RESEARCH REPORT

NCVER

Understanding the Australian vocational education and training workforce

Genevieve Knight, Ian White and Pip Granfield
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

INFORMING + INFLUENCING
THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR

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About the research

Understanding the Australian Vocational Education and Training workforce

Genevieve Knight, Ian White and Pip Granfield, National Centre for Vocational Education Research

A comprehensive picture of the overall vocational education and training (VET) market combined with an updated profile of the VET workforce is essential to informing policy development and workforce planning to ensure the sector has the capacity to meet the skill development needs of industry in a rapidly changing economy.

Currently, there is no consistent, regular collection of data on the VET workforce. The last study was released by the Productivity Commission[1] in 2011 but the estimates had poor reliability for providers beyond TAFE. Since then, the National VET Provider Collection has expanded to cover total VET activity (TVA), giving us a better understanding of privately funded VET than was available in 2011.

This report presents estimates of the size and nature of the Australian VET workforce as at February 2019. Using data collected between March and May 2019 through the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey, the report provides an estimate of the number of individuals working in registered training organisations (RTOs), with a particular focus on the qualifications held by trainers and assessors. Information is also presented for volunteers, who play an important role in some RTOs.

The survey collected information from all RTOs with students in 2017 that were registered on the National Register of VET (training.gov.au) at 31 January 2019. Trainers and assessors who delivered nationally recognised VET under third party partnering arrangements in providers that were not RTOs, which is undertaken in some schools and businesses, were not included in the survey. This means that the survey estimates are likely to be an under-estimate of the total national trainer and assessor workforce.

Simon Walker
Managing Director, NCVER

1 Australian Productivity Commission, 2011 pp 37 and 386.

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Executive summary

There were 246 167 people employed in the VET workforce in February 2019, of whom 29% were trainers or assessors

This report presents estimates of the size and nature of the Australian vocational education and training (VET) workforce as at February 2019, with data collected between March and May 2019 through the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey, from registered training organisations (RTOs) on the National Register of VET at 31 January 2019. The survey did not include trainers and assessors employed at non-RTOs that had third party partnership arrangements with RTOs, such as some schools and businesses. This means that the estimates from the survey are likely to be an under-estimate of the total trainer and assessor workforce to which the Standards for RTOs 2015 apply.

The survey provides headcount estimates of the number of individuals working in RTOs, with a particular focus on the qualifications held by trainers and assessors. Information was also collected about volunteers, who play an important role in some RTOs.

Currently, there is no consistent, regular collection of data on the VET workforce. This is a significant information gap which limits the extent to which data can be used for workforce planning and policy development. Where past VET workforce information has been collected, it has generally been acknowledged that it was incomplete and reliable estimates were often limited to TAFE, making it difficult to understand the size and characteristics of workers in the VET sector[2].

Key findings of the Survey (based on headcount) show that in February 2019:

- 246 167 people were employed in the VET workforce
  - There were 45 628 employees at TAFE and 200 539 employees at other RTOs.
- 71 379 people in the overall VET workforce were employed as trainers and assessors (29% of the VET workforce), including those delivering training under the supervision of a trainer.
  - The proportion of the workforce employed as trainers and assessors was higher for larger RTOs than it was for smaller RTOs. For large (1 000 to 9 999 students) and very large (more than 10 000 students) RTOs it was 40.3% and 59.0% respectively, while for medium (100-999 students) and small RTOs (less than 100 students) it was 21.9% and 19.9% respectively.
- Of people employed as trainers and assessors:
  - 52.6% were employed full-time and 47.4% part-time
  - 53.5% were employed on a permanent basis, 13.9% on a contract or in temporary positions, and 32.6% on a casual or sessional basis.
  - 93.3% had a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher-level qualification
  - 89.4% had a Certificate III or above as their highest qualification related to their industry or field of training delivery

2 Australian Productivity Commission, 2011 p37.

- 19.7% of RTOs had volunteers, and 6.1% of RTOs had volunteer trainers and assessors.
  - There were 177 596 volunteers of which 6 841 were directly involved in the delivery of training and/or assessment of VET.

These findings show that non-permanent employment in the VET sector is high with particularly high use of casuals for trainer and assessor roles, consistent with earlier 2011 findings[3]. This casualisation of trainer/assessor employment may restrict opportunities to develop teaching and assessment ability with potential impacts on the quality of training delivery. This suggests there may be a need to identify appropriate ways of enabling adequate professional development for casual and other non-permanent employees.

An RTO's training and assessment may only be delivered by persons who have the training and assessment credential specified in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (ASQA), or else be under supervision. Overall, these findings indicate the majority of VET trainers and assessors hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, but the relatively small number of completions (10 265) in the current version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40116) suggest that most (80%) would likely hold the superseded TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

On this basis, it appears that gap training in the additional units and skill sets required by those with the superseded qualification is the predominant approach to ensuring the minimum trainer and assessor standards are being met. Ensuring that the teaching skills of VET trainers and assessors are meeting the required credentials is therefore an area for ongoing consideration.

The findings also indicate that the teaching qualifications for volunteer trainers and assessors are lower than for employees. This further highlights the need to ensure the maintenance of trainer and assessor standards and the provision of development opportunities for maintaining teaching quality.

3 Australian Productivity Commission, 2011 p37.

The 2019 National Vocational Education and Training Workforce Survey

The aim of this research was to obtain an estimate of the overall size and nature of the VET workforce, including the number of trainers and assessors employed and the qualifications they hold. These estimates can support VET sector stakeholders when making decisions that may affect the VET workforce. In recent years, since the last VET workforce study in 2011[4], a number of initiatives have been considered by governments to improve the quality and standing of the VET workforce:

- In 2015, the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)[5] came into effect, setting out the credentials that trainers and assessors must have and the supervision requirements where these are not met.
- In April 2016, the Australian Industry Skills Council (AISC) approved an update to the Training and Education Training Package in response to the quality issues identified by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). In strategic industry reviews, ASQA had consistently found high levels of non-compliance with the requirement that trainers and assessors be qualified VET practitioners with current industry skills and knowledge as specified in the Standards for RTOs (clauses 1.13 to 1.20). The updated Certificate IV qualification now includes two new core units; one addressing adult language, literacy and numeracy skills, and the other the development of effective assessment tools. The AISC also recommended the existing VET workforce be required to upgrade their qualification, at a minimum to undertake these two additional core units contained in the new Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.
- In July 2017, the trainer and assessor credential requirements in the Standards for RTOs 2015 were changed requiring trainers and assessors to hold updated qualifications effective from 1 April 2019. This brought the requirements in line with the 2016 changes to the Training and Education Training Package. Skills Ministers subsequently agreed to delay the introduction of the requirements until 1 July 2019. This was in response to feedback from the VET sector that some trainers and assessors would not be able to meet the new requirements by 1 April 2019 because of the limited ability of the sector to keep up with demand for gap training.

About the survey

The 2019 National VET Workforce Survey covered the VET workforce within RTOs that are subject to the legislation[6] that sets out the credential requirements for trainers and assessors. This includes those RTOs regulated by Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), and the Western Australian

4 Productivity Commission 2011.
5 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019C00503>.
6 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377> - Standards for RTOs 2015 Australian Government.

Training Accreditation Council (TAC). The survey did not include trainers and assessors employed at non-RTOs that had third party partnership arrangements with RTOs, such as some schools and businesses.

All RTOs registered on the National Register of VET (training.gov.au) at 31 January 2019 who reported student enrolments in nationally recognised training in 2017[7] or were exempt from reporting 2017 activity to the National VET Provider Collection[8] were in scope of the survey. The number of RTOs may vary at any point in time due to regular changes to the National Register of VET. There were 3635 RTOs that met these criteria, of which 46 were exempt RTOs. A total of 3250 RTOs were registered with ASQA, 199 with the VRQA, and 186 with the TAC.

