET Provider Collection and the National VET in Schools Collection, which may contain overlaps, NCVET applies a deduplication process to reduce instances of overcounting. For more information refer to NCVET's 'de-duplication of training activity in Total VET activity' fact sheet <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/9674104/TVA\\_2021\\_fact\\_sheet\\_De-duplication\\_of\\_training\\_activity.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/9674104/TVA_2021_fact_sheet_De-duplication_of_training_activity.pdf)>.
- 8 The scope of analysis for the Longitudinal Data Construct is limited to enrolment years where a commencement status can be derived (i.e., there is another year of enrolments before the analysis year). This restricts the reporting to 2016 or later commencing cohorts.
- 9 The National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections collect subject enrolment and completion details of VET students and their qualifications. While these national databases are essentially cross-sectional by year, there is enough information to match data over between years for individual VET students and the qualifications they undertake. This process is outlined below.

## Student identification

- 10 Submitted records are associated with a master student record either via the primary identifier (i.e., unique student identifier) or a secondary identifier of encrypted student name, gender, and date of birth.

**Figure 1 Associating submitted records with a Master Student Key**



- 11 Logic has been applied to resolve inconsistencies and establish one set of demographic attributes for each student or as at commencement of the qualification.
- 12 The demographic attribute logic ignores any missing values before identifying the majority value for each attribute. Where no majority can be established a value of 'mixed' is assigned.

## Supersession

- 13 As part of the preparation of the Master Student Longitudinal Construct supersession is applied to the data such that the latest value in a known supersession cluster is associated with all records. This enables the linking and tracking of training activity over time and improves the matching between qualification enrolments and completions.

## Enrolments

- 14 Where a Master Student's training activity associated with a qualification has been reported in consecutive collections and without an intervening completion, this is grouped together as a single qualification enrolment.
- 15 A break in reporting or a matched completion creates a new qualification commencement.

## Matching enrolments to completions

- 16 If an enrolment and completion record share the same Master Student and latest superseding program identifier they are linked with the following constraints:
  - a. Records will only be linked where the enrolment year is the same or earlier than the completion year.
  - b. Where multiple completion records exist, enrolments will be linked to the earliest completion record.

## Enrolment statuses

- 17 For each qualification enrolment, both a commencement and completion status are defined.
- 18 The commencement year and status is based on whether a qualification enrolment was reported in a previous year.
- 19 The completion status will be one of three values.
  - a. **Completed** - the enrolment was matched to a completion.
  - b. **Continuing** - the enrolment is unmatched and was reported in the latest collection.
  - c. **Non-completion** - the enrolment is unmatched and there has been a break in activity.

## Other treatments

- 20 The percentages presented in this publication are reported to one decimal place.

## Data quality and comparability issues

- 21 Data are sourced from 'Total VET activity', and any quality and comparability issues outlined for *Total VET students and courses 2024* may apply here. For more information refer to *Total VET students and courses 2023: explanatory notes* available on NCVER's portal < <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/total-vet-students-and-courses>>.

22 NCVER has identified that Victorian overall and government funded completion rates are negatively influenced by the reporting of specific initiatives, such as VET in Schools and VET in Prison. NCVER is working with Victoria to identify improvements that could be adopted for future reporting.

## Methodologies

23 A VET qualification completion rate is defined as the proportion of VET qualifications that commenced in a given year that are eventually completed. The calculation considers when a student commences a qualification and, ultimately, when a student exits (such as successfully completing or discontinuing).

24 The publication presents either observed or projected completion rates, for qualifications at the certificate I level and above using the latest refresh of the Master Student Longitudinal Construct.

25 The time taken for a student to exit a VET qualification varies, in line with factors such as Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level and mode of study.

### Observed completion rate.

26 For commencing cohorts where enough time has passed, the observed completion rate is the sum of completed qualification enrolments divided by all enrolments for that commencing year.

27 Completions presented in the report are timeboxed to enable comparisons between commencing cohorts. Any completions that occur beyond the four-year window are excluded from rates defined as 'four-year' completion rates.

28 However, the DataBuilder includes an observed 'to date' measure capturing all reported completions up until the end of the collection year. Rates as at the latest submission, i.e. as at 31 December, referred to as 'to date' cannot be compared across years, as those in earlier years have had more time to complete.

### Projected completion rate

29 For more recently commencing cohorts, NCVER has developed a methodology for projecting an eventual completion rate using the principles of an absorbing Markov chain. The methodology can be readily applied to subsets of the data based on student demographics or attributes of the training.

30 This approach uses the completion status of commencing and continuing cohorts from the year/s of interest to generate a transition matrix used to derive the probability of the remaining active qualification enrolments completing.

31 Projections consistent of both

- a. observed 'to date' completions,
- b. and the proportion of active enrolments from that commencing cohort that are estimated to complete.

Projections are subject to change with subsequent submissions of data.

32 Each cohort's projected completion rate is not directly comparable due to cohorts having varying amounts of time to complete, possible delays in reporting, and - at disaggregated levels - the quantum of activity used to generate a projection.

33 Differences between projections and the eventual observed completion rate may be overstated if there are lags in reporting that impact the completion status of an enrolment e.g., delays in the

reporting of completion records. This is likely to be more evident for the most recently commencing cohorts.

34 Further explanations of qualification completion rates, including recent methodological reviews, can be found in the following technical papers and fact sheets:

- *The likelihood of completing a VET qualification: a model-based approach*, available at <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/the-likelihood-of-completing-a-vet-qualification-a-model-based-approach>>
- VET qualification completion rates: an evaluation of the current method <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-qualification-completion-rates-an-evaluation-of-the-current-method>>
- Evaluating machine learning for projecting completion rates for VET programs <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/evaluating-machine-learning-for-projecting-completion-rates-for-vet-programs>>
- VET qualification completion rate fact sheet: Which rate and why? <[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/9700224/Fact-sheet-Which-rate-and-why.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/9700224/Fact-sheet-Which-rate-and-why.pdf)>