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People with a disability in vocational education and training

A statistical compendium

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National Centre for Vocational Education Research

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Key messages

- Of the five recognised equity groups in vocational education and training (VET)—women, Indigenous people, people with a disability, people in regional/rural areas and people from non-English speaking backgrounds—people with a disability, as a whole, have the lowest levels of educational achievement and employment outcomes from VET.
- This compendium provides much new information on people with a disability as a whole, as well as for subgroups with different types of disability.
- As a whole, students with a disability in VET have prior schooling education levels strikingly far below those for all other VET students. About 55% of all people with a disability had left school at or before the end of Year 10, compared with 40% for all VET students. This suggests that developing educational pathways before Year 10 for people with a disability is important as part of an early-intervention approach.
- As a whole, people with a disability are less likely to undertake/attain higher-level Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications (such as diplomas and certificate IIIs) and are more likely to undertake/achieve certificate I or II qualifications: their subject completion rates are lower than those of students with no declared disability.
- However, type of disability does matter: educational achievements and outcomes from VET vary significantly between disability groups, suggesting that different improvement strategies may be necessary for different groups of people with a disability in VET.
- Of all disability types, VET students with hearing or vision disabilities have the highest probability of passing assessed subjects, and the highest employment outcomes, whereas VET students with intellectual or learning disabilities have the lowest, and well below the average level for all VET students with a disability. Those with about the average levels include people with physical and medical disabilities. Those with just below the average include people with a mental illness and acquired brain impairments.

Introduction

People with a disability have been identified as a key equity group in vocational education and training (VET) for several years on the basis of their overall participation levels, progression rates through VET studies and the employment outcomes they achieve after completion. Indeed, by comparison with the other four commonly recognised VET equity groups (women, Indigenous people, people in regional/rural areas, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds), people with a disability as a whole, have educational achievements and employment outcomes that are relatively poor (table 1).

Table 1: Summary of VET participation, achievements and outcomes for equity groups, 2003

Equity group	Participation rate (% of students to total population aged 15–64 years)	Educational achievement (% of subjects completed)	Employment outcomes (% graduates employed after training)
Women	12.5	82	71
Indigenous Australians	11.4	69	60
People with a disability	2.3	75	50
People from rural and remote Australia	–	83	76
People of non-English speaking background	4.5	76	61
All people in VET	12.1	82	74

Note: Scope—NCVER national collection of student data from VET providers. Figures include all students who were in the publicly funded VET system.
– not available.

Source: ABS (2003, tables 6 & 7; 2003 figures are preliminary); ABS (2004)

To determine why this might be, the National Training Statistics Committee at the July 2003 meeting, discussed the possibility of a targeted survey of people with a disability. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) suggested that, before further research was undertaken, there was a need to further analyse existing information, and to consult with key stakeholders, such as the Australian Disability Advisory Training Council (ADTAC). Data on this group's training activity have been reported at aggregate level only, whereas there is considerable diversity within the group. Both the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and ADTAC supported this viewpoint. Thus, NCVER has produced this statistical compendium to aid planning and strategy development, as well as to identify gaps in the available data.

This statistical compendium examines, firstly, VET students with a disability as a whole group, focusing on their participation levels, achievements and outcomes from VET, and identifies gaps and/or issues with the existing data. This is followed by a comparison section of people with different types of disabilities, and a conclusion. An appendix contains detailed profiles for each disability type, which can stand alone as fact sheets. Included is one fact sheet for each of the following disability types: physical disability, medical condition, vision disability, learning disability, hearing disability, intellectual disability, mental illness, acquired brain impairment and other/unspecified disabilities. A fact sheet on Indigenous people with a disability is also included.

Overall profile

This section provides a profile of VET students with a disability as an aggregate group, focusing on their overall participation levels, achievements and outcomes from VET.

Participation levels

There has been a steady growth in the number of students in VET reporting a disability, from 53 475 in 1998 to 91 439 in 2003 (table 2). However, three factors have contributed to the recent apparent stronger growth in participation levels. Firstly, from 2002 onwards, new disability types have been added to the original definition. Secondly, methods for identifying these people have been improved. Thirdly, there have been greater and more coordinated efforts to enhance access and participation for students with a disability in recent years, and particularly through the national *Bridging pathways* strategy. It is not possible to distinguish the degree to which each of these factors has affected the total numbers between 2002 and 2003.

Table 2: Number of students in the public VET system reporting a disability, 1998–2003

Disability status	1998	1999	2000	2001	* 2002	2003
Disability reported	53 475	62 608	61 466	68 462	81 806	91 439
No disability reported	1 111 594	1 289 285	1 316 578	1 386 229	1 331 281	1 345 443
Unknown	344 753	262 721	329 865	224 450	269 859	280 913
Total	**1 509 822**	**1 614 614**	**1 707 909**	**1 679 141**	**1 682 946**	**1 717 795**
Proportion of all with a disability (%)	3.5	3.9	3.6	4.1	4.9	5.3
Proportion of VET students reporting a disability of all Australians with a disability (%)	1.5	–	–	–	–	2.3

Notes: Scope—NCVER national collection of student data from VET providers. Figures include all students who were in the publicly funded VET system.
* There is a break in series from 2001–02 because of changes to the national data standard relating to students with a disability, with new disability types coming into effect for the reporting of VET student characteristics. Also there have been improvements in methods of identifying and measuring their participation.

Source: ABS (2004)

The total of 91 439 students in VET reporting a disability in 2003 represents an estimated 2.3% of the total Australian population with a disability. This participation rate of 2.3% needs to be treated with caution for two reasons. Firstly, both the VET data on student numbers with a disability and the data on the total Australian population with a disability from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) rely on self-reporting. Secondly, the two data sources use different definitions, although the same categories of disability. For their Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, the ABS (2004) defines disability to be 'any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities'. Under the Australian VET Management Information and Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), maintained by NCVER, a student can indicate that they have a disability, impairment or long-term condition and also specify the kind of disability.

The self-reporting of disability status in the national VET data collection is problematic also because 280 913 students (16.4% of total) did not indicate their disability status, as shown in table 2.

Table 3 presents the percentages of all students reporting a disability for each state and territory and compares this with the percentage of the total VET population in each jurisdiction for 2003. In most cases, the proportions are similar. The two states where the share of students with a disability is significantly different from their share of all VET students are New South Wales and Queensland. New South Wales has 43.4% of students with a disability compared with 34.3% of all students. By contrast, Queensland has 12.8% of all students with a disability compared with 17.3% of total VET students.

Table 3: Proportion of students with a disability in each state and territory, against percentage of VET population in each state and territory, 2003

State/territory	Total VET population		Students with a disability	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
New South Wales	588 403	34.3	39 688	43.4
Victoria	511 221	29.8	23 765	26.0
Queensland	297 573	17.3	11 665	12.8
South Australia	112 655	6.6	5 888	6.4
Western Australia	130 407	7.6	5 895	6.4
Tasmania	35 756	2.1	2 411	2.6
Northern Territory	19 933	1.2	907	1.0
Australian Capital Territory	21 847	1.3	1 220	1.3
Australia	**1 717 795**	**100.0**	**91 439**	**100.0**

The participation in apprenticeships and traineeships by people with a disability has decreased slightly from 1.5% in 2002 to 1.3% in 2003 (table 4). However, the number of people who did not identify either way (that is, unknown response) has remained high, with an increase from 1.3% to 1.4% of the population. The participation rate for apprentices and trainees with a disability appears much lower than that of the general VET population (5.3%), possibly due to the fact that apprentices and trainees may not want to identify themselves as having a disability to their employer.

Table 4: Apprentices and trainees in training as at 31 December 2002 and 2003 by disability

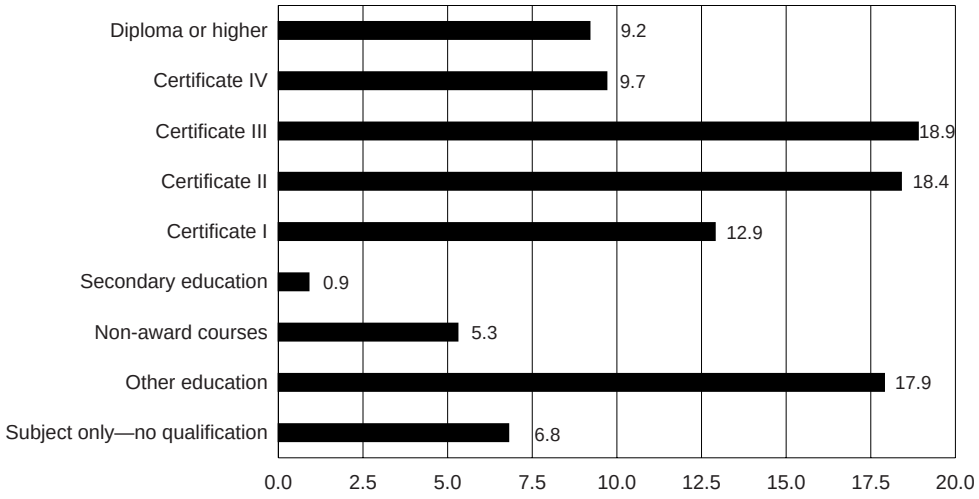
In training as at 31 December	Disability	No disability	Unknown	Total
2002	5 460	355 620	4 940	**366 010**
2003	5 130	382 530	5 320	**392 980**

Source: NCVER Apprentice and Trainee Collection, based on September 2004 estimates

Training activity undertaken

Figure 1 depicts the proportion of students with a disability by major qualification level undertaken in 2003. It shows that around 38% of students with a disability undertook Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certificates III and above. A further 31% of total VET students with a disability undertook AQF certificates I and II. The remaining (31%) students undertook 'other' (non-AQF) education.

Figure 1: Proportion of students with a disability (%) by major qualification level undertaken, 2003



AQF certificate III and above awards have been used as a benchmark because they usually have direct employment outcomes associated with them, whereas AQF certificates I, II and non-AQF education often lead into further education opportunities rather than directly to an employment outcome.

Students with a disability had a lower propensity to undertake AQF certificates III and above (38%) compared to all VET students (46%) (figure 2).

Figure 2: Proportion of students with a disability by major qualification grouping, 2003

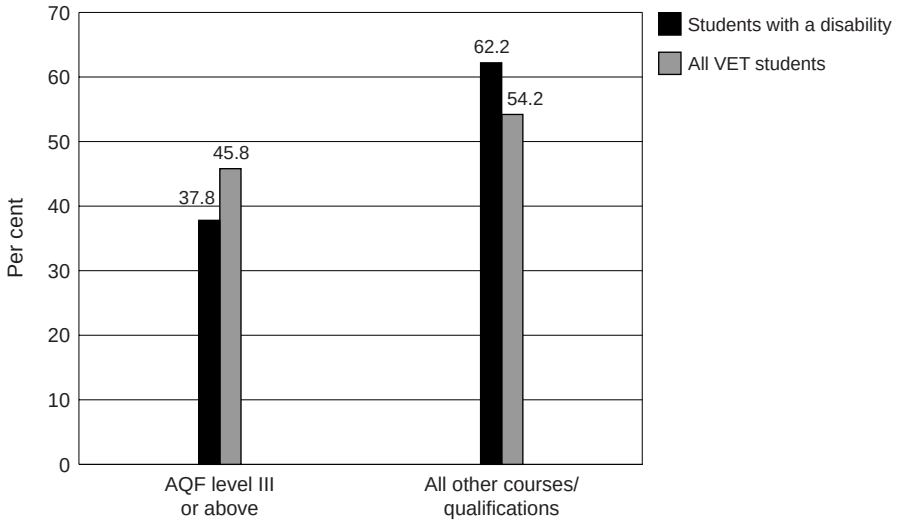


Table 5 provides information on training packages activity undertaken by students with a disability by qualification category. Around 60% of students with a disability undertook their training outside a training package. For those undertaking a training package in 2003, the greatest numbers were at AQF levels III and II.

At both AQF levels III and II, *community services*, *business services* and *hospitality* training package areas were the most popular.

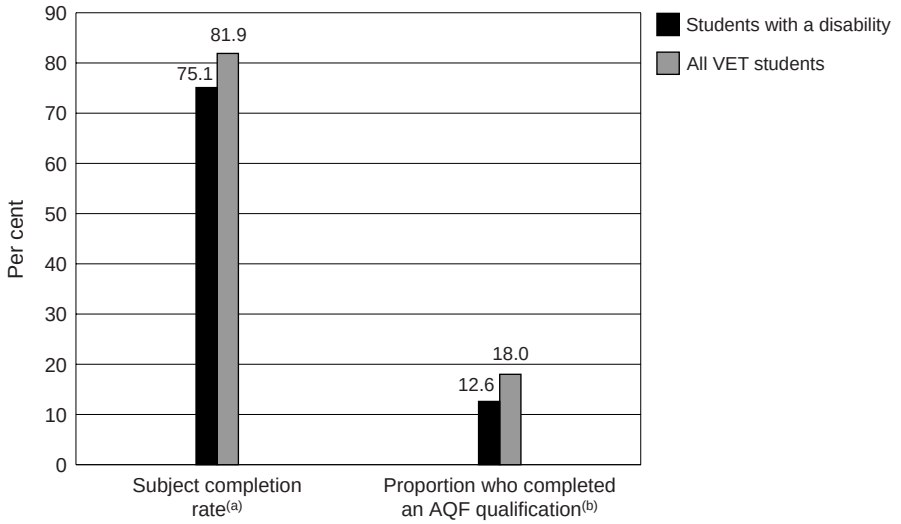
Table 5: Number of VET students reporting a disability by major training package area and qualification category, 2003

Training package area	Diplomas & above	AQF IV	AQF III	AQF II	AQF I	Senior second-ary	Other	Non award	Module enrolment only	Total
Business services	562	1 170	1 633	1 610	377	–	–	–	–	**5 352**
Information technology	514	672	740	2 375	1 001	–	–	–	–	**5 302**
Community services	979	832	2 315	131	0	–	–	–	–	**4 257**
Hospitality	189	257	1 159	1 511	285	–	–	–	–	**3 401**
Horticulture	116	150	691	878	187	–	–	–	–	**2 022**
Financial services	508	407	448	8	0	–	–	–	–	**1 371**
Automotive, retail & repair	2	6	864	183	211	–	–	–	–	**1 266**
Metal & engineering industry	11	197	516	300	111	–	–	–	–	**1 135**
Retail	3	12	216	782	80	–	–	–	–	**1 093**
Assessment & workplace training	18	1 057	0	0	0	–	–	–	–	**1 075**
Transport & distribution	7	33	515	336	99	–	–	–	–	**990**
General construction	0	0	679	129	114	–	–	–	–	**922**
Agriculture	94	123	123	316	20	–	–	–	–	**676**
Tourism	102	157	237	93	3	–	–	–	–	**592**
Food	0	0	272	181	92	–	–	–	–	**545**
Electrotechnology industry	159	9	331	25	17	–	–	–	–	**541**
Other training package areas (aggregated)	787	827	2 501	2 220	135	–	–	–	–	**6 470**
Non-training package courses	4 335	2 993	4 014	5 719	9 088	834	13 489	7 713	–	**48 185**
Module enrolment only	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6 244	**6 244**
Total	**8 386**	**8 902**	**17 254**	**16 797**	**11 820**	**834**	**13 489**	**7 713**	**6 244**	**91 439**

Achievement in VET

Students with a disability in aggregate have subject success rates somewhat lower than for all VET students: 75% compared with 82% (figure 3). They also have a lower propensity to complete full AQF qualifications: 13% compared with 18%. These achievements in vocational education and training might be related to their reasons for study which are often not vocational (see below). They also might be related to the fact that VET learners with a disability are more likely than other students to have left school before Year 10 and so struggle with VET subjects. (See next comparison section, subsection Previous education levels.)