Data were collected using an online self-enumeration questionnaire. A personalised email was sent to RTOs on 14 March 2019 inviting them to participate in the survey on their workforce for the period 11 to 24 February 2019. Fieldwork closed on 9 May 2019. The overall response rate was 40%.

The survey describes the VET workforce just before the new trainer and assessor requirements were to have been met (1 April 2019), and just prior to the 2019 RTO Declaration of Compliance being made to regulators (31 March 2019).

Survey responses were weighted to RTO population benchmarks from the National Register of VET. Since the estimates from the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey are based on information provided by RTOs that responded to the survey rather than the entire RTO population, they may differ from the estimates that would have arisen had all RTOs responded to the survey.

All figures reported for Australia's VET workforce are weighted estimates of headcount at February 2019. For all tables, published percentages are based on stated responses (complete cases)[9].

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7 This 2017 information used for the survey design was the latest information available at February 2019.

8 Under the National VET Data Policy (version 1, which was in effect for the collection of 2017 training activity) RTOs were exempt from collecting and reporting data to the National VET Provider Collection if they had a National security, border protection and policing exemption or a Delivery of emergency or safety community services exemption.

9 The information from those answering is used for those RTOs who did not respond. To ensure estimates for the workforce used the maximum information, headcounts are based on all survey responses that included the headcount. For some other questions, fewer RTOs gave information. We do not report Full Time Equivalents (FTE) as while the survey sought this, 22.8% of responding RTOs did not give this information and the partial estimate is not meaningful.

The 2019 VET workforce

Employees

The VET workforce includes a variety of roles beyond trainers and assessors, comprising other professionals and general staff that may manage, administer or contribute to general business operations: such as leadership, management, student support, quality assurance, accounting, marketing, and maintenance. Some RTOs may have diverse business activities and operate in industries outside of the sole delivery of formal education and training, with staff contributing to these other operations. For this reason, enterprise and school RTOs in the survey were explicitly asked to supply information only about the RTO part of their organisation. However, the large scale of all roles supplied in the survey suggests other RTOs may also be more diverse in their portfolio of business activities. This survey did not ask for further information about roles beyond those of trainers and assessors for brevity, and to focus responses on gaining the key information.

In February 2019, there were 246 167 people employed in the VET workforce (table 1). The highest number of people were employed in School RTOs (with 72 412 employees or 29.4% of the total VET workforce), closely followed by independent or private RTOs (with 72 241 employees or 29.4% of the total VET workforce). The average number of employees per RTO was highest for TAFE (at 1630) followed by university-based RTOs (at 669). Estimates for the non-TAFE sector show that this forms 81.5% of the VET workforce up from 67% in 2011[10].

Table 1 Estimated number of employees in the VET workforce, by provider type, February 2019

	RTOs		Employees		
	Number	%	Number	%	Average per RTO
TAFE	28	0.8	45 628	18.5	1 630
University	13	0.4	8 702	3.5	669
Community education providers	222	6.1	8 872	3.6	40
Private training providers	2 823	77.7	72 241	29.4	26
Enterprise providers	118	3.2	19 033	7.7	161
School RTOs	385	10.6	72 412	29.4	188
Exempt	46	1.3	19 279	7.8	419
Total	**3 635**	**100**	**246 167**	**100**	**68**
All non-TAFE providers	*3 607*	*99.3*	*200 539*	*81.5*	*56*

Note: All RTOs registered on the National Register of VET (training.gov.au) at 31 January 2019 who reported student enrolments in nationally recognised training in 2017 or were exempt from reporting 2017 activity to the National VET Provider Collection. The number of RTOs may vary due to regular changes to the National Register of VET. Average is rounded to nearest whole number. Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. Enterprise providers and School RTOs in the survey were explicitly asked to supply information only about the RTO part of their organisation. Number of employees is headcount. Weighted number of RTOs.

10 The Australian Productivity Commission 2011 estimated 223 400 for the VET workforce overall of which 73 400 were TAFE, p37. See Appendix B Table B1.

It is reasonable to assume that a sizeable proportion of the 2019 VET trainer and assessor workforce were potentially multiple job holders not working full time[11]. Recent evidence also suggests multiple job holding may be quite high for parts of the VET workforce. Experimental ABS estimates indicate secondary jobs are particularly common in the education and training industry, which had the second highest number of secondary jobs, placing it amongst the top three industries for secondary jobs in June 2019.

The last VET workforce study, released by the Productivity Commission[12], estimated the size of the VET workforce at 223 400 employees in 2011, which is 9.3% lower than the 2019 estimate (246 167, table 1). There are differences in estimates of the number of employees at TAFE and other VET providers between the two studies. In 2011, the number of TAFE employees was estimated at 73 400 compared with 45 628 in 2019. The number of non-TAFE employees was estimated at 150 000 in 2011 compared with 200 539 in 2019. These differences may relate to the different methodologies used or to the significant changes that have occurred in the sector over this period. The 2019 VET Workforce Survey obtained estimates of the size and nature of the VET workforce at a point in time, i.e. February 2019, while the 2011 estimates were formulated as annual estimates of total number of VET workers employed in the year[13].

In 2019, trainers and assessors made up 29% of the VET workforce, with 71 379 employees (table 2). TAFE providers had the highest number (at 26 688) of trainers and assessors followed by independent/private training providers (at 23 113) (table 2). TAFE providers also had the highest proportion of their VET workforce that were trainers and assessors (58.5%). This estimate is comparable with the Productivity Commission's 2011 estimate of 62.7%[14], which was described as a reliable estimate at the time due to the availability of administrative data sources for TAFEs, despite some coverage and timing limitations.

Table 2 Estimated number of trainers and assessors, by provider type, February 2019

Training and assessment employees	Number	%	Average per RTO	Proportion of VET workforce that are trainers and assessors (%)
TAFE	26 688	37.4	953	58.5
University	2 353	3.3	181	27.0
Community education providers	2 315	3.2	10	26.1
Private training providers	23 113	32.4	8	32.0
Enterprise providers	2 819	3.9	24	14.8
School RTOs	8 446	11.8	22	11.7
Exempt	5 645	7.9	123	29.3
Total	71 379	100	**20**	29.0
All non-TAFE providers	*44 691*	*62.5*	*12*	*22.3*

Note: Average is rounded to nearest whole number. Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. The proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers and assessors in a category is the aggregate total of trainers and assessors divided by the aggregate total of all employees, and the calculation assumes equal weighting across RTOs in the category. Number of trainers and assessors is headcount.

11 About half the 2019 trainer and assessor workforce were working part time (47.4%, table 4). The VET workforce survey could not establish multiple job holding since it was a survey of RTOs about their workforce and RTOs may not know about multiple job holding by employees. Instead, an individual level worker survey might try to establish this information directly with workers.

12 Australian Productivity Commission, 2011 pp 37 and 386. See Appendix B Table B1.

13 Australian Productivity Commission, 2011 pp 385 and 386.

14 Productivity Commission 2011 Table C3 p347. See Appendix B Table B1.

The proportion of the workforce that are trainers and assessors in non-TAFE RTOs is 22.3% (table 2), which is below that estimated for non-TAFE RTOs in 2011 (48.0%[15]). There could be various reasons for this, but the most likely one is the acknowledged low reliability for the 2011 non-TAFE estimate[16]. However, it cannot be ruled out that there may also have been an actual change over time. The chief source of the difference in scale between the TAFE and non-TAFE estimates for the 2019 proportion of the workforce that are trainers and assessors is due to the variation in size of the RTOs within these groups. Past research has shown that of the larger training providers, TAFE is the main provider type (Anlezark and Foley 2016). RTO size is further examined in table 3.

