



nextstep
Report 2005

Overview





Background

The Next Step report documents the results of the first statewide survey of the destinations of students completing Year 12 across Queensland in 2004, in state and non-state schools. The survey shows the initial study and work destinations of young people after leaving school.

The *Next Step* survey was conducted in order to assist:

- parents and the wider public to know the achievements of students and to appreciate the range of options available to students
- schools to review and plan their services for students, especially in the senior years of schooling
- school systems to review their education policies as they affect the transition from school to further study and employment
- training bodies, universities, business and industry, local government and regional planners to plan their services.

The survey was commissioned by the Queensland Department of Education and the Arts as part of the Schools Reporting initiatives. The survey supports the State Government's Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF), which aim to have every young person learning or earning.

The survey targeted **all** students who completed Year 12 and gained a Senior Certificate or Certificate of Post-compulsory School Education in 2004, whether they attended a state, Catholic or independent school, or a TAFE secondary college. The survey therefore provides information on Year 12 completers from the full spectrum of senior schooling providers.

The survey was completed by 23 650 young people. This was 59.9 per cent of the 39 458 young people targeted. The response rate was very high in comparison to most surveys.

The responses were generally representative, with a small over-representation of those progressing to university study and under-representation of Indigenous, remote, students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) and international students.

The Office of the Government Statistician conducted the survey between 22 April and 6 June 2005, a little under six months after the young people left school. Responses were invited by mail, telephone or online. Approximately equal numbers of responses were received by mail and telephone (47 and 48 per cent), with 5 per cent online.

A reference group advised on the design and conduct of the survey. Its members represented the school sectors, their principals' associations, the Queensland Studies Authority and the Department of Employment and Training.

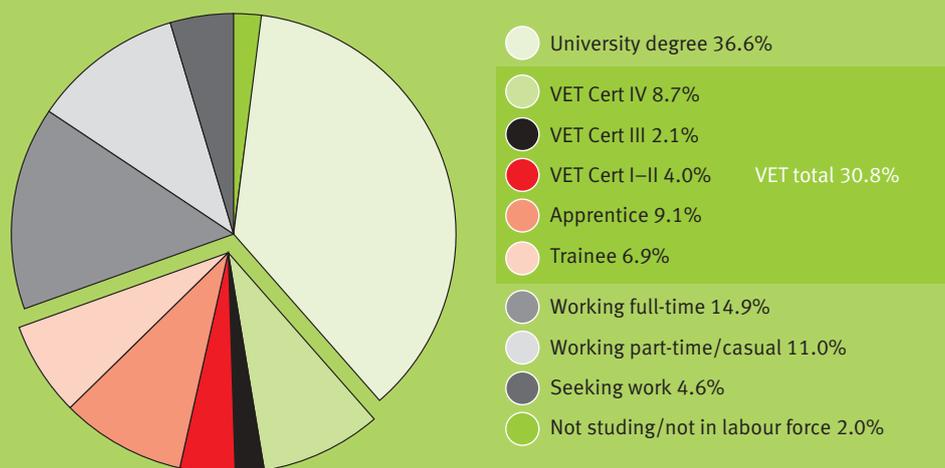
The Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning at The University of Melbourne analysed the data and prepared this report.

Findings

The pathways of Year 12 students have been categorised into 10 main destinations, in which those who were both studying and working are counted as studying. The figure below shows that:

- More than 90 per cent of Year 12 completers were studying or in paid employment
- About two-thirds (67.5 per cent) continued in some recognised form of education and training in the year after they left school
- Almost as many were studying vocational education and training (VET) as university degrees (30.8 per cent and 36.6 per cent respectively)
- The majority of campus-based VET students were studying at Certificate IV level or higher (8.7 per cent, compared to 6.1 per cent studying other campus-based VET)
- Almost one in six (16.0 per cent) were undertaking employment-based training, either as an apprentice (9.1 per cent) or trainee (6.9 per cent)
- One in three (32.4 per cent) did not enter post-school education or training, and were either employed (25.9 per cent), looking for work (4.6 per cent) or neither working, seeking work or studying (2.0 per cent).

