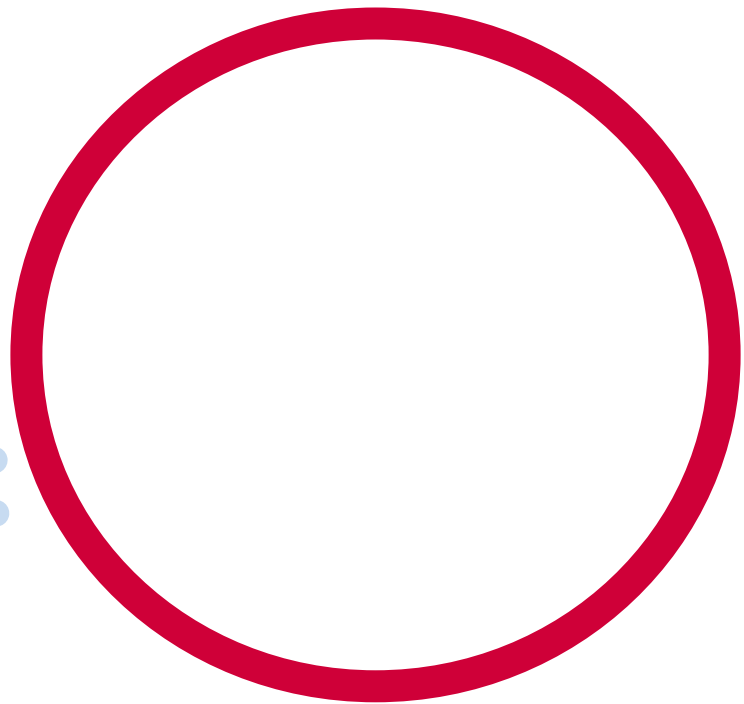
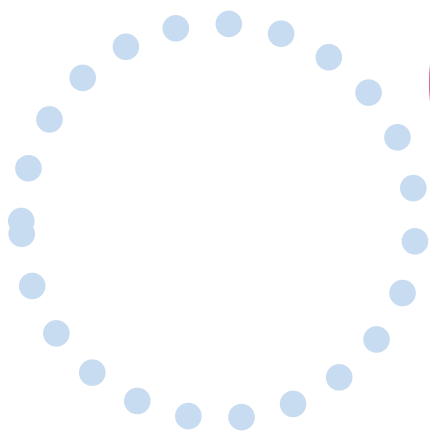
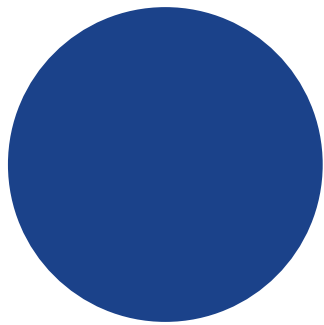


Improving post-training outcomes for VET students who experience disadvantage

Discussion paper



1 Introduction

The NSW Government is continuing to shift towards an “**outcomes-focused approach**” to policy and program design. This approach can be seen in the draft Smart and Skilled NSW Quality Framework – which sets the quality and performance expectations for Smart and Skilled providers.

As part of this commitment, the Department of Education is looking for opportunities to **improve post-training outcomes for students undertaking Government funded vocational education training (VET) in NSW**.

The purpose of this paper is to trigger discussion on the effectiveness of existing arrangements and support streams for students who experience some form of disadvantage in education and training.

1.1 Executive summary

1.1.1 Background

The NSW Government offers additional support to students who experience disadvantage through a mix of funding and policy settings under Smart and Skilled (the key program that delivers subsidised VET to NSW students), as well as other targeted programs which are designed to support specific cohorts of students.

This support plays an important role given there are a large proportion of students in the Smart and Skilled system who experience some form of disadvantage¹. These students can typically encounter a range of barriers in education and training that can impact their ability to achieve training and employment outcomes at the same rate as the overall population².

In addition to aligning with the ambitions of the draft NSW Quality Framework, improving post-training outcomes for students who experience disadvantage would lead to wide ranging benefits to individuals, communities and the economy. It is therefore a critical goal of the NSW VET system and broader Government.

1.1.2 Current issues

Two recently completed data analysis and research projects have helped identify issues with current arrangements that place limits on the likelihood of students completing training and achieving a positive post-training outcome. These issues have been grouped into the following themes:

- **The broader context for post-training outcomes** – including issues such as discrimination and stigma, labour market context and the effectiveness of other system supports.
- **Student participation and experiences in training** – including low participation in training areas that typically lead to the strongest outcomes, prevalence of individualised learning plans, better sharing of information and ensuring additional supports are provided when needed.