Table 3 Total Employees and Trainers and assessors by RTO size, February 2019

RTO size (no. students)	RTOs		Employees		Trainers and assessors		Proportion of VET workforce that are trainers and assessors
	Number	%	Number	Average per RTO	Number	Average per RTO	%
Very large (>=10 000)	68	1.9	48 212	709	28 456	418	59.0
Large (1000-9 999)	648	17.8	32 502	50	13 086	20	40.3
Medium (100-999)	1 530	42.1	53 899	35	11 787	8	21.9
Small (<100)	958	26.4	19 864	21	3 961	4	19.9
Subtotal	**3 204**	**88.1**	**154 476**	**48**	**57 289**	**18**	**37.1**
Exempt	46	1.3	19 279	419	5 645	123	29.3
School RTOs	385	10.6	72 412	188	8 446	22	11.7
Total	**3 635**	**100**	**246 167**	**68**	**71 379**	**20**	**29.0**

Notes: Average is rounded to nearest whole number. Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. The proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers and assessors in a category is the aggregate total of trainers and assessors divided by the aggregate total of all employees, and the calculation assumes equal weighting across RTOs in the category. School RTOs and Exempt RTOs are presented separately due to coverage aspects for the workforce and student size. The workforce for School RTOs does not fully cover all trainers and assessors for the students for VET delivered in secondary schools, with third party arrangements (also called auspicing or partnerships) resulting in non-RTO trainers and assessors in schools that are not in these figures; there is not a student size for exempt RTOs since some may have claimed an exemption from reporting student data to the National VET Provider Collection. Number of employees or trainers and assessors is headcount. Weighted number of RTOs.

It is useful to consider how the size of the trainer and assessor workforce, and the overall RTO staffing, relates to the size of the RTO in terms of its student population (table 3)[17]. Previous research has indicated that, while smaller RTOs make up a substantial proportion of all providers, in aggregate they have far fewer students than larger providers (Anlezark & Foley 2016)[18]. Table 3 shows that the average number of employees and trainers/assessors increases with RTO student size. We also see that as RTO student size incrementally increases, so does the proportion of an RTO's workforce that are trainers and assessors. Table 3 shows that the proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers

15 Productivity Commission 2011 Table C3 p347 and p38, this was an assumption due to data limitations.

16 Productivity Commission 2011 p37 and 38.

17 The RTO student enrolment size category can fluctuate over years: Korbel and Osborne 2019 highlight the substantial movements between the size categories for small providers, including providers apparently leaving the VET market altogether, and found 60-65% of small providers remained in this category between years.

18 Anlezark and Foley (2016) p6 pointed out that across all training providers, 14.1% have more than 1000 students and are categorised as large training providers, 45.1% are medium-sized, and 40.8% are small providers, with fewer than 100 students; and the majority of students (80.4%) study with the larger training providers, of which TAFE is the main provider.

and assessors is higher for large and very large RTOs (at 40.3% and 59.0% respectively) than for medium and small RTOs (at 21.9% and 19.9% respectively). Smaller RTOs (medium and small RTOs) formed 68.5% of RTOs, excluding exempt and school RTOs.

For student size, the School RTOs and exempt RTOs are presented separately in table 3 as they are different to other RTOs due to coverage aspects that affect the figures reported for the workforce and related student size[19]. Due to auspicing arrangements that exist with some schools that are *not RTOs*, the number of trainers and assessors that operate in such schools are not represented in table 3.

Profile of trainers and assessors

Employment status

Of the estimated 71 379 trainers and assessors in the VET workforce, 52.6% were employed full-time and 47.4% part-time (table 4). This is a higher part-time share than in the wider labour market, where 31.4% were employed part-time in August 2019[20].

Table 4 Full and part-time status of trainers and assessors, February 2019 (%)

Provider type	Full time	Part time	Total
TAFE	38.4	61.6	100
University	45.8	54.2	100
Community education providers	30.7	69.3	100
Private training providers	48.6	51.4	100
Enterprise providers	88.2	11.8	100
School RTOs	81.7	18.3	100
Exempt	86.4	13.6	100
Total	**52.6**	**47.4**	**100**

Note: Full-time: 35 hours or more per week; Part-time: less than 35 hours per week. Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components.

Most trainers and assessors were part-time when employed at RTOs that were TAFE institutions, universities and community education providers. At enterprise providers, school and exempt RTOs, most trainers and assessors were employed full-time.

Just over half of trainers and assessors (53.5%) were employed on a permanent basis and 32.6% on a casual or sessional basis (table 5). Most trainers and assessors were employed on a permanent basis at enterprise providers, School RTOs and exempt RTOs. Less than half of trainers and assessors at other types of providers were employed on a permanent basis.

19 See table 3 notes.

20 ABS August 2019 LFS Table 13 3355.5 ('000) employed part time of 10679.7 ('000) total. <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.003Aug%202019?OpenDocument>. However note that the differential may be smaller since the part-time share is higher at 39.8% when using May 2018 Employee hours and Earnings ABS 6306.0 - Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyCatalogue/27641437D6780D1FCA2568A9001393DF?OpenDocument>.

Table 5 Employment status of trainers and assessors by provider type, February 2019

Provider type	Permanent	Contract/ temporary	Casual/ sessional	Total
TAFE	38.7	10.2	51.1	100
University	31.5	25.8	42.7	100
Community education providers	47.0	14.8	38.2	100
Private training providers	47.9	21.2	30.9	100
Enterprise providers	88.0	6.5	5.5	100
School RTOs	93.0	6.2	0.8	100
Exempt	86.9	10.2	2.9	100
Total	**53.5**	**13.9**	**32.6**	**100**

Note: % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components.
Permanent: is on-going employment within the organisation, entitled to paid holiday leave, annual leave and sick leave
Contract/temporary: is employed for a specified pre-set term, usually short-term
Casual/sessional: employees are employed and paid on an hourly or sessional basis and are not entitled to paid holiday or annual leave.

The incidence of casual employment for VET trainers and assessors (32.6%) is higher than in the general labour market, where casual employees accounted for 22.0% of employees (May 2018[21]).

The proportion of TAFE full-time trainers and assessors, and the proportion of TAFE casual/sessional trainers and assessors is consistent with 2011 estimates[22].

In commenting on 2011 estimates, the Productivity Commission noted that non-permanent employment in the VET sector was high with particularly high use of casuals for trainer and assessor roles. In conjunction with this, they indicated that this casualisation of trainer/assessor employment may restrict opportunities to develop teaching and assessment capability and concluded that adequate support for professional development for casual and other non-permanent staff was needed[23]. These findings for 2019 indicate that this recommendation is still relevant for VET trainers and assessors in 2019.

Teaching qualifications

RTOs are required to employ qualified and skilled trainers and assessors under the Standards for RTOs 2015 as set out in Appendix A, while trainers without the required qualifications can only train and assess under supervision. RTOs were required to ensure that all their trainers and assessors met the new requirements by 1 July 2019. This entailed trainers and assessors holding either a diploma or higher-level qualification in adult education, or the most recent version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40116). As a minimum, trainers and assessors holding the superseded Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) could undertake a defined set of units to bridge the gap to the new requirements[24]. It should be noted that the National VET Workforce Survey was carried out a few months before these new requirements had to be met.

21 ABS 6306.0 - Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2018 <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyCatalogue/27641437D6780D1FCA2568A9001393DF?OpenDocument>

22 Productivity Commission 2011 pp350-351 tables C.7 and C.8 35.6% full time, 52.8% casual/sessional.

23 Productivity Commission 2011 p.xxxv.

24 See Appendix A, table A1.

The survey estimates show that the majority of trainers and assessors held a formal teaching qualification, with 93.3% of trainers and assessors holding a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher qualification (table 6).

Table 6 Highest Teaching Qualification held by VET trainers and assessors, February 2019 (%)

Qualification	Training and assessment employees
Diploma of VET (TAE 50111, TAE50116)	4.6
Diploma of Training Design and Development (TAE50211, TAE50216)	1.4
Any other Diploma in Adult Education	2.0
Any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education	8.2
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110, TAE40116)	77.1
Other teaching qualifications	3.6
Assessor Skill Set (TAESS00001, TAESS00011)	1.0
Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (TAESS00007, TAESS00014, TAESS00008, TAESS00013, TAESS00003, TAESS00015)	1.0
No teaching qualification held	1.1
Total	**100**
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher qualification	*93.3*

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. RTOs reported the number of employees with each qualification. RTOs were asked to list the highest training and assessment qualification for all of their teaching and assessment employees. The list in the table reflects the alternatives available. No teaching qualification held was an alternative listed.