Figure ES1: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, Queensland, 2005



The 10 categories used in the figure above are defined below:

Table ES1: Categorisations used to determine Main Destinations

Higher Education	
University (degree)	Respondents studying at degree level. N.B. Some are also in the labour market
VET categories	
VET Cert IV+	Respondents studying Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (excluding apprentices and trainees). N.B. Some are also in the labour market. This category is referred to as higher level VET in the report.
VET Cert III	Respondents studying Certificate III (excluding apprentices and trainees). N.B. Some are also in the labour market.
VET Cert I-II	Respondents studying Certificate I or II (excluding apprentices and trainees). This category also includes 274 respondents in an 'unspecified' VET certificate and 358 with an unknown course level. N.B. Some are also in the labour market. This category is referred to as lower level VET in the report.
Apprentice	Working and in employment-based apprenticeship.
Trainee	Working and in employment-based traineeship.
No further education and training	
Working full-time	Working full-time (35 hours or more) and not in a study or training destination. This includes people with part-time jobs that total 35 hours or more.
Working part-time/casual	Working part-time or casual (fewer than 35 hours) and not in a study or training destination.
Seeking work	Looking for work and not in a study or training destination (Unemployed in the Australian Bureau of Statistics classification).
Not studying and not in the labour force	Not in study or training, not working and not looking for work.

Learning: education and training destinations

The great majority of respondents were studying in the year after completing Year 12.

The vast majority of current students (87.8 per cent) were studying full-time. Most combined study with part-time/casual employment.

Their most common fields of study across all study destinations were Society and Culture (e.g. Law, Arts) and Management and Commerce (e.g. Business, Tourism). However, apprentices were enrolled mainly in Engineering and Related Technologies, Food and Hospitality, and Architecture and Building.

Of those studying, a little over a half (55 per cent) were doing a university degree.

Another 20 per cent said they were attending an Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), while 5 per cent were attending a private training provider. The true TAFE figure is considerably higher, as most apprentices and trainees did not provide this information.

Apprentices are concentrated in industry areas such as Construction, Manufacturing and Electricity, Gas and Water Supply, while trainees are more evenly distributed across a range of industry areas, but in particular Retail and Hospitality.

Earning: employment destinations

Most young people (73.4 per cent) who completed Year 12 were employed, whether or not they undertook further education.

Of those not studying, full-time employment was more common than part-time/casual employment (45.8 per cent and 33.7 per cent respectively). The most common occupational group was Sales Assistants and Storepersons. The next most common occupational groups varied by sex, being Labourers, Factory and Machine Workers, then Food Handlers/Waiters for males, and Food Handlers/Waiters, then Clerks, Receptionists and Secretaries for females.

The vast majority of part-time workers were employed on a casual basis (nine out of 10).

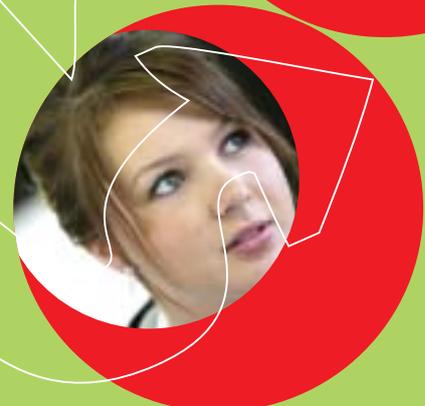
Nearly six in ten school leavers (including those studying) were working in just two occupational groups — Sales Assistants and Storepersons, and Food Handlers, Waiters, etc. Other main areas were Clerical/Secretarial, and Building and Construction.

Not earning or learning

Fewer than 5 per cent (4.6 per cent) were not in study or employment and were seeking work.

Another 2.0 per cent were neither in a study destination nor in the labour market (i.e. neither working nor looking for work). This group includes those with a disability or health condition, travelling or waiting for their course to commence.

Those with a Certificate of Post-compulsory School Education and Indigenous school completers were over-represented in both these situations.



Reasons for not continuing in study

The key reason given for not continuing in study was that young people want ‘time out’ to think about what they want to do, or have a break from study. Many of these young people would have deferred their university places.

The second-most important reason relates to economic and financial impediments. Many were concerned with the cost of studying, and some were working in order to finance future study.

The third group of reasons is related to accessibility to study, reflecting concerns about work commitments, physical access, transport, family commitments and perceived academic barriers.

The need to take a ‘gap year’ and the perception of not being ready for more study tended to be strongest among those from a higher socioeconomic status background, while economic imperatives were strongest for those from lower socioeconomic status groups.

Different people, different pathways

The survey found different patterns for different groups of young people.

