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Submission

by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

To

The Senate

Standing Committee on Education and Employment

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment

19 October 2016

Inquiry into the VET Student Loans Bill 2016, the VET Student Loans (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2016 and the VET Student Loans (Charges) Bill 2016

Name: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
Category: Ministerial Owned Company
Contact: Dr Craig Fowler, Managing Director

RESPONSE TO THE INQUIRY

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is an independent body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, evaluating and communicating research and statistics about tertiary education and training. This submission provides information relevant to the inquiry into the VET Student Loans Bill 2016, the VET Student Loans (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2016 and the VET Student Loans (Charges) Bill 2016.

NCVER strongly supports the consequential amendments to the *Student Identifiers Act 2014* (the Student Identifiers Act), which will clarify that student identifiers can be collected, used and disclosed for the purposes of the VET Student Loans Act. This amendment will support the Unique Student Identifier (USI) transcript service, which will provide students with the ability to view information about the training they completed in or after 2015, if this training activity is also reported to the National VET Collections.



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The information on the USI transcript comes from two sources. The student name on the transcript comes from the USI Office, and the training information comes from the National VET Provider and VET in Schools collections, for which NCVER is the data custodian. The USI transcript includes information about qualifications completed and subjects undertaken, their outcomes, funding, and when and with whom the training was undertaken. Only those records submitted with a USI to the National VET Collections held by NCVER will appear on students' transcripts.

Historically, collection of the USI in the VET FEE-HELP Data Collection, for which the Australian Government Department of Education and Training is the custodian, and in the National VET Collections would provide a mechanism with which to identify VET FEE-HELP assisted activity in the broader scoped collection of total VET activity (TVA). Such identification would improve understanding of how VET FEE-HELP assisted activity fits within the scope of total VET activity, and over time what influence, if any, the scheme may be having on government-subsided activity and student behaviour. At this time, it is not possible to make an analysis of VET FEE-HELP assisted qualifications using data from the National VET Collections, as this activity cannot currently be identified. A better USI compliance regime would facilitate this analysis.

Assuming that the VET Student Loans program starts in 2017, and details are to be held by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training as custodian, it is vital that the USI is available to allow identification of VET Student Loans assisted activity between the new administrative collection and TVA.

Analysis of the profile of enrolments in all diploma and above qualifications reported for TVA 2015 shows that enrolments in these qualifications are heavily concentrated in relatively few qualifications. In 2015, there were 613 500 enrolments spread across approximately 468 qualifications¹. The largest 100 qualifications (21%) accounted for 95% of the enrolments in 2015, while the remaining group of 368 qualifications (79%) had the remaining 5% of enrolments. The largest 20 qualifications accounted for over two thirds (67%) of enrolments.

References

NCVER 2016, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: total VET students and courses 2015*, NCVER, Adelaide.

¹ This figure only includes enrolments in training package (not nationally accredited) qualifications at diploma level and above for data reported to the National VET Collections for 2015.