



DID YOU KNOW?

A guide to vocational education and training in Australia

In Australia, after people complete their compulsory schooling, their main choices for further education are vocational education and training (VET) and university. This publication provides a guide to understanding some basics about VET in Australia.

What is VET?

VET aims to provide people with the skills and knowledge they require to:

- enter the workforce for the first time
- re-enter the workforce after absences
- train or re-train for a new job
- upgrade their skills
- move into further study in VET or university.

VET provides a vast array of subjects and programs, ranging from the traditional trades, to business and commerce and the creative arts. It also provides basic skills training for social and community participation, such as English language training for new migrants.

Formal VET offers a range of nationally recognised qualifications, from certificates that can be completed in a relatively short time, through to advanced diplomas that generally require two years of post-school study.

While this type of education is commonly known as vocational education and training (or VET) in Australia, it is known internationally as technical vocational education and training (TVET) or further education (FE).

VET, together with university education, makes up the tertiary education system in Australia.

Why choose VET?

VET provides skills and qualifications for all types of employment, except for those jobs which require a university degree. The flexibility of the system enables students to study one or two subjects to gain specific skills, without necessarily completing a full qualification, if that is their choice.

Who undertakes VET?

In most Australian states, anyone over 15 years of age can access VET. Around half of all school leavers undertake vocational training within a year or two of leaving school. About half of all students undertaking VET are over the age of 25 years and the vast majority of VET students study part-time. Apprenticeships and traineeships also form part of the Australian VET system.

Many people with university qualifications, such as degrees, also undertake VET to obtain specific skills. Some people are required to undertake VET as part of their job. Students also participate while still at school through 'VET in Schools' programs.

Australia's VET sector caters for all types of students, including:

- students living in capital cities, regional towns and remote locations
- students of all cultural backgrounds (including Indigenous people and people for whom English is a second language)
- international students (both in Australia or with an Australian VET provider overseas)
- students with disabilities.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can study just about anything in the Australian VET sector; for example, cabinet making, accounting, mortuary studies, and fashion design. Over 19% of VET students enrol in management and commerce programs, the most common field of study.

Source: NCVET 2010, Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009.

Over 11% of Australia's population aged between 15 to 64 years participate in government-funded VET. The sector is a popular choice for young people (aged 15 to 19 years), with 30% of all young people living in Australia undertaking some form of VET.

Source: NCVET 2010, Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009.





Who provides VET?

VET is provided by training organisations, which register with the government to teach accredited courses and include government and private providers.

Government registered training organisations include:

- technical and further education (TAFE) institutes
- secondary schools and colleges
- universities
- agricultural and technical colleges.

Private registered training organisations are a diverse group offering a range of accredited (recognised under a formal training framework) and non-accredited courses. They include:

- enterprises training their own employees
- private training and business colleges
- specialist bodies providing training within their industry
- adult and community organisations.

Schools also provide some vocational education and training. Known as VET in Schools, this nationally recognised training is available to all students as part of their senior secondary school education. This form of training offers students the chance to complete their secondary education, acquire work skills and gain a VET qualification.

There are various VET pathways available to school students, from programs offering a few hours per week, to part-time school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, which combine training and paid work.

Who funds VET?

VET is largely funded by the Australian Government and state and territory governments. However, companies and individuals also contribute to the cost of training. Companies can contribute by purchasing training for their employees, while students contribute through the payment of course and administrative fees. Some students pay all their fees without receiving any government subsidies.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are around 5000 registered training organisations in Australia, the majority of which are private providers, both small and large.

Source: National Training Information Service (NTIS) <www.ntis.gov.au>.

More than 76% of students who undertake training in a publicly funded training provider enrol in a TAFE institute or other government provider.

Source: NCVET 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009*.

There are around 1.7 million students enrolled in the public VET system, compared with over 1.1 million in university.

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Collection 2006–08.

NCVER 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009*.

Nearly 230 000 high school students participated in VET in Schools programs or a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Source: NCVET 2011, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: young people in education and training 2009*.



Where is VET delivered?

VET is delivered in a traditional classroom setting, in the workplace, on the internet, by correspondence and in community venues, using a variety of methods to meet industry and individual needs. The learning options offered mean that students can learn at their own pace and in an environment which best suits their individual learning style.

VET may also be customised to meet the requirements of particular enterprises, each specific job skill and the ability of the student.

