VET teachers' motivations survey 2023: Full results

Quantitative responses, and 'other' qualitative responses

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Should be read in conjunction with the survey questions

*All response percentages rounded to 1 decimal place

1. Are you currently working as a VET teacher/trainer in a Registered Training Organisation (including TAFE)? (Note: Those employed by schools as a VET in Schools teacher are not eligible).

Working as a VET teacher in an RTO?	N	%
Yes	149	87.6
No	21	12.4
Total	170	100.0

About you and your work as a VET teacher

2. How long have you worked as a VET teacher/trainer?

Years of service	N	%
0-4 years	46	31.1
5-9 years	52	35.1
10-19 years	36	24.3
20-29 years	10	6.8
30+ years	4	2.7
Total	148	100.0

3. What is your age?

Age	N	%
20-29	3	2.0
30-39	24	16.2
40-49	42	28.4
50-59	63	42.6
60+	16	10.8
Total	148	100.0

4. With which gender do you identify?

Gender	N	%
Female	93	62.8
Male	54	36.5
Non-binary	0	0.0
Prefer not to say	1	0.7
Total	148	100.0

5. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin or descent?

ATSI origin or descent	N	%
Yes	4	2.7
No	143	97.3
Total	147	100.0

6. In which country were you born?

Country	N	%
Australia	118	79.7
Other (please specify)	30	20.3
Total	148	100.0

Other (n = 30)

- India (6)
- Brazil
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Canada
- Zimbabwe (2)
- United Kingdom (7)
- Turkey (2)
- Do not wish to disclose
- Sri Lanka
- Austria
- Mauritius
- New Zealand
- Germany
- Hungary
- Philippines

7. If you answered 'Other', how long have you lived in Australia?

Length of time in Australia	N	%
0-4 years	0	0.0
5-9 years	2	6.1
10+ years	31	93.9
Total	33	100.0

8. Do you usually speak a language other than English at home?

Usually speak other than English at home?	N	%
No, English only	126	86.3
Yes, another language	20	13.7
Total	146	100.0

9. Do you identify as having a disability? *(This may include physical and/or psychological/psychosocial conditions which may be diagnosed or undiagnosed).*

Disability	N	%
Yes	17	11.5
No	128	86.5
Prefer not to say	3	2.0
Total	148	100.0

10. When you entered VET teaching what was your highest qualification in VET teaching?

Highest qual in VET teaching	N	%
Diploma of VET	8	5.4
Cert IV in Training and Assessment	113	76.9
Skill set from Cert IV	12	8.2
A higher level qualification in adult and/or Vocational Education	14	9.5
Total	147	100.0

11. When you entered VET teaching what was your highest completed qualification in any other industry or discipline area?

Qualification level	N	%
Certificate III	20	13.6
Certificate IV	19	12.9
Diploma/Advanced Diploma	30	20.4
VET sector (Training Package) Grad Cert/Grad Dip	0	0.0
Higher Education Associate Degree/ Bachelor's Degree	45	30.6
Higher Education Grad Cert/Grad Dip	13	8.8
Masters by coursework or research	19	12.9
Doctorate (PhD, EdD etc)	1	0.7
Total	147	100.0

12. Are you currently either studying a VET teacher-education course at a university, or have recently completed one?

Studying	N	%
Yes	139	93.9
No	9	6.1
Total	148	100.0

13. Please tick the industry/discipline area into which the qualification you teach fit best.

Industry area of qualification	N	%
Agriculture and Animals	10	6.8
Arts, Media and Culture	4	2.7
Business, Financial Services and IT	19	12.8
Community Services	24	16.2
Construction and Property (inc. Electrical)	20	13.5
Foundation Skills, English Language and General Studies	10	6.8
Health and Fitness	22	14.9
Manufacturing and Automotive	14	9.5
TAE	13	8.8
Transport, Infrastructure, Safety and Resources	1	0.7
Wholesale, Retail, Tourism, Hospitality and Personal Services	11	7.4
Total	148	100.0

14. What generally is the age of your students?

Age of students	N	%
Most are less than 20 years old	26	17.6
Most are 21-39 years old	57	38.5
Most are 40+ years old	1	0.7
The students are generally of a mixed age group	64	43.2
Total	148	100.0

