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Registered Training Providers Experiences with VET Data Reporting

National Survey Findings

March 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges First Nations peoples as Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and the continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to First Nations peoples, their Cultures, and Elders past, present and emerging.

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Contents

[Survey acknowledgement 3](#_Toc133227033)

[Vocational Education and Training (VET) activity and data management research 3](#_Toc133227034)

[Summary of Findings 7](#_Toc133227035)

[Student Management Systems (SMS) 9](#_Toc133227036)

[Data Entry and Other Systems 11](#_Toc133227037)

[Data Checking, Validation and Submission 13](#_Toc133227038)

[Staffing and Resources 18](#_Toc133227039)

[Barriers to submission 21](#_Toc133227040)

[Getting Help 27](#_Toc133227041)

[Conclusion 28](#_Toc133227042)

[Stay up to date 29](#_Toc133227043)

# Survey acknowledgement

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations thanks the people who supported and participated in this research.

# Vocational Education and Training (VET) activity and data management research

## Background

The VET Data Streamlining program was established to modernise the way VET student and training activity data is collected, managed, and utilised by the whole sector. The program’s focus is to improve outcomes for the sector and includes three main pillars of work:

1. The introduction of a new VET Information Standard, which replaces the existing standard, the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS8). The VET Information Standard specifies national and state specific VET data elements to be collected.
2. The introduction of new technology that can integrate with existing systems to enable data submission, validation, and reporting of VET student and training activity data.
3. Changes to the legislative framework to support the program and allow for progressive submission of data.

The Australian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), in partnership with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), state and territory governments and sector regulators are working together to deliver the VET Data Streamlining program.

The program is committed to engaging with the VET sector early and often and has established several forums to facilitate this, including an External User Reference Group (EURG) and a range of subgroups. These groups, combined with targeted research, are critical to the successful delivery of the program.

In 2021, DEWR engaged Where*to* Research to conduct qualitative and quantitative research on the VET sector. This research has been critical in terms of understanding the complex and diverse nature of the sector, so DEWR and its partners can effectively deliver this program of work. The qualitative research, which was gathered through interviews and workshops, was completed in late 2021 and is published on the [DEWR website](https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/resources/vet-data-streamlining-discovery-1-summary-report).

This document is a summary of the findings from the quantitative research, conducted in August and September 2022.

## Purpose

DEWR engaged Where*to* to investigate and understand the different approaches training organisations currently use to manage student and training activity data collection, validation, and submission. The survey focused on what and how systems are used, staffing arrangements, and student management system functionality.

DEWR is using the outcomes of this research to:

* better map the diversity and landscape of the VET sector’s reporting processes
* understand current challenges of VET data reporting for training organisations
* identify potential early challenges to adoption and implementation of the new VET Information Standard and the program’s enabling technology
* understand the roles and relationships between training organisations and student management system vendors, and
* build a detailed understanding of the unique and varied business processes used by training organisations.

## Data Collection Process

A quantitative survey of registered training organisations was conducted between 11 August and 2 September 2022.

DEWR used its existing administrative records to determine training providers in scope of the survey. Invitations were sent via email to 4,089 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The survey was open for three weeks.

DEWR received 980 responses, and 702 of those were able to be used in this analysis. This represented a final response rate of 17 percent.

## Reading these Tables

The *Population* is the percentage of the in-scope RTOs that category represents. For example, 9.9% of all RTOs in DEWR’s records have 19 students or fewer. The *Responding sample* (%) is the percentage of the survey respondents in that category. For example, 4.9% of the respondents have 19 or fewer students. The *Difference* is the gap in percentage points between the number of respondents in a category compared with their representation in the sector (according to DEWR records). For example, the gap between the number of respondents and representation in the sector is five percentage points. This indicates that this cohort is five percentage points under-represented in the data.

## RTO Size

RTOs are grouped in cohorts of small, medium, and large.

### Small (less than 100 students):

* Small RTOs with 19 or less students represented 9.9% of the population and 4.9% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of -5.0 percentage points.
* Small RTOs with 20 to 49 students represented 9.6% of the population and 5.4% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of -4.2 percentage points.
* Small RTOs with 50 to 99 students represented 10.8% of the population and 9.1% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of -1.7 percentage points.