¹ More than 40% of Smart and Skilled students receive additional funding based on their circumstances.

² For example, Department of Education analysis shows that all categories of “disadvantaged students” (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with Disability and Long-term unemployed students) were consistently below the overall Smart and Skilled completion rate by around 15 percentage points.

- **Variability in availability of specialised supports** – including low “disadvantage confidence” from providers and employers, the concentration of “specialist expertise” to pockets within TAFE NSW and Adult and Community Education (ACE) and additional barriers for remote students.
- **The relationship between funding support streams** – including blurred intersections across streams and low instances of identifying “best-practice”.

1.1.3 Opportunities to improve on current arrangements

Addressing these issues and achieving our targets requires a greater focus on delivering an inclusive ecosystem for students who experience disadvantage, achieving greater participation and completion in quality training and employment outcomes.

This broad ambition is broken down into four high-level policy objectives – intended to guide the design of any future changes:

1. Achieving greater participation by students who experience disadvantage in training areas that lead to typically strong employment outcomes (such as apprenticeships or traineeships and higher level qualifications) and align with the strengths and interests of the individual.
2. Providers offering training support and services based on the individual needs of students who experience disadvantage, which leads to increased completion and post-training outcomes.
3. Increasing the availability and depth of specialist expertise across the sector and support for linkages to other sectors.
4. Greater clarity, transparency and evaluation of Government funding to ensure its use is effective and efficient in supporting disadvantaged students to achieve positive outcomes.

1.1.4 Next steps

Readers are encouraged to consider the issues raised in in this paper and to express their views in response to the discussion questions (see below).

Feedback will inform the development of proposed options (i.e. any changes) to achieve greater post-training outcomes for these students, which will be the subject of a second round of consultation. Written feedback can be provided by completing the following survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P8YKTLG>.

1.1.5 Discussion questions

The following discussion questions are intended to prompt stakeholders to express their thoughts, concerns or ideas when participating in the consultation activities.

- 1. Which of the four themes (discussed in sections 3.1 – 3.4) is the most important to improving post-training outcomes for disadvantaged cohorts of students?**
- 2. What other training and support issues limit the likelihood of disadvantaged cohorts of students completing their training and gaining employment? What suggestions do you have to overcome this?**
- 3. How can the VET sector work more effectively and cohesively with other sectors to achieve positive post-training outcomes for students? (discussed in section 3.1.3)**
- 4. How can disadvantaged cohorts of students be supported to take-up training with better post-training outcomes, such as apprenticeships and traineeships? (discussed in section 3.2.1)**
- 5. How can we ensure students receive more person-centred assistance through the training experience, including with course selection and individualised supports? (discussed in section 3.2.2)**
- 6. How can we better leverage the existing specialist expertise in supporting disadvantaged students to apply across the NSW VET system? (discussed in section 3.3.2)**
- 7. What is the best approach to overcoming issues faced by disadvantaged students in regional and remote areas? (discussed in section 3.3.3.)**
- 8. Are the policy objectives and measures of success for current NSW Government funding programs for disadvantaged students clear? (discussed in section 3.4)**
- 9. What changes are needed to ensure students who require additional support, particularly disadvantaged cohorts, receive it? (e.g up-front loading payments, changes to existing loading payment formula or eligibility criteria etc) (discussed in sections 3.2.2, 3.3, 3.4.1)**
- 10. How can we get the right mix of funding streams to ensure that students are supported to achieve good outcomes? (discussed in sections 3.2 – 3.4)**
- 11. How can measurement of provider performance and student outcomes be improved? (e.g. completion and employment measures, drawing on student experience data, annual qualitative reporting etc) (discussed in section 3.4.3)**

2 Background

2.1.1 Types of disadvantage

‘Disadvantaged’ is a broad term used to describe people who experience barriers as a result of society and their individual circumstances. People with the following characteristics may experience disadvantage in a training and employment setting as a result of one or a combination of these characteristics:

- People with disability;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- People with a low socio-economic status (especially low level of income);
- People living in regional and remote areas of NSW;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Long-term unemployed people;
- Refugees and people seeking asylum; and
- Students with low levels of language, literacy, numeracy and digital capability.

