

Apprentice and trainee destinations 2010:

Technical notes

NCVER

This document was produced as an added resource for the report *Apprentice and trainee destinations 2010*. The report is available on NCVER's website:

<<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>

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Introduction

Apprentice and Trainee Destinations presents information about the destinations of apprentices and trainees approximately nine months after leaving their training. Information in this publication is derived from the Apprentice and Trainee Destinations Survey that covered apprentices and trainees who, between April and June 2009, either completed their training (completers), or cancelled or withdrew from an apprenticeship or traineeship and did not return to the same qualification (non-completers). This is the second time the survey has been conducted. The first survey covered the destinations of apprentices and trainees who left their training between October and December 2007 and were interviewed between September and November 2008.

The focus of the survey is on the outcomes of apprentices and trainees and their satisfaction with the apprenticeship or traineeship. Information collected includes personal and training characteristics, satisfaction with training, employment outcomes, and further study activity.

The survey was conducted by telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) between March and May 2010. A total of 6 228 interviews were completed. The average time taken to complete the interview was 11 minutes. Interviews were conducted by I-view, the field work contractor, on behalf of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Scope

For this survey, an apprentice or trainee is defined as “a person who undertook a contract of training with an employer and a training provider”. The scope of the survey was all apprentices and trainees, aged 15 years and over, who left their training between April and June 2009, regardless of whether they re-entered the system later in a different occupational apprenticeship or traineeship, by:

- completing all of the prescribed requirements of a contract of training
- cancelling or withdrawing from a contract of training prior to completing all prescribed requirements

as defined in the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection.

Out of scope of the survey are apprentices and trainees under the age of 15, and in Western Australia, apprentices and trainees who were still at school.

Also out of scope were any apprentices and trainees who cancelled or withdrew from their contract in the June quarter 2009, but who had re-commenced in another apprenticeship or traineeship prior to sampling (according to the administrative data, using December 2009 estimates) in the same 2-digit ANZSCO occupation, as this was indicative of the continuation of their training.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to answer the following research questions:

- What are the destinations of apprentices and trainees who complete and do not complete their training?
- What are the main reasons for not completing an apprenticeship or traineeship?
- Are those who complete an apprenticeship or traineeship more likely to remain in an occupation related to their training than those who do not complete their training?

Reference period

Apprentices and trainees were asked to provide information with respect to two reference periods.

The first period was the *last week of their apprenticeship or traineeship* (somewhere between April and June 2009). Apprentices and trainees were asked to provide information on their employment characteristics, income, occupation, and industry of employment. It is important to note that for completers the last week of an apprenticeship or traineeship may be up to four years after they commenced. For non-completers, the last week of an apprenticeship or traineeship may have been anywhere from only a few weeks after commencing their training to nearly full-term.

The second period was *19 March 2010*. Apprentices and trainees were asked to provide information on their labour force status, employment characteristics, income, occupation, industry of employment, and relevance of their apprenticeship or traineeship to their main job.

Survey methodology

Sample design and frame

The National Apprentice and Trainee Collection no. 62 (December 2009 estimates) was used as the sampling frame for the survey. The collection holds details of each commencement, cancellation, withdrawal, completion, or expiration associated with the life of an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract.

Before the sample was drawn, all records with a contract status of completion and cancellation or withdrawal between April and June 2009 were selected. Multiple records were selected for some individuals (for example, an individual may have cancelled from one apprenticeship, and recommenced and completed in another during this same period). As the survey was based on individuals and not training contracts, a set of criteria was followed so that only one record appeared for each individual. Where more than one record appeared for an individual, the most recently dated record was chosen (for example, if an individual held a cancellation record dated 1 May and a completion record dated 1 June, the completion record was chosen).

Contact details of all selected apprentices and trainees were then supplied to the field work contractor by the State Training Authority (STA) in each state and territory. They provided the name, address, and telephone number of the apprentice or trainee directly to the fieldwork contractor.

After removing apprentices and trainees under the age of 15, those in scope of the survey were randomly selected stratified by:

- Contract status (completions, cancellations/withdrawals)
- Occupational code (trade and non-trade occupations)
- State (each of the eight states and territories).