### Medium (100 to 999 students):

* Medium RTOs with 100 to 149 students represented 8.0% of the population and 6.5% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of -1.5 percentage points.
* Medium RTOs with 150 to 249 students represented 10.6% of the population and 11.3% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of 0.7 percentage points.
* Medium RTOs with 250 to 499 students represented 15.2% of the population and 16.5% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of 1.3 percentage points.
* Medium RTOs with 500 to 749 students represented 8.1% of the population and 6.8% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of -1.3 percentage points.
* Medium RTOs with 750 to 999 students represented 4.9% of the population and 5.6% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of 0.7 percentage points.

### Large (1000+ students):

* Large RTOs with 1,000 to 2,499 students represented 12.9% of the population and 17.8% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of 4.9 percentage points.
* Large RTOs with 2,500 and over students represented 10.0% of the population and 16.1% of the responding sample, equating to a difference of 6.1 percentage points.

## Organisation Type

* Respondents are grouped according to organisation type (enterprise, industry association, TAFE etc).
* Community based adult education providers represented 10.2% of the population and 8.3% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -1.9 percentage points.
* Enterprise – government providers represented 1.7% of the population and 1.5% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.2 percentage points.
* Enterprise - Non-government providers represented 1.6% of the population and 1.5% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.1 percentage points.
* Equipment and/or product manufacturer or supplier providers represented 0.2% of the population and 0.2% of the responding sample, the same in both groups.
* Industry association providers represented 3.3% of the population and 5.3% of the responding sample, which represented a difference of 2.0 percentage points.
* Other – not elsewhere classified providers represented 0.3% of the population and 0% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.3 percentage points.
* Privately operated registered training organisation providers represented 71.3% of the population and 75.7% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 4.4 percentage points.
* Professional association providers represented 0.4% of the population and 0.2% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.2 percentage points.
* School – Catholic providers represented 1.9% of the population and 1.7% of the responding sample which equated to a difference of -0.2 percentage points.
* School – government providers represented 6.3% of the population and 2.6% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -3.7 percentage points.
* School – Independent providers represented 1.6% of the population and 0.8% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.8 percentage points.
* Technical and further education institute or similar public institutions (TAFE) providers represented 0.6% of the population and 1.4% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 0.8 percentage points.
* University – Government providers represented 0.3% of the population and 0.6% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 0.3 percentage points.
* University – Non-Government Catholic providers represented 0.1% of the population and 0.2% of the responding samples which equated to a difference of 0.1 percentage points.
* University – Non-Government Independent providers represented 0.1% of the population and 0% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of -0.1 percentage points.

## Reporting

This information is based on reporting pathways. Some training providers may have reporting pathways to multiple jurisdictions.

* Cross-jurisdictional training providers represented 11.1% of the population and 17.8% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 6.7 percentage points.
* NSW training providers represented 27.7% of the population and 33.4% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 5.7 percentage points.
* Vic training providers represented 26.9% of the population and 22.3% of the responding sample which equated to a difference of -4.6 percentage points.
* Qld training providers represented 32.3% of the population and 34.6% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 2.3 percentage points.
* SA training providers represented 10.1% of the population and 12.7% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 2.6 percentage points.
* WA training providers represented 12.7% of the population and 14.7% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 2.0 percentage points.
* Tas training providers represented 3.7% of the population and 6.8% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 3.1 percentage points.
* NT training providers represented 2.9% of the population and 5.6% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 2.7 percentage points.
* ACT training providers represented 3.5% of the population and 5.6% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 2.1 percentage points.
* Direct to NCVER training providers represented 65.6% of the population and 66.8% of the responding sample, which equated to a difference of 1.2 percentage points.

# Summary of Findings

The survey data has been combined with administrative data provided by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

The key variables of interest are RTO size (which is derived from student numbers), funding sources and jurisdictions of operation. The data presented in this report has been analysed by each of these variables and notable findings are included.

The survey sample is broadly representative of the sample frame and no weighting has been applied to the data. These findings are statistically significant enough to be applied across the VET sector, noting that larger RTOs are slightly over-represented.

VET sector RTOs are diverse in size, funding, and business type. This is reflected in the results.

## Definitions

* The statistical ‘mean’ refers to the average of a set of numbers.
* The statistical ‘median’ is the middle number in a sequence of numbers.