Whilst the experiences of students will differ on a case-by-case basis, some of the most common experiences of these students include:

- Discrimination and stigma, which can lead to low self-esteem;
- Lack of financial resources to participate in training;
- Juggling caring, family and community commitments;
- Low “disadvantage confidence” from educators and trainers;
- Limited individualisation and person centred approaches to learning; and
- Additional barriers for students in regional and remote locations in accessing support services and employment opportunities.

2.1.2 Existing supports for students who experience disadvantage

The NSW Government supports training through a variety of different initiatives, some of which are available more broadly to all students and providers, and some of which are more targeted to certain cohorts of students or providers. The “core funding streams” that support disadvantaged cohorts to participate and succeed in training are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of “core NSW funding streams” for disadvantaged students

Initiative	Description	Current policy objective
Smart and Skilled fee exemptions and concessions	<p>Smart and Skilled is the key program that funds VET in NSW. Under Smart and Skilled, there are a variety of current <i>free training</i> initiatives designed to fully waive or reduce student fees. A student’s status or the type of course they are studying will determine whether the Government fully covers the cost of the training (i.e. whether training is “fee free” or “concessional”).</p> <p>These fee arrangements apply to eligible students training with any approved Smart and Skilled provider.</p>	<p>To promote access to training for key cohorts of students (such as Aboriginal students and students with disability) or to incentivise the broader student population into “priority training areas”(such as apprenticeships and traineeships).</p>

<p>Smart and Skilled Loading payments</p>	<p>Loadings payments are a top-up to the subsidy paid to the provider. They are calculated as a percentage of the qualification price. They compensate providers for the typical additional costs associated with providing training to specific categories of students.</p> <p>A provider may receive a maximum of one <i>needs-based</i> loading (10 or 15% of the qualification price) and one <i>location-based</i> loading (10 or 20% of the qualification price) for an individual student.</p> <p><i>Needs-based</i> cohorts are Aboriginal students, students with a disability and long-term unemployed students. <i>Location based</i> cohorts are regional and remote students.</p> <p>Smart and Skilled Providers receive loading payments for students whose training is funded under the Smart and Skilled contract.</p>	<p>To remove potential disincentives for providers to enrol disadvantaged cohorts of students with typically higher training costs.</p>
<p>TAFE NSW Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding to support Aboriginal students, students with a disability and other disadvantaged students</p>	<p>CSO funding is currently used to deliver a range of activities and wrap-around services such as pre-training support, mentoring, access to adaptive technologies and learning support services, career counselling and supporting community or group initiatives etc.</p> <p>Funding is only for TAFE NSW.</p>	<p>The Government provides CSO funding in acknowledgment that TAFE NSW (as a public provider) undertakes some activities that do not align with their commercial objectives but go towards meeting NSW Government policy objectives – such as improving participation and completion outcomes for disadvantaged students.</p>
<p>The Adult and Community Education (ACE) program</p>	<p>The ACE program provides a wide range of generalist (including Foundation skills) and lower level part qualifications (up to certificate III) to learners that often require more intensive learning and training support. A key component of ACE funding is to enable the provision of intensive support to students undertaking part-qualifications to enable them to be able to transition into full qualifications.</p> <p>Funding is available for approved Adult and Community Education Providers.</p>	<p>To promote access to training for disadvantaged students (who face barriers to training such as low literacy and numeracy skills), and students in regional and remote communities in NSW.</p>

Outside of these core funding streams, there is a suite of targeted training and employment programs. For example the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program, Way Ahead for Aboriginal People program, the Refugee Employment Support Program and many others are designed to support specific cohorts of students who experience disadvantage. Whilst these programs are outside the scope of this project, it will be

important to consider how different initiatives co-exist within the overall system and to identify opportunities to better complement one another.

3 Current issues

Data analysis and research has highlighted some initial issues with current arrangements and available supports for students who experience disadvantage. The two main projects which have informed this starting position are:

- An internal Evaluation of *Smart and Skilled Loadings Payments*, which utilised statistical data to analyse the effectiveness of the existing loadings framework in meeting access objectives.
- The *VET, Disability and Disadvantage research project* undertaken by the University of Sydney (University of Sydney research), which looked at how disadvantaged cohorts, particularly people with a disability engage with VET.

Identified issues arising from these projects are grouped into four themes:

- **The broader context for post-training outcomes**
- **Student participation and experiences in training**
- **The variability in availability of specialised supports**
- **The relationship between funding support streams**

Discussion questions

- Which of the four themes (discussed in sections 3.1 – 3.4) is the most important to improving post-training outcomes for disadvantaged cohorts of students?
- What other training and support issues limit the likelihood of disadvantaged cohorts of students completing their training and gaining employment? What suggestions do you have to overcome this?