Figure 3: Subject completion rates and proportions completing an AQF qualification for students with a disability and total VET students, 2003



Notes: (a) The subject completion rate is based on the number of enrolments with each outcome. It represents the proportion of enrolments achieved/passed, recognition of prior learning and satisfactorily completed of the total number of enrolments (less credit transfers and continuing enrolments).
(b) The proportion of students who completed a full AQF qualification is represented by the number of students completing a full AQF qualification of the total number of students.

Outcomes from VET

This section provides key findings about employment and training outcomes for students with a disability who completed some training at a VET organisation in the period 2000–03 and who were included in the sample for the Student Outcomes Survey.

Table 6 summarises a pattern of unequal employment outcomes for VET graduates with and without a disability, from 2001 onwards. It shows:

- ✧ There is a significant *increase* (from 45% to 51%) in the proportion of VET graduates with a disability who are *employed* after training. However, it is still considerably lower than those without a disability.
- ✧ There is a *decline* (from 21% to 16%) in the proportion of VET graduates with a disability who are *unemployed* after training. This is significantly higher than those without a disability.
- ✧ Apart from 2003, when there was a decrease, the proportion of students with a disability *not looking for work* after training has remained *consistent* from 2001–04. This is significantly higher than those without a disability.

Similar trends emerge for module completers. However, the proportion of those with a disability who are employed after training has remained consistent over the years (table 7).

Table 6: VET graduates with and without a disability by employment status, 2001–04

Area of change	2001 (%)	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)
Employed *after* training—with a disability	45	43	50	51
Employed *after* training—with no disability	76	76	76	77
Unemployed *after* training—with a disability	21	25	20	16
Unemployed *after* training—with no disability	11	12	12	11
Not seeking work *after* training—with disability	32	30	25	32
Not seeking work *after* training—with no disability	12	12	10	12

Source: NCVER (2001–04)

Table 7: Module completers with and without a disability by employment status, 2001–04

Area of change	2001 (%)	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)
Employed *after* training—with a disability	38	37	40	42
Employed *after* training—with no disability	70	68	69	71
Unemployed *after* training—with a disability	19	21	19	18
Unemployed *after* training—with no disability	13	14	14	11
Not seeking work *after* training—with disability	40	38	35	37
Not seeking work *after* training—with no disability	16	17	15	17

Source: NCVER (2001–04)

Table 8 describes the main reasons for study given by VET students with a disability who completed some training in 2002 and who participated in the Student Outcomes Survey. The reasons are summarised into 'employment-related', 'further study-related' and 'personal development or other' against employment status, and compares these relationships on the basis of disability status.

It is evident that employment outcomes for graduates with a disability are higher for those who undertook their training for an employment-related reason than those whose reason for training was further study or personal development. For those with a disability who undertook their training for further study or personal development, there is a higher proportion not in the labour force. These trends are similar for graduates without a disability. However, employment outcomes are higher and proportions of those not in the labour force are lower.

There is a similar trend for module completers; however, their employment outcomes are lower than for graduates (table 9).

Table 8: Graduate employment status (as at 30 May 2003) by disability status and reason for training (%)

Reason	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not employed (NFI)	Total
Graduates with a disability					
Employment-related (n=1736)	57	23	14	6	**100**
Further study-related (n=146)	27	14	56	*	**100**
Personal development or other (n=680)	34	16	48	2**	**100**
Total (n=2562)	**49**	**21**	**25**	**5**	**100**
Graduates with no disability					
Employment-related (n=26 567)	81	12	6	2	**100**
Further study-related (n=2059)	50	17	32	1	**100**
Personal development or other (n=6305)	64	14	21	2	**100**
Total (n=34 931)	**76**	**12**	**11**	**2**	**100**

Note: * Indicates the unweighted count is less than 5; ** indicates relative standard error is greater than 25%.

Source: NCVER (2003)

Table 9: Module completer employment status (as at 30 May 2003) by disability status and reason for training (%)

Reason	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not employed (NFI)	Total
Module completers with a disability					
Employment-related (n=1281)	49	25	21	6	**100**
Further study-related (n=79)	27	24	42	7**	**100**
Personal development or other (n=991)	27	11	56	6	**100**
Total (n=2351)	**39**	**19**	**36**	**6**	**100**
Module completers with no disability					
Employment-related (n=12 951)	77	13	7	2	**100**
Further study-related (n=609)	43	28	26	2**	**100**
Personal development or other (n=6166)	54	13	30	3	**100**
Total (n=19 726)	**69**	**14**	**15**	**3**	**100**

Note: ** Indicates relative standard error is greater than 25%.

Source: NCVER (2003)

Comparisons by type of disability

The characteristics of students with different types of disability are compared in this section, referenced against both those for all students with a disability and all students in VET. The characteristics covered are gender, age and previous education levels. Some information is also included on employment and other outcomes by type of disability using the 2003 Student Outcomes Survey information.

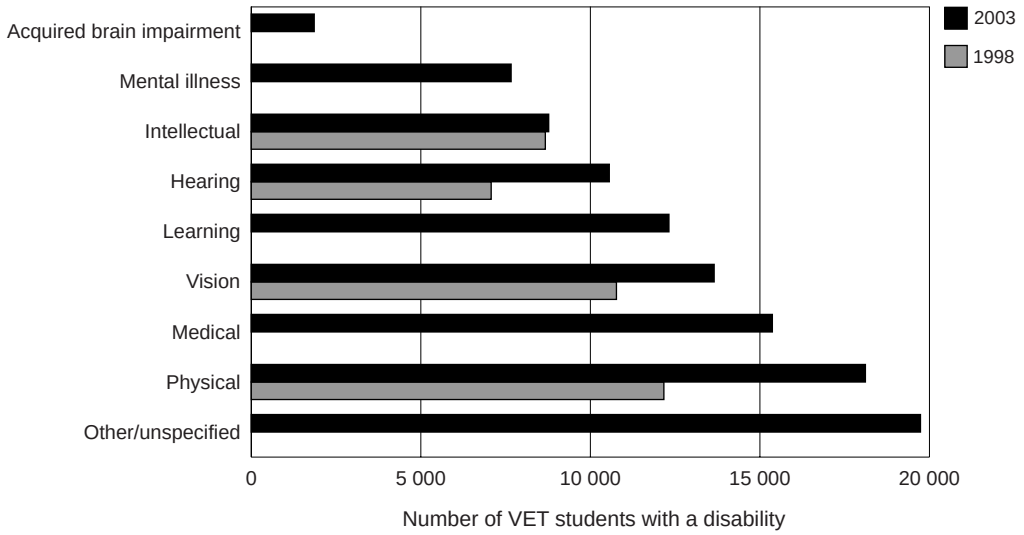
Disability types

A total of 91 439 VET students reported they had at least one of nine disability types (including 'other/unspecified' category) in 2003. In figure 4 we show a breakdown of these students by the type of disability they reported.

The largest of the identifiable disability groups is physical, which accounts for 18 111 (or 19.8%) of all VET students with a disability. Other major groups include medical condition (16.8%), vision (14.9%), learning (13.5%) and hearing (11.5%).

Beyond the eight disability types, a total of 12 753 (13.9%) reported having some 'other' disability, and a further 6982 (7.6%) did not specify their type of disability.

Figure 4: Number of VET students with a disability, by disability type, 2003



Note: For comparison purposes, the number of students by disability type (for corresponding categories) for 1998 VET students with a disability have also been shown in figure 4. These figures should be treated with care due to differences in definition and disability types between the 1998 and 2003 National VET Provider collections. The differences in the wording of the disability question on enrolment forms also suggests that the 2003 data could include a greater proportion of students with a lower severity disability.

The majority (86%) of students with a reported disability had a single disability (table 10). Between 23% and 32% of students in each of the different disability types reported multiple disabilities, with the exception of those in the acquired brain impairment category where half identified having multiple disabilities. While a very high proportion of students with acquired brain impairment reported multiple disabilities, they only represent 7.5% of all students with multiple disabilities. Those students reporting multiple disabilities were most likely to have as their primary disability a physical disability (40.8%), a medical condition (38.9%), a learning disability (31.5%) or a vision disability (27.5%). Also of note from table 10 is that, of those reporting an unspecified disability, nearly all had a single disability only.

Table 10: VET students by disability type by single versus multiple disabilities (%), 2003

Type of disability	Row proportion (%)		Column proportion (%)			Number of students ('000)
	Single disability	Multiple disabilities	Single disability	Multiple disabilities	Single or multiple	
Hearing/deaf	71.7	28.3	9.6	24.1	11.5	10.56
Physical	72.0	28.0	16.5	40.8	19.8	18.11
Intellectual	68.8	31.2	7.6	22.1	9.6	8.77
Learning	68.3	31.7	10.6	31.5	13.5	12.32
Mental illness	72.3	27.7	7.0	17.1	8.4	7.66
Acquired brain impairment	49.7	50.3	1.2	7.5	2.0	1.86
Vision	75.0	25.0	13.0	27.5	14.9	13.65
Medical condition	68.6	31.4	13.3	38.9	16.8	15.37
Other	76.9	23.1	12.4	23.8	13.9	12.75
Type unspecified	99.2	0.8	8.8	0.4	7.6	6.98
All students with a disability (net)*	86.4	13.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	91.44
Total reporting a disability ('000)	79.04	12.40	4.6	0.7	5.3	91.44
No disability reported ('000)						1345.44
Unknown ('000)						280.91
All VET students ('000)	79.04	12.40	100.0	100.0	100.0	1717.80

Notes: Scope: All students in the public VET system.
* As some students report more than one disability, the totals for students with multiple disabilities are less than the sum of the figures in the column above. The 'net' figures relate to individual students, as opposed to individual numbers of disabilities.

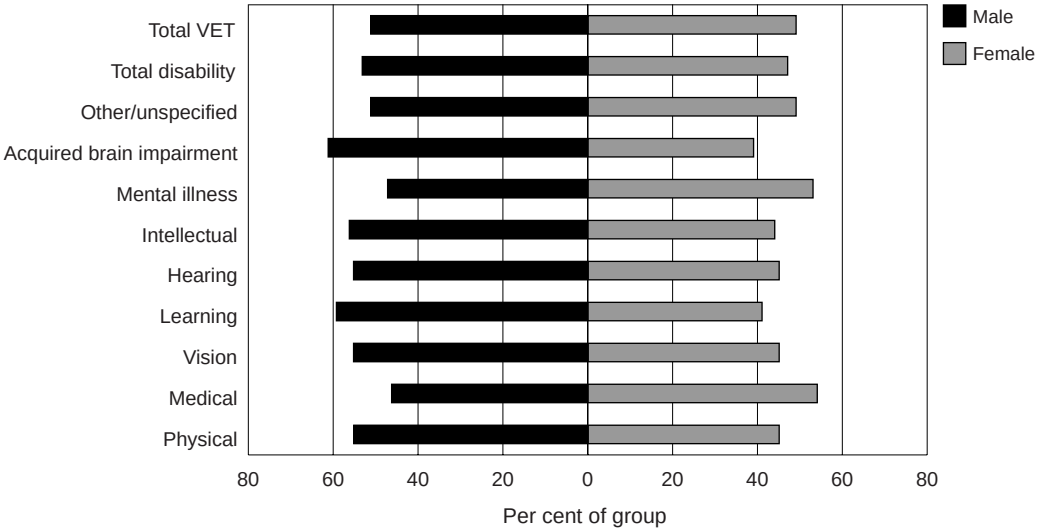
Characteristics of students by disability type

The following discussion on the characteristics of VET students with different types of disability incorporates all VET students with a disability, and does not distinguish students with a single disability from those with multiple disabilities.

Gender

Figure 5 shows that, overall, 53% of all VET students with a disability were males and 47% were females in 2003, compared with 51% males and 49% females in the total VET student population. Males outnumbered females in all disability groups except medical (46%) and mental illness (47%) disabilities. The largest proportion of males was found in the groups of acquired brain impairment (61%) and learning disability (59%).

