

School non-completers: outcomes in vocational education and training

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Not all young people continue on at school to complete year 12. While many of those who drop out of school do not undertake any further formal education and training, others participate in further education and training, enrolling in a post-school VET course through adult and community education, state TAFE systems or private providers.

School non-completers identified in the 1995 (Y95) national cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) have been tracked annually from 1995 and their school experiences, educational attainment, and post-school participation in education, training and work have been recorded. In this study, the information collected on participation in VET from LSAY respondents has been supplemented with data from the national VET provider data collection managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

This study examines the VET activities and achievement of school non-completers in the initial years beyond high school (roughly to age 19). Trends for school non-completers in VET between 1996 and 1998 suggest significant differences in achievement across gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity.

This study provides information about the VET choices and progress in VET of school non-completers. The research suggests that the vocational education and training sector is playing an important role in the transition from school to working life for young people who do not remain on at school to complete year 12.