3.1 The broader context for post-training outcomes

3.1.1 Discrimination and stigma

Discrimination and stigma towards people who experience disadvantage is deep-seated and widespread. In addition to broader social inequalities that this can cause, it impacts people's ability to complete school, participate in further education and training and secure employment.

Current or previous experiences of discrimination and stigma, particularly about disability, can also impact individual's self-belief in their ability. It can also make individuals reluctant to disclose information (such as their disability) to VET providers, which can limit their access to supports.

3.1.2 Labour market context

Disadvantaged cohorts, and especially people with disability, have lower employment rates than those not experiencing disadvantage. This suggests that whilst a better skilled population is important and must continue to be a priority across Governments, it is not the only answer to joblessness. For example, quality training must complement other

initiatives and programs which are designed to encourage employers to hire more people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The coronavirus pandemic is likely to further exacerbate the employment gap for those who experience disadvantage – especially without Government interventions. The National Skills Commission (like many others) forecasts that long-term employment will likely rise considerably in the medium-term, as it did following the Global Financial Crisis.³ Increased labour competition is likely to more negatively impact employment opportunities for students who experience disadvantage. For example, in addition to facing discrimination and bias, there may be less social capital from employers willing to invest in equity targets and initiatives.

It is also important to note that regional and remote communities typically (but not always) have less economic and employment opportunities than metropolitan areas. This can create barriers for students (who may be seeking an apprenticeship or traineeship) and graduates seeking to find employment in their relevant field.

3.1.3 Interactions with other systems and sector supports

There are a range of support systems across different sectors that aim to eliminate barriers and gaps for people who experience disadvantage. These sectors range from education and training, employment, social services, health and justice. For example, people with a disability could be simultaneously supported by two or more systems (such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme and VET). JobActive Providers and other employment agencies are other examples of important cross-system supports that students who experience disadvantage regularly engage with.

A person-centred approach across these support systems must work effectively and cohesively to give students the best possible chance of success. This can include instances where the different system supports co-ordinate and develop individual plans for students, which deal with and seek to address all forms of disadvantage that a student may be experiencing.

A finding of the University of Sydney research was that disadvantaged cohorts often experience “compliance-driven pathways” when engaging in these systems instead of best practice that leads to successful longer-term outcomes. The support for disadvantage cohorts under the compliance-driven pathways is based on the rules of the funding model instead of individual needs. This experience can see people kept in a holding pattern instead of progressing to achievement of the person’s goals.

Discussion question

- **How can the VET sector work more effectively and cohesively with other sectors to achieve positive post-training outcomes for students?**

³ National Skills Commission, ‘*snapshot in time: the Australian labour market and COVID-19*’, section 1.2, released 1 July 2020.

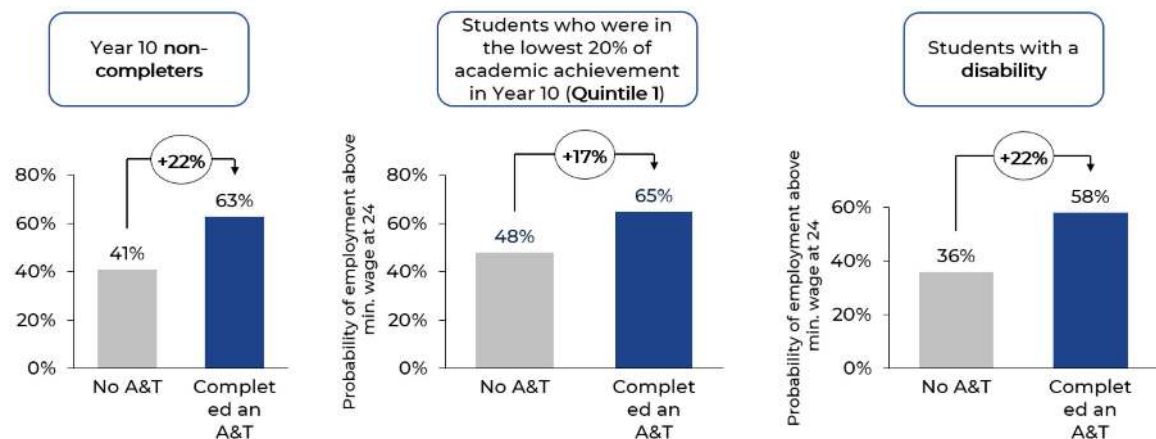
3.2 Student participation and experiences in training

3.2.1 Limited instances of students who experience disadvantage undertaking training which leads to the strongest outcomes

Overall, existing data demonstrates that *needs-based* and *location-based* categories of disadvantaged students (refer to Table 1 for definitions) have good levels of training participation under Smart and Skilled. Please refer to Table 2 in the appendix for a detailed summary of overall Smart and Skilled participation trends.