Figure 5: VET students with a disability, by disability type and gender, 2003

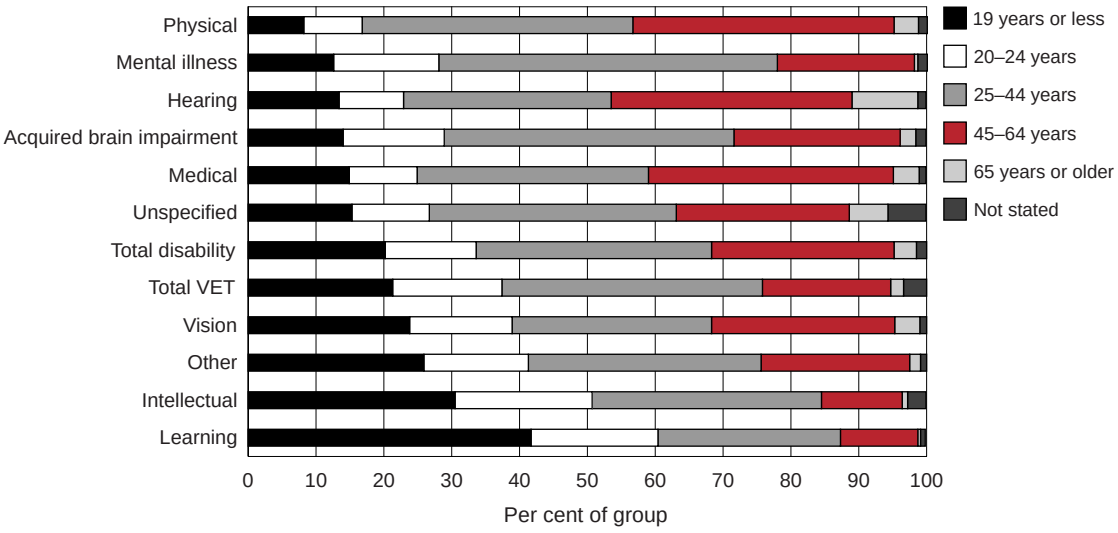


Age

As can be seen from figure 6, VET students with a known disability type in 2003 overall were slightly older than all VET students. The group with comparatively large numbers of older students were people with physical disabilities. Those disability groups with comparatively large numbers of younger students (<24 years) included people with learning difficulties (60%) and intellectual disabilities (51%).

Also evident are the large numbers of prime working age people in the mental illness and acquired brain impairment groups, where 50% and 43% respectively were aged 25–44 years.

Figure 6: VET students with a disability by disability type and age group, 2003

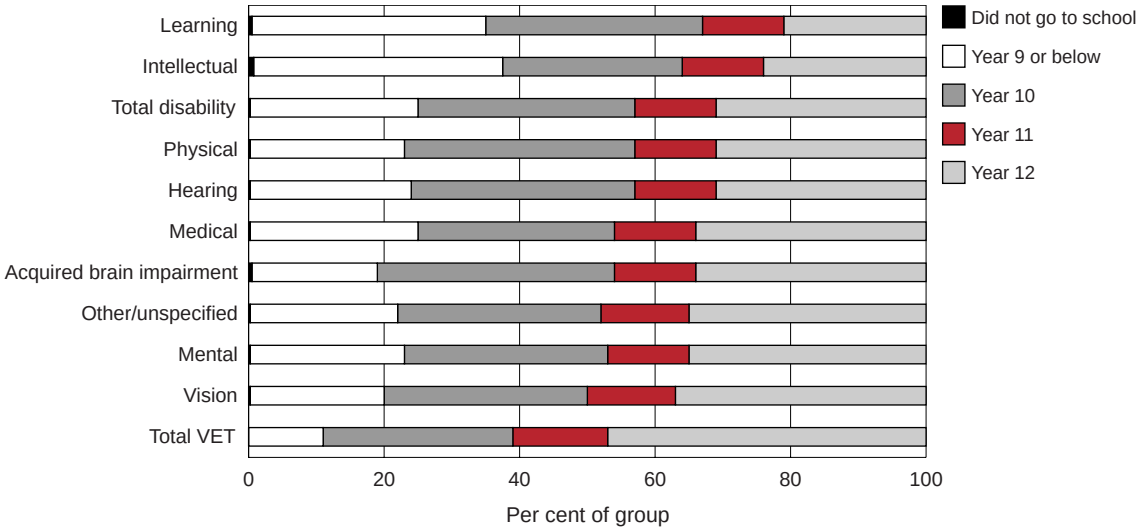


Previous education levels

Here we look firstly at the highest level of schooling completed by different disability groups, followed by consideration of their highest overall education levels prior to when they commenced in VET in 2003.

The prior schooling education levels of all people with a disability were strikingly far below those for all students in vocational education and training, as shown in figure 7. About 54% of all people with a disability had left school at or before the end of Year 10. For total VET students, this figure is 39%. People with learning and intellectual impairments are to be particularly noted for their low levels of completed schooling. Both these groups had 60% or greater with Year 10 or less schooling and a very small proportion with no schooling at all. Overall, figure 7 suggests that developing educational pathways before Year 10 for people with a disability is important as part of an early intervention approach.

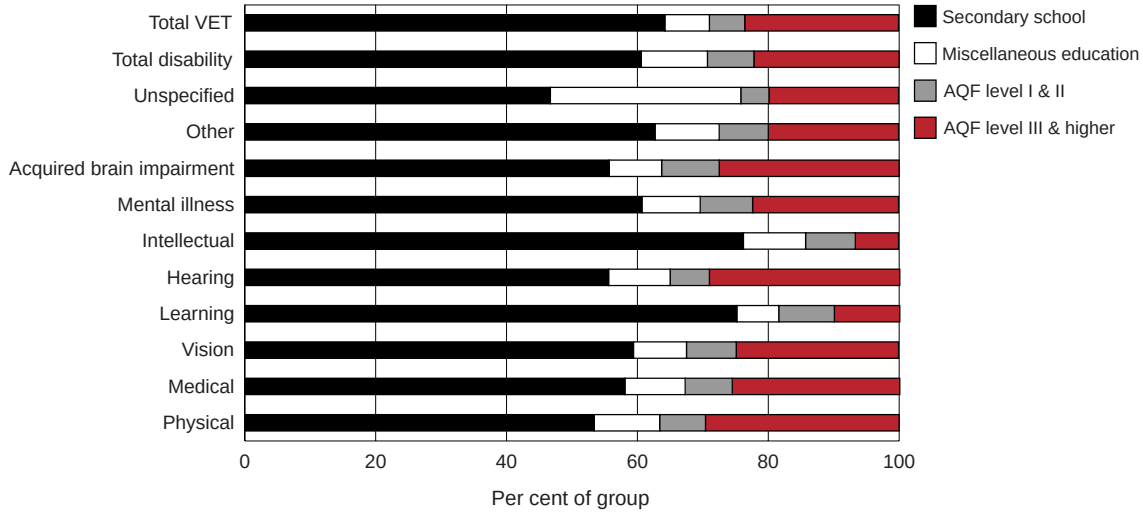
Figure 7: Highest school level completed, people with a disability by disability type, 2003



Not surprisingly, students in the intellectual and learning disability groups also had the lowest overall levels of previous education, as shown in figure 8.

All other disability types had previous highest education level profiles that are not too dissimilar from those for all VET students and had between 20% and 30% who had previously attained an AQF certificate III or higher.

Figure 8: Highest overall education level completed by VET students with a disability, by disability type, 2003

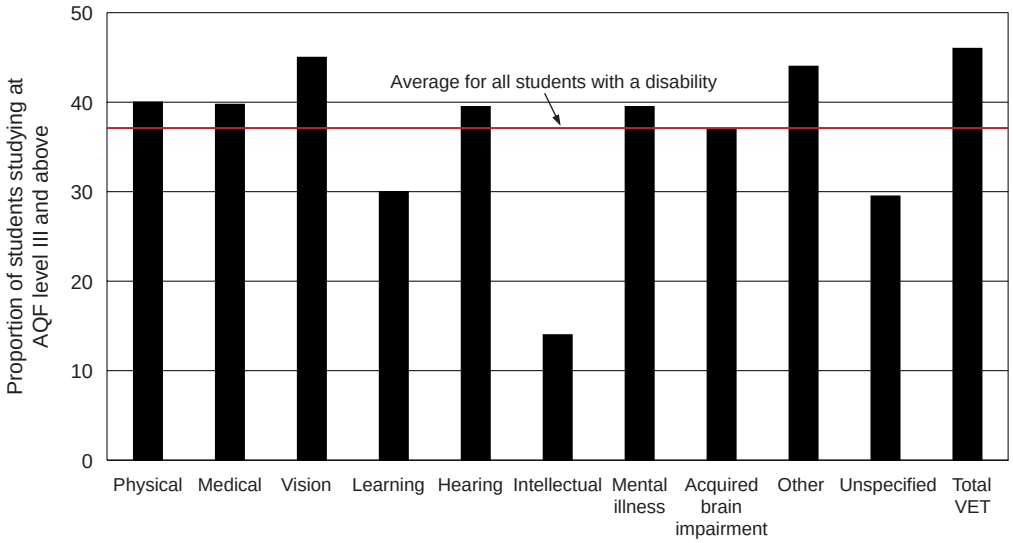


Achievements in VET by disability type

As mentioned previously, overall, 38% of students with a disability were studying AQF certificate III courses or above compared with 46% for all VET students.

People with a vision disability had the highest proportion studying at these levels (45%) as shown in figure 9. Several other groups had about 40% studying at AQF certificate III and higher, including people with a physical, medical, hearing and mental illness disability. The learning and intellectual disability groups had by far the lowest proportions studying at these high levels.

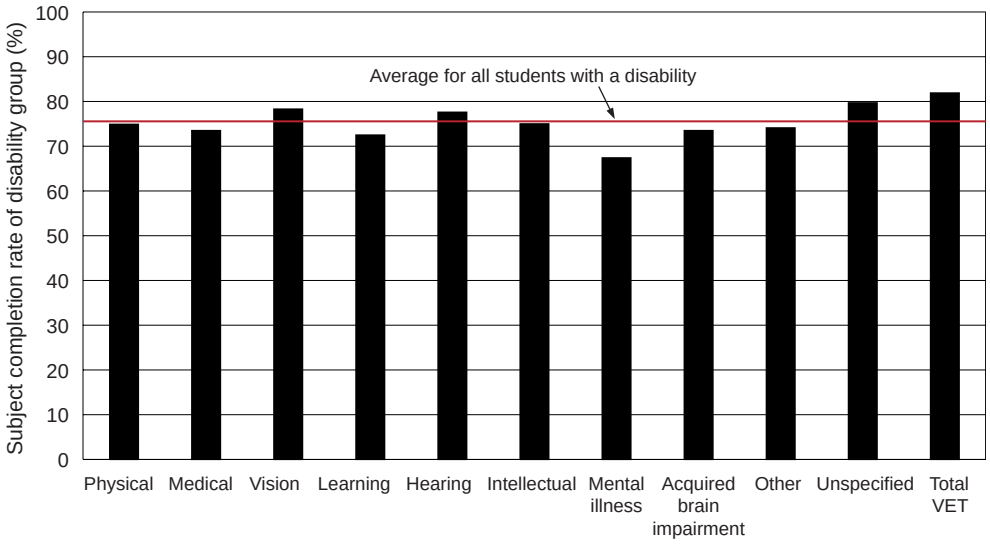
Figure 9: Proportion of VET students studying at AQF certificate III and higher, by disability group, 2003



Subject completion rates

Overall, the subject completion rate for VET students with a disability was 75% compared with about 82% for all VET students. The highest subject completion rates occurred in the vision (78.3%) and hearing (77.6%) groups, while the only group below a 70% subject completion rate was people with a mental illness (67.4%).

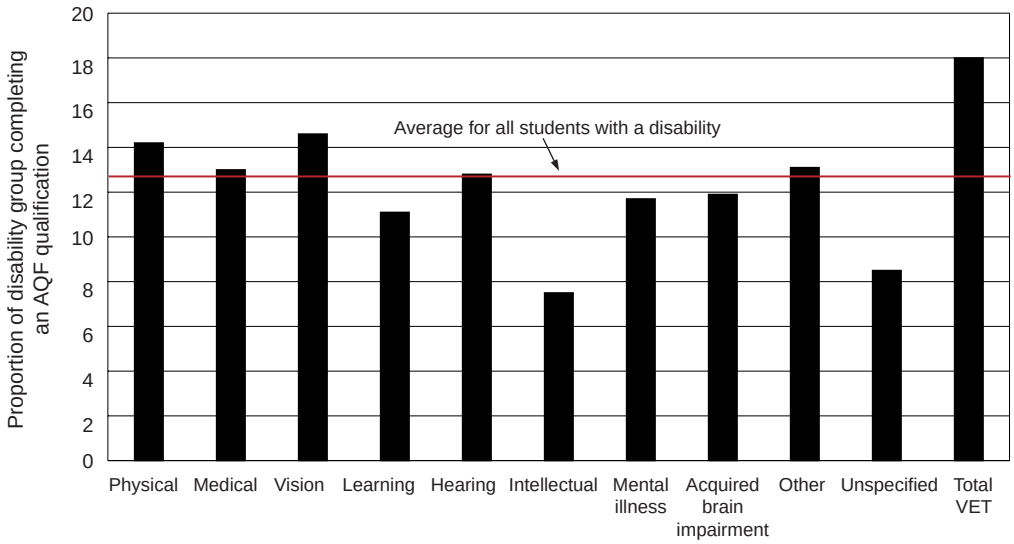
Figure 10: Subject completion rates of VET students with a disability, by disability group, 2003



AQF qualifications completed

The ideal way to measure completion rates is to follow a commencing cohort of students through to their exit from the system. In the annual provider collection, it is not a straightforward exercise to identify commencing students and to track their activity across years. Consequently, NCVER uses a proxy, which is the total number of qualifications completed per total number of students within the calendar year.

Figure 11: Proportion of VET students with a disability completing AQF qualification, by disability group, 2003



The proportion of VET students with a disability who completed an AQF qualification in 2003 was 12.6%. Students with a vision disability had the highest AQF attainment rate (14.6%), followed by physical disability (14.2%). The lowest rate was experienced by students with an intellectual disability (7.5%).

Outcomes from VET by disability type

This section provides key findings by disability type about employment and training outcomes for students with a disability who completed some training at a VET organisation in 2002 and were included in the 2003 Student Outcomes Survey. This survey was used as there were a sufficient number of responses by type of disability. Note however, that the disability types on the questionnaire in the 2003 Student Outcomes Survey varied slightly in wording from those on the standard enrolment form of the National Provider Collection.

Employment outcomes vary across the type of disability reported. For graduates of full qualifications, those with a hearing or visual disability have the highest employment outcomes, while those with physical, chronic illness or other type of disability have the lowest as indicated in table 11.