15. In which State/Territory is your main work as a teacher/trainer?

State/Territory	N	%
Victoria	99	66.9
Australian Capital Territory	0	0.0
New South Wales	20	13.5
Tasmania	0	0.0
Queensland	8	5.4
Northern Territory	2	1.4
Western Australia	17	11.5
South Australia	2	1.4
Overseas	0	0.0
Total	148	100.0

16. Is that work in a metro/rural-regional/remote area?

Metro/rural-regional/remote area work	N	%
Metropolitan	99	66.9
Rural/Regional	33	22.3
Remote area	16	10.8
Total	148	100.0

17. Are you employed as a VET teacher:

Employment status	N	%
Full-time?	99	66.9
Part-time?	33	22.3
Casual?	16	10.8
Total	148	100.0

18. Approximately how many students are there in the training provider for which you work?

No. of students in the RTO	N	%
Up to 99 students	11	7.4
100-499 students	21	14.2
500-999 students	14	9.5
1000+ students	81	54.7
Not sure	21	14.2
Total	148	100.0

19. What type of training provider do you work for?

Type of RTO	N	%
TAFE	122	82.4
Enterprise RTO	5	3.4
Other Registered Training Organisation (RTO) e.g. private provider	19	12.8
Secondary school (ineligible for survey)	2	1.4
Total	148	100.0

20. As far as you know, does your RTO find it hard to fill VET teacher vacancies in your industry area?

Hard to fill VET teacher vacancies in own industry area?	N	%
Yes	118	83.1
No	24	16.9
Total	142	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 61)

21. As far as you know, does your RTO find it hard to fill VET teacher vacancies in other industry areas?

Hard to fill VET teacher vacancies in other industry areas?	N	%
Yes	111	79.3
No	29	20.7
Total	140	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 61)

About your industry/discipline background

22. *What was the main job you were doing immediately before commencing your work in VET as a teacher/trainer? (Qualitative question, 144 responses)*

23. What level was that job?

Level of job	N	%
Employee (non-professional)	14	9.8
Employee (professional)	58	40.6
Supervisor	13	9.1
Manager	37	25.9
Small business owner	21	14.7
Total	143	100.0

Other (please specify) (n = 8)

24. How do you currently identify?

Occupational identity	N	%
As a VET teacher/trainer	85	58.6
As your prior occupation (e.g. nurse, social worker, plumber)	5	3.4
Both equally	55	37.9
Total	145	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 24)

25. Do you have a concurrent position outside of the VET workforce at this time? e.g. carpenter, clerical assistant, small business owner)

Concurrent position outside of the VET workforce	N	%
Yes	60	41.4
No	85	58.6
Total	145	100.0

26. If you answered 'Yes' to Question 25, is this position in the industry/discipline area in which you teach/train? *(77 answered 'not applicable' – not recorded below)*

Outside work in industry/discipline in which you teach/train?	N	%
Yes	49	76.6
No	15	23.4
Total	64	100.0

(Note: Total is not quite consistent with responses to Q. 25)

27. If you answered 'Yes' to Question 25, which do you consider to be your primary role? (*69 answered 'not applicable' – not recorded below*)

Primary role	N	%
VET teaching/training role	50	70.4
Position outside of VET workforce	9	12.7
Both equally	12	16.9
Total	71	100.0

(Note: Total is not quite consistent with responses to Q. 25)

Moving into VET teaching

28. What was your route for becoming a VET teacher?

Route for becoming a VET teacher	N	%
Directly into full-time work as a VET teacher	40	28.0
Initially into part-time work as a VET teacher	29	20.3
Initially into casual work as a VET teacher	74	51.7
Total	143	100.0

29. How long before you started teaching had you thought about VET teaching as a career?

(People were asked to place one tick on each row)

	1-2 years prior to beginning VET teaching		3-4 years prior to beginning VET teaching		5-6 years prior to beginning VET teaching		7-10 years prior to beginning VET teaching		11+ years prior to beginning VET teaching		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I had vague thoughts about teaching in VET.	80	63.5	25	19.8	10	7.9	5	4.0	6	4.7	126	100
I had serious thoughts about teaching in VET.	82	80.4	12	11.8	3	2.9	1	1.0	4	3.9	102	100

Please comment if you wish (n = 36)

30. Please say whether each of the following factors was a consideration in your decision to become a VET teacher (full-time, part-time or casual).