## Findings

* The data collected are based on the 702 responses from RTOs nationwide 443 RTOs agreed to participate in further research and consultation. These RTOs will be contacted about how they can be involved.
* 88% of RTOs use a commercial SMS.
* 9% of RTOs nationally use an in-house SMS, however it’s slightly more common for RTOS in WA to use an in-house SMS at 13%.
* 49% of RTOs nationally have a customised SMS, however RTOs in Tasmania are below this with only 34% having a customised SMS.
* Known usage of APIs in data submission is limited, with 22% of respondents reporting their use.
* Known API[[1]](#footnote-2) usage is lower for all small RTOs at 17%.
* Known API usage is lowest in schools at 9%.
* Overall, the usage of APIs is poorly understood with 36% of survey respondents unsure if they use an API during data collection and submission.
* 61% of respondents use multiple data systems, with the average number of systems increasing with RTO size.
* SMS assistance with validating activity data is most common in providers other than schools at 87%. This is compared with 76% in schools.
* Only 6% of registered training providers described their internal data processes as inefficient.
* 28% of registered training providers submit data annually.
* This practise is most common amongst small training providers at 46%, privately owned training providers at 32% and training providers who submit directly to NCVER at 40%.
* Over 80% of large training providers reported entering data into their SMS daily, in comparison to small training providers, where less than 20% reported entering data daily.
* More specifically, 57% of respondents reported that their highest frequency of data entry into their SMS was daily, whilst another 19% reported a frequency of at least once a week.
* 15% of small fee for service training providers enter data daily.
* 19% of small government funded training providers enter data daily.
* 54% of medium fee for service training providers enter data daily.
* 60% of medium government funded training providers enter data daily.
* 82% of large fee for service training providers enter data daily.
* 85% of large government funded training providers enter data daily.
* 23% of small fee for service training providers enter data at least once a week.
* 35% of small government funded training providers enter data at least once a week.
* 22% of medium fee for service training providers enter data at least once a week.
* 24% of medium government funded training providers enter data at least once a week.
* 6% of large fee for service training providers enter data at least once a week.
* 9% of large government funded training providers enter data at least once a week.

# Student Management Systems (SMS)

## Key Findings

Of the RTOs surveyed, approximately:

* 49% of commercial SMS users had a system customised to their organisation’s specific needs
* 15% of fee for service training providers do not use a commercial SMS, compared to 6% of government funded providers
* 73% of respondents believe their SMS is updated one or more times a year, however 24% were unsure how often their SMS is updated
* There was no notable correlation between degree of customisation and frequency of updates, and
* 49% of respondents receive full assistance from their SMS with data validation prior to submission, whilst 14% do not receive any assistance from their SMS.

## SMS Type

* 79% of respondents use a commercial SMS only.
* 9% use an in-house system built and maintained internally.
* 9% use a combination of commercial and in-house systems.
* 3% use a system described as ‘other’.

## Commercial SMS significantly customised to training provider’s needs

* 48% of commercial SMS users have a system customised to their specific needs.
* 48% of commercial SMS users do not have a system that is customised to their specific needs.
* 4% do not know if their SMS has been customised to their RTO’s needs.

## Frequency of updates

* 41% of respondents believe their SMS is updated more often than a few times a year.
* 21% believe their SMS is updated twice or a few times a year.
* 12% believe their SMS is updated once per year.
* 1% believe their SMS is not updated at all.

## Level of assistance with AVETMISS or state-funded data validation

* 49% receive full assistance from their SMS with data validation prior to submission.
* 38% receive some assistance from their SMS with data validation prior to submission.
* 14% do not receive any assistance from their SMS with data validation prior to submission.

## Percentage of training providers without a commercial SMS by organisation size and funding source

* 16% of small fee for service training providers don’t use a commercial SMS, compared with 6% of government funded training providers.
* 13% of medium fee for service training providers don’t use a commercial SMS, compared with 5% of government funded training providers.
* 17% of large fee for service training providers don’t use a commercial SMS, compared with 7% of government funded training providers.

# Data Entry and Other Systems

## Key Findings

* 57% of all RTOs overall enter data into their SMS daily.
* The smaller the RTO, the more variance in the time to input data to their SMS.
* A correlation can be seen between RTO size and funding source and how frequently they enter data into their SMS.
* 67% of RTOs use two systems or less to collect and submit student activity data.
* 34% of RTOs use three or more systems. In most cases this includes their SMS.
* Amongst government funded providers the number of systems used increases with the size of RTOs. This is generally not the case for fee for service only providers.
* 22% of RTOs knowingly use APIs, with 35% unsure if APIs are used in their system.
* API usage is lowest amongst small, government funded RTOs, but consistent across all other RTO types.