Sex

There were significant differences in the destinations of males and females. In particular:

- Females were much more likely to enter university (40.6 per cent compared to 31.8 per cent of males), but females and males were approximately equally likely to enrol in campus-based VET programs.
- Males were almost eight times more likely than females to enter an apprenticeship, while females were twice as likely to commence a traineeship.
- Creative Arts was the only field in which there were no sex differences in enrolments.
- Females were much more likely to study Society and Culture, Health and Education, and Food, Hospitality and Personal Services, and slightly more likely to enrol in Management and Commerce courses.
- Males were almost 15 times as likely as females to enrol in Engineering and Related Technologies courses, and outnumbered females in Information Technology, Architecture and Building, Agriculture and Environmental and Related Studies, and Natural and Physical Sciences.
- Females were more likely than males to be working in part-time/casual jobs (46.7 per cent compared to 32.4 per cent).
- The most common areas of employment for both males and females were in Sales and Food Handling, but considerably more so for females (67.0 per cent compared to 47.2 per cent). The next most common area of employment was Clerical/Reception for females and Building, Construction and Labouring for males.
- Among those working and not studying, males were slightly more likely than females to be in a full-time job; females were more likely to be reliant on part-time or casual work.

Geographic location

Post-school destinations varied progressively with the degree of urbanisation.

Brisbane students were the most likely to enter university and higher level VET while those in very remote areas were the most likely to be apprentices, trainees, seeking work or in full-time work.

Respondents’ reasons for not being in education or training suggest that while the practice of taking a gap year was well established in metropolitan and provincial cities, it was less common in remote and very remote areas.

Survey responses also suggest that lack of access to further education and training is a stronger disincentive to further study and training for those in remote areas than for those in provincial centres and urban locations.

Indigenous

Indigenous Year 12 completers were much less likely than their non-Indigenous peers to enrol at university (15.0 per cent compared to 37.1 per cent). Nonetheless, 76 Indigenous young people who completed the survey commenced university studies in 2005.



Indigenous students were much more likely to be a trainee (12.4 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent).

Indigenous school completers were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to enrol in lower level VET courses, and less likely to enrol in higher level VET.

Due to their relatively low proportions studying at university, Indigenous school completers were somewhat more likely to be employed (29.4 per cent compared to 25.8 per cent) and much more likely to be seeking work (12.2 per cent compared to 4.5 per cent) than their non-Indigenous peers.

Disability

The survey was not able to identify all students with a disability, but did identify those who completed a Certificate in Post-compulsory School Education (CPCSE), which is intended for students with an impairment or difficulties in learning that are not primarily due to socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors.

Among CPCSE completers, 37.0 per cent were studying, with a relatively high proportion doing lower level VET (25.0 per cent). Another 21.0 per cent were employed, principally in part-time/casual jobs (14.7 per cent, compared to 6.3 per cent in full-time jobs).

A high proportion was neither studying nor in the labour force (25.8 per cent) and a large proportion was seeking work (16.3 per cent).

Language background other than English (LBOTE)

LBOTE school completers demonstrated higher rates of transition to university than other respondents (49.5 per cent compared to 36.0 per cent) and to higher level VET courses (15.9 per cent compared to 8.4 per cent).

International students

There were too few responses from this group to draw clear conclusions. Among those who did respond, there were strong transitions to university (68.1 per cent) and higher level VET (17.8 per cent).

Students of VET in schools

The survey found a link between VET studies at school and destinations after school.

About three in ten Year 12 completers left school with a VET qualification (31.0 per cent), while 3.0 per cent were school-based apprentices or trainees (SATs).

Those with a VET qualification were much less likely to enrol in university than others (19.9 per cent compared to 44.2 per cent). However, they had much higher rates of transition to employment-based training (25.1 per cent compared to 11.9 per cent). They were also more likely to enter employment with no further education and training (31.0 per cent compared to 23.7 per cent).

School-based apprentices and trainees were much more likely to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships after school than other school completers (34.4 per cent compared to 15.4 per cent).

Socioeconomic status

Transition to post-school education and training was strongly associated with socioeconomic status (SES), increasing consistently from 62.3 per cent for the lowest SES quartile to 75.6 per cent to the highest SES quartile. This pattern was most pronounced for transition to university.

The proportion of students who entered employment-based training increased as socioeconomic status declined.

Age

Very young Year 12 completers (aged 15 at the start of Year 12) were much more likely than other completers to enrol in university, which suggests that these include gifted and talented students who have been accelerated through secondary education.

Mature age completers appeared to be more likely than others to move into campus-based VET.

Conclusions

Immediate status after Year 12 gives only a partial view of the experiences of young people after leaving school, as it can take several years for stable patterns to emerge as young people move between different types of education, training and work.

The survey found that the vast majority of young Queenslanders who completed Year 12 in 2004 were engaged in study or work six months after completing school.

More information on the survey is at www.education.qld.gov.au/nextstep