Table 11: Graduate employment status (as at 30 May 2003) by type of disability (%)

Type of disability	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not employed (NFI)	Total
Hearing disability (n=435)	64	17	18	2**	**100**
Visual disability (n=364)	61	14	21	4**	**100**
Intellectual disability (n=389)	55	22	16	7	**100**
Disability—not stated (n=125)	53	18	28	*	**100**
All disability	50	20	25	5	**100**
Physical disability (n=993)	45	23	28	4	**100**
Other disability (n=801)	45	20	28	7	**100**
Chronic illness (n=526)	43	20	33	3	**100**
No disability (n=37 024)	76	12	10	2	**100**

Notes: * Indicates the unweighted count is less than 5; ** indicates relative standard error is greater than 25%.
Source: NCVER (2003)

Table 12 shows the employment status at May 2003 of students who completed modules or subjects only in 2002. Module completers with a hearing disability have higher employment outcomes by far than those with other disabilities.

Table 12: Module completer employment status (as at 30 May 2003) by type of disability (%)

Type of disability	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not employed (NFI)	Total
Hearing disability (n=435)	52	16	26	6	**100**
Disability—not stated (n=125)	45	18	33	4**	**100**
Visual disability (n=364)	40	20	31	8	**100**
All disability	39	19	36	6	**100**
Intellectual disability (n=389)	38	19	34	10	**100**
Other disability (n=801)	35	21	38	7	**100**
Chronic illness (n=526)	32	14	50	5	**100**
Physical disability (n=993)	30	20	43	6	**100**
No disability (n=37 024)	69	14	15	3	**100**

Notes: * Indicates the unweighted count is less than 5; ** indicates relative standard error is greater than 25%.
Source: NCVER (2003)

Table 13 shows that nearly half the graduates with a disability were enrolled in further study at May 2003, which is higher than those without a disability. Those with a physical or 'other' disability were the most likely to have enrolled in further study. Eighty-four per cent of those with a disability were either employed or in further study at May 2003; this is lower than for those without a disability.

Table 13: Graduates enrolled in further study (at 30 May 2003) by type of disability (%)

	Enrolled in further study (summary)				Employed at 30 May or in further study			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Count	*Row %*	*Count*	*Row %*	*Count*	*Row %*	*Count*	*Row %*
Disability?								
Yes	4 719	48	5 076	52	10 733	84	2 080	16
No	60 367	43	80 199	57	192 016	93	14 901	7
Do you have any of the following?								
Visual disability	639	48	704	52	1 547	88	215	12
Hearing disability	658	44	850	56	1 805	89	222	11
Physical disability	1 709	50	1 685	50	3 616	83	727	17
Intellectual disability	580	44	732	56	1 715	88	237	12
Chronic illness	797	43	1 044	57	1 716	78	491	22
Other disability	1 382	55	1 153	45	2 867	85	507	15
Disability—not stated	217	39	344	61	565	80	142	20

Source: NCVER (2003)

Students with single versus multiple disabilities

Table 14 shows that students with multiple disabilities usually—but not always—have poorer educational attainment than students with a single disability.

Table 14: VET participation and attainment, by disability group, 2003

Disability group	Undertaking AQF certificate III or higher (%)		Subject completion rate (%)		Completed AQF qualification (%)	
	Single disability	Multiple disabilities	Single disability	Multiple disabilities	Single disability	Multiple disabilities
Hearing/deaf	41.4	34.4	79.0	74.4	13.3	11.5
Physical	41.4	37.3	75.6	72.9	15.1	12.0
Intellectual	12.8	17.0	76.7	71.9	7.0	8.6
Learning	31.7	25.8	73.0	71.4	11.6	10.0
Mental illness	40.0	38.0	67.4	67.5	12.1	10.6
Acquired brain impairment	36.2	37.1	74.4	72.6	12.5	11.4
Vision	48.9	34.1	79.5	74.1	15.6	11.3
Medical condition	40.7	38.2	74.4	71.5	13.8	11.2
Other/unspecified	38.9	39.4	76.3	71.9	11.6	10.8
All students with a disability	**38.4**	**33.6**	**75.6**	**72.1**	**12.9**	**10.9**

Further analysis has been undertaken to quantify the effects of having multiple disability types through the derivation of predicted probabilities. The predicted probabilities for each disability type participating in AQF certificate III courses and above, and passing assessed subjects were derived using logistic regression.[1]

The probability of undertaking an AQF certificate III or above course is 45.8% for all students and 46.2% for students without a disability. Closer inspection of the resulting probabilities for students with a disability suggests that, in general, the likelihood of a student undertaking an AQF certificate

[1] The predicted probabilities were derived using the parameters of the regression output and holding other disability types constant on their average values. This method was adopted by Martin, Maclachlan and Karmel (1999).

III or above course is reduced if the student has a disability and reduced further if they have multiple disabilities. The exceptions are students with a vision or 'other' disability.

Table 15: Predicted probabilities for participation in AQF certificate III and above courses, by disability type, 2003

Type:	Hearing	Physical	Intell-ectual	Learning	Mental illness	Acquired brain impair-ment	Vision	Medical	Other	Unspec-ified
Hearing	***41.0***	37.6	12.9	28.6	37.1	37.7	42.5	37.2	41.3	25.4
Physical	37.6	***42.3***	13.5	29.8	38.3	38.9	43.8	38.5	42.6	26.4
Intellectual	12.9	13.5	***15.3***	9.4	13.2	13.5	16.1	13.3	15.4	8.1
Learning	28.6	29.8	9.4	***32.8***	29.3	29.8	34.2	29.4	33.1	19.3
Mental illness	37.1	38.3	13.2	29.3	***41.7***	38.4	43.3	37.9	42.1	25.9
Acquired brain impairment	37.7	38.9	13.5	29.8	38.4	***42.3***	43.9	38.5	42.7	26.4
Vision	42.5	43.8	16.1	34.2	43.3	43.9	***47.3***	43.4	47.7	30.6
Medical	37.2	38.5	13.3	29.4	37.9	38.5	43.4	***41.9***	42.2	26.0
Other	41.3	42.6	15.4	33.1	42.1	42.7	47.7	42.2	***46.1***	29.5
Unspecified	25.4	26.4	8.1	19.3	25.9	26.4	30.6	26.0	29.5	***29.2***

Note: The diagonal cells (italicised and bold) represent the students with a single disability.

Examination of the probabilities of passing assessed subjects (recognition of prior learning has been excluded) shows that the probability is 80.5% for all students and 80.9% for students without a disability. The predicted probabilities in table 16 illustrate that the likelihood of a student passing an assessed subject is reduced if the student has a disability and reduced further if they have multiple disabilities. People with a 'hearing' or 'vision' disability had the highest probability of passing assessed subjects.

Table 16: Predicted probabilities for passing assessed subjects, by disability type, 2003

Type	Hearing	Physical	Intell-ectual	Learning	Mental illness	Acquired brain impair-ment	Vision	Medical	Other	Unspec-ified
Hearing	***78.1***	72.2	70.4	69.5	63.9	74.8	76.3	71.7	71.4	73.1
Physical	72.2	***75.1***	66.8	65.8	59.9	71.5	73.1	68.2	67.8	69.7
Intellectual	70.4	66.8	***73.4***	63.9	57.9	69.7	71.4	66.3	65.9	67.9
Learning	69.5	65.8	63.9	***72.6***	56.7	68.7	70.5	65.3	64.9	66.9
Mental illness	63.9	59.9	57.9	56.7	***67.3***	63.1	65.0	59.4	59.0	61.1
Acquired brain impairment	74.8	71.5	69.7	68.7	63.1	***77.5***	75.6	71.0	70.6	72.4
Vision	76.3	73.1	71.4	70.5	65.0	75.6	***78.9***	72.7	72.3	74.0
Medical	71.7	68.2	66.3	65.3	59.4	71.0	72.7	***74.7***	67.3	69.2
Other	71.4	67.8	65.9	64.9	59.0	70.6	72.3	67.3	***74.3***	68.8
Unspecified	73.1	69.7	67.9	66.9	61.1	72.4	74.0	69.2	68.8	***76.0***

Note: The diagonal cells (italicised and bold) represent the students with a single disability.

Discussion

From the analysis just presented it is clear that type of disability matters. To look only at VET students with a disability as a whole group masks the diversity that exists within this group.

The analysis by type of disability reveals that there are at least four important subgroups.

Subgroup one includes students with a hearing or vision disability who have above average experiences in vocational education and training compared with all students with a disability. VET students from these two groups record higher participation rates at higher AQF certificates (III and higher) compared with all VET students with a disability and higher subject completion rates and AQF qualification attainment rates; higher numbers are employed after their VET experience.

Subgroup two includes students with about the average experiences in vocational education and training for all students with a disability, on most of the measures just mentioned. These students generally include those with a physical and medical disability.

Subgroup three includes people with mental illnesses and acquired brain impairments who have just below average experiences of those for all people with a disability.

Finally, subgroup four includes students with a learning or intellectual disability who have well below average levels compared with all students with a disability in terms of level of education attempted in vocational education and training and level of education achievement, and somewhat lower employment outcomes as well.

Part of the analysis also differentiated students with a single disability from those with multiple disabilities and found that the latter group usually—but not always—had poorer educational attainment than students with a single disability.

Looking at the characteristics of the various disability types reveals that prior educational achievement before commencing in vocational education and training appears to have a bearing on students' results in VET. For example, people with a learning or intellectual disability have lower previous educational levels compared with the rest, and thus, attempt lower levels of vocational education and training compared with people with other types of disability, and more often without success.

Conclusions

VET data on people with a disability have been analysed at both the aggregate and disaggregated (disability type) level in this statistical compendium to aid planning and strategy development, as well as to identify gaps in the available information.

For planning purposes the analyses reveal that different strategies may be necessary for each of three groups of people with a disability.

- For those with a vision or hearing disability, the emphasis might best be on better assuring employment outcomes, as many students in these two groups successfully complete AQF certificate III or higher, giving them skills and knowledge to be independent workers and/or have AQF qualifications that enable them to work under supervision.
- Conversely, for those with learning, intellectual or multiple disabilities, there seems to be a need to focus on the successful completion of their programs.
- For students with all other types of disabilities, both greater assistance while they are in VET, as well as greater assistance in achieving employment outcomes from VET may be warranted. There is a need to recognise, however, that many students with a disability are not undertaking training for vocational or employment-related reasons.
- As well, the overall significantly lower levels of prior education achievement among people with a disability suggests the importance of developing employment and training pathways before Year 10.

To further improve our understanding of people with a disability in VET, several aspects could be investigated:

- The relationship between prior educational background and learning outcomes in vocational education and training could also be usefully explored to investigate the impact of disability type on this relationship. NCVER has agreed to undertake this analysis in early 2005.
- It might also be useful to gather information through standardised exit interviews with students with a disability who withdraw from their courses or fail to pass them.
- It would be useful to further explore the reasons for study and better relate motivations for being in vocational education and training by disability type and outcomes achieved. This would require the design of a special one-off survey of people with a disability in VET, investigating what they had hoped to achieve, any difficulties encountered (personal, social, system-based learning related etc.), incentives and disincentives to participating in vocational education and training, and recommended changes needed at system/operational level. This would also enable students with non-employment-related aspirations to be separated from those with employment-related aspirations and thus enable judgements on performance to be assessed more accurately.
- Alternatively, it could be best to target particular groups of people with a disability and conduct research projects around them rather than undertake an across-the-board detailed survey.

Overall, this statistical compendium on people with a disability in vocational education and training provides information to aid planning immediately, but it has also revealed a number of areas that warrant further research. The NCVER plans to consult with key stakeholders, including the Australian Disability Advisory Training Council and the National Training Statistics Committee on this report to determine priority areas for immediate action.

References

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Appendix 1
Profiles by disability type

Individual fact sheets covering the characteristics of gender, age, previous educational attainment, employment status and VET participation and attainment levels are available for the following disability groups:

- ✧ physical disability
- ✧ medical condition
- ✧ vision disability
- ✧ learning disability
- ✧ hearing disability
- ✧ intellectual disability
- ✧ mental illness
- ✧ acquired brain impairment
- ✧ other/unspecified disability.

Within each fact sheet, distinctions are made between those reporting single and those reporting multiple disabilities.

There is also a fact sheet on Indigenous people with a disability.

People with a physical disability

INTRODUCTION

- People with a physical disability are the largest group of persons with a disability. In 2003 there were 18 111 vocational education and training (VET) students who reported a physical disability. This represents 19.8% of the 91 439 VET students who reported a disability.
- Almost three-quarters (72.0% or 13 046) of students reporting a physical disability have a single disability, while 5065 (28.0%) reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

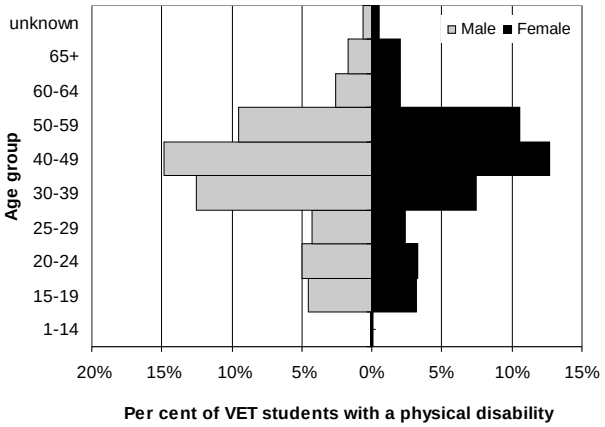
A physical disability affects the mobility or dexterity of a person and may include a total or partial loss of a part of the body. A physical disability may have existed since birth or may be the result of an accident, illness or injury suffered later in life. Examples of physical disability include absence or deformities of limbs, arthritis, ataxia, back disorders, bone formation or degeneration, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, spina bifida, etc. (NCVER 2002).

PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE PHYSICAL DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- 55.7% were males and 44.2% were females in 2003.
- More than three-quarters (76.0%) were aged 30 years or older. 15.9% were aged between 15 and 24 years, with a further 6.7% aged between 25 and 29 years.

Figure 1: VET students with a single physical disability, by age and sex, 2003



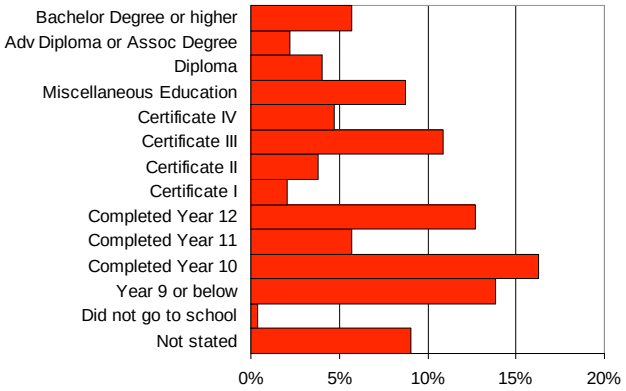
Previous education

- Approximately three out of ten (28.6%) VET students had completed Year 12.
- Almost half (42.1%) had previously completed some post-secondary education.

