

**The online delivery of VET  
during COVID-19: part 1**

**Sheila Hume & Tabatha Griffin**

National Centre for Vocational Education Research



**RESEARCH report**

### 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, or state and territory governments. Any interpretation of data is the responsibility of the author/project team.

To find other material of interest, search VOCEDplus (the UNESCO/NCVER international database <[http://www.voced.edu.au](http://www.voced.edu.au/)>) using the following keywords: assessment; enrolment; funding; online learning; providers of education and training; registered training organisation; students; teaching and learning; technology; trainers; vocational education and training; vocational teachers

P:\PublicationComponents\logos\Social Media\InBug-16px_0.pngP:\PublicationComponents\logos\Social Media\Twitter_blackbox.png

**© Commonwealth of Australia, 2021**

G:\pub_prod\PublicationComponents\logos\Creativecommons\CC BY logo.eps

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 Hume, S & Griffin, T 2021, The o*nline delivery of VET during COVID-19: part 1,* 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 Education, Skills and Employment.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

ISBN 978-1-925717-74-7

TD/TNC 144.12

Published by NCVER, ABN 87 007 967 311

Level 5, 60 Light Square, Adelaide SA 5000  
PO Box 8288 Station Arcade, Adelaide SA 5000, Australia

**Phone** +61 8 8230 8400 **Email** [ncver@ncver.edu.au](mailto:ncver@ncver.edu.au)   
**Web** <https://www.ncver.edu.au> <<https://www.lsay.edu.au>>

**Follow us:** <https://twitter.com/ncver> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ncver>

# About the research

The online delivery of VET during COVID-19

### Sheila Hume and Tabatha Griffin, NCVER

Efforts to contain COVID-19 through lockdowns and social distancing prompted swift changes to the delivery of vocational education and training (VET), with questions subsequently arising about the impact of this rapid transition on students and trainers/assessors. This report, the first of two, presents the initial findings on the transition to online delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this rapid shift could affect plans for the future delivery of online training and assessment. These early insights have been informed by an analysis of total VET activity (TVA) data for 2019 and 2020, as well as by preliminary findings from an online survey of registered training organisations (RTOs), administered in collaboration with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Key messages

* There was a strong response from the VET sector to COVID-19 restrictions, with the number of subjects delivered online increasing by about 24% between 2019 and 2020.
* The shift to online training delivery was more pronounced for government-funded subject enrolments than for those funded via domestic fee-for-service arrangements (increases of 40.4% and 15.7%, respectively):
* The increase in relation to government-funded subject enrolments in 2020 was more pronounced as fewer of these subjects were delivered online only in 2019 compared with domestic fee-for-service subjects (897 100 and 1 660 000 respectively).
* In 2020, there were an additional 159 600 enrolments in online-only government-funded stand-alone subjects, i.e. subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program, which increased from 4.7% of all government-funded online-only training in 2019 to 16.0% in 2020.
* This move to online training in response to COVID-19 was further reflected in the survey responses of RTOs, with most (75.2%) having transitioned at least some of their training and assessment online.
* Approximately 12 months on from the commencement of COVID-19 restrictions in Australia, online training is still being offered in areas where it had not previously been, with around 71% of surveyed RTOs having maintained at least some of this initial shift to online training.
* The intention to maintain an increased level of online training and assessment is relatively high, with more than 61% of RTOs surveyed indicating they would be more likely to use blended learning in the future.

The next stage of this project will investigate in more depth the transition to online by RTOs, including future plans for online delivery.

Simon Walker  
Managing Director, NCVER

# Acknowledgments

An online survey of RTOs was developed and administered in collaboration with ASQA. We acknowledge and appreciate the commitment shown by ASQA to working in partnership with NCVER throughout the entirety of this survey, including the questionnaire development, data collection and analysis phases of the project. Our gratitude also extends to the RTOs who took the time to complete the online survey and share their experience with regards to COVID-19 and online learning.

In addition, we would like to thank the Project Advisory Committee members for their guidance and comments on this project.

P:\PublicationComponents\Icons\ExecutiveSummary.emfContents

Executive summary 8

Response to COVID-19 8

Now and into the future 9

Stage two of this study 9

The increasing role of online delivery 10

Introduction 10

Delivery of VET before and during COVID-19 11

Who pays and the relationship to online delivery 12

Impact of COVID-19 on training type and subject result 14

Early findings from training provider survey 18

Appendix A 22

Methodology 22

Research questions 22

Appendix B 24

Additional delivery mode tables 24

Training package skill sets and funding source 26

Training type by online-only delivery mode 26

Training type and provider type for online-only delivery mode 26

Skilling initiatives 27

# Tables and figures

## Tables

1 Subject enrolments by delivery mode, 2019−20 11

2 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20 12

3 Government-funded subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20 13

4 Domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20 13

5 Subject enrolments by type of training, 2019−20 14

6 Government-funded and domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments by   
type of training for external-only delivery mode, 2019−20 15

7 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode comparing training type; including and excluding subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program, 2019−20 15

8 Government-funded and domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments by delivery mode, 2019−20 16

9 Subject enrolments by result outcomes, 2019−20 17

A1 Training providers surveyed by type 22

B1 Subject enrolments with internal-only delivery mode by jurisdiction,   
2019−20 24

B2 Subject enrolments with a workplace-based-only delivery mode by   
jurisdiction, 2019−20 24

B3 Subject enrolments with a combination of internal and workplace-based delivery modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20 24

B4 Subject enrolments with a combination of internal and external delivery   
modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20 25

B5 Subject enrolments with a combination of external and workplace-based delivery modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20 25

B6 Subject enrolments with all delivery modes combined by jurisdiction,   
2019−20 25

B7 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode split by funding source; including and excluding training package skill sets, 2019−20 26

B8 Subject enrolments by training type with an external-only delivery mode, 2019−20 26

B9 Subject enrolments by training type and provider type with an external-only delivery mode, 2019−20 26

## 

## Figures

1 Percentage change in delivery mode for subject enrolments, 2019−20 (%) 12

2 Proportion of training package skill sets with external-only delivery mode,   
by jurisdiction, 2020 (%) 14

3 The transition to online delivery in response to COVID-19, training delivery in 2021 and future intentions 18

4 Incidence of shifting face-to-face training online in response to COVID-19, and barriers to shifting among those who did not move any training or assessment online (%) 19

5 Incidence of offering any training/assessment through online delivery prior to COVID-19 (%) 19

6 Online training status of training provider in February/March 2021 (%) 20

7 Influence of COVID-19 on future online training delivery plans (%) 21

# Executive summary

P:\PublicationComponents\Icons\ExecutiveSummary.emfThis report, the first of two reports for this project, explores the vocational education and training (VET) sector’s response to COVID-19 through the increasing use of online training and assessment. The overall objective of this two-report study is to investigate the immediate response to COVID-19 by examining the transition from a face-to-face learning environment to online training and assessment. The study also aims to understand how registered training organisations (RTOs) navigated the changes necessitated by the pandemic.