Overall, a small share (16.2%) of trainers and assessors could meet the skilled trainers and assessor requirement with some form of diploma or higher-level teaching qualification.

For 77.1% of trainers and assessors, the Certificate IV was their highest teaching qualification. This only meets the requirement if it is the TAE40116 or successor unless gap training in the additional units was undertaken. The total enrolments in the TAE40116 in 2016 and 2017 were 5055, with a further 37 764 in 2018[25]. Between 2016 and 2018 a total of 10 265 TAE40116 were completed, forming the potential maximum number of trainers and assessors with TAE40116 at the time of the survey.

If all those holding the TAE40116 are assumed to have been employed by an RTO as a trainer/assessor at the time of the survey, then it is estimated that about 80% of trainers and assessors would have held the superseded TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment at that time. Those holding the superseded TAE40110 would either have needed to undertake additional units for their RTO to be compliant with requirements by July 2019 or have needed to deliver training under supervision while holding the Enterprise Trainer Skill Set. This suggests that potentially up to three quarters of RTOs[26] would have needed at least some of their training staff with the superseded TAE40110 to undertake gap training to obtain the additional required units.

Some caution is needed in interpretation of survey information in this context, as the requirements in the Standards for RTOs are relatively complex in the variations of combinations of qualifications, skill sets and units that they allow for in the credentials and supervision clauses, which can be further complicated by the date or vintage of the

25 Unpublished NCVER 2019.

26 There were 72.7%, a total of 2 671, RTOs who reported that at least some of their trainers and assessors held a Certificate IV as the highest qualification.

credential (whether superseded or not). The Standards for RTOs are also intended to be scrutinised by regulators and met at the individual staff level within the RTO. In designing the survey, only qualifications and skill sets were included in the question (see questionnaire in Appendix C). Additional TAE units required in the Standard when a superseded qualification is held were not included in the wording of the question about teaching qualifications. The reason for this is that the higher the number of trainers and assessors employed by an RTO, the greater the complexity for collecting and presenting this information, since individuals can hold various diverse qualifications, skill sets and units with a range of labels and vintages. This highlights that a survey can be less suitable for obtaining this type of information as an aggregate. Despite this, the estimates give an indicative scale of the key qualifications and skill sets that underlie the skills of trainers and assessors employed by RTOs.

Almost one in ten (9.4%) trainers and assessors were working under supervision (table 7), which tallies generally with the 6.7% that did not hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher-level qualification as their highest teaching qualification (table 6). Employment under supervision can occur in circumstances where practitioners lack the required training/assessment qualifications (see table A2 Appendix A). For example, employment under supervision can occur when an individual with industry knowledge, experience and vocational competency becomes a trainer without having yet completed a teaching qualification.

Table 7 Estimated proportion of trainers and assessors employed as supervisors or under supervision in the VET workforce, February 2019 (%)

Trainers and assessors	%
Trainers and assessors that are supervisors	31.1
Trainers and assessors that are under supervision	9.4

A slightly lower proportion of trainers and assessors employed by independent/private RTOs held a *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher teaching qualification* in 2019 (90.6%) compared with those employed by TAFE (97.8%) (table 8). Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of trainers and assessors employed by TAFE held a diploma or higher teaching qualification (19.3%) than those employed by independent/private RTOs (15.0%). The need for demonstrating the additional units required (related to superseded Certificate IV qualifications) therefore appears slightly lower for TAFE.

Earlier estimates of the teaching qualifications held by TAFE trainers and assessors were approximate, based on one jurisdiction indicating about 60% of TAFE trainers and assessors held the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher in 2011[27]. The estimates for 2019, which are arguably more reliable, have greater coverage and are more representative of all TAFE RTOs, indicate that the teaching qualifications for TAFE trainers and assessors are now demonstrably higher, with 97.8% holding a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher teaching qualification.

27 Productivity Commission 2011 p 43, based on TAFE information from one large jurisdiction.

Table 8 Highest Teaching Qualification held by trainers and assessors at TAFE and private training providers, February 2019 (%)

Highest Teaching Qualification held	TAFE	Private training providers
Diploma of VET (TAE 50111, TAE50116)	5.7	5.0
Diploma of Training Design and Development (TAE50211, TAE50216)	0.6	3.0
Any other Diploma in Adult Education	1.9	2.6
Any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education	11.1	4.4
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110, TAE40116)	78.5	75.6
Other teaching qualifications	0.6	4.9
Assessor Skill Set (TAESS00001, TAESS00011)	0.5	1.6
Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (TAESS00007, TAESS00014, TAESS00008, TAESS00013, TAESS00003, TAESS00015)	0.6	1.4
No teaching qualification held	0.5	1.4
Total	**100**	**100**
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher qualification	*97.8*	*90.6*

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. RTOs reported the number of employees with each qualification. RTOs were asked to list the highest training and assessment qualification for all of their teaching and assessment employees. The list in the table reflects the alternatives available. No teaching qualification held was an alternative listed.

Qualifications related to their field or industry

Trainers and assessors are required not only to be qualified in training and assessment but also to have current industry experience and expertise. Vocational competency in a particular industry consists of demonstrated industry knowledge, skills and experience, either as equivalent experience or combined with a relevant industry qualification[28]. Overall, 89.4% of trainers and assessors held a Certificate III or higher qualification related to their industry or field of training delivery (table 9).

Table 9 Highest Qualification held by trainers and assessors for their main field of training delivery, February 2019 (%)

Highest Qualification held for main field taught	%
Diploma or above	37.6
Certificate III/IV	51.8
Certificate I/II	6.4
Other qualifications	3.5
No qualification held	0.7
Total	**100**
Certificate III or higher-level qualification in their field	*89.4*

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components.

28 Vocational competency itself must be considered on an industry by industry basis. In most situations, trainers and assessors hold at least the level of the qualifications that they deliver or assess. In some instances, industry experience with equivalence to qualifications is used to demonstrate vocational competency instead of the qualification.

Mode of training delivery and number of internal delivery sites

Some training delivery modes may require fewer supporting staff in other roles. Most RTOs delivered either internal training solely or in combination with another mode of delivery (88.8%) (table 10).

Table 10 Average number of VET employees and trainers and assessors by mode of training delivery, February 2019

Mode of training delivery	RTOs	Employees	Trainers and assessors
	%	Average per RTO	Average per RTO
Internal & External & Workplace	27.7	111	43
Internal & Workplace	28.6	67	13
Internal only	24.6	58	11
Internal & External	7.9	35	13
Workplace only	5.2	20	7
External & workplace	3.5	9	5
External only	2.5	9	5
All modes	**100**	**68**	**20**

Notes: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. Weighted number of RTOs. Number of employees and trainers and assessors is headcount.

Internal delivery is where the client and trainer attend any permanent or semi-permanent training delivery location; includes workshop, laboratory, simulator, and classroom-based training even when the training is delivered using video or internet links in real time.

External delivery is where the client does not primarily attend a physical delivery location and instead undertakes training in their own time and location using training materials provided online or by correspondence; the client does not usually have to undertake training at a particular time; this type of training is often referred to as self-paced learning; contact with the trainer is usually limited to feedback on submitted work.

Workplace-based is where the training activity is conducted in the workplace by the training organisation or the employer; for example, industrial/work experience, field placement, fully on-the-job training or structured workplace training delivered at a place of employment.

The average number of all employees, including trainers and assessors, was highest for RTOs delivering internal training, either solely or in combination with another mode of delivery. Training delivered externally, or externally combined with workplace training, had the lowest average numbers per RTO of all employees, including trainers and assessors.

Just over half of RTOs (52.3%) that provided internal delivery, either solely or in combination with another mode of training, had only one delivery site (table 11).