## Number of systems

* 1% of respondents reported using no systems to collect and submit student activity data.
* 38% reported using one system to collect and submit student activity data.
* 28% reported using two systems to collect and submit student activity data.
* 19% reported using three systems to collect and submit student activity data.
* 15% reported using four or more systems to collect and submit student activity data.

## Percentage use multiple data systems by organisation size and funding source

* 49% of both small fee for service and government funded training providers reported an average of 1.8 data systems used.
* 65% of medium fee for service training providers reported an average of 1.9 data systems used.
* 57% of medium government funded providers reported an average of 2.2 data systems used.
* 57% of large fee for service training providers reported an average of 1.8 data systems used.
* 53% of large government funded training providers reported an average of 2.8 data systems used.

## Highest frequency of data entry into the SMS

### Daily

* 5% of small fee for service and 19% of government funded training providers have a daily entry frequency.
* 54% of medium fee for service and 60% of government funded training providers have a daily entry frequency.
* 82% of large fee for service and 85% of government funded training providers have a daily entry frequency.

### Weekly

* 23% of small fee for service and 35% of government funded training providers have a weekly entry frequency.
* 22% of medium fee for service and 24% of government funded training providers have a weekly entry frequency.
* 6% of large fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers have a weekly entry frequency.

### Fortnightly

* 11% of small fee for service and 19% of government funded training providers have a fortnightly entry frequency.
* 4% of medium fee for service and government funded training providers have a fortnightly entry frequency.
* 1% of large fee for service and government funded training providers have a fortnightly entry frequency.

### Monthly

* 25% of small fee for service and 19% of government funded training providers have a monthly entry frequency.
* 7% of medium fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers have a monthly entry frequency.
* 3% of large fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers have a monthly entry frequency.

### Quarterly

* 11% of small fee for service and 6% of government funded training providers have a quarterly entry frequency.
* 8% of medium fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers have a quarterly entry frequency.
* 4% of large fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers have a quarterly entry frequency.

### Biannually

* 5% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers have a six-monthly entry frequency.
* 1% of medium fee for service and government funded training providers have a six-monthly entry frequency.
* No large fee for service or government funded training providers have a six-monthly entry frequency.

### Annually

* 11% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers have a yearly entry frequency.
* 2% of medium fee for service and 1% of government funded training providers have a yearly entry frequency.
* 4% of large fee for service and no government funded training providers have a yearly entry frequency.

### Less frequently than yearly

* No fee for service or government funded training providers of any size reported entry frequencies of greater than one year.

# Data Checking, Validation and Submission

## Key Findings

* RTO size and funding source plays a large role in determining frequency of data submission.
* Weekly submission is practised mainly by medium and large government funded RTOs.
* Fortnightly and monthly submission is practised mainly by government funded RTOs irrespective of size.
* Quarterly and annual submission is practised mainly by fee for service RTOs irrespective of size.
* 35% of RTOs surveyed conduct a data quality check at the time of collection.
* Of those who do not check at the point of collection, 31% of RTOs check data quality at least monthly.
* Regardless of size, all government funded RTOs check data quality at least once a month, compared with fee for service providers who check less frequently.
* 31% of RTOs submit activity data once a year or less.
* 49% submit activity data at least once a month.

## RTOs first check of VET activity data quality prior to submission for validation

### At the time of collection

* 35% of small fee for service and 45% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality as it is collected from a student or source.
* 39% of medium fee for service and 35% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality as it is collected from a student or source.
* 19% of large fee for service and 38% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality as it is collected from a student or source.

### Daily

* 2% of small fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers first VET activity check data quality daily.
* 3% of medium fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality daily.
* 6% of large fee for service and 12% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality daily.

### Weekly

* 3% of small fee for service and 19% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a week.
* 6% of medium fee for service and 20% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a week.
* 12% of large fee for service and 21% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a week.

### Fortnightly

* 7% of small fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a fortnight.
* 2% of medium fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a fortnight.
* 6% of large fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a fortnight.