The two data sources informing this report are total VET activity (TVA) data for 2019 and 2020 and high-level findings from an online survey of RTOs, administered in collaboration with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). The intention of this report is to provide an initial indication of how the VET sector responded to COVID-19.

## Response to COVID-19

The data clearly reflect the VET sector’s quick and decisive response to COVID-19 and its transition to online delivery.[[1]](#footnote-1) The number of subjects delivered online only (external delivery mode) increased by almost 24% between 2019 and 2020.[[2]](#footnote-2) Increases in subjects delivered with combined delivery modes, whereby online delivery was included as at least one component of this mode, were also reported.

This substantial shift was also evident in the survey of RTOs, with approximately three-quarters (75.2%) of those who delivered face-to-face training prior to COVID-19 moving at least some of their training and assessment online in response to the pandemic. Around one-third (34.3%) of this group transferred certain subjects/units to online delivery, as opposed to full programs. The main barriers to transitioning to online training and assessment before, and in response to the pandemic, are not dissimilar. These barriers were consistently identified as subject matter being unsuitable for online delivery and online delivery not being suitable for students.

The TVA data identified that the shift to online delivery differed by funding source, with an increase of approximately 40% for government-funded subjects delivered only online between 2019 and 2020, while domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments increased by close to 16%. Although the difference between these two funding sources is noticeable, the number of government-funded subjects delivered only online in 2019 was much lower than for domestic fee-for-service (897 100 compared with 1 660 000), which results in the percentage increases in 2020 appearing more pronounced for government-funded subjects.

Investigations of the type of training associated with these online-subject enrolments showed that for government-funded enrolments the increase occurred in stand-alone subjects, i.e. subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program, which increased from 4.7% of all government-funded online-only training in 2019 to 16.0% in 2020.

Declines in total subject enrolments were noted across most training types in 2020, with the exception of training package skill sets, which recorded an increase of 11.2% (roughly 25 800 subject enrolments). In relation to training package skill sets delivered only online, this increase was even greater, at 193.8%. New South Wales reported the majority (63.7%) of these online-only enrolments in training package skill sets, followed by Queensland (21.4%) and Victoria (10.3%).

In terms of subject result, there was a decline of 5% in the proportion of subject enrolments recording a pass result in 2020, while continuing studies increased by more than 3%. No reportable differences for subject result when examined by funding source were identified.

## Now and into the future

Approximately 12 months after the commencement of COVID-19 restrictions in Australia, only about one-quarter (25.1%) of the surveyed RTOs who had transferred some face-to-face training online had reverted fully to their pre-COVID-19 approach to training.

The survey findings demonstrate a strong pattern of RTOs continuing to offer online training in areas where it was not available prior to COVID-19. More than one-third (35.5%) of respondents had only partially returned to their pre-COVID-19 approach to training delivery, while 23.3% were expanding online delivery, with a further 11.9% continuing to operate at the same level as their initial shift online.

The ongoing and increased level of online delivery identified through the survey is reflected in the plans held by many survey respondents. More than 61% of RTOs who transitioned to at least some training online in response to COVID-19 indicated they would be more likely to use blended learning in the future.

## Stage two of this study

The findings highlighted in this first report, along with ongoing feedback from project stakeholders, are informing the remaining elements of this project. The final report will bring together findings from TVA data, further analyses of the online survey and key outcomes from interviews with RTOs and the National Student Outcomes Survey.

# The increasing role of online delivery

## Introduction

Key points

In response to COVID-19:

* A substantial increase in online learning
* Domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments have driven this shift online
* RTOs are more likely to consider increasing the use of online training in the future

Key points

In response to COVID-19:

* There has been a substantial increase in online training
* Many RTOs are still offering online training in areas that weren’t online prior to the pandemic
* RTOs are now more likely to consider blended delivery modes for future training delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, lockdowns and social distancing requirements posed new and unique challenges for all education institutions, including those in the VET sector.

Although COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns drove an exponential growth in Zoom ‘catch ups’ and Microsoft Teams meetings, the rapid and unexpected transition from a face-to-face environment to a virtual one raises many complexities for the VET sector, in particular, issues relating to the impact of the move for students and trainers/assessors, and the implications of these for the sector into the future.

This report is the first from a current research project exploring how the VET sector has responded, and is responding, to the changing landscape caused by COVID-19.

This report brings together high-level findings from two key sources of information:

* total VET activity data for 2019 and 2020
* an online survey of RTOs[[3]](#footnote-3).

See appendix A for methodological details and research questions.

The following graphic identifies the data sources that will be used to inform this project for the first and final reports.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data sources** | **First report** | **Final report** |
| Total VET activity | Checkmark with solid fill2019 and 2020 administrative training activity data | Checkmark with solid fill2019 and 2020 administrative training activity data |
| Online survey of RTOs | Checkmark with solid fillEarly findings from 2021 survey | Checkmark with solid fillAnalysis of 2021 survey findings |
| In-depth interviews with RTOs | Close with solid fillOccurring in second half of 2021 | Checkmark with solid fillKey findings from interviews conducted second half of 2021 |
| National Student Outcomes Survey | Close with solid fillNot included in first report | Checkmark with solid fill2021 student outcomes and satisfaction data |

## Delivery of VET before and during COVID-19

Between 2019 and 2020 there was an overall decrease of about 4% in VET subject enrolments, as reported in TVA data for 2020 (figure 1), equating to a total decline of more than 1.1 million subject enrolments. This overall decline for VET has not, however, translated across to the online-only[[4]](#footnote-4) delivery mode, where, in 2020, there was an increase of almost 626 700 online-only subject enrolments. Data in table 1 also show that, pre-pandemic (2019), 9.5% of subjects were delivered online-only, with this figure increasing to 12.3% in line with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1 Subject enrolments by delivery mode, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| Internal only | 15 430 649 | 56.0 | 13 576 051 | 51.4 |
| External only | 2 617 745 | 9.5 | 3 244 413 | 12.3 |
| Workplace-based only | 1 806 600 | 6.6 | 1 386 836 | 5.2 |
| Combination of internal and external | 3 038 127 | 11.0 | 3 447 898 | 13.0 |
| Combination of internal and workplace-based | 1 101 428 | 4.0 | 1 018 538 | 3.9 |
| Combination of external and workplace-based | 1 130 246 | 4.1 | 1 262 161 | 4.8 |
| Combination of all modes | 1 443 514 | 5.2 | 1 443 668 | 5.5 |
| Not applicable (RPL or credit transfer) | 995 865 | 3.6 | 1 052 468 | 4.0 |
| **Total** | **27 564 174** | **100.0** | **26 432 033** | **100.0** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Note: Grey shading indicates those delivery modes with that include some form of online delivery, either solely or in combination with other modes of delivery

There was a substantial increase in the number of subjects delivered online only between 2019 and 2020, with TVA data reporting an increase[[5]](#footnote-5) of almost 24% (figure 1). The impact of COVID-19 on training delivery also extended across mixed delivery modes that include a component of online training:

* combination of internal (for example, classroom-based) and online (increase of 13.5%)
* combination of online and workplace-based (increase of 11.7%).

