



**MONASH UNIVERSITY - ACER**  
**CENTRE FOR THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Completion and partial completion of courses in  
TAFE, Australia**

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## MONASH UNIVERSITY - ACER

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- labour turnover and the effect on jobs for entrants to the labour market
- the impact of globalisation on the occupational structure
- evaluation of 'user choice' for apprenticeship training
- analysis of the efficiency and equity in the training market
- policies to improve the transition of youth from education to work
- the impact of VET research on policy and practice
- equity and VET
- models for analysing student flows in higher education and in vocational education, and
- returns to investment in enterprise training.

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# Executive summary

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## Student outcomes

A quarter of all students who commenced a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) course in 1997 had completed it by the end of 2000. Twenty-nine per cent had partially completed the course, that is, they had successfully completed all modules that they had enrolled for but had not completed the course fully. The same proportion had withdrawn from the course having failed at least one module. Finally, 17 per cent of students were assumed to be continuing the course into 2001 and a quarter or more of them are expected to complete their course.

More females completed TAFE courses than males. Among different age groups, the rate of course completion was highest for eighteen-year-olds while the rate of partial course completion was highest for persons 40 years or older. A higher proportion of younger students were expected to be continuing with their courses in 2001.

Students of Indigenous background have a lower course completion rate and a higher withdrawal rate. Although completion rate for students with a disability is almost the same as that for other students, their withdrawal rate is much higher.

Students born in Asia have a higher course completion rate than students born elsewhere, but their withdrawal rate from courses is also one of the highest. Students who mainly spoke another language than English at home also had a high completion rate.

In general, students who had attained Year 12 or other tertiary qualification had a higher completion rate than other groups. Surprisingly, those who had completed Year 11 had the lowest completion rate.

A higher proportion of unemployed students completed their course than any other group. In contrast, a lower proportion of self-employed students completed their course than any other group, although the proportion of them partially completing was the highest amongst all groups.

Course completion rate for residents in remote areas was substantially lower while partial completion rate was substantially higher compared to students from any other areas.

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## Background

In the higher education sector most students enrol in a course with the intention of obtaining a qualification. In the vocational education and training (VET) sector many students tend to complete only some units of competencies or modules of a course. Estimates of module completion rates in VET are available but there is little information on qualifications completed or of the performance of those who successfully complete a part of the course (pass all modules enrolled in) and then withdraw from the course. Although this pattern of behaviour among TAFE

students has been well known for some time, detailed system-level analyses were for the first time completed only recently (Foyster, Hon and Shah 2000). The study's main finding was that nearly half of all students who enrolled in courses were *partial completers* (those who successfully completed all modules they had enrolled in but dropped out before completing course fully) and only 27 percent completed the full course.

The current study analysed the progress until 2000 of students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997. The study forms part of the program that CEET is undertaking as part of their National Key Research Centre agreement with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). This study provides analysis of course outcomes for students by a wider range of characteristics than has been done before.

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## Data

The study uses national data on VET that are archived at NCVET. The data are collected under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information statistical Standard (AVETMISS). There are considerable difficulties in using the original data as provided by the state training authorities to NCVET because of data quality and inconsistency. Furthermore, there is a quantum jump in complexity if one wants to link individual student records over time. This is because a unique identifier for students is not available.

NCVER has developed a methodology to link a student's records across different years using a number of demographic and other variables. The technique produces reasonably reliable results. The method assigns a unique identification to each person and thus allows links to be made of an individual's enrolment records across years. The course code, which is unique to each course across all years, allows determination of whether a student is continuing in the same course or not.

NCVER made available to CEET linked data for student enrolments for the years 1995 to 2000 for this study. A unique record is created for each student who enrolled in a course. For students with multiple enrolments in a given year, only the record of their main course is included.

The data include a range of demographic information on students as well as information about the courses they had enrolled in. The 1997 data contained information on over 1.5 million students. After allowing for missing values and records containing spurious values 493 000 of these students were identified as commencing courses with designated AQF levels.

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## Definitions of student outcomes

The AVETMISS data lack information on course outcome for students. Based on the number of modules and the proportion of nominal course hours that are satisfactorily completed, various course outcomes are determined.

## Completion

A student who successfully completes at least 95 per cent of nominal course hours is deemed to have completed the course.