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level	Per cent of total		
	Physical disability only	Physical and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.5	0.6	0.1
Year 9 or lower	18.8	23.5	7.8
Year 10	30.1	28.6	19.9
Year 11	10.8	11.2	10.3
Year 12	28.6	25.0	32.8
Not known	11.2	11.1	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**13 046**	**5 065**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single physical disability, 2003



Employment status

- At the time of enrolment in 2003, three out of ten (30.5%) students were employed, with a slightly higher proportion (31.4%) unemployed, while slightly fewer (28.5%) were not in the labour force.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

	Per cent VET students		
	Physical disability only	Physical and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificates III or higher	41.4	37.3	45.8
Subject completion rate*	75.6	72.9	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	15.1	12.0	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**13 046**	**5 065**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- There were higher proportions of students with a single physical disability enrolled in management and commerce (22.8%), information technologies (8.6%), society and culture (12.0%), creative arts (4.0%) and mixed field programs (18.6%) compared with all VET students.

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Physical disability only	Physical and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.4	0.4	0.4
Information technology	8.6	7.9	4.2
Engineering and related technology	9.2	6.7	15.2
Architecture and building	3.3	2.4	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	4.4	4.9	4.8
Health	3.0	2.1	6.0
Education	3.0	2.3	3.4
Management and commerce	22.8	19.5	21.4
Society and culture	12.0	10.7	10.7
Creative arts	4.0	5.3	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	4.0	3.2	9.3
Mixed field program	18.6	26.9	9.6
Subject only	6.8	7.8	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**13 046**	**5 065**	**1 717 795**

PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITY.

- Four out of every ten (39.7%) students with a physical and other disability were not in the labour force, while 28.6% were unemployed and 22.5% employed.
- Smaller proportions of students with a physical and other disability had previously completed Years 10 and 12 than students with only a physical disability, while a greater proportion had completed Year 9 or lower.
- Higher proportions of students with physical and other disabilities were undertaking certificate I (13.4%) and II (17.9%) than students with single physical disability.
- A greater proportion of students with physical and other disabilities undertake mixed field programs (26.9%) and creative arts (5.3%) than students with a single physical disability (18.6% and 4.0% respectively).
- There is a slightly lower proportion of VET students with physical and other disability who completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification (12.0%) than students with a single physical disability and all VET students (15.1% and 18.0% respectively).

SUMMARY

- Students with a single physical disability tend to be older compared with students in other disability groups, and the VET population in general.
- There is a high proportion of students with a single physical disability undertaking AQF certificate III courses. It is expected that this high level of education would lead to good employment outcomes.
- The proportion of VET students with a single physical disability, who completed an AQF qualification (15.1%) was slightly lower as for all VET students.
- VET students with multiple disabilities (including physical) tend to have lower previous educational attainments than students with a single physical disability. They are also more likely to undertake courses at lower AQF certificate levels (particularly certificates I and II).

Reference

NCVER 2002, *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION

- In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, 15 367 students reported that they had a medical disability in 2003 representing 16.8% of all students who reported a disability.
- Just over two-thirds (68.6%) of these students with a medical disability reported they had a single disability. The remaining 31.4% reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

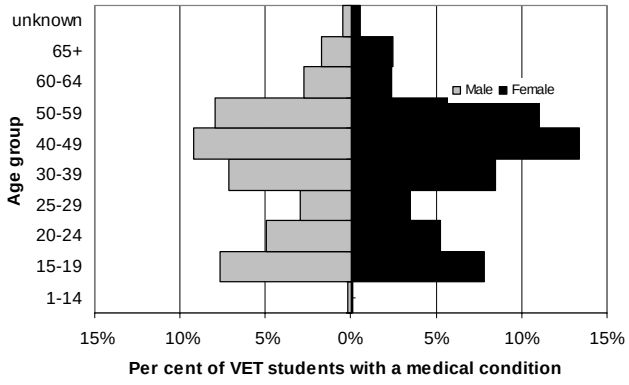
Medical condition is a temporary or permanent condition that may be hereditary, genetically acquired or of unknown origin. The condition may not be obvious or readily identifiable, yet may be mildly or severely debilitating and results in fluctuating levels of wellness and sickness, and/or periods of hospitalisation; for example, AIDS, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, asthma, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy (NCVER 2002).

PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE MEDICAL DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- The proportion of females (54.9%) exceeded males. This proportion of females was higher than for any other disability group.
- Just over half (50.8%) of the students in this category were aged 40 years and over, the majority shared nearly equally between the 40–49 year and 50–59 year groups (22.6% and 19.0% respectively.

Figure 1: VET students with a single medical disability by age and sex, 2003



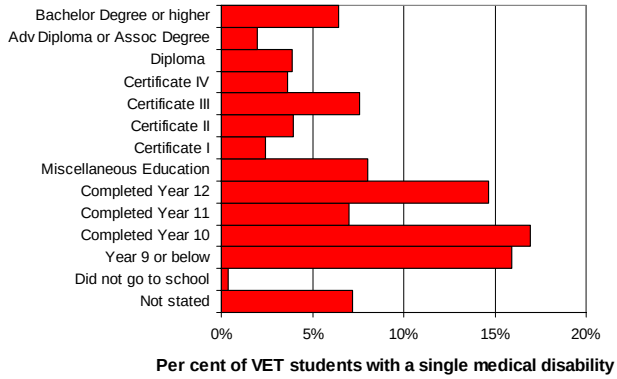
Previous education

- The proportions of students completing Years 10 and below were high compared with all VET students.
- Nearly two-fifths (37.9%) had completed some post-secondary study.

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level	Per cent VET students		
	Medical disability only	Medical and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.4	0.5	0.1
Year 9 or lower	20.8	24.3	7.8
Year 10	26.4	27.9	19.9
Year 11	11.5	11.6	10.3
Year 12	31.7	26.8	32.8
Not known	9.1	8.8	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**10 539**	**4 828**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single medical disability, 2003



Employment status

- At the time of enrolment in 2003, just over one-third (33.8%) of VET students with a medical disability were employed. A further 28.5% were unemployed and 29.7% were not in the labour force.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Medical disability only	Medical and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	40.7	38.2	45.8
Subject completion rate*	74.4	71.5	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	13.8	11.2	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**10 539**	**4 828**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- A high proportion (19.8%) of students chose to study in the management and commerce field, almost matching the proportion of 21.4% for all VET students. Next highest of the individual fields were society and culture (12.2%) and engineering and related technology (8.7%). mixed field programs accounted for a further 21.2%.

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Medical disability only	Medical and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.5	0.4	0.4
Information technology	6.4	7.5	4.2
Engineering and related technology	8.7	7.4	15.2
Architecture and building	2.9	2.3	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	5.0	4.6	4.8
Health	3.2	2.5	6.0
Education	2.8	2.7	3.4
Management and commerce	19.8	18.4	21.4
Society and culture	12.2	11.7	10.7
Creative arts	4.7	5.3	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	5.5	3.8	9.3
Mixed field program	21.2	26.8	9.6
Subject only	7.1	6.6	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**10 539**	**4 828**	**1 717 795**

PEOPLE WITH A MEDICAL DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Just under one-quarter (24.6%) of students with medical and other disabilities were employed. A further 27.2% were unemployed and nearly two-fifths (39.4%) were not in the labour force.
- Students with medical and other disabilities generally tended towards slightly lower levels of school achievement than those with a single disability.
- In general, there were only minor differences between the participation rates by qualification level undertaken by students with multiple disabilities and those with only a medical disability. The largest differences were for certificate I (multiple: 13.7%, medical only: 9.0%), and certificate III (multiple: 16.6%, medical only: 18.4%).
- Participation rates by fields were also fairly similar, the biggest difference being for mixed field programs (multiple disability: 26.8%, medical only: 21.2%). As for the single disability group, the highest activity in an individual field was management and commerce (multiple disability: 18.4% compared with medical only: 19.8%).
- There was a small difference between students with multiple disabilities and those with only a medical disability in terms of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification completions (multiple: 11.2%, medical only: 13.8%).

SUMMARY

- The proportion of females in the medical disability only group was higher than for any other single disability category. This high proportion of females was most prominent in the 40 to 59 year age range.
- Participation rates, for people with a single and multiple medical disability were similar. Almost two-fifths were studying at certificate III level and higher, and well over one-third were studying either at certificate II or III.
- The most preferred fields of study, for people with a single and multiple medical disability were: mixed field programs, management and commerce, society and culture, and engineering and related technology.

Reference

NCVER 2002 *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

People with a vision disability

INTRODUCTION

- Vision disability is the third most common disability type reported by vocational education and training (VET) students. In 2003, 13 651 VET students reported they had a vision disability. This represents 14.9% of the 91 439 VET students who reported a disability.
- Three-quarters (75.0% or 10 237 students) reporting a vision disability have only a single disability, while one-quarter (25.0% or 3414 students) reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

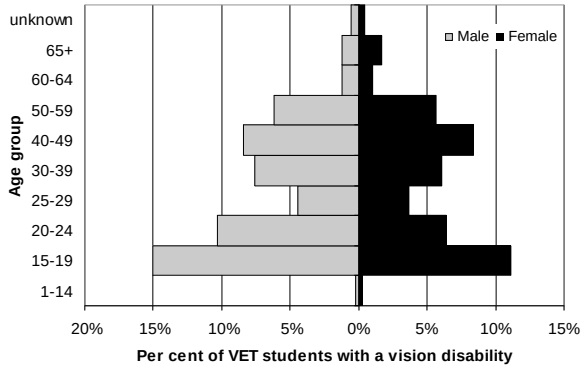
Vision disability relates to sensing the presence of light and sensing the form, size, shape and colour of visual stimuli. It can range from a partial loss of sight causing difficulties in seeing up to and including blindness. This may be present from birth or acquired as a result of disease, illness or injury.

PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE VISION DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- There is a greater proportion of males (55.2%) than females (44.7%) in 2003.
- This is a relatively young group, with 43.3% aged less than 25 years. In addition, a further 47.6% of students were aged between 30 and 64 years.

Figure 1: VET students with a single vision disability, by age and sex, 2003



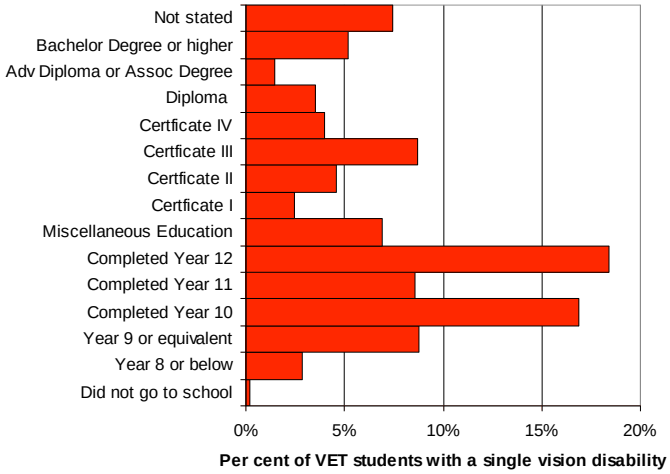
Previous education

- Half (50.4%) of students had completed either Year 11 (13.4%) or Year 12 (37.0%).
- Over one-third (36.8%) had previously completed some post-secondary education (i.e. beyond Year 12).

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level	Per cent of total		
	Vision disability only	Vision and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.3	0.8	0.1
Year 9 or lower	14.3	27.3	7.8
Year 10	26.1	26.7	19.9
Year 11	13.4	10.2	10.3
Year 12	37.0	24.5	32.8
Not known	8.9	10.6	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**10 237**	**3 414**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single vision disability, 2003



Employment status

- More than a half (53.1%) of students were employed at the time of their enrolment in 2003, while 23.4% were unemployed and 15.7% were not in the labour force.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Vision disability only	Vision and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	48.9	34.1	45.8
Subject completion rate*	79.5	74.1	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	15.6	11.3	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**10 237**	**3 414**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- There were higher proportions of students with a single vision disability enrolled in engineering and related technology (17.1%), society and culture (10.5%), information technology (6.7%), agriculture, environment and related studies (5.5%), and mixed field programs (14.0%) compared with the total VET population.

Table 3: VET students by field of education, by disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Vision disability only	Vision and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.6	0.4	0.4
Information technology	6.7	6.5	4.2
Engineering and related technology	17.1	9.2	15.2
Architecture and building	5.0	2.5	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	5.5	5.7	4.8
Health	3.8	3.0	6.0
Education	2.7	2.0	3.4
Management and commerce	19.4	16.8	21.4
Society and culture	10.5	10.2	10.7
Creative arts	3.4	4.1	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	7.3	4.5	9.3
Mixed field program	14.0	28.5	9.6
Subject only	3.8	6.7	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**10 237**	**3 414**	**1 717 795**

STUDENTS WITH A VISION DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITIES.

- Slightly more students (32.7%) with a vision and other disability were not in the labour force than were employed (29.6%) or unemployed (28.5%).
- Students with a vision and other disability were less likely to have completed Years 11 or 12 than students with a single vision disability.
- Greater proportions of students with vision and other disabilities were undertaking certificate I (14.9%) and II (19.8%) than students with a single vision disability.
- More than one-quarter (28.5%) of students with vision and other disabilities were undertaking mixed field programs. This is twice that of single vision disability students (14.0%). Participation in agriculture, environment and related studies, and creative arts were also greater than that for single vision students.
- The proportion of students who completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification was lower for vision and other disability students (11.3%) than single vision disability students (15.6%) and all VET students (18.0%).

SUMMARY

- Students with a single vision disability are a relatively young population compared with students in other disability groups and the total VET population.
- There is very high participation of students with a single vision disability at AQF certificate III or above. It is expected that this high level of education would lead to good employment outcomes.
- The completion of AQF qualifications was higher for students with a single vision disability than for all other disability groups.
- Students with vision disability and other disabilities had lower previous educational attainments than students with a single vision disability. In addition, they were more likely to undertake courses at lower AQF certificate levels (certificates I and II).