In contrast, a 12% decrease was recorded in the number of subjects that were delivered in a classroom only between 2019 and 2020, with decreases also observed for subjects delivered solely in the workplace (-23.2%), and through a combination of classroom and workplace-based delivery (-7.5%).

Figure 1 Percentage change in delivery mode for subject enrolments, 2019−20 (%)

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

The transition to online delivery varied between the states and territories (table 2), with the ACT and Queensland recording the most substantial increases. Although tables 1 and 2 provide an overall picture of delivery mode changes for subject enrolments between 2019 and 2020, an examination of these changes by funding source and jurisdiction provides a clearer picture of the shift.

Table 2 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| External-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | %change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 1 039 618 | 39.7 | 1 304 527 | 40.2 | 25.5 |
| Victoria | 470 328 | 18.0 | 505 299 | 15.6 | 7.4 |
| Queensland | 809 230 | 30.9 | 1 103 519 | 34.0 | 36.4 |
| South Australia | 95 960 | 3.7 | 104 430 | 3.2 | 8.8 |
| Western Australia | 140 164 | 5.4 | 157 699 | 4.9 | 12.5 |
| Tasmania | 12 723 | 0.5 | 16 317 | 0.5 | 28.2 |
| Northern Territory | 5 898 | 0.2 | 7 226 | 0.2 | 22.5 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 13 969 | 0.5 | 20 468 | 0.6 | 46.5 |
| Other\* | 29 855 | 1.1 | 24 928 | 0.8 | -16.5 |
| **Total** | **2 617 745** | **100.0** | **3 244 413** | **100.0** | **23.9** |

Note: See appendix B for additional tables examining the other delivery modes by jurisdiction.

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

## Who pays and the relationship to online delivery

The overall increase of online training has coincided with a substantial rise in the number of government-funded online-only subject enrolments, with these enrolments increasing by almost 362 600 in 2020 (an increase of 40.4%; table 3). Online-only domestic fee-for-service enrolments increased by approximately 16% (table 4).

In Victoria, government-funded online-only enrolments increased from approximately 70 400 to close to 135 100 in 2020 (an increase of more than 91%; table 3). New South Wales and Tasmania also recorded sizeable increases, at 41.7% and 41.5% respectively. Compared with the rest of Australia, Victoria was subject to the most sustained periods of lockdown and restrictions as a result of COVID-19 during 2020; hence, it is not surprising that state recorded such a substantial increase in online-only enrolments.

Table 3 Government-funded subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Government-funded subject enrolments with external-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 558 841 | 62.3 | 791 920 | 62.9 | 41.7 |
| Victoria | 70 407 | 7.8 | 135 128 | 10.7 | 91.9 |
| Queensland | 141 574 | 15.8 | 184 121 | 14.6 | 30.1 |
| South Australia | 54 309 | 6.1 | 63 741 | 5.1 | 17.4 |
| Western Australia | 58 577 | 6.5 | 67 632 | 5.4 | 15.5 |
| Tasmania | 8 037 | 0.9 | 11 373 | 0.9 | 41.5 |
| Northern Territory | 1 728 | 0.2 | 2 632 | 0.2 | 52.3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 3 588 | 0.4 | 3 080 | 0.2 | -14.2 |
| **Total** | **897 061** | **100.0** | **1 259 627** | **100.0** | **40.4** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

As shown in table 4, the delivery of online-only subjects funded through domestic fee-for-service arrangements varied across the states and territories between 2019 and 2020. A noticeable shift was recorded for the ACT with an additional 6800 subject enrolments (increase of 66.2%), while Queensland also reported a sizeable increase of 37.9% (additional 249 100 subject enrolments).

Table 4 Domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments with external-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 462 700 | 27.9 | 494 393 | 25.7 | 6.8 |
| Victoria | 392 221 | 23.6 | 358 694 | 18.7 | -8.5 |
| Queensland | 657 459 | 39.6 | 906 551 | 47.2 | 37.9 |
| South Australia | 40 403 | 2.4 | 38 920 | 2.0 | -3.7 |
| Western Australia | 81 100 | 4.9 | 89 696 | 4.7 | 10.6 |
| Tasmania | 4 686 | 0.3 | 4 810 | 0.3 | 2.6 |
| Northern Territory | 4 155 | 0.3 | 4 553 | 0.2 | 9.6 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 10 344 | 0.6 | 17 193 | 0.9 | 66.2 |
| Other\* | 6 928 | 0.4 | 6 197 | 0.3 | -10.6 |
| **Total** | **1 659 996** | **100.0** | **1 921 007** | **100.0** | **15.7** |

Note: \*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Desktop research has revealed a variety of skilling initiatives introduced or expanded at both federal and state and territory levels in response to COVID-19. These skilling initiatives cover a broad range of training and are likely to incorporate classroom-based, online and other delivery modes. The broad scope of these initiatives means that it is difficult to draw any conclusions on the relationship between these and the increased levels of online training delivery. Refer to appendix B for examples of skilling initiatives introduced at a federal level, as well as a number specific to Victoria.

To investigate whether the substantial shift to online delivery for government-funded subject enrolments was in any way skewed by training package skill sets developed in response to COVID-19, comparisons were made between figures that included and excluded training package skill sets. These comparisons did not reveal any substantial impacts on the shift to online delivery in response to COVID-19 (table B7 in appendix B).

## Impact of COVID-19 on training type and subject result

### Training type during COVID-19

Overall, there were decreases in the number of subject enrolments between 2019 and 2020 for almost all training types, with the exception of training package skill sets. As shown in table 5, an increase of approximately 11% was reported for training package skill sets, equating to an additional 25 800 subject enrolments in 2020.