Factors in decision to move into VET teaching	Yes		To some extent		No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Better employment conditions in VET teaching.	52	37.1	40	28.6	48	34.3
More security in employment in VET teaching.	41	29.3	39	27.9	60	42.9
Getting 'off the tools'/away from stress/away from physical challenges of the previous job.	52	36.9	31	22.0	58	41.1
Giving back to the industry/society by developing next generation.	91	64.1	32	22.5	19	13.4
Thought I would enjoy teaching.	115	81.6	21	14.9	5	3.5
Better work/life balance.	78	55.3	40	28.4	23	16.3

31. *Please make a note about anything in particular that prompted you to enter VET teaching. (Qualitative question, 117 responses)*

32. How did the remuneration for VET teaching compare with the remuneration you received before entering VET teaching? (You may consider either annual salary or hourly rate as appropriate).

VET teaching remuneration compared with previous job	N	%
Much less than I was previously paid	38	26.6
Somewhat less than I was previously paid	19	13.3
About the same as I was previously paid	32	22.4
Somewhat more than I was previously paid	28	19.6
Much more than I was previously paid	26	18.2
Total	143	100.0

33. Did others tell you VET teaching was not a good career choice?

	N	%
Yes	43	30.7
No	97	69.3
Total	140	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 34)

34. How happy are you with your decision to become a VET teacher?

	N	%
Very happy	90	62.9
Quite happy	49	34.3
Not happy	4	2.8
Total	143	100.0

35. Was the experience of VET teaching what you expected?

	N	%
Better than I expected	56	39.7
About the same as I expected	61	43.3
Worse than I expected	24	17.0
Total	141	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 46)

36. How well did the Cert IV TAE prepare you as a VET teacher, overall?

	N	%
Very well	18	12.7
Quite well	58	40.8
Not well	66	46.5
Total	142	100.0

37. How well did the Cert IV TAE prepare you in the following areas?

	Very well		Quite well		Not well		Weighted ave
Areas where Cert IV prepared	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Classroom management	6	4.2	38	26.8	98	69.0	1.35
Session planning	29	20.4	79	55.6	34	23.9	1.96
Teaching delivery	29	20.4	62	43.7	51	35.9	1.85
Diverse learners	11	7.7	66	46.5	65	45.8	1.62

38. *Please make any comments about any improvements which could be made to the Cert IV TAE. (Qualitative question, 113 responses)*

39. In your opinion, which of these factors may be a barrier for people who work in industry wishing to become VET teachers?

	Yes, a barrier		To some extent		No, not a barrier		Weighted ave
Potential barriers to moving from industry to VET teaching	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lack of full-time jobs.	43	30.5	65	46.1	33	23.4	2.07
Prospect of lower pay.	72	50.3	53	37.1	18	12.6	2.38
Having to achieve a Cert IV qualification	71	50.0	54	38.0	17	12.0	2.38
Lack of digital skills.	52	36.9	65	46.1	24	17.0	2.20
Apprehension of entering a new field.	46	32.6	77	54.6	18	12.8	2.20
Not knowing how to find out about VET teaching jobs.	55	38.7	59	41.5	28	19.7	2.19
Negative experiences as a VET learner.	40	28.6	62	44.3	38	27.1	2.01

Other (n = 25)

- It seems difficult to get people and even more difficult to hold on to them
- The compliance paperwork attached to teaching, the lack of time to prepare especially when you are new and learn the systems
- I am currently mentoring some people who are moving into the VET sector and completing their TAE. They hate it. I have had employees quit because of bad experiences with the TAE.
- The level of knowledge and professionalism in the VET industry is poor.
- The job is really not what most people think it is. The administration and compliance on teachers is through the roof and definitely detracts from time which could be spent better working on actual lesson development for the classroom.
- Pay would depend of the industry you are coming from. I understand from colleagues who move into the role without their TAE, that this is a huge impact on their transition to the role. Having to begin, learn and do the job required of a lecturer and also having to study to complete the TAE, put stress on the situation and workload. Whether you are employees on a full-time or part-time basis.
- Fear of teaching others - not everyone feels confident about teaching adults. As much as I looked forward to VET teaching, I was quite concerned that as a person coming from an EAL background and being a young

adult, if I would be treated by my VET students with respect. I was brave enough to give it a go, but some people that I know (e.g. those who wished to enter VET and consulted me) shared with me that they had similar concerns, many did not end up trying to work in VET.

