

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0844_11

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

IS THE COMPLETION OF TRADE TRAINING COURSES OR APPRENTICESHIPS INCLUDED AS AN EQUIVALENT TO YEAR 12?

Is the completion of trade training courses or apprenticeships included as an equivalent to year 12? The programme appears to place priority on education attainment and preparation for university study. Does the programme do anything to encourage students to leave school early and take-up an apprenticeship, and learn a skilled profession? ABS statistics state that the current percentage of students who remain in school to Year 12 is currently 75.9 per cent. But this figure doesn't indicate the percentage of students who actually complete year 12. How was the 90 per cent figure chosen? What is the current percentage of students who complete year 12 or a year 12 equivalent? Given that retention rates for Year 12 have only increased by around 5 per cent over the past 10 years (according to the ABS), why does the Department believe that an increase in attainment rates to 90 per cent over the next four years is reasonable?

Answer

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Year 12 or its equivalent is defined as meeting the requirements for being awarded:

- a Year 12 Certificate (Senior Secondary Certificate) by a Board of Studies; or
- an equivalent qualification such as the Certificate of General Education for Adults (at Certificate II level or above), the International Baccalaureate or other higher education pre entry course; or
- an Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate II or higher qualification issued by a Registered Training Organisation or by a higher education institution.

In line with this, completion of trade training courses or apprenticeships at an AQF Certificate Level II or higher are included as an equivalent to Year 12.

The National Partnership is focussed on maximising the number of young people who remain in, or return to, education and training to get the qualifications and skills they will need to be competitive in the labour market and to start to build a career. This includes leaving school to enter vocational training, such as an apprenticeship.

Under the National Partnership, new learn or earn requirements have been introduced to ensure that young people:

- participate in schooling (meaning in school or an approved equivalent) until they complete Year 10, and
- when they have completed Year 10, participate full-time (defined as at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until they reach the age of 17.

These requirements allow for young people who have completed Year 10 to leave school, take up an apprenticeship and learn a skilled profession.

The 90 percent Year 12 or equivalent figure was set by the Council of Australian Governments which has committed to setting challenging targets to support education reform. For this reason, the target is an agreed performance measure in the National Education Agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories.

The agreed measure for Year 12 or equivalent attainment is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [*Cat. No. 6227.0*] *Survey of Education and Work (SEW)*. These data are measured annually in May and released by December. The most recent data from the SEW 2010 indicates that 85.6 per cent of young people aged 20-24 years had completed Year 12 or equivalent.

Achieving the 90 percent Year 12 or equivalent attainment target is considered by all governments to be achievable based on current progress towards the target and the significant level of education reform currently being undertaken to support improvements in this area.