However, *needs-based* students do not undertake training in areas that typically lead to strong employment outcomes at the same rate as the overall student population. Evidence demonstrates that completing an apprenticeship or traineeship is significantly beneficial for some cohorts of students and enables them to achieve better employment and lifelong outcomes (source: Educational Pathways data – see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Probability of employment above min. wage at age 24 for NSW VET students with various characteristics.



This leads to questions on how best Government can help to encourage students into selecting courses that not only align with their interests and goals – but are most likely to bring them longer-term employment and financial benefits.

3.2.2 Limited individualisation and person centred approaches to learning

Data on individuals with similar characteristics is a powerful tool that must be used to inform approaches to education and learning. However people's circumstances, training needs and goals are unique - regardless of whether or not somebody fits into a cohort of "disadvantage".

Evidence shows that successful outcomes are also influenced by individualised, or person-centred, approaches to education and training that focus on the individual in the context of their lives instead of offering supports based on categories of disadvantage or diagnoses. This is especially important as most disadvantaged c rarely experience only one form of disadvantage.

For these reasons, the recently revised draft NSW Quality Framework sets the expectation that all Smart and Skilled providers will actively seek to focus on shifting towards a person-centred approach that understands the strengths and interests of the individual.

Examples of person-centred approaches can involve:

- an understanding of an individual's strengths so that they can be prioritised;

- individualised (and independent) course selection support;
- identification of an initial literacy or numerary gap – then ensuring that the student also has access to a Foundational Skills Course (for example);
- genuine dialogue with individuals to really understand what supports they need and the extent to which they can be offered in a particular organisational environment;
- the development of individual learning plans; and
- flexible (without time restraints) progression through stages of learning from foundation to more specialised learning.

It is also important to highlight that disadvantaged learners (particularly students with disability) also experience variable levels of successful transitions from school into further education and training. This is an important area that must be improved through strategies such as receiving early career planning (i.e. whilst still in school), course selection/personalised planning which aligns with the student's goals and structured work experience opportunities.

3.2.3 Disconnect between current arrangements and ensuring students who require additional support can receive it

One of the key factors impacting training completion is whether or not additional support is provided to students in need of it. This is clearly demonstrated in the Student Outcomes Survey (SOS) data, which shows disadvantaged cohorts of students who receive additional supports even experience a boost in completion rates above those of students who did not require additional support (+4.65pp).

Alternatively, the few students (3.65%) who required additional support but did not receive it were very substantially less likely to successfully complete the training (-36.53pp) and very substantially more likely to withdraw from training (+33.63pp). *Please refer to Table 3 in the appendix for a detailed summary of the overall impact of supports for different student cohorts.*

This raises questions on whether current arrangements (like the design and availability of loading payments under Smart and Skilled) enable providers to provide additional supports to students in need of them. This will be further discussed in section 3.4

Discussion questions

- **How can disadvantaged cohorts of students be supported to take-up training with better post-training outcomes, such as apprenticeships and traineeships?**
- **How can we ensure students receive more person-centred assistance through the training experience, including with course selection and individualised supports?**

3.3 Availability of specialised supports is variable

3.3.1 Low disadvantage confidence

Poor knowledge and a general lack of "disadvantage confidence" (particularly about students with a disability) from by employers and VET educators was identified as another limiting issue for students who experience disadvantage in the University of Sydney research.

A lack of knowledge or understanding about disadvantaged learners amongst VET providers and employers can lead to a lack of appropriate supports or adjustments in the learning environment or the workplace. Students in this scenario are also more likely to feel less welcomed in the classroom and workplaces – and these poor experiences can lead to poor outcomes.

Under current arrangements, trainers with specialist expertise are typically limited to pockets within TAFE and ACE providers (discussed in the next section).