Table 11 Number of internal delivery sites for RTOs providing internal delivery either solely or in combination with another mode of training, February 2019 (%)

Number of internal delivery sites	RTOs
1 Site only	52.3
2-5 delivery sites	33.1
6 or more delivery sites	14.5
Total	**100**

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components.

Volunteers

The 2019 VET Workforce Survey provides the first volunteering estimates for the VET workforce. About a fifth (19.7%) of RTOs have volunteers (table 12). The incidence of volunteering was highest for RTOs exempt from reporting data to the National VET Provider Collection (63.0%); followed by Community education providers (47.3%) and School RTOs (39%).

Table 12 RTOs using volunteers by provider type, February 2019

	RTOs with volunteers		Volunteers		
Provider type	Number	% of all RTOs	Number	Average per RTO	% of volunteers
TAFE	5	17.9	272	54	0.2
University	0	0	0	0	0
Community education providers	105	47.3	3 792	36	2.1
Private training providers	416	14.7	4 183	10	2.4
Enterprise providers	11	9.3	799	73	0.5
School RTOs	150	39.0	3 294	22	1.9
Exempt	29	63.0	165 256	5 698	93.1
Total	**716**	**19.7**	**177 596**	**248**	**100**

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. Weighted number of RTOs, Number of volunteers is headcount.

The number of volunteers across all RTOs is estimated at 177 596. Of these, 93.1% were used by RTOs exempt from reporting data to the National VET Provider Collection. These RTOs may have claimed an exemption from reporting based on the delivery of emergency or safety community services[29].

There is little difference in this profile for the number of volunteers when examined by RTO size[30] (table 13), with exempt RTOs using mostly volunteers. On average, exempt RTOs had 5698 volunteers.

29 An exemption related to these services can occur where the:
- a. RTO is providing emergency or safety related services to the Australian community; and
- b. RTO is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission; and
- c. RTO provides volunteers, employees, contractors or other students with Nationally Recognised Training for which it receives no payment; and
- d. ability of the RTO to provide services to the community may be adversely impacted if it was required to collect and submit data compliant with AVETMISS for the National VET Provider Collection on all students (National VET Data Policy, Version 1).

30 For student size, the School RTOs and Exempt RTOs are presented separately due to coverage aspects for student size: School RTOs do not fully cover all students for VET delivered in secondary schools, with third party arrangements (also called auspicing or partnerships) resulting in a non-RTO VET workforce not covered by this RTO workforce survey; Exempt RTOs may have claimed an exemption from reporting student data to the National VET Provider collection.

Table 13 RTOs using volunteers by RTO size, February 2019

RTO size (no. students)	RTOs using volunteers		Volunteers		Volunteer trainers and assessors		Proportion of volunteers that are trainers and assessors
	Number	%	Number	Average per RTO	Number	Average per RTO	%
Very large (>=10 000)	5	0.7	382	76	121	24	31.8
Large (1000-9 999)	68	9.5	2 179	32	242	4	11.1
Medium (100-999)	268	37.4	5 011	19	435	2	8.7
Small (<100)	196	27.4	1 473	8	203	1	13.8
Subtotal	**537**	**75.0**	**9 045**	**17**	**1 001**	**2**	**11.1**
Exempt	29	4.1	165 256	5 698	5 789	200	3.5
Schools	150	20.9	3294	22	51	0	1.5
Total	**716**	**100**	**177 596**	**248**	**6 841**	**10**	**3.9**

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. Weighted number of RTOs, Number of volunteers or trainers and assessors is headcount. The proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers and assessors for a category is the aggregate total of trainers and assessors divided by the aggregate total of all employees, and the calculation assumes equal weighting across RTOs in the category.

A total of 6841 volunteers (or 3.9%) were trainers or assessors (table 14). Volunteer trainers and assessors were used by 6.1% of RTOs. For Community education providers, the figures are likely to include some volunteer trainers and assessors delivering adult community education who do not require the credentials set out in the Standards for RTOs 2015. This suggests that the numbers of volunteer trainers and assessors in table 14 may be a slight overestimate. Almost half (47.8%) of exempt RTOs had volunteer trainers and assessors. As with volunteers generally, the majority of volunteer trainers and assessors (5789 of the 6841 volunteers, 84.6%) were volunteering in exempt RTOs. On average, exempt RTOs using volunteer trainers and assessors had 263 volunteer trainers or assessors[31].

Table 14 RTOs using volunteer trainers and assessors by provider type, February 2019

Provider type	RTOs with volunteer trainers and assessors		Volunteer trainers and assessors		
	Number	% of all RTOs	Number	Proportion of volunteers that are trainers and assessors (%)	Average per RTO
TAFE	0	0	0	0	0
University	0	0	0	0	0
Community education providers	38	17.1	344	9.1	9
Private training providers	137	4.9	638	15.2	5
Enterprise providers	4	3.4	20	2.5	5
School RTOs	22	5.7	51	1.5	2
Exempt	22	47.8	5 789	3.5	263
Total	**223**	**6.1**	**6 841**	**3.9**	**31**

Note: Weighted number of RTOs, Number of trainer assessor volunteers is headcount. The proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers and assessors for a category is the aggregate total of trainers and assessors divided by the aggregate total of all employees, and the calculation assumes equal weighting across RTOs in the category. For Community education providers that are delivering ACE community education as well as accredited training, some volunteer trainers and assessors may have been delivering only ACE community education, which does not require the credentials set out in the Standards for RTOs 2015. (Appendix A table A1).

31 In comparison, exempt RTOs using volunteers in all roles had 200 volunteer trainers and assessors per RTO (table 13).

Few volunteer trainers and assessors held a formal teaching qualification, with 34.6% of trainers and assessors holding a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher qualification (table 15), far lower than the 93.3% of employees (table 6). For Community education providers, these figures are likely to include some volunteer trainers and assessors that deliver only adult community education, which does not require the credentials set out in the Standards for RTOs 2015 (Appendix A). A higher proportion of volunteer than employee trainers and assessors did not have a training and assessment qualification at 29.3% (table 15) and 1.1% respectively (table 6). This suggests that consideration should be given to ensuring that the teaching skills of volunteer trainers and assessors are supported with the required credentials to ensure the minimum trainer and assessor standards are being met. The context of volunteer trainers and assessors may need further investigation as little attention has been given to VET teaching quality in relation to volunteers. Since these are the first estimates that set out the scale of volunteering in the VET sector, issues affecting the teaching quality of volunteers, such as limited opportunities to develop teaching and assessment ability, may need to be considered in the same way as for casual and part-time trainers and assessors.

Table 15 Highest Teaching Qualification held by volunteer trainers and assessors, February 2019 (%)

Highest Teaching Qualification held by volunteer trainers and assessors	%
Diploma of VET (TAE 50111, TAE50116)	1.0
Diploma of Training Design and Development (TAE50211, TAE50216)	0.6
Any other Diploma in Adult Education	0.6
Any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education	1.2
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110, TAE40116)	31.2
Assessor Skill Set (TAESS00001, TAESS00011)	1.4
Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (TAESS00007, TAESS00014, TAESS00008, TAESS00013, TAESS00003, TAESS00015)	30.9
Other teaching qualifications	3.9
No teaching qualification held	29.3
Total	**100**
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or higher qualification	*34.6*

Note: % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding.

RTOs reported the number of employees with each qualification. RTOs were asked to list the highest training and assessment qualification for all of their teaching and assessment employees, the list in the table reflects the alternatives available, no teaching qualification held was an alternative listed. For Community education providers delivering ACE community education as well as accredited training, some volunteers reported may have been delivering only ACE community education which does not require the credentials set out in the Standards for RTOs 2015 (Appendix A table A1).

A total of 6841 volunteers (or 3.9%) were trainers or assessors, of which 42.0% were supervisors and 34.8% under supervision (table 16). A large share of volunteer trainers and assessors (30.9%, table 15) were reported to hold an Enterprise Trainer Skill Set as their highest teaching qualification (RTO trainers and assessors can be working under the supervision of a trainer who does meet the requirements of the Standards for RTOs 2015, if those under supervision also hold the Enterprise Trainer Skill set).