The number of subject enrolments in training package qualifications declined by about 404 900 between 2019 and 2020, yet the share of this training type increased by 1.5% in 2020, from 70.8% in 2019 to 72.3% in 2020. A sizeable shift was also reported for subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program, decreasing by more than 626 700 subject enrolments in 2020.

Table 5 Subject enrolments by type of training, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of training** | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| Training package qualifications | 19 505 788 | 70.8 | 19 100 906 | 72.3 | -2.1 |
| Accredited qualifications | 1 165 258 | 4.2 | 1 076 320 | 4.1 | -7.6 |
| Accredited courses | 268 611 | 1.0 | 231 206 | 0.9 | -13.9 |
| Training package skill sets | 230 862 | 0.8 | 256 667 | 1.0 | 11.2 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 6 393 655 | 23.2 | 5 766 934 | 21.8 | -9.8 |
| **Total** | **27 564 174** | **100.0** | **26 432 033** | **100.0** | **-4.1** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

The rise in training package skill sets was particularly noticeable for subjects delivered online only, with an increase of almost 194% (table B8 in appendix B). New South Wales reported close to two-thirds of these online-only enrolments in training package skill sets, as outlined in figure 2, followed by Queensland (21.4%) and Victoria (10.3%).

Figure 2 Proportion of training package skill sets with external-only delivery mode, by jurisdiction, 2020 (%)

Note: Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

When examining online-only subject enrolments by training type and funding source (table 6), subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program appear to have contributed to the overall increase in online delivery for government-funded subjects. There was an increase of more than 381% between 2019 and 2020, equating to an additional 159 600 subject enrolments.

Table 6 Government-funded and domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments by type of training for external-only delivery mode, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of training**  **External-only delivery mode** | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| **Government-funded** | | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 812 997 | 90.6 | 969 319 | 77.0 | 19.2 |
| Accredited qualifications | 32 776 | 3.7 | 47 233 | 3.7 | 44.1 |
| Accredited courses | 739 | 0.1 | 1 508 | 0.1 | 104.1 |
| Training package skill sets | 8 690 | 1.0 | 40 140 | 3.2 | 361.9 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 41 859 | 4.7 | 201 427 | 16.0 | 381.2 |
| **Total** | **897 061** | **100.0** | **1 259 627** | **100.0** | **40.4** |
| **Domestic fee-for-service** | | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 1 200 202 | 72.3 | 1 338 233 | 69.7 | 11.5 |
| Accredited qualifications | 32 519 | 2.0 | 44 464 | 2.3 | 36.7 |
| Accredited courses | 11 112 | 0.7 | 11 949 | 0.6 | 7.5 |
| Training package skill sets | 8 525 | 0.5 | 14 253 | 0.7 | 67.2 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 407 638 | 24.6 | 512 108 | 26.7 | 25.6 |
| **Total** | **1 659 996** | **100.0** | **1 921 007** | **100.0** | **15.7** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Building on the findings from table 6, these comparisons have been aggregated in table 7, which shows that the transition to online-only training delivery is lower for the total number of government-funded subject enrolments delivered as part of a nationally recognised program (23.7%) than for the total number of subjects *not* delivered as part of a nationally recognised training program (381.2%).

When looking at who was delivering the online-only subjects that were not part of a nationally recognised program, TVA data show that TAFE (technical and further education) institutes increased enrolments in this training type from 5.6% in 2019 to 21.0% in 2020 (table B9 in appendix B). Other providers who more commonly delivered this type of online-only training in 2020 included:

* private training providers (23.5%, up from 22.5% in 2019)
* enterprise providers (13.8%, down from 15.2% in 2019).

Table 7 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode comparing training type; including and excluding subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| External-only delivery mode | 2019 | 2020 | % change |
| No. | No. |
| **Government-funded (total)** | **897 061** | **1 259 627** | **40.4** |
| Subjects delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 855 202 | 1 058 200 | 23.7 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 41 859 | 201 427 | 381.2 |
| **Domestic fee-for-service (total)** | **1 659 996** | **1 921 007** | **15.7** |
| Subjects delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 1 252 358 | 1 408 899 | 12.5 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 407 638 | 512 108 | 25.6 |
| **Total1** | **2 617 745** | **3 244 413** | **23.9** |
| Subjects delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 2 165 321 | 2 528 021 | 16.8 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 452 424 | 716 392 | 58.3 |

Note: 1Total includes international fee-for service subject enrolments

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20

Further exploration of TVA data indicated, as shown in table 8, that online-only enrolments prior to COVID-19 were substantially lower for government-funded subjects (7.1%) than those funded through domestic-fee-for-service arrangements (13.4%). In terms of absolute change, the increased incidence of online-only delivery in 2020 was relatively similar for both government-funded and domestic-fee-for service, with these subject enrolments increasing by 362 600 and 261 000 respectively. As the reported number of online-only government-funded subject enrolments was lower than those funded via domestic fee-for-service in 2019 (897 100 vs 1 660 000), the difference in percentage increase in 2020 for these two funding sources was magnified because government-funded was calculated from a smaller number of enrolments in 2019. The reasons behind this difference in uptake of online training in government-funded subject enrolments prior to COVID-19 is not clear at this stage and was not investigated as a part of this project.

Table 8 Government-funded and domestic fee-for-service subject enrolments by delivery mode, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Delivery mode** | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| **Government-funded** | | | | | |
| Internal only | 7 532 128 | 59.9 | 6 433 117 | 54.2 | -14.6 |
| External only | 897 061 | 7.1 | 1 259 627 | 10.6 | 40.4 |
| Workplace-based only | 1 046 160 | 8.3 | 841 887 | 7.1 | -19.5 |
| Combination of internal and external | 1 120 018 | 8.9 | 1 235 043 | 10.4 | 10.3 |
| Combination of internal and workplace-based | 622 227 | 5.0 | 556 896 | 4.7 | -10.5 |
| Combination of external and workplace-based | 448 797 | 3.6 | 485 824 | 4.1 | 8.3 |
| Combination of all modes | 604 732 | 4.8 | 837 951 | 7.1 | 38.6 |
| Not applicable (RPL or credit transfer) | 296 429 | 2.4 | 225 339 | 1.9 | -24.0 |
| **Total** | **12 567 55**2 | **100.0** | **11 875 684** | **100.0** | **-5.5** |
| **Domestic fee-for-service** | | | | | |
| Internal only | 5 786 495 | 46.8 | 4 986 313 | 41.9 | -13.8 |
| External only | 1 659 996 | 13.4 | 1 921 007 | 16.1 | 15.7 |
| Workplace-based only | 749 261 | 6.1 | 539 231 | 4.5 | -28.0 |
| Combination of internal and external | 1 779 973 | 14.4 | 2 065 265 | 17.3 | 16.0 |
| Combination of internal and workplace-based | 386 330 | 3.1 | 368 833 | 3.1 | -4.5 |
| Combination of external and workplace-based | 676 354 | 5.5 | 773 516 | 6.5 | 14.4 |
| Combination of all modes | 780 944 | 6.3 | 536 138 | 4.5 | -31.3 |
| Not applicable (RPL or credit transfer) | 555 975 | 4.5 | 718 683 | 6.0 | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **12 375 328** | **100.0** | **11 908 986** | **100.0** | **-3.8** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