3.3.2 Lack of specialist expertise across the system

Importantly, research from the University of Sydney confirms the current existence of deep specialist expertise that support disadvantaged cohorts of students (but not all). This specialist expertise transforms into a range of indirect training delivery services concerning course selection, development of individualised learning plans, communication and study/skills assistance etc.

However, this specialist expertise (particularly in “disability confidence”) in the NSW VET system appears to be largely, but not solely, limited to TAFE NSW and the ACE sector. This is most likely due to the allocation of TAFE CSO and ACE program funding which is used to, among other things, support disadvantaged cohorts of students through a variety of wrap-around and intensive support services.

A lack of access to specialist expertise reduces the likelihood of students experiencing “best practice transitions” from school into vocational education and into the labour market. In these instances, expert school and VET educators would work together to identify and provide appropriate course selection, gap training and adjustments. Students would also become exposed to opportunities with employers who are both engaged and well-structured for the student.

Increasing the availability of specialist expertise across the VET system would likely lead to many benefits. It would be a step towards achieving a system where high-quality support is available to all students, including those who don’t disclose their disadvantage. This “mainstreaming” of support services would maximise the potential to improve outcomes for all students.

3.3.3 Additional barriers for students in regional and remote locations

There is a high incidence of students experiencing multiple disadvantage. One example of this can be seen in the problem of overcoming these barriers (especially students with disability) for students living in regional and remote locations.

In comparison with students living and studying in urban environments, regional and remote students can have more limited choice and control over their education, class-based supports and learning pathways. This means that they are less able to seek and receive the education that they need to have for a career and find employment compared to people living in metropolitan areas. Some students may consider relocating to metropolitan areas to gain access to more supports or opportunities. This can be an extremely difficult decision for a range of reasons, for example Aboriginal students may struggle to leave country and their family support networks.

Discussion questions

- **How can we better leverage the existing specialist expertise in supporting disadvantaged students to apply across the NSW VET system?**

- **What is the best approach to overcoming issues faced by disadvantaged students in regional and remote areas?**

3.4 Lack of clarity on funding support stream objectives and measuring outcomes

3.4.1 The objectives and design of the Smart and Skilled Loadings

The current policy objective of Smart and Skilled loading payments is “to remove disincentives from providers enrolling disadvantaged students with typically higher training costs”. However analysis has found no evidence that loadings payments drive preferential enrolment behaviour from providers – suggesting that positive overall training participation is most likely attributed to the Smart and Skilled Fee Policy (i.e. the removal of fee barriers for students). This finding reinforces views expressed by stakeholders during the University of Sydney research consultations regarding a lack of clarity on the objective of loading payments.

In addition to the lack of clarity on the purpose of loading payments, the following issues with are also limiting the likelihood of providers using this funding support to support students:

- payments are made directly into general revenue pools (rather than a distinct funding bucket);
- payments are made to the provider in small amounts and over the course of the training through the regular payment milestones;
- the amount of loading is tied to the volume of training which is not necessarily representative of cost for delivering to disadvantaged students; and
- there is no clear guidance on how the funding should be used, nor are providers required to meet any KPIs in order to receive funding.

3.4.2 Relationship between funding support streams

There are a variety of funding support streams available to assist students who experience disadvantage to engage and succeed in the NSW VET system. Unfortunately, a lack of clarity on the funding objectives may be causing blurred intersections across support streams. For example, Smart and Skilled fee exemptions and loading payments both support participation for disadvantaged cohorts of students.

This can result in funding duplication or gaps for students across the sector. It also raises transparency and accountability concerns for the use of Government funding.

Establishing clear objectives for different funding streams is a first step in setting up accountability arrangements with performance measures to assess how well the objectives are being achieved.

3.4.3 Identification of performance measures for funding streams

Part of moving towards an “outcomes-focused approach” must be to evaluate whether or not funding has been used to achieve its objectives – especially where the VET funding to support disadvantaged cohorts of students is a key part of delivering for NSW citizens.

The Department regularly monitors and analyses the performance of the NSW training market, however some funding streams do not have detailed key performance indicators. This can limit the ability of Government to measure the effectiveness of different funding

streams or initiatives – and to identify the specific initiative (and funding stream) that is attributed to the lift in performance. Importantly, this prevents the assessment of effectiveness of different programs to allow Government to invest resources in best practices.