Quality assurance of VET

The quality of VET in Australia is assured under the Australian Quality Training Framework. The framework offers:

- standards for the registration of training providers
- standards for those bodies that regulate and accredit training in the states and territories
- standards for the delivery and assessment of subjects taught
- standards for the administration systems.

The system has a number of key indicators to measure performance, including the employment rate and satisfaction of students.

DID YOU KNOW?

A snapshot of the VET student population reveals that the typical student in Australia is more likely to be an adult, already employed and upgrading their job skills, rather than a school leaver.

Sources: NCVET National VET Provider Collection 2009; NCVET Student Outcomes Survey 2009.

Of the 1.7 million students enrolled in the public VET system:

- 86% are in part-time study
- 55% are aged over 25 years
- 4% are Indigenous
- 15% speak English as a second language
- 6% report having a disability.

Source: NCVET 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009*.

Over three-quarters of graduates who undertake training are employed six months after completing their training, and over three-quarters of graduates report that their training was highly or somewhat relevant to their current job.

Source: NCVET 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: student outcomes 2009*.

What qualifications are offered under the VET system?

The VET system offers a variety of qualifications, including certificates I, II, III and IV, diploma, advanced diploma, vocational graduate certificate and vocational graduate diploma. The diagram below lists VET qualifications in relation to school and university qualifications.

Certificates I and II provide students with basic vocational skills and knowledge, preparing them for employment such as florists, factory hands, sales assistants or bank officers. Certificates III and IV have largely replaced the range of traditional trade certificates and prepare people for employment in roles as diverse as animal attendants, beauty therapists, plumbers, accounts clerks, professional builders, graphic designers and systems analysts.

Diplomas and advanced diplomas provide students with broad and specialised knowledge, preparing them for employment in a range of occupations, such as sales workers, community workers and carers, and occupations in business, human resources, marketing, hospitality, engineering and information technology.

DID YOU KNOW?

55% of VET students enrol in certificate III qualifications or higher.

Source: NCVET 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: students and courses 2009*.

The top five most popular courses are:

- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment – VET teaching qualification
- Certificate II in Hospitality – bar and cafe attendants or waiters
- Certificate II in Business – receptionists, clerks, junior secretaries or word process operators
- Certificate III in Children's Services – childcare workers
- Certificate III in Hospitality – bar and cafe attendants or waiters

Source: NCVET National VET Provider Collection 2009, unpublished data.

Qualifications by education sector

School sector accreditation	VET sector accreditation	University sector accreditation
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Vocational graduate diploma Vocational graduate certificate Advanced diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral degree Master's degree Graduate diploma Graduate certificate Bachelor degree Associate degree, Advanced diploma Diploma

How is VET taught?

Australia's VET system is based on teaching industry standards and learning outcomes, via training packages. Students have to demonstrate specific skills to meet these standards. This approach is known as 'competency-based' training.

Competency-based training

Training packages are a key resource for registered training organisations, employers and students. They are an essential part of Australia's system of competency-based training and comprise a set of competency standards and qualifications developed by industry through industry skills councils.

A training package sets out the competencies but does not prescribe how the training should be delivered, nor the time taken to deliver it. It is the responsibility of the registered training organisations to develop teaching strategies and assessment methods to meet the needs, abilities and circumstances of the students and industry.

Recognition of prior learning

Students may have gained prior skills through informal or formal training, experience in the workplace, voluntary work, or social or domestic activities. Whole or part qualifications can be awarded to students on the basis of these skills without further study.

DID YOU KNOW?

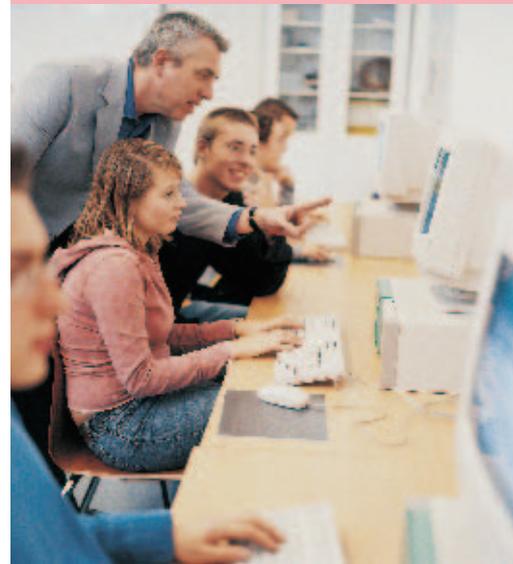
VET qualifications are based on a set of competency standards, rather than being determined by a specified amount of time to undertake a course of study. Thus, students can study for varying amounts of time to complete any given qualification.