### Subject result during COVID-19

A decline of 5% in the proportion of subject enrolments recording a pass result in 2020 and an increase of more than 3% for continuing studies (table 9) may provide some insight into the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on subject outcomes. It is conceivable that these figures were influenced by the intertwining of factors specific to COVID-19, and online learning in general. Additionally, the increase in continuing studies means that the result outcome for these enrolments is undetermined, and the full impact of COVID-19 on subject result may not be fully realised until those enrolments marked as continuing studies become either a pass, fail or withdrawal.

COVID-19 was obviously the driving force in the move to online learning in 2020, yet factors associated with online delivery in general may have contributed to the decline of the pass result and the increase of continuing studies. Earlier research has demonstrated that online delivery of VET is associated with lower course completion rates and higher subject withdrawal rates (Griffin & Mihelic 2019[[6]](#footnote-6)). It could be hypothesised therefore that the transition to online study amplified pre-existing factors associated with the online delivery of training. A further issue is the delay in work placements and practical assessments caused by COVID-19, which has been widely reported across the sector: more than 40% of respondents from the online survey reported a delay in mandatory work placements as a result of COVID-19, and an even greater proportion highlighted a delay in practical assessments (46.9%).

Table 9 Subject enrolments by result outcomes, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019 | |  | 2020 | | Percentage  point  difference |
|  | No. | % |  | No. | % |
| **Result recorded** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pass | 18 966 954 | 68.8 |  | 16 861 454 | 63.8 | -5.0 |
| Fail | 800 694 | 2.9 |  | 835 409 | 3.2 | 0.3 |
| Withdrawn | 1 837 222 | 6.7 |  | 2 021 026 | 7.6 | 1.0 |
| RPL\* | 914 600 | 3.3 |  | 986 561 | 3.7 | 0.4 |
| *Total result recorded* | *22 519 470* | *81.7* |  | *20 704 450* | *78.3* | *-3.4* |
| **No result recorded** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Continuing studies | 4 948 601 | 18.0 |  | 5 634 907 | 21.3 | 3.4 |
| Not assessed^ | 84 780 | 0.3 |  | 88 428 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Incomplete due to RTO closure | 11 323 | 0.0 |  | 4 248 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| *Total no result recorded* | *5 044 704* | *18.3* |  | *5 727 583* | *21.7* | *3.4* |
| **Total** | **27 564 174** | **100.0** |  | **26 432 033** | **100.0** |  |

\* Includes Recognition of prior learning – granted and Recognition of prior learning – not granted.

^ Not assessed refers to a non-assessable activity and includes completed and not completed; this activity is reported when the training activity in a program is designed such that a student is not required to undertake an assessment or has chosen not to be assessed in agreement with the training organisation, (<<https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/62383/AVETMISS-Data-element-definitions-2_3-PORTAL-VERSION.pdf>>).

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

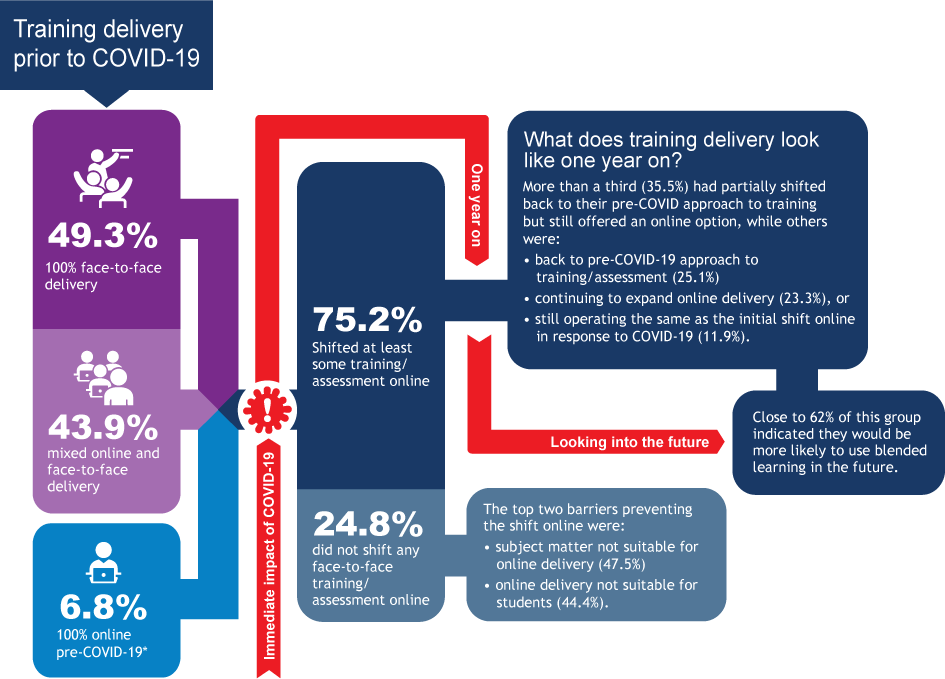
An examination of result outcomes by funding source did not show any notable differences to the overall figures.

## Early findings from training provider survey

### Overview of training provider response

COVID-19 has had an undeniable impact on the VET sector, with the significant and rapid transition to online learning early in the pandemic establishing the groundwork for and influencing the likelihood of RTOs using more blended learning in the future, as outlined in figure 3.

Figure 3 The transition to online delivery in response to COVID-19, training delivery in 2021 and   
future intentions



Note: \*Includes those who deliver 100% of training online except for practical work placements.

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

The survey findings highlighted in this report provide a snapshot of RTO responses to COVID-19, and how their future plans for training delivery have been influenced by the pandemic. A more detailed analysis of the survey findings will be provided in the final report.

### Delivery of training before and during COVID-19

Although there was a substantial transition (75.2%) to partial or full online delivery in response to   
COVID-19 (figure 4), more than half (52.5%) of the RTOs who did not (or could not) move any face-to-face training or assessment online had to suspend either full programs or certain subjects/units. This issue raises the question of the immediate and longer-term impacts of these suspensions on students and, potentially, on RTO viability.