Table 16 Volunteers that are trainers and assessors, proportion that are supervisors or under supervision, February 2019

Volunteers	%
Trainers and assessors that are supervisors	42.0
Trainers and assessors that are under supervision	34.8

Employees tended to hold higher level qualifications in their industry or field of training than volunteers, with 89.4% of employee trainers and assessors holding a Certificate III or higher-level qualification in their industry or field of training (table 9) compared with 39.1% of volunteers (table 17). This pattern may largely reflect the level of training that volunteer trainers and assessors are delivering, as the requirements are that they hold vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed.

Table 17 Highest Qualification held for their main field of training delivery by volunteer trainers and assessors, February 2019

Highest Qualification held for main field taught	%
Diploma or above	5.4
Certificate III/IV	33.7
Certificate I/II	30.4
Other qualifications	23.5
No qualification held	7.0
Total	**100**
Certificate III or higher-level qualification in their field	39.1

Note: Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components.

Volunteering may introduce factors affecting teaching quality such as limited opportunities to develop teaching and assessment ability, which is similar to the experience of casual and part-time trainers and assessors. The context of volunteer trainers and assessors raises issues around the need to ensure the maintenance of minimum trainer and assessor standards and the provision of development opportunities for maintaining teaching quality.

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Appendix

Appendix A: VET trainer and assessor requirements under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015[32] sets out the training and assessment Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualification or skill set requirements for trainers, to ensure they employ skilled trainers and assessors and provide supervision of trainers where needed.

Clauses 1.13—1.15, set out that the RTO's training and assessment is delivered only by persons who have:

a) vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed

b) current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided

c) current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

Industry experts may also be involved in the assessment judgement, working alongside the trainer and/or assessor to conduct the assessment.

The Standards for RTOs (2015) identifies a set of credentials that demonstrate current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning (table A1 shows Schedule 1 which is the list). These require that the RTO's training and assessment is delivered only by persons who have the specified training and assessment credentials. These qualifications are included in the TAE Training and Education Training Package[33] (table A3). The Education Industry Reference Committee (Education IRC[34]) is responsible for national training package qualifications relevant to Training and Education.

In later clauses 1.17—1.20 (table A2), the standard then allows for RTOs to employ individuals who do not hold these listed credentials when delivering their training, identifying that they can work under the supervision of a trainer who does meet the requirements if those under supervision hold one of the Enterprise Trainer Skill sets – TAESS00007 Presenting Skill Set, TAESS0008 Mentoring Skill Set or TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill set (or their successors).

In clauses 1.19 and 1.20, it further requires the RTO to ensure the training and assessment complies with Standard 1, to put in place the supervision level needed, and that the supervisors monitor and are accountable for the training provision and assessment evidence of those under supervision. The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) sets out that RTOs need to be able provide evidence that the available trainers and assessors meet all of the requirements of the Standards.

32 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019C00503>.
33 <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/TAE>.
34 <https://www.aisc.net.au/content/education-industry-reference-committee>.

Table A1 Responsible for employing skilled trainers and assessors (Clauses 1.13 to 1.16)

Requirements from 1 July 2019
Trainers and assessors must hold: TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor **or** TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, **plus the following units:** TAELLN411 Address Adult language, literacy and numeracy skills (or its successor) **or** TAELLN401A (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAELLN411), **and** TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools (or its successor) **or** TAEASS502A (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAEASS502B) **or** TAEASS502B (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAEASS502) **or** a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education.
Anyone who provides assessment only (i.e. does not deliver training) must hold: TAESS00011 Assessor Skill Set or its successor **or** TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set, **plus one of the following:** TAEASS502 Design and Develop Assessment Tools, **or** TAEASS502A Design and Develop Assessment Tools, **or** TAEASS502B Design and Develop Assessment Tools, **or** TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor, **or** TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, **plus the following units:** TAELLN411 Address Adult language, literacy and numeracy skills (or its successor) **or** TAELLN401A (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAELLN411), **or** TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools (or its successor) **or** TAEASS502A (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAEASS502B) **or** TAEASS502B (Is superseded by and equivalent to TAEASS502) **or** a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education.

Source: Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019C00503>.

Table A2 Providing supervision of trainers where needed (Clauses 1.17 to 1.20)

Individuals working under the supervision of a trainer
1.17. Where the RTO, in delivering training and assessment, engages an individual who is not a trainer or assessor, the individual works under the supervision of a trainer and does not determine assessment outcomes.
1.18. The RTO ensures that any individual working under the supervision of a trainer under Clause 1.17: a) holds the training and assessment credential specified in Item 4[35] of Schedule 1. b) has vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed; and c) has current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided.
1.19. Where the RTO engages an individual under Clause 1.17, it ensures that the training and assessment complies with Standard 1.
1.20. Without limiting Clauses 1.17 - 1.19, the RTO: a) determines and puts in place: i. the level of the supervision required; and ii. any requirements, conditions or restrictions considered necessary on the individual's involvement in the provision of training and collection of assessment evidence; and b) ensures that trainers providing supervision monitor and are accountable for all training provision and collection of assessment evidence by the individual under their supervision.

Source: Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019C00503>.

35 TAESS00007 Enterprise Training – Presenting Skill Set or its successor; or TAESS00008 Enterprise Trainer – Mentoring Skill Set or its successor; or TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set or its successor.

Table A3 TAE - Training and Education Training Package (Release 2.1)

Qualifications	
TAE40116	Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
TAE50116	Diploma of Vocational Education and Training
TAE50216	Diploma of Training Design and Development
TAE80316	Graduate Certificate in Digital Education
TAE80213	Graduate Diploma of Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Leadership
TAE80113	Graduate Diploma of Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice
Skill sets	
TAESS00009	Address Foundation Skills in Vocational Practice Skill Set
TAESS00010	Advanced Assessor Skill Set
TAESS00011	Assessor Skill Set
TAESS00012	Enterprise and Industry Engagement Skill Set
TAESS00013	Enterprise Trainer - Mentoring Skill Set
TAESS00015	Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set
TAESS00014	Enterprise Trainer-Presenting Skill Set
TAESS00016	Sustainable Practice Skill Set
TAESS00017	Workplace Supervisor Skill Set

Source: Training.gov.au < https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/TAE>.

Appendix B: Previous estimates of size of the VET Workforce

There are some previous estimates of the size of VET workforce, however they are not directly comparable with these 2019 estimates. The last estimate of the size of the VET workforce was for 2011[36], at which time there was no national information about training beyond government-funded training (Korbel and Misko 2016 detail the VET information about providers and VET activity for 2011). With the expansion of the National VET Provider Collection in 2014 to cover total VET activity (TVA) we now have a more complete picture of the entire VET market. This additional understanding of privately funded VET and its scale, and the wider range of related VET providers and their workforce was not available in 2011. Consequently, these 2019 VET workforce estimates are really the first with good coverage for providers beyond TAFE. The various past studies have estimated the size of the VET workforce as being anywhere from 130 600 to 1 220 100, with the proportion of the overall VET workforce that were trainers and assessors ranging from 48% to 71% (table B1).

The definition of the VET sector applied in the scope of the 2011 Productivity Commission report[37] was similar to that used for the 2019 VET workforce estimates (VET activity, under the Productivity Commission's definition, was undertaken in all instances by an RTO, Productivity Commission 2011 p.14) and excluded non-RTOs as well as hobby and leisure courses. But the 2011 estimates had practical data constraints that reduced their reliability and comparability with the 2019 estimates. The 2011 estimates were based on the Census of Population and Housing and TAFE data, which did not explicitly reflect volunteers since they were based on Census workforce definitions. The 2011 estimates were acknowledged to be of low reliability for the non-TAFE sector and the TAFE information also had some deficits, with incomplete coverage and varying time periods from 2008-2010 (Productivity Commission 2011 p37).

