

MEDIA RELEASE

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Disadvantaged youth find success in VET

The non-apprenticeship VET sector provides a successful pathway from school to further education and training for young Australians from all socioeconomic backgrounds, a new report shows.

The new study, released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), was based on a sample of young people who had been in Year 9 in 1995, and who commenced a non-apprenticeship VET course by 2000. Their education, training and labour market activities were tracked until late in 2001, when they were around 20 years of age.

Around 20 per cent of young Australians had enrolled in a non-apprenticeship VET course by age 19. By age 20 in late 2001, 60 per cent of the non-apprenticeship VET entrants had completed their first course while 14 per cent were still enrolled in their first course.

Attrition rates in the non-apprenticeship VET sector were about the same as those generally estimated for higher education with around a quarter of students not finishing their course.

However, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were not disadvantaged in terms of course progress. Gender, language background and region were also unrelated to continuing with non-apprenticeship study.

“It appears that the non-apprenticeship VET sector has been more successful than the university sector in assisting students from all backgrounds to continue their studies. Any new policy initiatives targeting these equity groups should perhaps focus on entry to tertiary education or on branching points earlier in young people’s educational pathways” said ACER’s Deputy CEO, Dr John Ainley.

The study also found evidence that participation in a non-apprenticeship VET course had benefits for participants in terms of creating future educational and work opportunities. By age 20, those who had done a non-apprenticeship VET course were more likely to be involved in full-time education, training or work than those who had not done any post-school study.

Further information and additional findings are available in the report, *Non-apprenticeship VET Courses: Participation, Persistence and Subsequent Pathways* by Julie McMillan, Sheldon Rothman & Nicole Wernert. The study is research report number 47 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), a program conducted jointly by ACER and the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

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LSAY background information is available on the ACER website at www.acer.edu.au