- Keeping up currency, constant qualification upgrades and specific assessor requirements
- Many start as casuals on higher wage, when offered part-time/full-time pay rate lower
- Lack of knowledge mostly. As I found about Cert IV TAE after so many years being in the industry.
- Lack of support once you start working. A lot is trial and error and being thrown in at the deep end to either sink or swim.
- I personally think TAE is a very low barrier for entry into the profession
- The two biggest barriers I have heard are the pay change between experienced in industry verses new to teaching.
- There is increasing requirements beyond the TAE for my RTO. In addition to 5 years industry experience, there are years of various training modules and processes to learn.
- Too much red tape - there is so much pressure on teachers to make sure the students don't fail and if they do fail, it is a lot of extra work.. The onus should be on the students, not the teachers.
- My current employer offers learn as you teach style of training for TAE, I undertook training in Cert IV Training and Assessment prior to undertaking work. This train as you work is a great incentive for a quick transition into teaching.
- The lack of understand around the demeaned and workload that is placed on VET teachers, that is outside of the industry profession that you have built the knowledge and skill around, the digital skills required to manage and develop the LMS, the administration required
- There is a lack of comms re the Pathways. The $$ might be less than a trade but the physical load is less
- The perception of TAFE teaching quality and the workload during semester
- The starting as a casual route many of us took to secure our current roles does not suit most adults with financial responsibilities.
- Academic prowess and coping/functioning in the academic bureaucracy
- The way qualifications are assessed in the industrial agreement
- A lack of understanding around conducting learning sessions, and how to support a range of learners from various backgrounds and experiences.
- Other barriers, that I currently see, there is no clear timeline for the maintenance of vocational industry currency, having to be dual professionals provides some challenges, and being expected to walk into a training position knowing everything - instead of being mentored / inducted into the training organisation

Staying in VET teaching.

40. How much do you value various aspects of VET teaching? Please provide one answer on each line.

Aspects of VET teaching	Highly valued		Somewhat valued		Not valued		Weighted ave
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Commitment to the industry/profession.	105	73.4	36	25.2	2	1.4	2.72
Enjoy engaging with learners.	133	93.7	9	6.3	0	0.0	2.94
My own lifelong learning as a teacher and member of the industry/profession.	107	74.8	34	23.8	2	1.4	2.73
Being a role model to learners.	117	81.8	23	16.1	3	2.1	2.80
Making a difference to learners' lives and careers.	132	92.3	11	7.7	0	0.0	2.92
Using my skills, knowledge and experience.	131	91.6	12	8.4	0	0.0	2.92
Seeing learners develop and become proficient.	137	95.8	6	4.2	0	0.0	2.96

41. How important to you are the following aspects of your employment conditions, as a VET teacher? Please provide one answer on each line.

Importance of various employment aspects	Highly valued		Somewhat valued		Not valued		Weighted ave
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Holiday periods.	91	63.6	42	29.4	10	7.0	2.57
Hours of work.	110	78.0	27	19.1	4	2.8	2.75
Opportunities to be part of a team.	89	62.2	46	32.2	8	5.6	2.57
Access to professional development to improve my teaching	88	61.5	49	34.3	6	4.2	2.57
The pay.	87	60.8	50	35.0	6	4.2	2.57
Opportunities for promotion.	48	33.6	72	50.3	23	16.1	2.17
Opportunities to work on interesting initiatives.	73	51.0	60	42.0	10	7.0	2.44

42. How likely are you to look for a job outside VET teaching in the next three years?

	N	%
Very likely	19	13.3
Likely	23	16.1
Neither likely nor unlikely	30	21.0
Unlikely	34	23.8
Very unlikely	37	25.9
Total	143	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 39)

43. If likely or very likely, would this be in the industry from which you came, or another? *(77 answered 'not applicable' – not recorded below)*

	N	%
In the industry in which I was previously employed, prior to VET teaching.	36	61.0
A different industry.	23	39.0
Total	59	100.0

Please comment if you wish (n = 14)
(Note: Total is not quite consistent with responses to Q. 42)