## Partial completion

A student is deemed to have partially completed a course if he/she has:

- successfully completed less than 95 per cent of nominal course hours;
- not failed any module of study enrolled in for the course; and
- discontinued from the course.

Students are considered to have discontinued from the course they were enrolled in if there is no record of their enrolment in the same course for 1999 and 2000.

## Non-completion

A student is considered to be a non-completer if he/she has:

- successfully completed less than 95 per cent of nominal course hours;
- failed at least one module of study they enrolled for in the course; and
- discontinued from the course.

## Continuing

A student is considered to be a continuing if their enrolment outcome is none of the above three.

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## Results of analyses

This report contains largely descriptive analyses. First, the student population that commenced TAFE courses in 1997 is described in terms of demographic and other personal characteristics. Next are described the course enrolment patterns. Finally, course outcomes are summarised for various subgroups of students.

### Student characteristics

Almost equal numbers of male and female students are represented in the cohort of 1997 commencing students. More than a quarter of all students are under 20 years of age, but 44 percent are aged 30 years or over.

Nearly four per cent of students indicated that they had Indigenous background. The proportion of students indicating having some sort of disability was also four per cent.

Just about one in five students indicated that they were born overseas, with seven per cent born in Asia; five per cent in a predominantly English-speaking country (UK, Ireland, New Zealand, North America) and six per cent in other foreign

countries. About 15 per cent of students indicated that the main language they spoke at home was other than English.

Half of all students had not completed Year 12 while 28 per cent had achieved some sort of tertiary qualification prior to commencing the course.

Forty-five per cent of all students were employees—31 per cent full-time and 14 per cent part-time. Self-employed, employers and employed unpaid family members made up a further 5 per cent. About 20 per cent were unemployed with most of the remaining 30 per cent not in the labour force.

Two out every three students were either resident in a capital city or in other metropolitan area. Students living in rural areas comprised another 29 per cent of enrolments.

## Course characteristics

Courses were categorised by three variables—accreditation, field of study and qualification.

Most students were enrolled in nationally accredited training packages. Only three per cent were enrolled in nationally accredited courses that were not training packages.

Business and related areas accounted for 27 per cent of all course enrolments. The next two fields of studies with the highest enrolments were Engineering (15 per cent) and Services, Hospitality and Transportation (13 per cent). The median nominal course hours were 652, but they varied from 210 for course in Education to 864 for courses in Engineering.

The majority of enrolments were in courses at AQF Certificate 2, 3 or 4. Less than four per cent of enrolments were in courses at AQF Advanced diploma level.

The overwhelming numbers of course enrolments were Government-funded, most from recurrent outlays. However, a significant proportion was funded from specific purpose Government program and 7 per cent were fee-for-service.

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## Summing up

This study used national VET data collected under AVETMISS to analyse course outcomes for students who commenced TAFE in 1997.

The results from this study show completion rates to be generally higher than those found in Foyster, Hon and Shah (2000), but the partial completion rates are substantially lower. However, the results are not strictly comparable because of the differences in the way the datasets for the two studies have been constructed. One major difference between the two studies is that in this study only enrolment in the main course is included in the analysis, while in the previous study multiple enrolments were allowed.

The dataset that has been constructed here can be used for further statistical analysis. Such models can provide information about the magnitude of the effects of personal, demographic and course variables on course outcomes.



# 1 Introduction

Estimates of module completion rates in VET are available but there is little information on qualifications completed or of the performance of those who complete modules successfully and withdraw without any failure. Foyster, Hon and Shah (2000) looked at this problem in a systematic way for the first time. They estimated completion, partial completion (successful completion of modules without failure) and withdrawal rates from courses by age, length of course and stream of study of students who commenced a TAFE course in 1994. The study showed about half of all students partial completed their course. A further 27 per cent successfully completed the required nominal course hours, and thus were eligible for certification or a qualification.

This study analyses the progress of students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997. Their progress through the course is followed until 2000.

## 2 AVETMISS data

The project used data on student enrolment in VET held at NCVER. These data are collected under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). There are considerable difficulties in using the original data as provided by the state training authorities to NCVER because of data quality and inconsistency. Furthermore, there is a quantum jump in complexity if one wants to link individual student records over time. This is because a unique identifier for students is not available.