Training packages are reviewed every three years to ensure they remain current. This review process involves the developer of the training package (usually the relevant industry advisory body), industry personnel, training providers and other relevant stakeholders.

The ten most popular training packages for students are:

- Business Services
- Tourism, Hospitality and Events
- Community Services
- Construction and Plumbing
- Health
- Metal and Engineering
- Information and Communications
- Retail
- Electrotechnology
- Financial Services.

Source: NCVET 2010, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Students and courses 2009*.



Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships are a notable feature of Australia's VET system. They bring together training and employment under a legal contract between the apprentices and trainees, training providers (such as TAFE) and employers. Apprentices and trainees receive a training wage, which increases as they progress. In some cases, group training organisations employ the apprentice or trainee and place them with a suitable employer.

During the mid-1990s, the apprenticeship model of training and employment was expanded through the introduction of traineeships in areas outside the traditional trades, including sales, service and clerical occupations.

Today, apprenticeships and traineeships are available to all age groups and can be undertaken on a part-time basis (where available) or full-time. Apprenticeships and traineeships can also be undertaken by students in secondary school.

Employers are entitled to financial incentives when taking on new apprentices and trainees. These incentives also apply to employers who train or re-train their existing workers.



DID YOU KNOW?

■ ■ ■ Apprenticeships and traineeships are available in hundreds of occupations. Students are not restricted to choosing apprenticeships in the traditional trades, such as plumbing, hairdressing and construction, but can access training across a range of industries, including retail, business, and information technology.

■ ■ ■ Around one-third of all new apprentices and trainees are already working for the employer they undertake their apprenticeship or traineeship with, and of these 79% are aged 25 years or older.

Source: National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, December 2010 estimates, unpublished.

■ ■ ■ Of 15 to 19-year-olds commencing an apprenticeship or traineeship, 38% had completed Year 12.

Source: National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, December 2010 estimates, unpublished.

■ ■ ■ 14% of people commencing apprenticeships and traineeships are aged 45 years or over.

Source: National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, December 2010 estimates, unpublished.

Organisations and information services linked to the VET system

There are a variety of organisations and information services that provide services and support for Australia's VET system, including those listed in the following table.*



Government – departments, committees, bodies	
Australian Apprenticeships Centres (AAC)	Australian Apprenticeships Centres are contracted by the Australian Government to provide 'one-stop shops' for those seeking to hire an apprentice or trainee, or to take up an apprenticeship or traineeship as a career path. www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au
Australian Education International (AEI)	The AEI is the arm of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) that is responsible for the international education sector. www.aei.gov.au
Australian Skills Quality Authority	The Australian Skills Quality Authority is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority established to improve quality and consistency in VET regulation. For those states/territories that refer their relevant regulatory powers to the Commonwealth, the Australian Skills Quality Authority will be responsible for the registration and audit of registered training providers and accreditation of courses.
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)	The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations advises the Australian Government, delivers programs and services, and provides information on all education and training sectors, employment and workplace relations. www.deewr.gov.au
Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)	Membership of MCTEE is comprised of the state, territory and Australian government ministers with responsibility for tertiary education and employment. In February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that Ministerial Councils will be replaced by the COAG Standing Councils of Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment from July 2011. www.training.com.au
National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC)	NSOC is a committee of senior officials, representing state, territory and federal education and training departments. www.training.com.au
State and territory education/training departments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training 	www.det.act.gov.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New South Wales Department of Education and Training 	www.det.nsw.edu.au

- Northern Territory Department of Education and Training www.deet.nt.gov.au
- Queensland Department of Education and Training www.education.qld.gov.au
- South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology www.dfeest.sa.gov.au
- Tasmanian Department of Education www.education.tas.gov.au
- Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au
- Victorian Department of Business and Innovation www.dbi.vic.gov.au

Industry advisory bodies

Industry skills councils (ISC)

ISCs are funded by the Australian Government and governed by independent, industry-led boards.