Reference

NCVER 2002, *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION

- In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, 12 317 students reported that they had a learning disability in 2003 representing 13.5% of all students who reported a disability.
- Just over two-thirds (68.3%) of these students reported they had a single disability. The remaining 31.7% reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

The United States National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities defined learning disability as

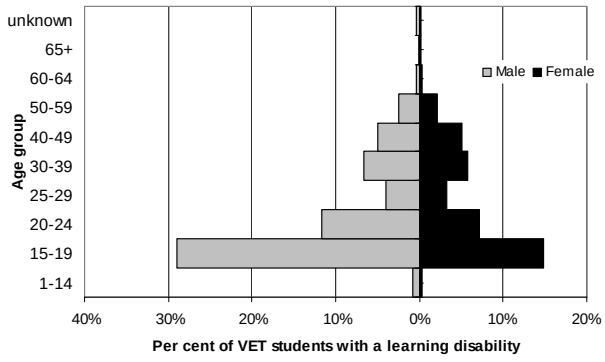
> … *a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the lifespan. Problems in self-regulatory behaviours, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability* (cited in NCVER 2002).

PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE LEARNING DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- Just on three-fifths (60.6%) were males. This proportion is higher than for all other single disabilities except acquired brain impairment. The proportions of males in the 15–19 year and 20–24 year age groups markedly exceeded females.

Figure 1: VET students with a single learning difficulty by age and sex, 2003



- Almost two-thirds (63.9%) were less than 25 years of age, almost twice the proportion for all VET students

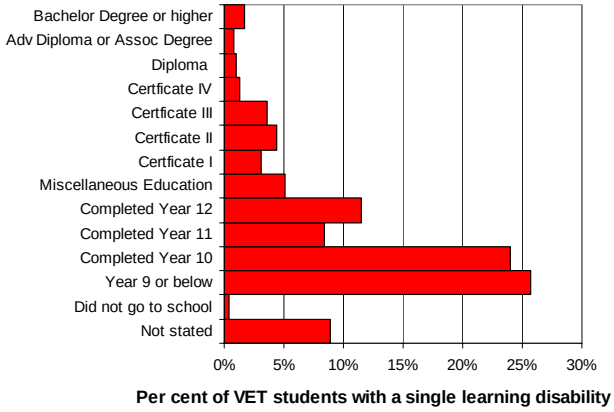
Previous education

- Year 10 was the most common secondary school level completed (30.7% of students).

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

School level	Per cent of total		
	Learning disability only	Learning and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.5	0.7	0.1
Year 9 or lower	30.2	31.6	7.8
Year 10	30.7	25.7	19.9
Year 11	10.7	10.5	10.3
Year 12	18.4	19.2	32.8
Not known	9.5	12.2	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**8 416**	**3 901**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single learning disability, 2003



Employment status

- Well over one-third (38.3%) of VET students with a learning disability were employed at the time of enrolment in 2003. A further 23.7% were not in the labour force and 27.8% were unemployed.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Learning disability only	Learning and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	31.7	25.8	45.8
Subject completion rate*	73.0	71.4	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	11.6	10.0	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**8 416**	**3 901**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- Around one in eight (12.9%) students studied in the field of engineering and related technology. Next highest of the individual fields were food, hospitality and personal services with 9.7% and management and commerce with 9.6%, followed by society and culture with 8.5%. By far the largest proportion was in mixed field programs which accounted for 37.0%.

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Learning disability only	Learning and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.3	0.2	0.4
Information technology	2.7	4.1	4.2
Engineering and related technology	12.9	9.1	15.2
Architecture and building	5.5	2.6	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	6.7	5.6	4.8
Health	2.2	1.7	6.0
Education	0.7	0.7	3.4
Management and commerce	9.6	11.8	21.4
Society and culture	8.5	6.5	10.7
Creative arts	2.4	3.3	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	9.7	7.3	9.3
Mixed field program	37.0	43.3	9.6
Subject only	2.0	3.7	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**8 416**	**3 901**	**1 717 795**

PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Slightly more than one-quarter (25.7%) of students with multiple disabilities were employed, a further third (33.9%) were not in the labour force and 29.5% were unemployed.
- Like their counterparts with a single learning disability, those with learning and other disabilities tended to have high proportions completing Year 10 and below when compared with all VET students.
- The proportion of students with learning and other disabilities who had completed a post-secondary qualification as their highest level of education was greater than for a learning disability only (25.2% compared with 21.0%).
- Participation rates by qualification level of students with learning and other disabilities were generally similar to those of students with a learning disability only. The exceptions were certificate III (multiple 14.7%, learning only 21.8%) and certificate I (multiple 28.5%, learning only 22.3%).
- Participation rates by fields were also similar with the major exception of mixed field programs (multiple disability 43.3%, learning only 37.0%). For the remainder, the most prominent differences were: engineering and related technologies (multiple 9.1%, learning only 12.9%) and architecture and building (multiple 2.6%, learning only 5.5%).
- There was some difference between students with multiple disabilities and students with only a learning disability in terms of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) completions (multiple 10.0%, learning only 11.6%). Both these rates were below that for all VET students (18.0%).

SUMMARY

- There are more male students with a single learning disability than females. This difference is most marked in the lower age groups.
- The proportions of both groups of students with a learning disability (single and multiple disability) who were studying at AQF certificate III and above was considerably lower than that of the all VET students.
- The proportion of both groups of students with a learning disability who had completed an AQF qualification was lower than that of all VET students.
- Both groups of students with a learning disability were much more likely to participate in mixed field programs than all VET students.

Reference

NCVER 2002 *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION

- A total of 10 558 vocational education and training (VET) students reported having a hearing disability in 2003. This represents 11.5% of the 91 439 VET students who reported a disability that year.
- Of these students, more than seven out of ten (71.7% or 7566) reported having only a single hearing disability, while 28.3% (2992) reported hearing and other (i.e. multiple) disabilities.

DEFINITION

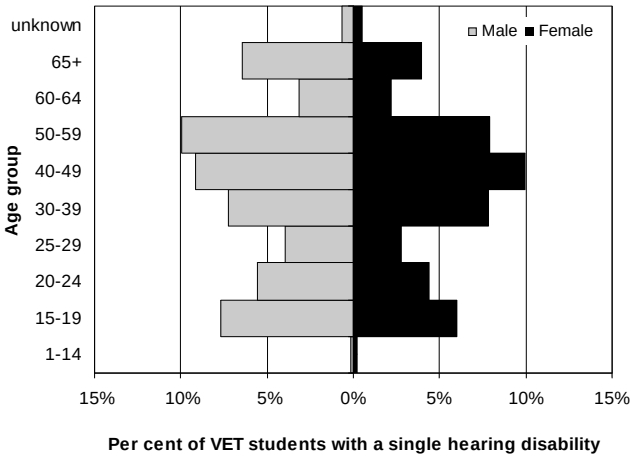
Hearing disability relates to the ability to sense the presence of sounds and discriminate the location, pitch, loudness and quality of sounds. It encompasses functions of hearing, auditory discrimination, localisation of sound source, lateralisation of sound, speech discrimination; impairments such as deafness, hearing impairment and hearing loss.

PEOPLE WITH A HEARING DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- There was a greater proportion of males (54%) than females (46%) in this disability group.
- Around 42.5% of students were aged over 40 years. Slightly less than one-quarter (24.1%) were aged less than 25 years.

Figure 1: VET students with a single hearing disability, by age and sex, 2003



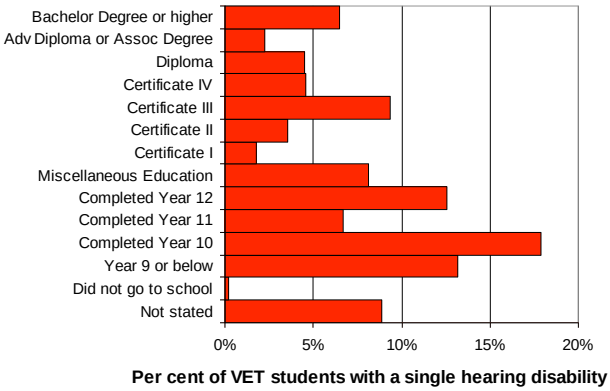
Previous education

- Almost three out of ten (29.5%) students had completed Year 12, with a similar proportion (30.2%) completing Year 10.
- Four out of ten (40.6%) students had completed some tertiary education prior to enrolment in 2003.

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level completed	Per cent of total		
	Hearing disability only	Hearing and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.3	0.8	0.1
Year 9 or lower	17.8	26.6	7.8
Year 10	30.2	29.4	19.9
Year 11	10.9	8.9	10.3
Year 12	29.5	23.2	32.8
Not known	11.3	11.2	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**7 566**	**2 992**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level of VET students with a single hearing disability, 2003



Employment status

- Nearly half (48.7%) of students were employed at the time of their enrolment in 2003. In addition, 20.9% were unemployed, while 21.5% were not in the labour force.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Hearing disability only	Hearing and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	41.4	34.4	45.8
Subject completion rate*	79.0	74.4	81.9
Proportion completing an AQF qualification	13.3	11.5	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**7 566**	**2 992**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- The largest proportion of students were enrolled in management and commerce (17.8%), mixed field programs (16.2%), engineering and related studies (12.5%) and society and culture (11.5%).
- Participation in information technology (5.5%), agriculture, environment and related studies (6.1%), society and culture (11.5%) and mixed field programs (16.2%) was higher than participation for the total VET population.

Table 3: VET students by field of education, by disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Hearing disability only	Hearing and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.3	0.5	0.4
Information technology	5.5	5.9	4.2
Engineering and related technology	12.5	9.9	15.2
Architecture and building	4.2	3.0	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	6.1	6.1	4.8
Health	4.5	2.6	6.0
Education	3.9	2.4	3.4
Management and commerce	17.8	16.8	21.4
Society and culture	11.5	10.3	10.7
Creative arts	3.4	4.2	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	6.4	4.6	9.3
Mixed field program	16.2	25.8	9.6
Subject only	7.6	7.8	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**7 566**	**2 992**	**1 717 795**

STUDENTS WITH A HEARING DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Just over one-third (33.8%) of students with multiple disabilities (including hearing) were not in the labour force. A slightly smaller proportion are employed (31.1%), while one-quarter (25.1%) are unemployed.
- Students with multiple disabilities have low attainment in secondary school, with smaller proportions of students completing Years 10, 11 and 12 than students with a single hearing disability. By contrast, a higher proportion of students with multiple disabilities completed Year 9 or lower or did not go to school, than single hearing disability students.
- Students with hearing and other disabilities had higher participation in certificate I (14.1%) and certificate II (19.0%), than students with a single hearing disability (8.1% and 16.6% respectively).
- One-quarter (25.8%) of all students with hearing and other disabilities undertook mixed field programs in 2003. This was considerably higher than single hearing students (16.2%) and the total VET population (9.6%).
- There is a lower proportion of VET students with hearing and other disabilities who completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification (11.5%) than students with a single hearing disability (13.3%) and all VET students (18.0%).

SUMMARY

- Students with a hearing disability tend be older compared with students in other disability groups and the VET population in general.
- The high proportion of students in this disability group who undertook AQF certificate III courses and above should lead to good employment outcomes.
- Students with multiple disabilities have lower attainment in secondary school than single hearing disability students. They also experienced low achievements in post-secondary education.

INTRODUCTION

- In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, 8771 students reported that they had an intellectual disability. This represents 9.6% of all students who reported a disability.
- Just over two-thirds (68.8%) of these students with an intellectual disability reported they had a single disability. The remaining 31.2% reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

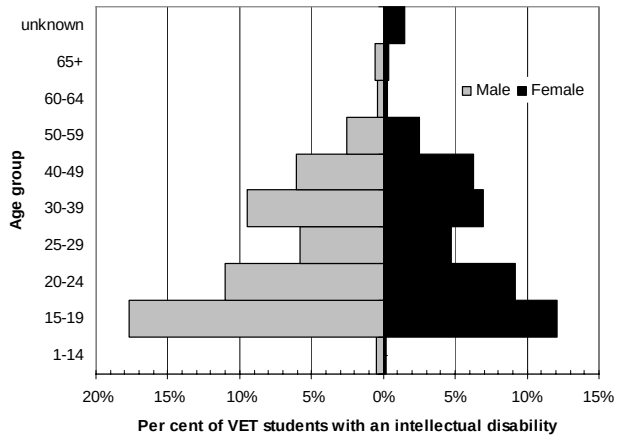
There is a diversity in the underlying concepts, definitions and classifications of intellectual disability adopted in Australia. In general, the term 'intellectual disability' is used to refer to low general intellectual functioning and difficulties in adaptive behaviour, both of which conditions were manifested before the person reached the age of 18. It may result from infection before or after birth, trauma during birth, or illness. (NCVER 2002)

PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- Slightly more than half (55.8%) of the students in this category were males. The most prominent differences in favour of males were in the 15–19, 20–24 and 30–39 year age groups.
- Just over half (50.6%) of the students were less than 25 years of age, a majority of them (29.7%) being in the 15–19 year age group.

Figure 1: VET students with a single intellectual difficulty by age and sex, 2003



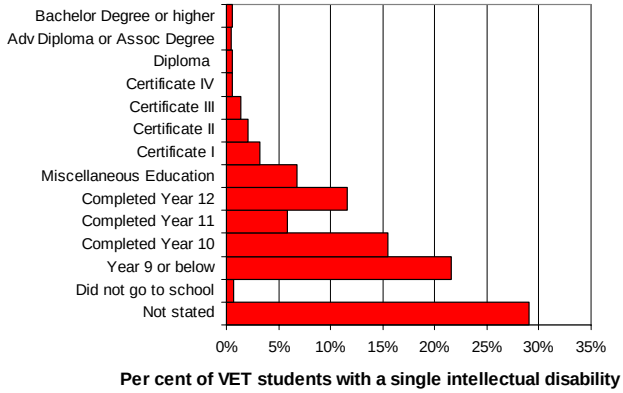
Previous education

- Nearly one-quarter (24.5%) of the students had completed Year 9 or below.
- At enrolment in 2003, a relatively small proportion (15.7%) had completed post-compulsory study, considerably lower than that for the total VET population (25.9%).