Among those who did not move any training online, the main barriers preventing a transition were identified as unsuitable subject matter (47.5%) and the unsuitability of online delivery for students (44.4%). The next stage of this project will explore these issues in more depth through interviews with RTO staff.

Figure 4 Incidence of shifting face-to-face training online in response to COVID-19, and barriers to shifting among those who did not move any training or assessment online (%)

Top two barriers to shifting online were (%):

Subject matter not suitable for online delivery (47.5)

Online delivery not suitable for students (44.4)

Note: The survey asked the following questions: In response to COVID-19, which of the following scenarios was most relevant to your organisation? (n = 1188); What were the main reasons for your organisation not shifting any face-to-face training online in response to COVID-19? (n = 295)

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

Although around three-quarters (75.2%) of the training providers moved at least some training online in response to COVID-19, this was not new territory for around half (50.7%), who indicated they were already, in some capacity, delivering training and assessment online before the start of the pandemic. As outlined in figure 5, a range of delivery mode variations were identified by those who delivered a mixture of online and face-to-face delivery prior to COVID-19.

Figure 5 Incidence of offering any training/assessment through online delivery prior to COVID-19 (%)

Delivery modes used by this cohort prior to COVID-19 were (%):

Some courses use blended delivery (mix of face-to-face   
and online) (89.4)

Some courses 100% face-to-face (39.1)

Some courses 100% online (23.4)

Note: The survey asked the following questions: Prior to COVID-19, did your organisation offer any training/assessment through online delivery? (n = 1247); Which of the following delivery modes did you use prior to COVID-19? Please select all that apply   
(n = 547).

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

### Incidence of maintaining online shift

An increased presence in the online learning environment continues 12 months after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. Only about 25% of the RTOs surveyed who moved training online in response to COVID-19 have fully reverted to their pre-pandemic approach to training delivery (figure 6), with many RTOs still delivering training online at levels greater than those before pandemic, as the following indicates:

* partial change back to pre-COVID approach to training/assessment but still offering online option (35.5%)
* have continued to expand online delivery since the initial shift in response to COVID-19 (23.3%)
* still operating at a level consistent with the initial shift online (11.9%).

Figure 6 Online training status of training provider in February/March 2021 (%)

Note: The survey asked the following question: Which of the following best applies to your organisation since the shift online due to COVID-19? (n = 893).

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

### Influence of COVID-19 on future plans

Training providers indicated a strong interest in incorporating more online training in the future, with 61.8% of those who moved some training online in response to the pandemic confirming that they were likely to use more blended learning in the future (figure 7). In addition, other plans to expand online learning in the future included:

* likely to permanently shift more units/parts of qualifications online (22.1%)
* likely to permanently shift more full qualifications online (10.6%).

Figure 7 Influence of COVID-19 on future online training delivery plans (%)

Note: The survey asked the following question: How has the shift online due to COVID-19 influenced your organisation’s future plans regarding online delivery? Please select all that apply. Multiple response (n = 893).

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

# Appendix A

## Methodology

The findings presented in this report are drawn from an analysis of subject enrolments reported in the Total VET Activity Collection for 2019 and 2020, along with a snapshot of the early findings from an online survey of RTOs, administered in collaboration with ASQA.

The intent of the TVA data analysis is to investigate changes as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic to:

* delivery mode
* subject result
* training type.

The online survey was completed by 1247 training providers, with the data collected between   
19 February and 23 March 2021. Since 3280 training providers were invited to participate in the survey, this represents a response rate of 38%. Table A1 provides details of the types of training providers responding to the online survey.

Table A1 Training providers surveyed by type

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Provider type | No. | % |
| Private training provider | 951 | 76.3 |
| Enterprise registered training organisation | 124 | 9.9 |
| Community education provider | 63 | 5.1 |
| School | 49 | 3.9 |
| TAFE | 15 | 1.2 |
| Accredited course owner | 8 | 0.6 |
| University | 5 | 0.4 |
| Other | 32 | 2.6 |
| **Total** | **1 247** | **100.0** |

Note: The survey asked following question: What best describes your organisation? (n = 1247).

Source: ASQA and NCVER online survey of training providers, conducted February to March 2021.

As noted above, the online survey, including questionnaire development and execution, was conducted in collaboration with ASQA, which was undertaking research to help inform its ‘Strategic review into online learning in the VET sector’. ACIL Allen was the fieldwork provider contracted by ASQA to undertake survey programming, distribution of survey links to ASQA’s database of training providers and analysis of survey results.

## Research questions

There is no single research question for this project, rather a list of research objectives guiding it:

* the extent of the shift to online delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic
* the reasons for RTOs transitioning to online delivery (given that it was not mandated) and the type of software/technology used
* whether the move to online delivery applied to all programs, or to some only, or to parts of programs, and the reasons for their application, or not (for example, strict assessment rules for training packages and/or mandatory work placements; funding source)
* the opportunities and challenges encountered in moving to online delivery, either fully or partially, for RTOs and trainers, and what suited different categories of students; what worked well and what didn’t in facilitating online delivery
* if and how online delivery impacted on training and assessment practices and mandatory work placement, as well as on the quality of assessment and/or training delivery, for different categories of students or types of training
* what barriers to accessibility, student engagement, learning and course completion outcomes for different learner cohorts were identified and how these were addressed
* the extent to which shifts to full or partial online learning may have impacted on student learning outcomes and satisfaction rates
* the likelihood of RTOs changing how they deliver training in the future post-COVID-19.

The project will also attempt to determine whether any RTOs were unable to transition to online delivery and if not, why not, and the accompanying implications for learners, as well as how they plan to adapt for potentially similar situations in the future.