Table B1 Previous estimates of the size of the VET workforce and TAFE workforce, 1997-2011

	VET workforce			TAFE workforce		
Year	Trainers & assessors	All VET workers	Proportion that are trainers and assessors (%)	Trainers & assessors	All TAFE workers	Proportion that are trainers and assessors (%)
1997	654 800	1 220 100	54	45 800	69 200	66
2001	744 600	1 077 800	69	71 300	90 400	79
2001	24 500	na	-	17 400	39 000	45
2002	na	na	-	42 300	62 500	68
2005	677 700	950 800	71	61 800	70 800	87
2006	62 900	130 600	48	20 200	42 900	47
2006	26 900	na	-	19 300	na	-
2008	na	na	-	36 460	57 800	63
2011	107 600	223 400	48	46 240*	73 400	63

Notes: * This estimate was calculated by the authors using figures from tables C.3 and C.2. The TAFE estimates were derived from underlying information for various periods 2008-2010. Source: Productivity Commission (2011), p37, p.346 Table C.1, Table C.2., p.347 Table C.3.

36 Productivity Commission 2011.

37 <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/education-workforce-vocational/report>.

Appendix C: 2019 National VET Workforce Survey

Coverage and survey design

The 2019 National VET Workforce Survey was designed to provide an estimate, at a national level, of the number of individuals working in the Australian VET training/assessment workforce.

The coverage of the survey was identified as the VET workforce within registered training organisations (RTOs) that had student enrolments in 2017, that are subject to the legislation[38] that sets out the credential requirements for trainers/assessors in RTOs. It is important to note that there can be trainers/assessors that deliver VET that is not delivered by an RTO, but these are not included in the scope of this survey. These trainers and assessors can also be delivering nationally recognised qualifications in a non-RTO organisation, where an RTO holds an auspicing partnership arrangement[39] (third party arrangement[40]) with the non-RTO, for which the RTO undertakes the quality assurance of the training and assessment delivered by the organisation. Such a non-RTO organisation can include schools offering VET, or any business seeking nationally recognised qualifications for their training.

The population of RTOs was identified using information from the National Register of VET (training.gov.au). RTOs under the jurisdiction of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), and the Western Australian Training Accreditation Council (TAC) were each separately identified for the survey. All RTO types, including those RTOs exempt[41] from regular reporting requirements, were in scope in order to gain a full estimate of trainers/assessors (and they were included among achieved respondents).

Table C1 shows the number of RTOs in-scope for the population. There are regular changes to the RTOs registered on training.gov.au. The population for this survey was extracted on 29 January 2019. Contact details for the survey were accessed on 31 January 2019 to ensure the most recent contact details from training.gov.au were included in the sampling frame. As a result of cancellations of registration, two ASQA cases were removed during fieldwork and the total population adjusted to 3635.

38 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377> - Standards for RTOs 2015 Australian Government.

39 Bateman and Clayton 2002.

40 <https://www.asqa.gov.au/news-publications/news/updated-fact-sheet-and-faqs-third-party-arrangements>.

41 The exempt category for the VET workforce survey includes the RTOs that have been granted an exemption from reporting AVETMISS data to the VET Provider collection for any/all activity, by the VET regulatory bodies, under Section 5 of the VET data policy (i.e. if an RTO is exempt for some of their activity in 2017, then they are in the exempt category).

Table C1 In-scope population and strata for the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey

Provider size (students in 2017) and type	RTO population (N)
Very large (>10 000)	
Community education provider	0
Enterprise provider	2
Private training provider	41
School	4
TAFE	21
University	4
Total very large	**72**
Large (1000 - 9 999)	
Community education provider	36
Enterprise provider	19
Private training provider	583
School	10
TAFE	7
University	3
Total large	**658**
Medium (100 - 999)	
Community education provider	134
Enterprise provider	60
Private training provider	1 332
School	225
TAFE	0
University	4
Total medium	**1 757**
Small (<100)	
Community education provider	52
Enterprise provider	37
Private training provider	867
School	146
TAFE	0
University	2
Total small	**1 104**
Exempt	46
Total	**3 635**

Note: Two RTOs were removed because their registration was cancelled between drawing the population and the start of fieldwork. This reduced the overall population from 3637 to 3635.

Data collection

Data for the National VET Workforce Survey 2019 were collected by way of an online self-enumeration questionnaire. A personalised email was sent to RTOs on 14 March 2019 inviting them to participate in the survey. Fieldwork closed on 9 May 2019.

This email invitation contained a unique login code and an embedded link with direct access to the online survey. Reminder emails with the embedded link to the online survey were sent to sample members who had not completed the survey. Up to three were sent during the field period. Targeted telephone follow-up was undertaken addressed to the strata within each regulator population. Telephone reminder activity commenced two weeks after

the initial email invite was sent with the aim of boosting survey responses and targeting strata with low response rates (target response rate was 30%).

All RTOs were sent a link to the privacy notice. The privacy notice complied with the Australian Privacy Principles and provided further information on how information would be managed and protected. For further information on the privacy notice, refer to <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vet-workforce/privacy>.

RTO contacts' names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses were used by the fieldwork contractor during the fieldwork stage. Contact details held by the fieldwork contractor for the purpose of this survey were destroyed upon conclusion of the project.

Response rate

The national response rate to the survey was 40% (table C2).

Table C2 National VET Workforce Survey 2019 response summary

	RTOs in population	Responding RTOs	Response rate
	N	n	%
ASQA	3 250	1 278	39
VRQA	199	101	51
TAC	186	92	49
Total	**3 635**	**1 471**	**40**

Weighting

While the survey aimed to be a complete collection, in practice 40% of RTOs responded. To address this, we calculated 'weights' for each respondent so that the respondent RTOs provide an estimate for the entire population restoring the representativeness of the achieved sample, at least in respect of those characteristics that are measured in the population. The general approach is to create strata and assume that within each stratum the respondents are a simple random sample of the corresponding subpopulation. By creating strata, we allow for some differential non-response, with each respondent RTO assumed to be representative of the strata rather than the whole population. Strata were formed based on the size in terms of students in 2017 (the latest information available at February 2019), and the type of RTO.

As can be seen from tables C3 and C4, response rates by provider size and type were similar to the distributions within the population.

Table C3 Response rates by provider size (students 2017)

	RTOs in population		Responding RTOs	
Provider size (students in 2017)	N	%	n	%
Very large (>10000)	72	2.0	42	2.9
Large (1000-9999)	658	18.1	310	21.1
Medium (100-999)	1 755	48.3	711	48.3
Small (<100)	1 104	30.4	383	26.0
Exempt from reporting data	46	1.3	25	1.7
Total	**3 635**	**100**	**1 471**	**100**

Note: Exempt had no student information informing their category.

Table C4 Response rates by provider type

	RTOs in population		Responding RTOs	
Provider type	N	%	n	%
Community education provider	222	6.1	105	7.1
Enterprise provider	118	3.2	57	3.9
Private training provider	2 823	77.7	1 100	74.8
School	385	10.6	155	10.5
TAFE	28	0.8	21	1.4
University	13	0.4	8	0.5
Exempt	46	1.3	25	1.7
Total	**3 635**	**100**	**1 471**	**100**

Benchmarking

A comparison of numbers for 13 TAFE RTOs collected through the survey with figures in their annual reports suggested a reasonable alignment between point in time (February 2019) and the annual report estimates, which were often point in time estimates for December 2018. The average difference was 5%. The annual report figure was higher for seven TAFE RTOs and lower for six, with the scale of difference ranging from 32% higher to 27% lower than numbers collected though the survey.

Collection of National VET workforce information

Workforce data can be gathered in a variety of ways, with the choice of method being a trade-off between the stakeholder's required level of precision for the results, the nature of data sought and costs such as compliance costs. The choice of one data collection format over another necessarily considers cost, coverage and desire for accuracy when drawn from an administrative data collection with related compliance burden. This may be compared with surveys that are known to be less costly to administer.