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

	Per cent of total		
	Intellectual disability	**Intellectual and other disability**	**Total VET population**
Did not go to school	0.7	1.2	0.1
Year 9 or lower	24.5	26.6	7.8
Year 10	19.5	22.3	19.9
Year 11	7.7	10.5	10.3
Year 12	16.6	19.1	32.8
Not known	31.1	20.2	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**6 031**	**2 740**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single intellectual disability, 2003



Employment status

- At the time of enrolment in 2003, 29.1% of VET students with an intellectual disability were employed. A further 20.7% were unemployed and 37.1% were not in the workforce.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	**Per cent VET students**		
	Intellectual disability only	**Intellectual and other disability**	**Total VET population**
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	12.8	17.0	45.8
Subject completion rate*	76.7	71.9	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	7.0	8.6	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**6 031**	**2 740**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- One in eight (12.8%) students studied at AQF certificate III or above. This is far less than that for the total VET population (45.8%).
- Just over three-quarters (76.7%) of students completed their subjects studied, somewhat less than the 81.9% for the total VET population.
- The proportion of students completing an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification in 2003 (7.0%) was less than half that of the total VET population (17.2%).
- Nearly half (45.3%) the students were enrolled in mixed field programs. The highest of the proportions for the remaining fields were: management and commerce (8.5%), engineering and related technology (6.0%), food, hospitality and personal services (5.9%) and agricultural, environment and related studies (4.8%).

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Intellectual disability only	Intellectual and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.0	0.1	0.4
Information technology	1.5	3.1	4.2
Engineering and related technology	6.0	6.7	15.2
Architecture and building	2.0	2.0	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	4.8	5.7	4.8
Health	0.7	1.0	6.0
Education	0.7	0.7	3.4
Management and commerce	8.5	10.2	21.4
Society and culture	3.5	4.4	10.7
Creative arts	1.8	3.1	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	5.9	5.5	9.3
Mixed field program	45.3	46.2	9.6
Subject only	19.5	11.2	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**6 031**	**2 740**	**1 717 795**

PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Almost one-quarter (24.9%) of students with an intellectual and other disabilities were employed. A further 23.3% were unemployed and nearly two-fifths (38.4%) were not in the labour force.
- Students with intellectual and other disabilities tended to have slightly lower levels of school achievement than those with a single disability.
- Students with intellectual and other disabilities had higher participation rates in certificate III and above study than those with an intellectual disability only (multiple 17.0%, intellectual only 12.8%).
- Highest participation rates by field for the intellectual and other disability group were mixed field programs (46.2%) followed by management and commerce (10.2%) then engineering and related technologies (6.7%). These participation rates were quite similar to those for the intellectual disability only group.
- There was a small difference between students with multiple disabilities and those with only an intellectual disability in terms of AQF qualification completions (multiple: 8.6%, intellectual only: 7.0%).

SUMMARY

- Students with a single intellectual disability tended to be younger than those who did not have a disability. More than half were under 25 years of age compared with slightly more than two thirds for all VET students.
- Compared with most other disability groups and the total VET population, the intellectual disability group had a higher proportion of males, particularly in the lower age groups.
- The proportion of students with an intellectual disability who were studying at AQF certificate III level and higher was extremely low, the average rate for the two groups with intellectual disability being 14.1%, which was less than one-third that of the total VET population. About one-third were studying at certificate I level, higher than any other disability groups.
- Nearly half of students with an intellectual disability were enrolled in mixed field programs, a higher proportion than for any other disability.

Reference

NCVER 2002 *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION

- A total of 7663 students in the vocational education and training (VET) sector reported they had a mental illness. This represents 8.4% of the 91 439 students who reported a disability in 2003.
- Less than three-quarters (72.3% or 5544) of students with a mental illness reported having a single disability, while 27.7% (2119) reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

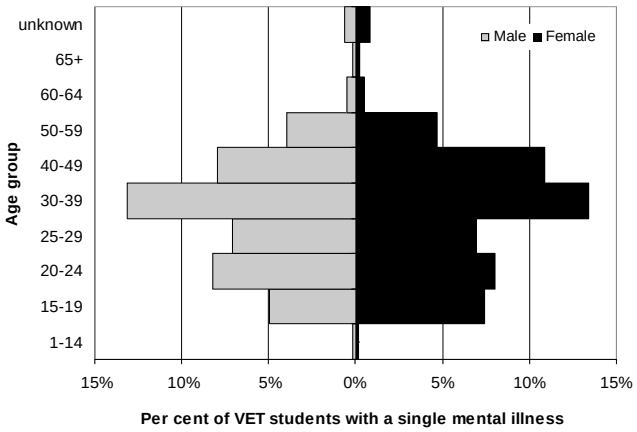
Mental illness refers to a cluster of psychological and physiological symptoms that cause a person suffering or distress and which represent a departure from a person's usual pattern and level of functioning.

PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS ONLY

Key characteristics

- There are slightly more females (53.1%) than males (46.8%).
- More than half (55.6%) of VET students with a mental illness were aged 30 years or older. More than one-quarter (26.6%) of students were aged between 30 and 39 years.

Figure 1: VET students with a single mental illness, by age and sex, 2003



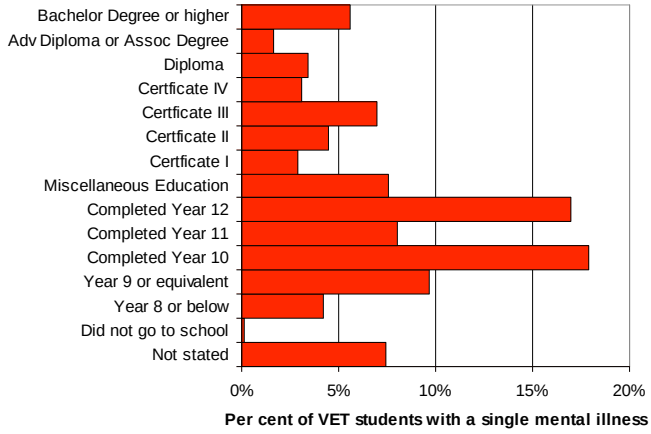
Previous education

- More than one-third (34.1%) of students with a single mental illness completed Year 12.
- Over one-third (35.6%) of students completed tertiary studies. Qualifications included certificate III (6.9%), certificate IV (3.1%), diplomas and advanced diplomas (5.0%) and bachelor and higher degrees (5.6%).

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level completed	Per cent of total		
	Mental illness only	Mental illness and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.2	0.8	0.1
Year 9 or lower	17.5	26.3	7.8
Year 10	27.2	29.0	19.9
Year 11	12.4	11.2	10.3
Year 12	34.1	25.4	32.8
Not known	8.7	7.3	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**5 544**	**2 119**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level of VET students with a single mental illness, 2003



Employment status

- Most students with a mental illness were either not in the labour force (35.6%) or unemployed (34.5%). Only one in five students (20.8%) were employed at the time of their enrolment in 2003.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent of total		
	Mental illness only	Mental illness and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	40.0	38.0	45.8
Subject completion rate*	67.4	67.5	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	12.1	10.6	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**5 544**	**2 119**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- The subject completion rate was lower than all other disability groups (average 75.9%) and the total VET population (81.9%).
- Only one in eight (12.1%) students with a mental illness completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification in 2003. This is the lowest award rate of all the major disability groups and considerably lower than that for the total VET population (18.0%).
- Three out of ten (30.3%) students in this group were studying mixed field programs, more than three times the rate for the total VET population (9.6%). Other education fields above the rate for the total VET population included society and culture (12.5%), creative arts (6.7%), information technology (6.3%) and natural and physical sciences (0.7%).

Table 3
VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Mental illness only	Mental illness and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.7	0.5	0.4
Information technology	6.3	6.9	4.2
Engineering and related technology	6.3	6.1	15.2
Architecture and building	2.1	2.2	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	4.6	5.0	4.8
Health	2.2	2.3	6.0
Education	1.1	1.7	3.4
Management and commerce	15.4	15.1	21.4
Society and culture	12.5	11.4	10.7
Creative arts	6.7	6.8	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	4.9	4.4	9.3
Mixed field program	30.3	32.5	9.6
Subject only	6.6	5.1	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**5 544**	**2 119**	**1 717 795**

STUDENTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Less than one in five students (19.7%) with multiple disabilities (including mental illness) were employed at the time of enrolment in 2003. This is the lowest rate of all major disability groups. Four out of ten (40.3%) students were not in the labour force and 31.4% were unemployed. These rates are highest for all the major disability groups.
- Students with mental illness and other disabilities had lower secondary school attainment than students with mental illness only. They had lower completion rates for Years 11 (11.2%) and 12 (25.4%), and higher rates for all lower years.
- A greater proportion (38.2%) of students with multiple disabilities completed some post-secondary education (beyond Year 12) than students with a mental illness only (35.6%). This difference is explained by more students (10.0%) completing miscellaneous education than students with only mental illness (7.6%).
- Almost one-third (32.5%) of students were undertaking mixed field programs in 2003, more than students with mental illness only (30.3%) and the total VET population (9.6%).
- Students with multiple disabilities had a marginally higher subject completion rate (67.5%) than students with mental illness only (67.4%). However, this rate was lower than all other disability groups except intellectual and unspecified.

SUMMARY

- Students with a mental illness are more likely to be middle-aged, particularly aged between 30 and 39 years.
- Although students with a mental illness have good participation in, and completion of, secondary and post-secondary education, they have very low subject completion rates in VET. Furthermore, they have the lowest award rate of all the major disability groups and considerably lower than that for the total VET population.
- Students with multiple disabilities had lower subject completion rates than all other disability groups except intellectual and unspecified groups.

Reference

NCVER 2002, *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

People with acquired brain impairment

INTRODUCTION

- In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, 1856 students of the 91 439 students who reported a disability reported that they had an acquired brain impairment (ABI). This represents 2.0% of all students with a disability.
- In comparison with other disability groups, a relatively high proportion of students with acquired brain impairment (50.3%) reported multiple disabilities (other disabilities in addition to acquired brain impairment).

DEFINITION

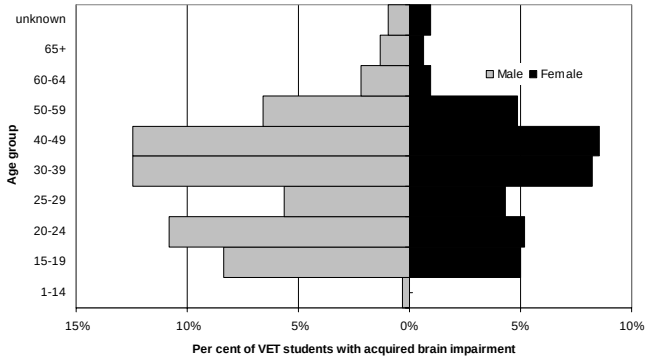
Acquired brain impairment is injury to the brain that results in deterioration in cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning (Ministerial Implementation Committee on Head Injury in 1995, cited in NCVER 2002). Acquired brain impairment can occur as a result of trauma, hypoxia, infection, tumour, accidents, violence, substance abuse, degenerative neurological diseases or stroke. These impairments may be either temporary or permanent and cause partial or total disability or psychosocial maladjustment (NCVER 2002).

PEOPLE WITH AN ACQUIRED BRAIN IMPAIRMENT ONLY

Key characteristics

- More than three-fifths (61.1%) of VET students with ABI only were males—a higher proportion than any other group.
- About three in ten (29.7%) VET students with an ABI were less than 25 years of age and well over one-third (37.7%) were aged 40 years or older.

Figure 1: VET students with a single ABI, by age and sex, 2003



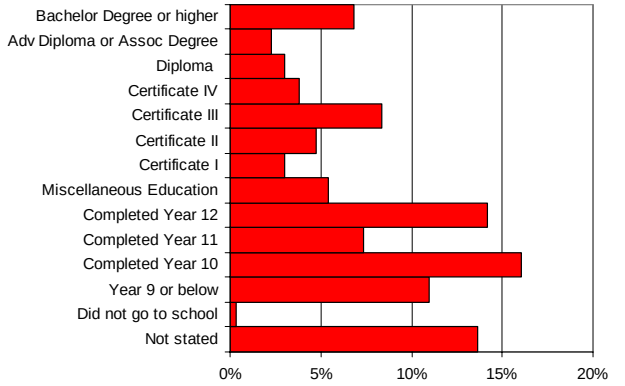
Previous education

- Almost one-third (31.2%) of students in this category had completed Year 12 with a further 38.4% completing either Years 10 or 11.
- At enrolment in 2003, more than one-third (37.5%) of students had completed some post-secondary education.

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

	Per cent of total		
	ABI only	**ABI and other disability**	**Total VET population**
Did not go to school	0.5	0.5	0.1
Year 9 or lower	14.6	18.6	7.8
Year 10	27.2	32.5	19.9
Year 11	11.2	11.0	10.3
Year 12	31.2	27.4	32.8
Not known	15.3	9.9	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**923**	**933**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by VET students with a single ABI, 2003



Employment status

- Just over a quarter (27.6%) of VET students with an acquired brain impairment were employed at the time of enrolment, somewhat lower than most other disability groups. The unemployment rate was 24.7%, and 34.5% were not in the labour force.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	ABI only	**ABI and other disability**	**Total VET population**
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	36.2	37.1	45.8
Subject completion rate*	74.4	72.6	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	12.5	11.4	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**923**	**933**	**1 717 795**

*Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- With the notable exception of mixed field programs, the proportions of enrolments of students with acquired brain impairment in most fields were either lower or similar to those of all VET students.

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Percent VET students		
	ABI only	ABI and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.2	0.4	0.4
Information technology	6.7	6.5	4.2
Engineering and related technology	9.5	8.3	15.2
Architecture and building	3.3	4.7	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	5.4	4.6	4.8
Health	3.4	2.6	6.0
Education	1.4	2.1	3.4
Management and commerce	13.4	18.2	21.4
Society and culture	9.3	9.1	10.7
Creative arts	5.3	4.0	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	5.0	4.0	9.3
Mixed field program	27.2	29.7	9.6
Subject only	9.9	5.8	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**923**	**933**	**1 717 795**

STUDENTS WITH AN ACQUIRED BRAIN IMPAIRMENT AND OTHER DISABILITIES

- Slightly more than one-quarter (26.6%) of students with an acquired brain impairment and other disabilities were employed.
- The highest school levels completed by students with acquired brain impairment and other disabilities tended to be slightly lower than those with only an ABI.
- There were no notable differences between VET students with an acquired brain impairment only and those with an ABI and other disabilities in terms of the proportions studying at the various qualification levels.
- The proportion of students with acquired brain impairment and other disabilities studying in the field of management and commerce (18.2%) was greater than that of students with an ABI only (13.4%). Differences for the other fields were relatively small (refer to table 3).
- The proportion of students with acquired brain impairment plus other disability who completed an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification (12.3%) was less than one percentage point below that of those with an ABI only, but was markedly lower than that for all VET students (17.7%).