### Monthly

* 16% of small fee for service and 23% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a month.
* 14% of medium fee for service and 20% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a month.
* 19% of large fee for service and 14% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a month.

### Quarterly

* 14% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a quarter.
* 21% of medium fee for service and 6% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a quarter.
* 23% of large fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a quarter.

### Biannually

* 7% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality every six months.
* 7% of medium fee for service and 1% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality every six months.
* 3% of large fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality every six months.

### Yearly

* 15% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a year.
* 7% of medium fee for service and no government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a year.
* 10% or large fee for service and 1% of government funded training providers first check VET activity data quality once a year.

### Less frequently than yearly

* No fee for service or government funded training provider of any size reported checking VET activity data quality less frequently than once a year.

## Frequency of submission to NCVER, state/territory training authorities

### Daily

* 1% of small fee for service and 0% of government funded training providers submit their data daily.
* 2% of medium fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers submit their data daily.
* 7% of large fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers submit their data daily.

### Weekly

* 1% of small fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers submit their data weekly.
* 2% of medium fee for service and 20% of government funded training providers submit their data weekly.
* 3% of large fee for service and 26% of government funded training providers submit their data weekly.

### Fortnightly

* 2% of small fee for service and 29% of government funded training providers submit their data fortnightly.
* 1% of medium fee for service and 18% of government funded training providers submit their data fortnightly.
* 0% of large fee for service and 17% of government funded training providers submit their data fortnightly.

### Monthly

* 6% of small fee for service and 48% of government funded training providers submit their data monthly.
* 10% of medium fee for service and 41% of government funded training providers submit their data monthly.
* 8% of large fee for service and 31% of government funded training providers submit their data monthly.

### Quarterly

* 24% of small fee for service and 6% of government funded training providers submit their data quarterly.
* 19% of medium fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers submit their data quarterly.
* 40% of large fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers submit their data quarterly.

### Biannually

* 5% of small fee for service and 0% of government funded training providers submit their data biannually.
* 7% of medium fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers submit their data biannually.
* 5% of large fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers submit their data biannually.

### Annually

* 57% of small fee for service and 13% of government funded training providers submit their data annually.
* 58% of medium fee for service and 7% of government funded training providers submit their data annually.
* 37% of large fee for service and 6% of government funded training providers submit their data annually.

### Less than once a year

* 2% of small fee for service and 0% of government funded training providers submit their data less than once a year.
* 0% of medium fee for service or government funded training providers submit their data less than once a year.
* 0% of large fee for service and 1% of government funded training providers submit their data less than once a year.

# Staffing and Resources

## Key Findings

Staffing varies significantly depending on the size of the RTO.

* Up to three staff are employed by most training providers to work on data entry, validation, or the submission of VET activity data.
* Large government funded training providers employed significantly more data staff than any other cohort.
* 72% of training providers do not hire or reallocate additional staff to assist with data entry, validation, or submission.
* One or two people are typically responsible for preparation and validation of data prior to submission. This was true for both annual and quarterly submissions.
* The number of hours involved in preparation and validation varies dramatically. Approximately two-thirds of training providers devote between five and 100 hours. The median effort required is slightly longer for annual submissions (25 hours) than for quarterly submissions (20 hours).

## Staff hiring or reallocation

### Hired one or more extra staff

* 12% of all RTOs reported hiring additional staff to assist with data entry, validation and/or submission.
* 6% of small fee for service and 16% of government funded training providers hired one or more additional staff to assist.
* 13% of medium fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers hired one or more staff to assist.
* 8% of large fee for service and 24% of government funded training providers hired one or more staff to assist.

### Reallocated staff

* 14% of all RTOs reported reallocating staff to assist with data entry, validation and/or submission.
* 15% of small fee for service providers and 3% of government funded training providers reallocated staff to assist.
* 9% of medium fee for service and 20% of government funded training providers reallocated staff to assist.
* 14% of large fee for service and 16% of government funded training providers reallocated staff to assist.

### Hired more and reallocated staff

* 2% of all RTOS reported both hiring more and reallocating staff to assist with data entry, validation and/or submission.
* 1% of small fee for service and no small government funded training providers both hired more and reallocated staff to assist.
* 1% of medium fee for service and government funded training providers both hired more and reallocated staff to assist.
* 1% of large fee for service and 6% of government funded training providers both hired more and reallocated staff to assist.