NCVER has developed a methodology to link a student's records across different years using a number of demographic and other variables. The technique produces reasonably reliable results. The method assigns a unique identification to each person and thus allows links to be made of an individual's enrolment records across years. The course code, which is unique to each course across all years, allows determination of whether a student is continuing in the same course or not.

NCVER made available to CEET linked data for student enrolments for the years 1995 to 2000 for this study. A unique record is created for each student who enrolled in a course. For students with multiple enrolments in a given year, only the record of their main course is included.

The analyses reported here are of the cohort of students who commenced their course in 1997. These are students for whom no enrolment record in the same course exists for the previous two years. Their progress is followed until 2000.

# 3 Concepts and definitions

The AVETMISS data lack information on course outcome for students. Based on the number of modules and the proportion of nominal course hours that are satisfactorily completed, various course outcomes are determined.

## Completion

A student who successfully completes at least 95 per cent of nominal course hours is deemed to have completed the course.

## Partial completion

A student is deemed to have partially completed a course if he/she has:

- successfully completed less than 95 per cent of nominal course hours;
- not failed any module of study enrolled in for the course; and
- discontinued from the course.

Students are considered to have discontinued from the course they were enrolled in if there is no record of their enrolment in the same course for 1999 and 2000.

## Non-completion

A student is considered to be a non-completer if he/she has:

- successfully completed less than 95 per cent of nominal course hours;
- failed at least one module of study they enrolled for in the course; and
- discontinued from the course.

## Continuing

A student is considered to be a continuing if their enrolment outcome is none of the above three.

## Commencing students

A student is defined as commencing if there is no enrolment record for them in the same course in the previous two years. The analyses reported here are of students who commenced their course in 1997.

## 4 Construction of dataset

Over 1.8 million course enrolments and over 9.9 million module enrolments were reported in publicly-funded vocational education and training (VET) in Australia in 1997 (NCVER 1998). Some students enrolled in more than one course during the year, some even concurrently, and therefore the actual number of students who enrolled was only 1 458 600.

This study is restricted to the ‘main’<sup>1</sup> course that a student enrolled in, which means that the initial dataset consists of 1 458 600 students. The population for analyses was further restricted to include only students:

- who stated their age unambiguously and who were between the ages of 15 and 64 at course commencement;
- who stated their sex unambiguously;
- whose main course enrolment potentially lead to one of the following qualifications:
  1. AQF Certificate 1;
  2. AQF Certificate 2;
  3. AQF Certificate 3;
  4. AQF Certificate 4;
  5. AQF Diploma;
  6. AQF Advanced diploma; and
  7. AQF senior school;
- for whom the total enrolled hours over the four years was between 0 and 4 500;
- who either passed or failed at least one module; and
- who were enrolled in courses with nominal hours that were more than 40.

Furthermore, records of students for whom there were multiple records in any year were excluded from the database. Finally, students who changed training providers during their course were also excluded from the analyses.

As a result of the above restrictions usable records for 492 901 students who commenced a course in 1997 were available for analysis. The data still contained some missing values for certain variables. These were imputed from other information.

For example, missing qualification levels were imputed from nominal hours’ information as follows:

1. AQF Certificate 1 was assumed if nominal course hours were less than 350;
2. AQF Certificate 2 was assumed if nominal course hours were greater than or equal to 350 and less than 454;
3. AQF Certificate 3 was assumed if nominal course hours were greater than or equal to 454 and less than 559;

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<sup>1</sup> We adopt the NCVER assessment of what the ‘main’ course a student enrolls in.

4. AQF Certificate 4 was assumed if nominal course hour were greater than or equal to 559 and less than 933;
5. AQF Diploma was assumed if nominal course hours were greater than or equal to 933 and less than 1323;
6. AQF Advanced diploma was assumed if nominal course hours were greater than or equal to 1323 and less than 1483; and
7. AQF senior school was assumed if nominal course hours were greater than or equal to 1483.

The above nominal hour limits were calculated as the average of the median nominal course hours for adjacent qualification levels.

The following section summarises the characteristics of the students and the courses they enrolled in.