SUMMARY

- In terms of number, acquired brain impairment was the smallest disability category considered in this study (1856 students).
- The proportion of males was higher than that of any other disability considered.
- The employment rate for VET students with acquired brain impairment was lower than that for most other disability categories.
- The proportion of VET students with acquired brain impairment completing AQF qualifications was lower than that for all VET students.

Reference

NCVER 2002 *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

People with other/unspecified disabilities

INTRODUCTION

- A total of 19 735 vocational education and training (VET) students reported either other (12 753) or an unspecified disability (6982) in 2003. Altogether, this represents 21.6% of the 91 439 students who reported a disability that year.
- A total of 16 735 (84.8%) students who reported either other or unspecified disability identified a single disability, while 3000 reported having multiple disabilities. Virtually all (99.2%) of those who reported an unspecified disability reported a single disability.

DEFINITION

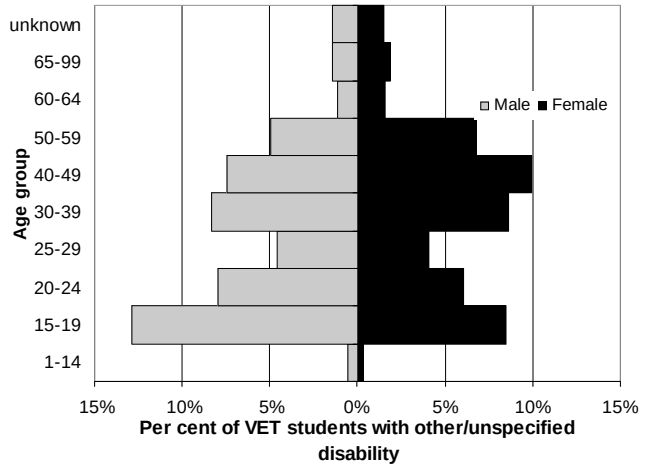
This disability group refers to students who either reported a disability other than one of the eight major groups, or did not specify the disability they suffered.

PEOPLE WITH AN OTHER/UNSPECIFIED DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- There are slightly more males (50.6%) than females (49.2%) in this combined group.
- The largest age group is the 15–19 year age group, with 21.3% of students. In addition, almost half (46.1%) of students were aged between 30 and 59 years.

Figure 1: VET students with a single other/unspecified disability, by age and sex, 2003



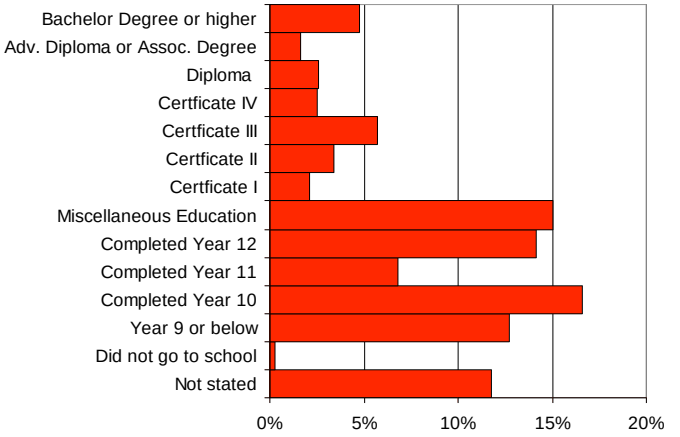
Prior education

- More than a quarter (27.8%) of students completed Year 12.
- Half (50.5%) of students did not complete any post-secondary education.

Table 1: Highest school level completed by VET students, 2003

Highest school level completed	Per cent of total		
	Other/ unspecified disability only	Other/ unspecified and other disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.3	0.3	0.1
Year 9 or lower	15.8	24.6	7.8
Year 10	24.1	26.4	19.9
Year 11	10.7	12.8	10.3
Year 12	27.8	26.3	32.8
Not known	21.4	9.6	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**16 735**	**3 000**	**1 717 795**

Figure 2: Highest school level completed by VET students with a single other/unspecified disability, 2003



Employment status

- Four out of ten (41.3%) students were employed, 23.1% were unemployed and 22.5% were not in the workforce.

VET participation and attainment

Table 2: Attainment of VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Other/ unspecified disability only	Other/ unspecified and other disability	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	38.9	39.4	45.8
Subject completion rate*	76.3	71.9	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	11.6	10.8	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**16 735**	**3 000**	**1 717 795**

Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- Higher proportions of students with an other/ unspecified disability were enrolled in information technologies (6.1%), society and culture (11.7%), creative arts (4.2%) and mixed field programs (19.0%) compared with all VET students.

Table 3: VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Other/ unspecified disability only	Other/ unspecified and other disability	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.4	0.3	0.4
Information technology	6.1	6.1	4.2
Engineering and related technology	10.8	8.6	15.2
Architecture and building	3.7	2.8	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	4.6	5.6	4.8
Health	4.8	2.7	6.0
Education	2.1	2.0	3.4
Management and commerce	19.3	16.5	21.4
Society and culture	11.7	10.4	10.7
Creative arts	4.2	5.3	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	7.5	5.6	9.3
Mixed field program	19.0	27.3	9.6
Subject only	5.8	6.7	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**16 735**	**3 000**	**1 717 795**

PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE OTHER/UNSPECIFIED DISABILITIES

- More than a third (34.2%) of students with multiple disabilities were not in the labour force, while almost equal numbers were employed (28.9%) and unemployed (28.8%).
- Almost a quarter (24.6%) of students with multiple disabilities completed Year 9 or lower at school.
- A slightly smaller proportion (37.1%) of students with multiple disabilities completed some post-secondary education than students with a single other/unspecified disability (37.8%).
- A higher proportion of students with multiple disabilities were undertaking studies at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certificate III and above than students with a single disability (38.9%).
- Students with multiple disabilities had higher participation than single disability (other/ unspecified) students at all tertiary education levels except bachelor and higher degrees and miscellaneous education.
- The highest participation was in mixed field programs (27.3%).

SUMMARY

- The greatest proportion of students in this category were aged between 15 and 19 years (21.3%).
- Measures of VET participation and attainment were lower for this disability group than the total VET population.
- Students with multiple disabilities had lower subject completion rates and AQF qualifications awarded than students with a single disability, but were undertaking a higher proportion of studies at AQF certificate III and higher.

Reference

NCVER 2002, *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Indigenous people with disabilities

INTRODUCTION

- A total of 5410 of the 91 439 vocational education and training (VET) students who reported a disability in 2003 identified themselves as Indigenous. This represents 5.9% of all students with a disability.
- Of these Indigenous students, 4600 (85%) reported that they had a single disability, while 810 (15%) reported multiple disabilities.

DEFINITION

Descriptions of the eight disability groups used to classify disability can be found in NCVER's *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002* (available at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/vetstandard/31196.html>).

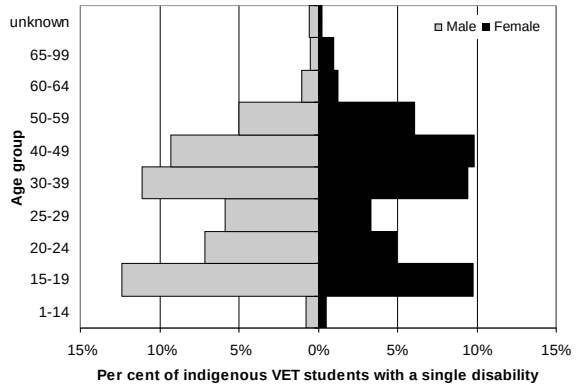
The Indigenous status of VET students is a self-assessment response by students as to whether they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WITH A SINGLE DISABILITY ONLY

Key characteristics

- Over half (53.7%) of Indigenous VET students with a single disability were males and 46.3% were females.
- More than one in five (22.2%) of Indigenous VET students with a single disability were aged between 15 and 19 years. Over half (54.5%) of Indigenous VET students with a disability were aged 30 years or older.

Figure 1: Indigenous VET students with a single disability, by age and sex, 2003



Employment status

- The largest group of Indigenous VET students was not in the labour force (31.1%), with a further 27.9% unemployed. Only 30.2% were employed.
- The most frequently reported disabilities among Indigenous VET students are medical condition (16.8%), learning disability (14.9%) and vision disability (13.2%). These three groups are all above the proportion evident in the total VET population.

Table 1: Indigenous VET students by disability status and disability group, 2003

Disability group	Per cent of total	
	Indigenous students with single disability	All students with single disability
Hearing	10.5	9.6
Physical	12.7	16.5
Intellectual	4.6	7.6
Learning	14.9	10.6
Mental illness	5.5	7.0
Acquired brain impairment	1.2	1.2
Vision	13.2	13.0
Medical condition	16.8	13.3
Other	14.2	12.4
Unspecified	6.5	8.8
TOTAL (n)	**4 600**	**79 037**

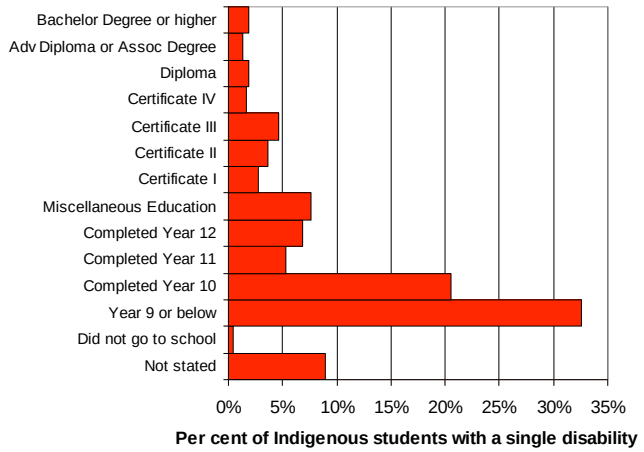
- Indigenous students with a single disability have much lower school achievement rates than students with a single disability and the total VET population. Only 11.8% of Indigenous VET students with a single disability completed Year 12, compared with 28.4% of VET students with a single disability and 32.8% of all VET students.

Table 2: Highest school level completed by Indigenous VET students with a single disability, 2003

Highest school level completed	Per cent of total		
	Indigenous students with a single disability	All VET students with a single disability	Total VET population
Did not go to school	0.6	0.4	0.1
Year 9 or lower	41.0	19.3	7.8
Year 10	28.7	26.8	19.9
Year 11	8.0	11.1	10.3
Year 12	11.8	28.4	32.8
Not known	9.9	14.0	29.0
TOTAL (n)	**4 600**	**79 037**	**1 717 795**

- Indigenous students with a disability have very low attainment of tertiary qualifications. Only one-quarter (25.4%) had completed a post-school qualification, of whom 7.6% had completed miscellaneous education.

Figure 2: Highest education level completed by Indigenous VET students with a single disability, 2003



VET participation and attainment

Table 3: Attainment of Indigenous VET students by disability status, 2003

VET attainment	Per cent VET students		
	Indigenous students with single disability	Indigenous students with multiple disabilities	Total VET population
Proportion undertaking AQF certificate III or higher	30.6	35.5	45.8
Subject completion rate*	65.1	63.9	81.9
Proportion completed an AQF qualification	9.0	9.7	18.0
TOTAL (n)	**4 600**	**810**	**1 717 795**

Subject completion rate = Pass + Recognition of prior learning + Non-assessable satisfactorily completed divided by Pass + Fail + Withdraw + RPL + NA satisfactorily completed and NA not satisfactorily completed
AQF = Australian Qualifications Framework

- One-third (33.5%) of Indigenous students with a disability undertook mixed field programs, with participation also higher in society and culture (13.4%) and agriculture, environment and related studies (7.8%) than for the total VET population.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

- The secondary school attainment of Indigenous students with multiple disabilities is slightly worse than that for Indigenous students with a single disability and considerably worse than all VET students.
- The participation of Indigenous students with multiple disabilities was higher in mixed field programs (39.5%), society and culture (13.7%) and creative arts (7.1%) than for indigenous students with a single disability and the total VET population.

Table 4: Indigenous VET students by field of education and disability status, 2003

Field of education	Per cent VET students		
	Indigenous students with a single disability	Indigenous students with multiple disabilities	Total VET population
Natural and physical sciences	0.1	0.2	0.4
Information technology	2.6	2.5	4.2
Engineering and related technology	8.3	7.2	15.2
Architecture and building	3.5	2.0	5.8
Agriculture, environment and related studies	7.8	5.7	4.8
Health	3.4	3.6	6.0
Education	2.3	3.4	3.4
Management and commerce	11.8	10.9	21.4
Society and culture	13.4	13.7	10.7
Creative arts	5.9	7.1	3.4
Food, hospitality and personal services	4.1	3.2	9.3
Mixed field program	33.5	39.5	9.6
Subject only	3.2	1.0	5.8
TOTAL (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
TOTAL (n)	**4 600**	**810**	**1 717 795**

SUMMARY

- Indigenous students with a disability—both single and multiple—have very poor secondary school attainment.
- Only a quarter of Indigenous students with a single disability have acquired any tertiary level qualification at the time of their enrolment in 2003.
- The VET attainment of Indigenous students with a disability in the VET sector is well below that of the total VET population.

Reference

NCVER 2002, *AVETMISS – The standard for VET providers: Release 5.0 September 2002*, NCVER, Adelaide.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

NCVER

This statistical compendium examines, firstly, vocational education and training (VET) students with a disability as a whole group, focusing on their participation levels, achievements and outcomes from vocational education and training, and identifies gaps and/or issues with the existing data. This is followed by a comparative section dealing with people with different types of disabilities and a conclusion. The appendix contains detailed profiles, which can stand alone as fact sheets, for each disability type: physical disability, medical condition, vision disability, learning disability, hearing disability, intellectual disability, mental illness, acquired brain impairment, and other/unspecified disabilities. Also included is a profile on Indigenous people with a disability.

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