### No extra hires/reallocations of staff

* 72% of all RTOs reported not hiring or reallocating staff to assist with data entry, validation and/or submission.
* 78% of small fee for service and 81% of government funded training providers did not hire or reallocate staff to assist.
* 78% of medium fee for service and 70% of government funded training providers did not hire or reallocate staff to assist.
* 77% of large fee for service and 54% of government funded training providers did not hire or reallocate staff to assist.

## Estimated number of staff working on data entry, validation, and submission

### Full time staff

* Small training providers had an average of 1.1 and median of one full time data staff.
* Medium training providers had an average of two and median of one full time data staff.
* Large training providers had an average of 22.1 and median of two full time data staff.

### Part time staff

* Small training providers had an average of 0.7 and median of no part time data staff.
* Medium training providers had an average of 0.7 and median of no part time data staff.
* Large training providers had an average 1.4 and median of no part time data staff.

### Casual staff

* Small training providers had an average of 0.2 and median of no casual data staff.
* Medium training providers had an average of 0.3 and median of no casual data staff.
* Large training providers had an average of 1.7 and median of no casual data staff.

### Volunteer staff

* Small training providers had no average or median volunteer data staff.
* Medium training providers had no average or median volunteer data staff.
* Large training providers had an average of 0.1 and no median volunteer data staff.

The table above shows the approximate number of staff that work on data entry, validation and submission compared to RTO student numbers for VET activity in 2021. The table shows us that:

* Small and medium RTOs employ similar numbers of staff to work on VET activity data.
* Large RTOs generally have more data staff and this reflects the significantly larger number of students they have.
* Some casual staff are utilised by large RTOs, however most small and medium RTOs do not use casual staff.
* The significant difference between average and the median number of staff for large RTOS reflects the scale of some of the larger providers.

## Involvement in the most recent AVETMISS submission

* 3% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission took one hour or less and 5% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took one hour or less.
* 10% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission took two to four hours and 15% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took two to four hours.
* 33% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission five to 20 hours and 38% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took five to 20 hours.
* 38% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission 21 to 100 hours and 25% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took 21 to 100 hours.
* 13% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission 101 to 1,000 hours and 14% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took 101 to 1,000 hours.
* 2% of training providers reported that their most recent annual submission took over 1,001 hours and 3% of training providers reported that their most recent quarterly submission took over 1,001 hours.

# Barriers to submission

## Key Findings

The most common barriers to quality data submission are:

* human error in data collection or entry
* specific validation issues, including lack of clarity and support
* issues engaging with government systems, and
* inadequate resources.

Of the training providers surveyed:

* 51% reported that their internal data validation and submission processes or systems are efficient, with 6% reporting that they are inefficient.
* Internal efficiency is consistent across all provider types and funding sources - except schools who are less likely than others (36%) to report - or label their internal processes as efficient.

## Largest barriers to submission

‘What is the largest barrier to submitting quality data (and why)?’

## Other Issues:

This category was not expanded upon, described only as ‘other’. The responses collected were as below:

* 21% of all training providers reported ‘other’ issues as being their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort below:
* 18% of small fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
* 20% of medium fee for service and 21% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
* 21% of large fee for service and 28% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.

## Data Collection Issues

* Data collection issues were broken into two main obstacles, ‘incomplete data/students not answering all questions or answering them incorrectly’, and ‘in house error/human error/input error’.
* 17% of all training providers reported ‘incomplete data/students not answering all questions or answering them incorrectly’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort below:
  + - 16% of small fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
    - 23% of medium fee for service and 13% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
    - 25% of large fee for service and 16% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 13% of all training providers reported ‘in house error/human error/input error’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Breakdown by individual cohort below:
  + 15% of small fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 14% of medium fee for service and 15% of government funded training providers reported this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 11% of large fee for service and 14% of government funded training providers reported this issue as their largest barrier.