In this light, it is useful to consider the data collection via the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey in the context of other workforce collections. The 2019 National VET Workforce Survey was voluntary for RTOs and carried out with no defined plans for regularly repeating the survey. In Australia, there are other examples of business workforce surveys which are carried out for informing workforce development policy in health – for example Aged Care, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Nursing[42]. The business workforce surveys for aged care providers and NDIS providers were, amongst other reasons, implemented to gather information about the carer workforce about which very little was known (aged care or disability carers) and who formed the largest part of the aged care and NDIS workforce

42 For aged care: Mavromaras et al. 2016; King et al. 2012; for NDIS the workforce survey of registered NDIS providers Cebulla et al. 2015; for nursing Health Workforce Australia 2014; AIHW- The AIHW Health Force Surveys collect information on the demographic and employment characteristics of employees in the professions of medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy and podiatry. The survey questionnaire is administered to those persons who were registered or enrolled in each profession Australia at the time of the survey. The medical, nursing and midwifery, and dental labour force surveys are conducted annually, with the questionnaire administered in most jurisdictions by the relevant registration boards, in conjunction with the registration renewal process. Pharmacy, physiotherapy and podiatry labour force surveys are conducted irregularly. <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/400072>.

but were not a profession with a registration process[43]. There is not a required professional registration process for VET trainers and assessors, although there are some associations such as the Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia (ITECA) with voluntary registers for VET trainers and assessors (at the time of writing in 2019).

The response rate for the 2019 National VET Workforce Survey was 40%. This is a reasonable response rate[44], given that it was a voluntary and online business survey, and that there were some issues with inaccurate contact details for email and telephone. The accuracy and currency of the email and telephone contact details for RTOs sourced from the National Register of VET (training.gov.au) was found likely to be a key contributory source of non-response for the National VET Workforce Survey. Distribution was to email contacts, and telephone follow-up was made when no response was received. A high number of email and telephone numbers were identified as invalid in tests, and further non-response may have been due to the difficulty of email systems blocking receipt.

This response rate compares favourably with that of the 2010 VET Workforce RTO Survey[45], which was about 10% by 512 RTOs from about 5000 RTOs. The 2019 National VET Workforce Survey response rate also compares favourably with workforce surveys for the NDIS (30%[46]) and aged care in 2016 for the Home Care and Home Support outlets (42%). However, it is lower than the response rate to the residential aged care workforce survey 2012[47] of 96%, where the survey was essentially mandatory due to the tied government payment for survey completion. In contrast, in 2016 the equivalent residential aged care survey response rate was 53% for the online component (76% overall response rate when including telephone and paper), when the survey was voluntary and had no payment associated[48].

43 For Nursing and a range of other health professions (medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy and podiatry), this is annual, based on a formal register with full coverage and a required registration process that exists for these professions.

44 Two further aspects generally reduce the response rates for workforce surveys against general surveys: once it reaches the RTO, the survey usually needs to be passed on for completion by another person at the RTO with the detailed HR information. Once the survey reaches the correct person within the RTO, the detailed administrative records do need to be consulted to complete the survey.

45 Productivity Commission 2011 p384

46 The response rates when the NDIS provider survey was closed were: Disability Support Provider outlets - 30 per cent from 2,323 invited to participate Cebulla et al. 2015 p157.

47 King et al. 2012.

48 It was noted for the 2012 aged care residential facilities that 2 factors contributed to the very high response rate from residential facilities: the high quality of the sample, which was up to date and contained accurate address details; the Commonwealth offered a strong participation payment incentive to residential aged care facilities (payment receipt was conditional on reporting through the workforce survey). In contrast, while carried out at the same time, the response rate for the 2012 aged care Home Care and Home Support outlets was 33% where there was no payment conditionality and the quality of the sample coverage and contact retails was reported to be low.

Appendix D: National VET Workforce Survey 2019 questionnaire

Respondents were asked to provide information about their RTO's workforce for the period 11 to 24 February 2019.

Enterprise providers and School RTOs in the survey were explicitly asked to supply information only about the RTO part of their organisation.

The following items were collected in the survey:

1 Number of employees in all roles (including permanent, contract, casual and where owner operated with no other employees, and including the respondent as an employee).
   - Total number of employees (head count and full-time equivalents (FTEs))
   - Number of employees directly involved in the delivery and/or assessment of VET, including those working to deliver training under the supervision of a trainer (head count and full-time equivalents (FTEs))

2 Employment status of training and assessment staff (i.e. not volunteers).
   - Number of full-time (staff who work 35 hours or more per week) and part-time (staff who work less than 35 hours per week)
   - Number employed on a permanent basis (employees who have permanent, on-going employment within the organisation, and are entitled to paid holiday leave, annual leave and sick leave); contract/temporary (employees who are employed for a specified, pre-set term, usually short-term), and casual/sessional basis (employees who are employed and paid on an hourly or sessional basis, and are not entitled to paid holiday leave or annual leave)

3 Number of volunteers in all roles.
   - Total number of volunteers (head count)
   - Number of volunteers directly involved in the delivery of training and/or assessment of VET (head count)

4 Highest qualification held by training and assessment staff and volunteers for the main field they teach.
   - Number of training and assessment staff that hold as their *highest* qualification for the main field they teach:
     - Certificate I/II
     - Certificate III/IV
     - Diploma or above
     - Other (specify)
     - No qualification held
   - Number of training and assessment volunteers that hold as their *highest* qualification for the main field they teach:
     - Certificate I/II
     - Certificate III/IV

- Diploma or above
- Other (specify)
- No qualification held

5 Highest teaching qualification held by training and assessment staff and volunteers.

- Number of training and assessment staff that hold as their highest teaching qualification:
  - Assessor Skill Set (TAESS00001, TAESS00011)
  - Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (TAESS00007. TAESS00014, TAESS00008, TAESS00013, TAESS00003, TAESS00015)
  - Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110, TAE40116)
  - Diploma of VET (TAE 50111, TAE50116)
  - Diploma of Training Design and Development (TAE50211, TAE50216)
  - Any other Diploma in Adult Education
  - Any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education
  - Other (specify)
  - No teaching qualification held
- Number of training and assessment volunteers that hold as their highest teaching qualification:
  - Assessor Skill Set (TAESS00001, TAESS00011)
  - Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (TAESS00007. TAESS00014, TAESS00008, TAESS00013, TAESS00003, TAESS00015)
  - Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110, TAE40116)
  - Diploma of VET (TAE 50111, TAE50116)
  - Diploma of Training Design and Development (TAE50211, TAE50216)
  - Any other Diploma in Adult Education
  - Any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education
  - Other (specify)
  - No teaching qualification held

6 Supervision of trainers and assessors.

- Number of training and assessment staff that are supervisors
- Number of training and assessment staff that are under supervision
- Number of training and assessment volunteers that are supervisors
- Number of training and assessment volunteers that are under supervision

7 Modes used to deliver training.

- Internal delivery
  - where the client and trainer attend any permanent or semi-permanent training delivery location;
  - includes workshop, laboratory, simulator, and classroom-based training even when the training is delivered using video or internet links in real time.
- External delivery
  - where the client does not primarily attend a physical delivery location and instead undertakes training in their own time and location using training materials provided online or by correspondence;
  - the client does not usually have to undertake training at a particular time;
  - this type of training is often referred to as self-paced learning;
  - contact with the trainer is usually limited to feedback on submitted work.
- Workplace-based
  - where the training activity is conducted in the workplace by the training organisation or the employer;
  - for example, industrial/work experience, field placement, fully on-the-job training or structured workplace training delivered at a place of employment.
- Location of internal delivery
  - Number of locations in Australia where internal training was delivered;
  - Postcode of each internal training delivery location.

8 Willingness to be contacted to participate in further research on this topic in the future.

There are some items collected in the survey, which are now part of the information submitted to NCVER about training via the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) (for 2018), that would not need to be duplicated within a future workforce survey, as long as the data can be linked: mode of delivery for training, number and postcode of delivery locations.

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