## 5 Initial data analyses

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### Student characteristics

Table 1 shows that there are almost equal numbers of male and female students who commenced TAFE courses in 1997. More than a quarter of all students are under 20 years of age, but 44 percent are aged 30 years or over.

Nearly four per cent of students indicated that they had Indigenous background. The 'Others' are those who had either a non-Indigenous background or did not indicate their background on the enrolment form. The proportion of students who indicated having some sort of disability was 4 per cent.

About one in five students were born overseas with seven per cent born in Asia; five per cent in a predominantly English-speaking country (UK, Ireland, New Zealand, North America); and six per cent in other foreign countries. Fifteen per cent of all students indicated that the main language they spoke at home was other than English.

Under half of all students had either not completed Year 12 or had failed to specify their highest education achievement. Nearly 28 per cent of all students had a tertiary qualification prior to commencing the course with one in five of them with a degree or higher qualification.

Forty-five per cent of all students were employees—31 per cent full-time and 14 per cent part-time. Self-employed, employers and employed unpaid family members made up a further 5 per cent. About 20 per cent were unemployed with most of the remaining 30 per cent not in the labour force.

Two out every three students were either resident in a capital city or in other metropolitan area. Students living in rural areas comprised another 29 per cent of enrolments.

**Table 1**                      **Characteristics of students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997, Australia**

	Number ('000)	(%)
All students	492.9	100.0
Sex		
Male	244.6	49.6
Female	248.3	50.4
Age group		
15, 16	32.0	6.5
17	26.2	5.3
18	40.1	8.1
19	28.2	5.7
20-24	85.7	17.4
25-29	65.5	13.3
30-39	108.7	22.1
40 or over	106.5	21.6
Cultural background		
ATSI	17.8	3.6
Others	475.1	96.4
Disability		
With disability	18.6	3.8
Others	474.4	96.2
Country of birth		
English-speaking (UK, Ireland, NZ, NA)	26.0	5.3
Europe	14.8	3.0
Asia	35.5	7.2
Other foreign countries	16.1	3.3
The rest (including Australia)	400.4	81.2
Language spoken at home		
Other than English	73.0	14.8
The rest	419.9	85.2
Highest education level attained		
Degree or above	27.6	5.6
Diploma	17.6	3.6
Certificate	91.8	18.6
Year 12	115.0	23.3
Year 11	41.8	8.5
Year 10	81.1	16.5
The rest	118.1	24.0
Labour force status		
Full-time	153.1	31.1
Part-time	68.3	13.9
Self-employed	13.8	2.8
Employer or employed unpaid family member	10.8	2.2
Unemployed	98.8	20.0
The rest	148.1	30.0
Home location		
Other metropolitan	39.1	7.9
Rural	142.5	28.9
Remote	19.0	3.9
Overseas	6.1	1.2
The rest (includes Capital city)	286.1	58.1

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## Course characteristics

Courses were categorised by three variables—accreditation, field of study and qualification.

Most students were enrolled in nationally accredited training packages. Only three per cent were enrolled in nationally accredited courses that were not training packages.

Business and related areas accounted for 27 per cent of all course enrolments. The next two fields of studies with the highest enrolments were Engineering (15 per cent) and Services, Hospitality and Transportation (13 per cent). The median nominal course hours were 652, but they varied from 210 for course in Education to 864 for courses in Engineering.

The majority of enrolments were in courses at AQF Certificate 2 (20 per cent), Certificate 2 (26 per cent) and Certificate 3 (19 per cent). Less than four per cent of enrolments were in courses at the AQF Advanced diploma level.

The overwhelming numbers of course enrolments were Government-funded, most from recurrent outlays. However, a significant proportion was funded from specific purpose Government program and 7 per cent were fee-for-service.

The majority of enrolments were in courses at AQF Certificate 2, 3 or 4. Less than four per cent of enrolments were in courses at AQF Advanced diploma level and only one per cent at AQF Senior school level. In general, median nominal course hours increase with AQF level. The AQF Senior school level courses have unusually high median nominal course hours.

The overwhelming numbers of course enrolments are Government-funded, most of them from recurrent outlays. However there is a significant proportion that is funded from specific purpose Government programs. Seven per cent of enrolments are fee-for-service, most of which are for local students.