Before considering new or additional data sources or reporting requirements, it is useful to consider what is already currently available. This includes, but is not limited to:

- VET student participation and completions data;
- VET graduate outcomes data – including data on graduates who are employed after training (of those not employed before training) or employed at a higher skill level after training);
- Student experience data (SOS) – including looking at the training experience of the student such as data on the provision of additional supports to students and whether or not the student received a personal benefit from training; and
- Australian Tax Office employment and wage data – including looking at short and medium term employment and earnings data, as well as longitudinal outcomes and trends.

3.4.4 Better sharing of data

Sharing of information across sectors (i.e. schools and further education) would assist with the transition for students from school and into further education, as well as reduce the burden for students to have to disclose their disadvantage.

For example, data on successful adjustments (i.e. changes to the environment, curriculum or teaching delivery to ensure a student with disability can better participate in the learning) which were successful for students' with disability during their school years could be better utilised by educators and trainers post-school.

Discussion questions

- **Are the policy objectives and measures of success for current NSW Government funding programs for disadvantaged students clear?**
- **What changes are needed to ensure students who require additional support, particularly disadvantaged cohorts, receive it? (e.g up-front loading payments, changes to existing loading payment formula or eligibility criteria etc)**
- **How can we get the right mix of funding streams to ensure that students are supported to achieve good outcomes?**
- **How can measurement of provider performance and student outcomes be improved? (e.g. completion and employment measures, drawing on student experience data, annual qualitative reporting etc)**

4 Opportunities to improve on current arrangements

As highlighted in the executive summary, four high-level policy objectives are intended to provide direction to achieve the overarching goal of improving post-training outcomes for students who experience disadvantage. These objectives also seek to address some of the existing issues discussed in the previous section.

These four policy objectives are:

1. Achieving greater participation by students who experience disadvantage in training areas that lead to typically strong employment outcomes (such as apprenticeships or traineeships and higher level qualifications) and aligns with the strengths and interests of the individual.
2. Providers offering tailored training support and services based on the individual needs of students who experience disadvantage, which leads to increased completion and post-training outcomes.
3. Increasing the availability and depth of specialist expertise across the sector and support for linkages to other sectors.
4. Greater clarity, transparency and evaluation of Government funding to ensure its use is effective and efficient in supporting disadvantaged students to achieve positive outcomes.

5 Summary

Improving post-training outcomes for cohorts of students who typically experience disadvantage in training and employment would lead to wide-ranging benefits for individuals and broader society. During a time of global uncertainty, disruption and increasing unemployment – it has never been more important to make efforts to address issues with current arrangements which are limiting the likelihood of these students achieving success at the same rate as the overall population.

Utilising existing data and analysis, issues under current arrangements were grouped into the following four themes:

- **The broader context for post-training outcomes**
- **Student participation and experiences in training**
- **Variability in availability of specialised supports**
- **The Relationship between funding support streams**

Stakeholders are asked to respond to these issues, as well as highlight any other issues which are currently limiting the likelihood of students (who experience disadvantage) undertaking training and achieving positive post-training outcomes.

The proposed direction for addressing these issues seeks to focus on **delivering an inclusive ecosystem for students who experience disadvantage, achieving greater participation and completion in quality training and employment outcomes.**

Feedback on the issues will inform the refinement of the proposed direction and design of possible options to achieve these objectives.

Any questions about this paper or the consultation process can be emailed to MarketDesign.Implementation@det.nsw.edu.au.

6 Appendix

Table 2: Summary of Loadings Eligible participation trends under Smart and Skilled