The sample was designed to produce estimates at the Australia level with a 5% margin of error. States and territories were invited to provide additional funds for state/territory information. Victoria, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory elected to do so. A total of 20 266 apprentices and trainees were selected with the aim of achieving 6 026 interviews (table 1). The national target, without state and territory support, was 5 013 interviews.

Table 1. The survey sample selections and target number of interviews by respondents' contract status at the time of sampling

Contract status when sampled (December 2009 estimates - Collection 62)	Population	Sample selections	Target number of interviews
Completion	33 727	8 315	2 729
Cancellation/Withdrawal	21 007	11 951	3 297
Total	54 734	20 266	6 026

Field work

The fieldwork was conducted in three phases. A personalised primary approach letter (PAL) was sent approximately one week before initial contact was made. A copy of the letter can be found at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publication/2262.html>. The aim of the letter was to reassure potential respondents of the legitimacy of the survey, inform them of the financial incentive for completing the survey (i.e. two prizes of \$1 000), and ultimately maximise the response rate. An 1800 (free call) number was also set up and details printed on the letter for respondents to call to obtain further information about the survey, make an appointment for interview, or opt out of the survey. Telephone interviewing was conducted between March and May 2010.

Weighting

All published percentages have been derived based on stated responses. As the survey was undertaken as a sample rather than a census, responses have been weighted to population benchmarks of apprentices and trainees who left their training between April and June 2009, the target population for the survey.

There are lags in reporting contract information to the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection. Therefore, numbers for the same period (in this case April to June 2009) change between collection quarters. The sample was drawn from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection no. 62 (December 2009 estimates). Population counts for weighting purposes were obtained from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection no. 63 (March 2010 estimates) when more information was known about the period April to June 2009. Respondents were weighted by contract status, occupational code and state. Population benchmarks were aligned to the number of individuals with contract statuses of completion and cancellation/withdrawal, with only one record counted for each individual. This brought the population of completions to 34 258 and cancellations/withdrawals to 21 401 from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection.

These figures were then adjusted based on respondent’s self-identification as a completer, or a cancellation/withdrawal, or if their response disqualified them from the survey window as out-of-scope (eg. did not leave their training between April to June 2009 or were still ongoing in their training). This produced an estimated population of 34 715 completers and 17 767 non-completers for the period April to June 2009, which are reported in the publication.

Due to lags in reporting contract information to the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, Collection no. 62 (December 2009 estimates) did not contain the final number of training contracts for the period April to June 2009. It is because of the lags in reporting that numbers of completions are estimated for the most recent three quarters, and numbers of cancellations and withdrawals estimated for the most recent seven quarters. Population benchmarks used for weighting are close to estimated numbers and therefore close to the final numbers, such that using them for weighting would make little difference to the estimated proportions and standard errors had the final numbers been available.

Reporting

Findings are reported for two groups, completers or non-completers, depending on respondents’ answers to the survey and contract status at the time of weighting, where:

- Completers refer to those apprentices and trainees who are reported as completing all of the prescribed requirements of their apprenticeship or traineeship contract or those who self-identify as completing all requirements between April and June 2009.
- Non-completers refer to those apprentices and trainees who cancelled or withdrew from their contract of training prior to completing all prescribed requirements and did not recommence in the same qualification before being interviewed or those who self-identify as cancelling or withdrawing between April and June 2009.

Survey response

Telephone interviews were attempted with 14 298 apprentices and trainees selected in the sample. Of these, interviews were completed with 6 228 apprentices and trainees (table 2) from the main survey and non-response survey, giving an overall response rate of 45%. The response rate for the main survey, presented in table 3, was 51% for completions and 41% for cancellations/withdrawals.

Overall, 103% of the target number of interviews was achieved (table 2) when the non-response survey was included in the total number of surveys conducted.

Table 2. Number of interviews achieved by respondents’ contract status at the time of sampling

Contract status when sampled (December 2009 estimates - Collection no. 62)	Target number of interviews	Number of interviews achieved	Proportion of target interviews achieved
	n	n	%
Completion	2 729	2 865	104
Cancellation/Withdrawal	3 297	3 363	102
Total	6 026	6 228	103

Table 3. Survey response summary for main survey by respondents' contract status at the time of sampling

Survey response	Contract status when sampled (December 2009 estimates - Collection no. 62)			
	Completions		Cancellations/ withdrawals	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Apprentices and trainees selected	6 022	na	8 276	na
Telephone interviews attempted	5 340	100	8 031	100
Responded	2 746	51	3 282	41
Did not respond	2 594	49	4 749	59
Refused	371	7	676	8
Non-contactable ^a	1 427	27	2 289	29
Non-qualifiers (eg. did not commence an apprenticeship or traineeship)	305	6	801	10
Not available	422	8	894	11
Other ^b	69	1	89	1

Notes

a Includes those with a Telstra message indicating the phone number was not connected, and where nine to twelve attempts were made at contact with no success.

b Includes those who had previously completed the survey online and incapable of responding.