**Table 2** Students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997 by course characteristics, Australia

	Enrolments		Median course hours
	'000	%	
All main course enrolments	492.9	100.0	540
Accreditation			
National, not training package	16.4	3.3	500
State or institute accredited	8.5	1.7	864
National, training package	468.0	95.0	540
Field of study			
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry etc	24.3	4.9	590
Architecture & building	22.8	4.6	864
Arts & humanities	34.1	6.9	600
Business, economics, admin. & legal studies	133.9	27.2	460
Education	12.2	2.5	210
Engineering	75.0	15.2	864
Health & community services	43.4	8.8	490
Science	26.7	5.4	380
Services, hospitality & transportation	61.6	12.5	459
TAFE multi-field	58.8	11.9	450
Qualification			
AQF Certificate 1	76.7	14.4	249
AQF Certificate 2	98.6	20.0	390
AQF Certificate 3	127.7	25.9	540
AQF Certificate 4	94.6	19.2	600
AQF Diploma	80.9	16.4	1220
AQF Advanced diploma	17.5	3.6	1365
AQF Senior school	2.8	1.0	1600
Funding source			
Government specific-purpose	31.2	6.3	390
Fee-for-service	29.3	5.9	440
Overseas fee-paying	5.8	1.2	952
Government recurrent	426.7	86.6	577

## 6 Course outcomes

Table 3 shows that 25 per cent of all students who commenced a course in 1997 had completed it by the end of 2000. Twenty-nine per cent had partially completed the course, that is, they had successfully completed all modules that they had enrolled for but had not completed the whole course. The same proportion had withdrawn from

the course having failed at least one module. Finally, 17 per cent of students were assumed to be continuing the course into 2001.

More females completed TAFE courses than males. Among different age groups, the rate of course completion was highest for eighteen-year-olds while the rate of partial course completion was highest for persons 40 years or older. A higher proportion of younger students were expected to be continuing with their courses in 2001.

Students of Indigenous background have a lower course completion rate and a higher withdrawal rate. Although completion rate for students with a disability is almost the same as that for other students, their withdrawal rate is much higher.

Students born in Asia have a higher course completion rate than students born elsewhere, but their withdrawal rate from courses is also one of the highest. Students who mainly spoke another language than English at home also had a high completion rate.

In general, students who had attained Year 12 or other tertiary qualification had a higher completion rate than other groups. Surprisingly, those who had completed Year 11 had the lowest completion rate.

A higher proportion of unemployed students completed their course than any other group. In contrast, a lower proportion of self-employed students completed their course than any other group, although the proportion of them partially completing was the highest amongst all groups.

Course completion rate for residents in remote areas was substantially lower while partial completion rate was substantially higher compared to students from any other areas.

The unemployed are most likely to complete courses while the self-employed the least likely to do so. The latter group is most likely to partially complete.

Those residing in remote areas have a substantially lower course completion rate and a substantially higher partial completion rate than those residing in other parts of the country.



**Table 3 Course outcomes at end of 2000 for students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997 by student characteristics, Australia (%)**

	Partial			
	Completions	completions	Withdrawal	Continuing
All students	25.3	29.2	29.0	16.5
Sex				
Male	23.4	29.8	29.3	17.5
Female	27.1	28.7	28.7	15.4
Age group				
15, 16	23.6	25.3	26.1	25.0
17	27.3	20.8	28.5	23.5
18	31.9	16.0	31.3	20.9
19	28.9	20.0	32.9	18.2
20-24	24.6	26.1	34.3	15.1
25-29	22.8	30.7	31.8	14.7
30-39	24.3	33.0	27.3	15.4
40 or over	24.8	37.7	23.8	13.7
Cultural background				
ATSI	21.9	21.7	37.8	18.6
Others	25.4	29.5	28.7	16.5
Disability				
With disability	25.6	22.0	33.7	18.6
Others	25.2	29.5	28.8	16.5
Country of birth				
English-speaking (UK, Ireland, NZ, NA)	24.3	32.0	27.7	16.0
Europe	28.7	28.3	28.1	14.9
Asia	31.9	19.5	34.9	13.7
Other foreign countries	28.4	21.4	35.1	15.2
The rest (including Australia)	24.5	30.3	28.3	16.9
Language spoken at home				
Other than English	30.8	19.7	34.1	15.5
The rest	24.3	30.9	28.1	16.7
Highest education level attained				
Degree or above	26.5	31.7	28.7	13.2
Diploma	25.9	29.9	29.2	15.0
Certificate	27.3	27.7	28.9	16.1
Year 12	28.1	22.0	31.2	18.6
Year 11	21.5	30.6	28.7	19.1
Year 10	24.9	27.1	29.8	18.2
The rest	22.0	37.8	26.4	13.8
Labour force status				
Full-time	24.0	32.9	25.1	18.0
Part-time	27.2	26.3	29.1	17.4
Self-employed	20.3	37.0	28.6	14.1
Employer or employed unpaid family member	21.5	34.4	28.9	15.2
Unemployed	29.9	19.9	35.6	14.7
The rest	23.3	31.9	28.6	16.2
Home location				
Other metropolitan	28.6	25.3	30.2	15.9
Rural	23.6	34.4	25.5	16.5
Remote	17.6	42.3	23.1	17.0
Overseas	36.6	16.5	36.6	10.2
The rest (includes Capital city)	25.9	26.6	30.8	16.7