Needs-based loading cohorts	Location-based loading cohorts
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General patterns</u></p> <p>The share of Smart and Skilled Contestable Funding (SSCF)⁴ commencements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is over 3 times their share of the NSW working age population.</p> <p>For long-term unemployed people it is over five times their share of the NSW working age population.</p> <p>Students with disability make up 13.27% of SSCF commencements compared with 16.3% of the total NSW population.</p> <p>All cohorts of disadvantaged students are substantially more likely to undertake Entitlement Full Qualifications (i.e. certificates I -III level qualifications) than Smart and Skilled students overall.</p> <p>All cohorts of disadvantaged students are less likely to undertake Apprenticeships and Traineeships.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General patterns</u></p> <p>Regional and remote students make up a marginally larger share of Smart and Skilled Contestable Funding (SSCF) commitments than their share of the NSW population.</p> <p>Regional and remote students are somewhat more likely to undertake Entitlement Full Qualifications (i.e. certificates I -III level qualifications).</p> <p>Regional students are somewhat less likely to undertake Targeted Priorities Pre-Vocational Qualification training, whereas remote students are somewhat more likely to undertake them.</p> <p>Remote students are somewhat less likely to undertake a Targeted Priorities Full Qualification (i.e. certificates IV – Advanced Diploma level qualifications), compared to Smart and Skilled students overall.</p> <p>Regional students are somewhat more likely to undertake an Apprenticeship or Traineeship and remote students are somewhat less likely.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Qualification level</u></p> <p>Students with disability are less likely to undertake Certificate III, and Certificate IV and higher qualifications, and are more likely to undertake a Certificate II or Certificate I.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are somewhat more likely to undertake a Certificate II (+4.15pp) and somewhat less likely to undertake a qualification at Certificate IV level or above (-3.72pp)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Qualification level</u></p> <p>Metro students are somewhat more likely to undertake a Certificate IV or higher qualification.</p> <p>Regional students are somewhat more likely to undertake a Certificate III qualification.</p> <p>Remote students are less likely to undertake a Certificate IV or higher and marginally more likely to undertake a Certificate II.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Provider type</u></p> <p>Students with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are less likely to enrol with private training providers and are correspondingly more likely to enrol with TAFE NSW.</p> <p>Long term un-employed students are more likely to enroll with a private training provider.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Provider type</u></p> <p>Remote students are somewhat less likely to enrol with private RTOs and somewhat more likely to enrol with TAFE NSW compared to Smart and Skilled students overall.</p> <p>There are negligible differences in the distribution of commencements between provider types for regional students and metro students.</p>

⁴ Smart and Skilled Contestable Funding (SSCF) refers to all contestable training activity under Smart and Skilled (Foundational Skills, Part-qualifications through and Full Qualifications) – excluding TAFE NSW students studying qualifications at the Certificate IV to Advanced Diploma level (TAFE NSW Direct Funding) due to lack of available data.

Table 3: Summary of SOS evaluation on additional supports

Disadvantaged category	Data highlights
<p>General data highlights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the students who answered, 45.1% reported they received additional supports. • The vast majority (88.43%) of SOS respondents who did not receive additional support reported that it was not required. • Overall, the SOS responses indicate that additional supports are effective in overcoming barriers to successful completion. Students that receive additional supports even experience a boost in completion rates above those of students who did not require additional support (+4.65pp). However, the few students (3.65%) who required additional support but did not receive it were very substantially less likely to successfully complete the training (-36.53pp) and very substantially more likely to withdraw from training (+33.63pp). • The positive effects on successful completion rates from receiving additional support, and the negative effects of needing additional support but not receiving it, are less pronounced when online delivery is excluded. This suggests that additional support is particularly important for students undertaking online training.
<p>Students with disability data highlights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half of all students with disability who completed the SOS received additional supports (52.53%), meaning students with disability are significantly more likely (+13.04pp) to have received additional support relative to all SOS respondents. • However, students with disability are substantially more likely (+10.27pp) to have required extra help but not received it. • Compared to the population of SOS respondents, students with disability overall are somewhat less likely to successfully complete (-4.18pp). • Receiving additional support boosts the completion rate for students with disability by 5.68 percentage points and this more than makes up for the difference.
<p>Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander student data highlights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reported receiving additional supports at a similar rate to SOS respondents overall. • However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are somewhat more likely (+4.58pp) to have required extra help but not received it. • Compared to the population of SOS respondents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students overall are more likely to withdraw from training (+9.19pp) and less likely to successfully complete (-9.38pp). • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who did not receive additional support but required it are substantially more likely to withdraw from training (+14.22pp) and substantially less likely to successfully complete (-14.67pp). • However, receiving additional support improves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' completion rate by 7.13 percentage points, so that it differs only marginally (-2.35pp) from the completion rate for SOS respondents overall.
<p>Regional and remote student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of students who received no additional supports but required extra help differed negligibly between SOS respondents overall and students

data highlights:	<p>in metro, regional and remote locations. This indicates there are no significant differences between students in metro, regional and remote locations in the level of need for additional support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional students (+2.56pp) and remote students (+3.63pp) are somewhat more likely to report that they did not receive additional support because it was not required, compared to all SOS respondents.• Overall, remote students are marginally less likely to successfully complete the training (-2.74pp) and marginally more likely to withdraw from training (+2.24pp).• Respectively, regional students (+4.81pp) and remote students (+5.63pp) that reported they required additional support but did not receive it are more likely to withdraw from training, compared to all students that reported that additional support was required but not received.
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