## Issues with Government Systems or Processes

* This category was broken into three obstacles: ‘Error system not specific enough with what issue is’, ‘lack of clarity with validation rules/constant changes with requirements/lack of support help compliance’, and ‘use of different systems across states/federal/inconsistency of requirements between systems’.
* 8% of all training providers reported: ‘Error system not specific enough with what issue is’ as their largest obstacle to submission of quality data. Breakdown by individual cohort as below:
  + 14% of small fee for service and 22% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 7% of medium fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 2% of large fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
* 8% of all training providers reported ‘lack of clarity with validation rules/constant changes with requirements/lack of support help compliance’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Breakdown by individual cohort as below:
  + 5% of small fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 6% of medium fee for service and 12% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 6% of large fee for service and 5% of government funded training providers list this issue as their largest barrier.
* 8% of all training providers reported ‘use of different systems across states/federal/inconsistency of requirements between systems’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Breakdown by individual cohort as below:
  + 1% of small fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issues.
  + 2% of medium fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 5% of large fee for service and 17% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.

## Validation Issues

* This category was broken into three main obstacles: ‘USI errors / Student ID not congruent with legal name’, ‘Post code verification not exact / address validation’ and ‘Inconsistency of errors detected between SMS and VET validation / lack of communication between SMS vendors and gov on changes’.
* 7% of all training providers reported ‘USI errors / Student ID not congruent with legal name’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 5% of small fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 7% of medium fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 8% of large fee for service and 11% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
* 6% of all training providers reported ‘Post code verification not exact / address validation’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 8% of small fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 6% of medium fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 16% of large fee for service and 8% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
* 6% of all training providers reported ‘Inconsistency of errors detected between SMS and VET validation/lack of communication between SMS vendors and gov on changes’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + No small fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 6% of medium fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 6% of large fee for service and government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.

## Inadequate Resources

* This category was broken into four main obstacles: ‘Is too time consuming /requires too much effort’, ‘Staffing issues / complex staff training for reporting / staff turnover’, ‘Current SMS tools are not adequate / too expensive’ and ‘Complexity/amount of data required’.
* 14% of all training providers reported ‘Is too time consuming /requires too much effort’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 15% of small fee for service and 13% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 15% of medium fee for service and 16% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 10% of large fee for service and 12% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
* 7% of all training providers reported ‘Staffing issues / complex staff training for reporting / staff turnover’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 9% of small fee for service and 4% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 6% of medium fee for service and 7% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 2% of large fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
* 4% of all training providers reported ‘Current SMS tools are not adequate / too expensive’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 3% of small fee for service and 9% of government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 1% of medium fee for service and 3% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 5% of large fee for service and government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
* 4% of all training providers reported ‘Complexity/amount of data required’ as their largest barrier to submission of quality data. Break down by individual cohort as below:
  + 1% of small fee for service and no government funded training providers listed this issue as their largest barrier.
  + 3% of medium fee for service and 2% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.
  + 3% of large fee for service and 10% of government funded training providers reported this as their largest issue.

## Efficiency of the organisation’s internal data validation and submission processes by provider type

Respondents to the survey were asked to rate their organisation’s efficiency via the question ‘How efficient are your organisation’s internal data validation and submission processes or systems?’.

Responses were grouped according to organisation type (privately operated training providers, community-based adult education provider, industry association, school and other) and then graded against ratings of ‘efficient’, ‘somewhat efficient’ and ‘inefficient’.

* Breakdown of responses are as follows:
  + 53% of privately operated training providers reported a rating of ‘efficient’, 42% reported a rating of ‘somewhat efficient’ and 5% reported a rating of ‘inefficient’.
  + 48% of community-based adult education providers reported a rating of ‘efficient’, 39% reported a rating of ‘somewhat efficient’ and 13% reported a rating of ‘inefficient’.
  + 46% of industry associations reported a rating of ‘efficient’, 49% reported a rating of ‘somewhat efficient’ and 5% reported a rating of ‘inefficient’.
  + 36% of schools reported a rating of ‘efficient’, 58% reported a rating of ‘somewhat efficient’ and 6% reported a rating of ‘inefficient’.
  + 53% of other organisations reported a rating of ‘efficient’, 36% reported a rating of ‘somewhat efficient’, and 11% reported a rating of ‘inefficient’.

# Getting Help

## Key Findings

* RTOs regularly contact SMS vendors (63%), NCVER (60%) and STAs (54%) for help. When doing so, most RTOs find it easy to get help.
* 75% of RTOs receive information regarding AVETMISS updates from NCVER, SMS vendors and STAs, but most commonly through NCVER.
* 69% of RTOs want to participate in information sessions and most prefer email as the primary contact channel for updates.