Course outcomes by course characteristics are shown in Table 4. It shows that nationally accredited courses that are training packages have higher completion rates than courses that are not training packages. However, the completion rates in State or institution accredited courses are the highest.

Education courses have completion rates above 50 per cent, but it must be noted that Education courses generally tend to be short with median nominal course hours that are less than half for all courses. Business and Engineering courses tend to have the lowest completion rates of all fields.

**Table 4** Course outcomes at end of 2000 for students who commenced a TAFE course in 1997 by course characteristics, Australia (%)

	Partial Completion			
	s	s	Withdrawal	Continuing
All courses	25.3	29.2	29.0	16.5
Accreditation				
National, not training package	17.9	35.4	30.6	16.2
State or institute accredited	41.1	14.4	27.9	16.6
National, training package	25.2	29.3	29.0	16.5
Field of study				
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry etc	23.2	33.8	26.8	16.2
Architecture & building	24.2	26.4	27.3	22.1
Arts & humanities	25.2	23.3	33.7	17.8
Business, economics, admin. & legal studies	21.1	30.2	33.4	15.4
Education	51.7	28.2	12.1	8.1
Engineering	19.6	34.7	24.0	12.7
Health & community services	30.4	27.3	24.7	17.5
Science	24.6	26.6	31.7	17.1
Services, hospitality & transportation	32.4	27.8	26.3	13.6
TAFE multi-field	26.9	27.0	32.5	13.7
Qualification				
AQF Certificate 1	31.5	30.4	25.9	12.2
AQF Certificate 2	28.9	31.0	27.4	12.8
AQF Certificate 3	27.1	30.5	24.7	17.8
AQF Certificate 4	23.3	29.9	31.0	15.8
AQF Diploma	16.6	24.7	36.7	22.0
AQF Advanced diploma	17.3	22.3	35.1	25.3
AQF Senior school	22.0	30.8	34.8	12.4
Funding source				
Government specific-purpose	26.3	34.3	24.8	14.7
Fee-for-service	14.8	49.9	19.3	16.1
Overseas fee-paying	38.3	15.6	35.7	10.3
Government recurrent	25.7	27.6	29.9	16.8

Completion rates tend to decline with AQF level of the course. The rate in Certificate 1 courses is twice that in Diploma courses. The partial completion rates in Diploma and Advanced diploma courses are also relatively lower but because these

courses tend to be of longer duration a higher proportion of students doing these courses are continuing into 2001.

The completion rates for courses that are fee-for-service are significantly lower and the partial completion rates significantly higher than other courses. Overseas fee-paying students have substantially higher completion rates but course withdrawal rate is also relatively high for them.

The above tables show that 17 per cent of students who commenced a course in 1997 had not completed it by end of 2000. It is not unreasonable to assume that some them would either complete or partially complete their course in the future. If it is assumed that outcome patterns for these students will follow what has already been observed then the overall outcome rates can be approximated. These approximations are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 shows that overall course completion rate can be expected to be 30.3 per cent, partial completion rate 35.0 per cent and withdrawal rate of 34.7 per cent.