44. In general, what factors do you think may contribute to people leaving VET teaching?

What factors might contribute to VET teachers leaving?	A highly contri-buting factor		Could be a contributing factor		Not a contri-buting factor		Weighted ave
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Dissatisfaction with management.	94	66.2	46	32.4	2	1.4	2.65
Unmanageable workload.	102	71.3	37	25.9	4	2.8	2.69
Ongoing change / insecurity within the sector.	66	46.8	62	44.0	13	9.2	2.38
Seeking a new challenge.	24	16.9	92	64.8	26	18.3	1.99
Restructuring or mergers.	43	30.3	70	49.3	29	20.4	2.10
Wanting more flexibility in hours worked.	33	23.2	79	55.6	30	21.1	2.02
Learner behaviour.	56	39.7	61	43.3	24	17.0	2.23
Seeking promotion or career development.	50	35.2	77	54.2	15	10.6	2.25
Poor workplace culture.	76	53.5	54	38.0	12	8.5	2.45
Seeking a higher salary.	93	66.0	43	30.5	5	3.5	2.62
Too much time spent teaching lower level quals/learners.	31	21.8	69	48.6	42	29.6	1.92
Wanting less responsibility.	25	17.6	69	48.6	48	33.8	1.84
Too much time spent on compliance work.	101	71.1	31	21.8	10	7.0	2.64

Please comment if you wish (N = 14)

- Management push compliance and audit workload down to time poor teachers. And management also blame teachers for poor audit results when not provided the real resources to deliver the best programs to teachers. Management want well industry current teachers yet are not prepared to pay for teachers to attend industry events or conferences or functions which would assist teachers improve their currency and professionalism.
- Workplace culture could be very different between departments. Our culture in our department is great because our manager is great. However other managers aren't able to bring the same energy. In terms of salary, the new MEA has taken too long to come out and even at level-6 and with the rising costs of living, I'm not happy with the pay level.
- There is a lot of red tape and form filling to the job now which can be off putting for those entering the profession. I have grown along side this aspect so it doesn't worry me, but new lecturers can get overwhelmed with the administrative side of the job.
- People leave because the job is nuts.
- Having our university Degree under recognised and having to continually up-grade a cert 4 when we have post graduate quals

- Short term employment contracts, uncertain VET student numbers (government stops funding student number drops immediately, trainers lose jobs), private RTO closures.
- The workload is extremely high with administration tasks and less with the learners
- Management at TAFE does not seem to understand what the role entails
- Having to maintain currency as a dual professional.
- Teaching has become less about quality teaching and more about compliance and administration
- the workload is only high in organisations that don't have a good culture and foster teamwork. I also think that management are FAR too quick to jump into things and change things without considering that there are people and students that need to keep moving toward their own goals and priorities. There is a huge disconnect between the management side and the actual on the ground side at the RTO I work at and everyone seems to be pushing up a hill everyday. Really disappointing. ...
- The paperwork now is crazy. Additionally I don't see how it is any different than before because a lot of the paperwork is lip service , to ensure the boxes are ticked. I'd rather provide a good experience, and actually have competent students, rather than spend most of my time filling in their forms
- The pay is out of step with being dual professionals. It should be commensurate with university lecturer pay.
- Our assessments are all paper based still, in 1997 when I started my apprenticeship we had more digital interaction than we do here now in 2023! This is all due to perception of compliance from our executive. This is where our increased workload has come from, I spent 4 hours marking the work of 11 students from 2 days work. I teach 3 days a week every week, this equates to at least 1 very full day of ticking boxes and signing my name. Our other option is to do this assessing in class where we should be teaching not sitting there ticking boxes and signing off work that could so easily be put online for digital correction. Study uni for 1 day a week and there is no work time left to prepare for the next week, so we find we are forced to balance out weekend with some work, or not assessing or teaching to our full ability or expectations.

45. In general, how do you think VET teaching is valued by society?

	N	%
Highly valued	15	10.5
Somewhat valued	91	63.6
Not valued	37	25.9
Total	143	100.0

Please comment if you wish (N = 40)

46. *What do you think would make more people become VET teachers? (Qualitative question, 134 responses)*

47. *What would make more people stay in VET teaching? (Qualitative question, 132 responses)*

Project web site:
https://federation.edu.au/institutes-and-schools/ieac/research/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/recent-research

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