## Preferred contact channels

* 63% of RTOs would like to be contacted for future research and consultation for VDS.

‘What is the best way for the government to inform your organisation about any change to VET data submissions?’

* Emails with brochures 91%
* Information sessions 69%
* Website updates 37%
* Other 5%

The survey sought to understand how the VET sector accesses support and via what channels during the data entry, validation and submission process.

Respondents were asked:

* ‘Which external organisations does your organisation contact for assistance with VET activity data validation or submission issues?’
* ‘How does your organisation currently receive information regarding updates and changes to AVETMISS?’
* ‘Currently, how easy or difficult is it to get good external advice on data validation and submission?’.
* Respondents could provide multiple responses to the first two questions, therefore percentages for these do not total to 100.
* For ‘Which external organisations does your organisation contact for assistance with VET activity data validation or submission issues?’, responses were as below:
  + 54% of respondents contacted their state/territory training authority.
  + 60% of respondents contacted National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
  + 63% of respondents contacted their student management system vendor (if commercial)
  + 32% of respondents contacted a VET sector regulator (ASQA, TAC, VRQA etc)
  + 5% of respondents contacted ‘other’ unnamed organisations.
* For ‘How does your organisation currently receive information regarding updates and changes to AVETMISS?’, responses were as below:
  + 47% of respondents receive updates via their state/territory training authority.
  + 75% of respondents receive updates via National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
  + 46% of respondents receive updates via student management system vendor (if commercial)
  + 51% of respondents receive updates via a VET sector regulator (ASQA, TAC, VRQA etc)
  + 22% of respondents receive updates via ‘other’ unnamed channels.
* For ‘Currently, how easy, or difficult is it to get good external advice on data validation and submission?’, responses were as below:
  + 24% of respondents reported it to be ‘very easy’ and 15% reported it to be ‘somewhat easy’ to get help from their state/territory training authority.
  + 24% of respondents reported it to be ‘very easy’ and 16% reported it to be ‘somewhat easy’ to get help from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
  + 24% of respondents reported it to be ‘very easy’ and 14% reported it to be ‘somewhat easy’ to get help from their student management system vendor (if commercial)
  + 24% of respondents reported it to be ‘very easy’ and 11% reported it to be ‘somewhat easy’ to get help from their VET Regulator (ASQA, TAC, VRQA)
  + 24% of respondents reported it to be ‘very easy’ and 15% reported it to be ‘somewhat easy’ to get help from via ‘other’ unnamed channels.

# Conclusion

## The benefit of this research for the VET sector

DEWR is working closely with our program delivery partners, including the state and territory governments and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, to use these findings in ways that support jurisdiction-specific needs associated with the rollout of the program. DEWR believes that by providing this research to the sector, it will find additional value and purpose for those who contributed to it and for the broader sector.

## Engagement with the sector

The VET Data Streamlining program is committed to engaging early and often with the sector and have established forums with representatives from across the sector and each jurisdiction. These include the External User Reference Group and several sub-groups which focus on user design, technology and systems, training, and support, change management and stakeholder needs and analysis.

EURG meets regularly and is attended by representatives from large and small training providers including TAFEs, state and territory training authorities, SMS providers, VET peak bodies and regulators. The Extended Consultation Group (ECG) is a forum for ad-hoc, informal engagement which provides occasional input on implementation issues.

# Stay up to date

As the program progresses, information and support materials will be published on the DEWR and our delivery partner’s websites.

* [dewr.gov.au/vds](https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/skills-reform-overview/vet-data-streamlining-program)
* [ncver.edu.au](https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/skills-reform-overview/vet-data-streamlining-program)
* [act.gov.au/skills](https://www.act.gov.au/skills/home)
* [education.nsw.gov.au/](https://education.nsw.gov.au/)
* [skillingterritorians.nt.gov.au](https://skillingterritorians.nt.gov.au/home)
* [education.vic.gov.au/](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/)
* [dtwd.wa.gov.au/](https://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/)
* [education.sa.gov.au/](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/)
* [desbt.qld.gov.au/](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/)
* [skills.tas.gov.au/home](https://www.skills.tas.gov.au/home)

Enquiries about the program can be sent to [VETDataStreamlining@dewr.gov.au](mailto:VETDataStreamlining@dewr.gov.au)

1. APIs is the acronym for Application Programming Interface – a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)