**Table 5** Estimated eventual outcomes for students commencing a TAFE course in 1997 by student characteristics, Australia (%)

	Completion s	Partial completions	Withdrawals
All students	30.3	35.0	34.7
Sex			
Male	28.4	36.1	35.5
Female	32.1	34.0	34.0
Age group			
15, 16	31.5	33.7	34.8
17	35.6	27.2	37.2
18	40.3	20.2	39.5
19	35.3	24.4	40.2
20-24	28.9	30.7	40.4
25-29	26.7	36.0	37.3
30-39	28.7	39.0	32.3
40 or over	28.7	43.7	27.6
Cultural background			
ATSI	26.9	26.7	46.4
Others	30.4	35.3	34.3
Disability			
With disability	31.5	27.1	41.5
Others	30.2	35.3	34.5
Country of birth			
English-speaking (UK, Ireland, NZ, NA)	28.9	38.1	33.0
Europe	33.7	33.3	33.0
Asia	37.0	22.6	40.4
Other foreign countries	33.5	25.2	41.3
The rest (including Australia)	29.5	36.5	34.1
Language spoken at home			
Other than English	36.4	23.3	40.3
The rest	29.2	37.1	33.7
Highest education level attained			
Degree or above	30.5	36.5	33.0
Diploma	30.5	35.2	34.4
Certificate	32.5	33.0	34.4
Year 12	34.6	27.1	38.4
Year 11	26.6	37.9	35.5
Year 10	30.4	33.1	36.4
The rest	25.5	43.9	30.6
Labour force status			
Full-time	29.3	40.1	30.6
Part-time	32.9	31.8	35.2
Self-employed	23.6	43.1	33.3
Employer or employed unpaid family member	25.4	40.6	34.1
Unemployed	35.0	23.3	41.7
The rest	27.8	38.1	34.1
Home location			
Other metropolitan	34.0	30.1	35.9
Rural	28.3	41.2	30.5
Remote	21.2	51.0	27.8
Overseas	40.8	18.4	40.8
The rest (includes Capital city)	31.1	31.9	37.0

**Table 6 Estimated eventual outcomes for students commencing a TAFE course in 1997 by course characteristics, Australia (%)**

	Completion s	Partial completions	Withdrawa l
All main course enrolments	30.3	35.0	34.7
Accreditation			
National, not training package	21.3	42.2	36.5
State or institute accredited	49.3	17.3	33.5
National, training package	30.2	35.1	34.7
Field of study			
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry etc	27.7	40.3	32.0
Architecture & building	31.1	33.9	35.0
Arts & humanities	30.7	28.3	41.0
Business, economics, admin. & legal studies	24.9	35.7	39.4
Education	56.2	30.7	13.2
Engineering	25.0	44.3	30.7
Health & community services	36.9	33.1	30.0
Science	29.7	32.1	38.2
Services, hospitality & transportation	37.5	32.1	30.4
TAFE multi-field	31.1	31.3	37.6
Qualification			
AQF Certificate 1	35.9	34.6	29.5
AQF Certificate 2	33.1	35.5	31.4
AQF Certificate 3	32.9	37.1	30.0
AQF Certificate 4	27.7	35.5	36.8
AQF Diploma	21.3	31.7	47.1
AQF Advanced diploma	23.2	29.9	47.0
AQF Senior school	25.1	35.2	39.7
Funding source			
Government specific-purpose	30.8	40.2	29.0
Fee-for-service	17.6	59.4	23.0
Overseas fee-paying	42.7	17.4	39.8
Government recurrent	30.9	33.2	35.9

## 7 Concluding comments

This study has used national VET data collected under AVETMISS to analyse course outcomes for students who enrolled in TAFE courses in 1997. All these students enrolled in AQF level courses.

The results from this study show completion rates to be generally higher than those found in Foyster, Hon and Shah (2000), but the partial completion rates are substantially lower. However, the results are not strictly comparable because of the differences in the way the datasets for the two studies have been constructed. One

major difference between the two studies is that in this study only enrolment in the 'main' course is included in the analysis, while in the previous study multiple enrolments were allowed.

The dataset that has been constructed here can be used for further statistical analysis. Such models can provide information about the magnitude of the effects of personal, demographic and course variables on course outcomes.

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