# Appendix B

## Additional delivery mode tables

Table B1 Subject enrolments with internal-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Internal-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 4 101 455 | 26.6 | 3 625 350 | 26.7 | -11.6 |
| Victoria | 4 107 785 | 26.6 | 3 382 297 | 24.9 | -17.7 |
| Queensland | 3 564 257 | 23.1 | 3 332 218 | 24.5 | -6.5 |
| South Australia | 822 365 | 5.3 | 646 386 | 4.8 | -21.4 |
| Western Australia | 2 026 405 | 13.1 | 1 928 372 | 14.2 | -4.8 |
| Tasmania | 197 002 | 1.3 | 173 776 | 1.3 | -11.8 |
| Northern Territory | 159 313 | 1.0 | 124 891 | 0.9 | -21.6 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 161 007 | 1.0 | 163 236 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| Other\* | 291 060 | 1.9 | 199 525 | 1.5 | -31.4 |
| **Total** | **15 430 649** | **100.0** | **13 576 051** | **100.0** | **-12.0** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Table B2 Subject enrolments with a workplace-based-only delivery mode by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Workplace-based-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 386 255 | 21.4 | 299 884 | 21.6 | -22.4 |
| Victoria | 458 358 | 25.4 | 314 167 | 22.7 | -31.5 |
| Queensland | 548 098 | 30.3 | 455 310 | 32.8 | -16.9 |
| South Australia | 54 033 | 3.0 | 35 388 | 2.6 | -34.5 |
| Western Australia | 267 517 | 14.8 | 222 209 | 16.0 | -16.9 |
| Tasmania | 51 517 | 2.9 | 35 143 | 2.5 | -31.8 |
| Northern Territory | 19 754 | 1.1 | 15 403 | 1.1 | -22.0 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 17 511 | 1.0 | 8 673 | 0.6 | -50.5 |
| Other\* | 3 557 | 0.2 | 659 | 0.0 | -81.5 |
| **Total** | **1 806 600** | **100.0** | **1 386 836** | **100.0** | **-23.2** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Table B3 Subject enrolments with a combination of internal and workplace-based delivery modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Combination of internal and workplace-based delivery modes | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 249 962 | 22.7 | 240 579 | 23.6 | -3.8 |
| Victoria | 404 514 | 36.7 | 325 197 | 31.9 | -19.6 |
| Queensland | 255 575 | 23.2 | 244 706 | 24.0 | -4.3 |
| South Australia | 55 443 | 5.0 | 60 287 | 5.9 | 8.7 |
| Western Australia | 71 278 | 6.5 | 81 727 | 8.0 | 14.7 |
| Tasmania | 42 372 | 3.8 | 45 793 | 4.5 | 8.1 |
| Northern Territory | 8 237 | 0.7 | 7 016 | 0.7 | -14.8 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 10 354 | 0.9 | 9 388 | 0.9 | -9.3 |
| Other\* | 3 693 | 0.3 | 3 845 | 0.4 | 4.1 |
| **Total** | **1 101 428** | **100.0** | **1 018 538** | **100.0** | **-7.5** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Table B4 Subject enrolments with a combination of internal and external delivery modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Combination of internal and external delivery modes | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 965 551 | 31.8 | 916 093 | 26.6 | -5.1 |
| Victoria | 699 459 | 23.0 | 816 866 | 23.7 | 16.8 |
| Queensland | 810 339 | 26.7 | 971 121 | 28.2 | 19.8 |
| South Australia | 185 803 | 6.1 | 264 439 | 7.7 | 42.3 |
| Western Australia | 159 643 | 5.3 | 261 348 | 7.6 | 63.7 |
| Tasmania | 34 729 | 1.1 | 43 068 | 1.2 | 24.0 |
| Northern Territory | 16 697 | 0.5 | 24 328 | 0.7 | 45.7 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 137 204 | 4.5 | 134 566 | 3.9 | -1.9 |
| Other\* | 28 702 | 0.9 | 16 069 | 0.5 | -44.0 |
| **Total** | **3 038 127** | **100.0** | **3 447 898** | **100.0** | **13.5** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Table B5 Subject enrolments with a combination of external and workplace-based delivery modes by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Combination of external and workplace-based delivery modes | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 518 312 | 45.9 | 467 220 | 37.0 | -9.9 |
| Victoria | 248 704 | 22.0 | 323 853 | 25.7 | 30.2 |
| Queensland | 301 745 | 26.7 | 399 312 | 31.6 | 32.3 |
| South Australia | 22 483 | 2.0 | 22 750 | 1.8 | 1.2 |
| Western Australia | 19 479 | 1.7 | 27 165 | 2.2 | 39.5 |
| Tasmania | 9 087 | 0.8 | 11 255 | 0.9 | 23.9 |
| Northern Territory | 2 294 | 0.2 | 3 014 | 0.2 | 31.4 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 6 170 | 0.5 | 6 573 | 0.5 | 6.5 |
| Other\* | 1 972 | 0.2 | 1 019 | 0.1 | -48.3 |
| **Total** | **1 130 246** | **100.0** | **1 262 161** | **100.0** | **11.7** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

Table B6 Subject enrolments with all delivery modes combined by jurisdiction, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Combination of all delivery modes | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| New South Wales | 633 449 | 43.9 | 666 306 | 46.2 | 5.2 |
| Victoria | 271 782 | 18.8 | 288 975 | 20.0 | 6.3 |
| Queensland | 284 362 | 19.7 | 290 147 | 20.1 | 2.0 |
| South Australia | 72 279 | 5.0 | 57 301 | 4.0 | -20.7 |
| Western Australia | 102 569 | 7.1 | 84 323 | 5.8 | -17.8 |
| Tasmania | 32 801 | 2.3 | 24 789 | 1.7 | -24.4 |
| Northern Territory | 7 125 | 0.5 | 11 467 | 0.8 | 60.9 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 31 578 | 2.2 | 16 522 | 1.1 | -47.7 |
| Other\* | 7 569 | 0.5 | 3 838 | 0.3 | -49.3 |
| **Total** | **1 443 514** | **100.0** | **1 443 668** | **100.0** | **0.0** |

\*Other includes subject enrolments from offshore and other Australian territories and dependencies.

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

## Training package skill sets and funding source

Table B7 Subject enrolments with an external-only delivery mode split by funding source; including and excluding training package skill sets, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| External-only delivery mode | 2019 | 2020 | % change |
| No. | No. |
| **Government-funded (total)** | **897 061** | **1 259 627** | **40.4** |
| Government-funded (excluding TP skill sets) | 888 371 | 1 219 487 | 37.3 |
| **Domestic fee-for-service (total)** | **1 659 996** | **1 921 007** | **15.7** |
| Domestic fee-for-service (excluding TP skill sets) | 1 651 471 | 1 906 754 | 15.5 |
| **Total** | **2 617 745** | **3 244 413** | **23.9** |
| Total (excluding TP skill sets) | 2 599 199 | 3 189 929 | 22.7 |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

## Training type by online-only delivery mode

Table B8 Subject enrolments by training type with an external-only delivery mode, 2019−20

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| External-only delivery mode | 2019 | | 2020 | | % change |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| Training package qualifications | 2 065 687 | 78.9 | 2 363 855 | 72.9 | 14.4 |
| Accredited qualifications | 69 231 | 2.6 | 96 224 | 3.0 | 39.0 |
| Accredited courses | 11 857 | 0.5 | 13 458 | 0.4 | 13.5 |
| Training package skills sets | 18 546 | 0.7 | 54 484 | 1.7 | 193.8 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 452 424 | 17.3 | 716 392 | 22.1 | 58.3 |
| **Total** | **2 617 745** | **100.0** | **3 244 413** | **100.0** | **23.9** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