- Agri-Food Industry Skills Council www.isc.org.au
- Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council www.agrifoodskills.net.au
- Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council www.cshisc.com.au
- Electro-Comms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council www.cpsisc.com.au
- ForestWorks Industry Skills Council www.ee-oz.com.au
- Government Skills Australia www.forestworks.com.au
- Innovation and Business Skills Australia www.governmentskills.com.au
- Manufacturing Skills Australia www.ibsa.org.au
- Resources and Infrastructure Industry Skills Council www.mskills.com.au
- Service Skills Australia www.skillsdmc.com.au
- Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council www.serviceskills.com.au
- www.tlisc.com.au

There are also a number of industry training advisory bodies and skills boards that advise state/territory governments on industry-specific education and training.

Skills Australia

Skills Australia is an independent statutory body, providing advice to the Federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations on Australia's current, emerging and future workforce skills and development needs.

www.skillsaustralia.gov.au

Provider peak bodies

Adult Learning Australia (ALA)

The ALA is a national peak body representing organisations and individuals in the adult learning field.

www.ala.asn.au

Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET)

ACPET is a national industry association for independent providers of post-compulsory education and training.

www.acpet.edu.au

Australian Education Union (AEU)	The AEU is the union for educators who work in public schools, colleges, early childhood and vocational settings. www.aefederal.org.au
Community Colleges Australia (CCA)	CCA is the peak body representing not-for-profit community-owned providers of adult and youth education, training and learning in a local environment. www.cca.edu.au
Enterprise Registered Training Organisations Association (ERTO A)	ERTO A is the peak body representing enterprise registered training organisations that provide accredited training to their own employees. www.ertoa.org.au
Group Training Australia (GTA)	GTA is the national peak body representing group training organisations (GTOs). GTOs manage recruitment, training contracts, wages and entitlements, administration, training delivery and monitor skill development for apprenticeships and traineeships. www.gtald.com.au GTA also includes six state/territory associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qld/NT www.gtaqnt.net.au • NSW/ACT www.nswgrouptraining.com.au • Vic. www.gtav.com.au • SA www.gtasa.com.au • WA www.grouptrainingwa.com.au • Tas. www.skills.tas.gov.au/providers/gtos
TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)	TDA is the peak national body that represents Australia's 58 public TAFE institutes and university TAFE divisions and the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC). www.tda.edu.au
Research organisations/other bodies	
Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)	ACER is a not-for-profit, independent research centre that undertakes research and assessment projects in the education sector in Australia and internationally. www.acer.edu.au
Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC)	The AQFC provides education and training ministers with advice on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training, and higher education sectors in Australia. www.aqf.edu.au
Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA)	AVETRA is an association of researchers in the vocational education and training sector. www.avetra.org.au
Education Network Australia (edna)	edna is an online service that supports and promotes the benefits of the internet for learning, education and training in Australia. It is organised around the Australian curriculum and is funded by the Australian Government and state and territory governments. www.edna.edu.au

Education Services Australia (ESA)	<p>ESA is a national, not-for-profit company owned by all Australian education ministers. ESA was established to support delivery of national priorities and initiatives in the school, training and higher education sectors – particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment, and information technology and communication.</p> <p>www.esa.edu.au</p>
Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG)	<p>FLAG is an advisory group that advises on directions and priorities for information and communication technologies (ICT) in the VET system and adult and community education. FLAG's key strategy is the Australian Flexible Learning Framework.</p> <p>www.flexiblelearning.net.au</p>
National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)	<p>NCVER is a not-for-profit company owned by the state, territory and federal ministers with responsibility for training. NCVER is an independent body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, evaluating and communicating VET research and statistics nationally.</p> <p>www.ncver.edu.au</p>
National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC)	<p>NVEAC was established to provide advice to the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) to guide equity reform in the national training system.</p> <p>www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au</p>
TVET Australia*	<p>TVET provides professional services which support the national training system. TVET's responsibilities include managing ASharenet and Training Products Australia. TVET also provides secretariat services to groups such as the National VET Equity Advisory Council and the Flexible Learning Advisory Group.</p> <p>www.tvetaustralia.com.au</p>

*TVET Australia will cease operations in late 2011

Further information

For further information on the VET sector visit:

www.training.com.au

For registered training organisations wanting more detailed information on the VET sector visit:

www.ntis.gov.au

For information on training packages visit:

www.tpatwork.com

For further information on VET statistics and research visit:

www.ncver.edu.au

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ISBN 978 1 921 170 86 7 print
978 1 921 170 92 8 web

TD/TNC 90.05
Updated 2011

Published by NCVER
ABN 87 007 967 311

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