Privacy

All apprentices and trainees were assured of complete confidentiality. No information has or will be released in a way that will enable identification of any individual. Apprentices' and trainees' names, addresses, and telephone numbers were only used by the field work contractor during the fieldwork stage. Contact details have not and will not be given to any other persons, organisations or departments. Any contact details of the apprentices and trainees held by the fieldwork contractor for the purpose of this survey were destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

Survey data

The 2010 Apprentice and Trainee Destinations Survey collected data on apprentice and trainees':

- training characteristics
- satisfaction with off-the-job training and employment aspects
- employment characteristics, in their last week of and after leaving their apprenticeship or traineeship
- further study activity
- suggestions for improvement.

Information on apprentices and trainees was also obtained from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection. This included details of apprentice and trainees' personal characteristics and some information on their training characteristics.

A summary of the main findings is published. For more information on the questions asked within the survey and the derivation of variables, see the questionnaire and data dictionary at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2262.html>.

Additional information is available, subject to reliability and confidentiality constraints, for the following data items.

Personal characteristics

All personal characteristics were obtained from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection; they include apprentice and trainees' age, sex, country of birth, disability status, Indigenous status, students speaking a language other than English at home, school qualifications, and educational qualifications.

Training characteristics

Some details of apprentices and trainees' training characteristics was obtained from the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection; they include the course name, qualification, existing worker status and group training company status.

Training characteristics collected in the survey include reasons for undertaking the apprenticeship or traineeship and reasons for not completing the apprenticeship or traineeship.

Employment characteristics

Employment characteristics in the last week of an apprenticeship or traineeship include full-time or part-time status, income, occupation and industry.

Employment characteristics after an apprenticeship or traineeship include labour force status, full-time or part-time status, permanent or casual employment status, occupation, industry, income, and relevance of their apprenticeship or traineeship to their current job. It also includes whether they are with the same employer as their apprenticeship or traineeship and if not, why they changed employers.

Permanent and casual employment status is determined by whether the apprentice or trainee indicated they received paid holiday and/or sick leave. This derivation is necessary as previous testing of the question (for the Student Outcomes Survey) shows that respondents could not always identify whether they were permanent or casual.

Apprentices and trainees are asked how much they usually earn including over-time, but before tax or other deductions. They are provided with a list of income ranges to decide where their income best fits over a week or a year.

Further study activity

Further study activity relates to any study done after the apprenticeship or traineeship. It includes whether the respondent enrolled in another apprenticeship/traineeship or is undertaking other study, if the study is related to the previous apprenticeship/traineeship, the qualification level, and type of institution.

Satisfaction

Students are asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their training, employment as an apprentice or trainee, and their apprenticeship or traineeship overall.

Completion of pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship courses

In 2010, questions about pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship courses were added to the questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether or not they completed one of these courses, and if so, how relevant they found the course to their apprenticeship or traineeship.

Reliability of estimates

Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a survey: sampling error and non-sampling error. *Non-sampling error* may occur for reasons such as non-response bias, incorrect responses, interviewer errors, attrition, and processing errors. *Sampling error* is a measure of the variability that occurs because a sample rather than the entire population responds to a survey.

Estimates from the Apprentice and Trainee Destinations Survey are subject to sampling variability. This is because they are based on information provided by a sample rather than a population. The estimates may differ from those produced if all completers and non-completers had been included and responded to the survey. The standard error is one measure of the likely difference. Standard errors enable us to calculate confidence intervals, or significance levels, for the estimates. By convention, a 95% confidence interval is applied in judging the reliability of survey estimates. That is, there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate obtained from the sample will be within two standard errors of the true population value (i.e. the value if the whole population is surveyed).

Confidence intervals are provided in the data tables. Please refer to <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2262.html>.