## Training type and provider type for online-only delivery mode

Table B9 Subject enrolments by training type and provider type with an external-only delivery mode, 2019−20

| **External-only delivery mode** | **2019** | | **2020** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | % | No. | % |
| **Private training providers** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 1 322 600 | 74.7 | 1 560 846 | 72.7 |
| Accredited qualifications | 33 326 | 1.9 | 49 358 | 2.3 |
| Accredited courses | 9 985 | 0.6 | 10 796 | 0.5 |
| Training package skills sets | 5 075 | 0.3 | 21 269 | 1.0 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 398 990 | 22.5 | 505 880 | 23.5 |
| **Total** | **1 769 976** | **100.0** | **2 148 149** | **100.0** |
| **TAFE institutes** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 632 506 | 87.9 | 670 821 | 71.3 |
| Accredited qualifications | 32 322 | 4.5 | 39 278 | 4.2 |
| Accredited courses | 1 802 | 0.3 | 2 100 | 0.2 |
| Training package skills sets | 12 381 | 1.7 | 31 153 | 3.3 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 40 167 | 5.6 | 198 048 | 21.0 |
| **Total** | **719 178** | **100.0** | **941 400** | **100.0** |
| **Community education providers** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 42 216 | 90.5 | 56 314 | 87.3 |
| Accredited qualifications | 28 | 0.1 | 2 576 | 4.0 |
| Accredited courses | 6 | 0.0 | 348 | 0.5 |
| Training package skills sets | 21 | 0.0 | 550 | 0.9 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 4 365 | 9.4 | 4 710 | 7.3 |
| **Total** | **46 636** | **100.0** | **64 498** | **100.0** |
| **Enterprise providers** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 28 192 | 79.7 | 20 079 | 76.6 |
| Accredited qualifications | 1 753 | 5.0 | 2 333 | 8.9 |
| Accredited courses | 64 | 0.2 | 143 | 0.5 |
| Training package skills sets | 10 | 0.0 | 47 | 0.2 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 5 371 | 15.2 | 3 618 | 13.8 |
| **Total** | **35 390** | **100.0** | **26 220** | **100.0** |
| **Universities** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 24 919 | 84.5 | 30 896 | 83.0 |
| Accredited qualifications | 1 619 | 5.5 | 2 407 | 6.5 |
| Accredited courses | - | - | 71 | 0.2 |
| Training package skills sets | 27 | 0.1 | 365 | 1.0 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 2 909 | 9.9 | 3 479 | 9.3 |
| **Total** | **29 474** | **100.0** | **37 218** | **100.0** |
| **Schools** | | | | |
| Training package qualifications | 15 254 | 89.3 | 24 899 | 92.5 |
| Accredited qualifications | 183 | 1.1 | 272 | 1.0 |
| Accredited courses | - | - | - | - |
| Training package skills sets | 1 032 | 6.0 | 1 100 | 4.1 |
| Subjects not delivered as part of a nationally recognised program | 622 | 3.6 | 657 | 2.4 |
| **Total** | **17 091** | **100.0** | **26 928** | **100.0** |

Source: NCVER Total VET students and courses, 2019−20.

## Skilling initiatives

Two key Commonwealth Government initiatives that incorporated joint funding arrangements with individual states and territories were:

* National Infection Control Training Fund: this supported around 80 000 training places in fee-free or low-fee nationally accredited infection prevention and control short courses (<<https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/announcements/subsidised-infection-control-training-fast-tracked-re-opening-businesses>>).
* JobTrainer Fund: this provided fee-free or low-fee training places targeted at job seekers, school leavers and young people aged 17−24, with training reserved for areas of identified skills needs and/or employment growth (<<https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-reform/jobtrainer-fund>>).

Apart from the National Infection Control Training Fund and the JobTrainer fund, Victoria offered several other skilling initiatives, some of which were an expansion of pre-existing initiatives:

* Free TAFE program: this was expanded in response to COVID-19 to include new full qualifications in priority areas and linked jobs (<<https://www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe>>).
* Skilling Up Victorians: a funding package that in part helped TAFE institutes and other training providers to transition to delivering more online and remote learning (<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/skilling-victorians-get-through-coronavirus-crisis>).
* The Reconnect Program: this supported disengaged high-needs learners to re-engage and succeed in further education and employment and was expanded in October 2020 to target those unemployed because of COVID-19 or bushfires (<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/reconnect-program.aspx>>).
* Working for Victoria: through this program free short courses in food hygiene and cleaning were provided (<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/skilling-victorians-get-through-coronavirus-crisis>).

P:\PublicationComponents\logos\NCVER LOGOS\WMF - word\No lines\NCVER_Floating_Blue.wmf

**National Centre for Vocational Education Research**

Level 5, 60 Light Square, Adelaide, SA 5000  
PO Box 8288 Station Arcade, Adelaide SA 5000, Australia

**Phone** +61 8 8230 8400 **Email** [ncver@ncver.edu.au](mailto:ncver@ncver.edu.au)   
**Web** <https://www.ncver.edu.au> <<https://www.lsay.edu.au>>

**Follow us:** <<https://twitter.com/ncver>> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ncver>



1. The terms ‘online’ and ‘online only’ have been used in this report as a proxy for the AVETMISS field ‘external’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Although the administrative data subject enrolments demonstrate a shift to online training, further investigations of administrative data and survey data reveal that the extent of this transition may be larger than shown in the data if enrolment data is not updated to reflect a shift after commencement of training. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It should be noted this survey was conducted at a time (February and March 2021) when jurisdictions were experiencing differing levels of COVID-19 restrictions, as such, the diverse pandemic-related circumstances experienced by RTOs may have influenced individual responses. The survey findings present views captured at this point in time during the pandemic and should not be an assumption of post-COVID-19 or COVID-adapted plans. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The terms ‘online’ and ‘online only’ have been used in the text of this report as a proxy for the AVETMISS field ‘external’. To maintain consistency with TVA data outputs the term ‘external’ has been used in the tables. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The terms ‘increase’ and ‘decrease’ have been used widely in this report to describe the percentage changes (relative change) that occurred in TVA data between 2019 and 2020; this can magnify small changes, for example, an increase from 5 to 10 equates to a percentage increase of 100%. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. T Griffin & M Mihelic, Online delivery of VET qualifications: current use and outcomes, NCVER, Adelaide, 2019, viewed 15 March 2021, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/online-delivery-of-vet-qualifications>>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)