

2026 Next Step Year 12 Completers

Department of Education

Destinations of Year 12 completers from 2025 in Queensland

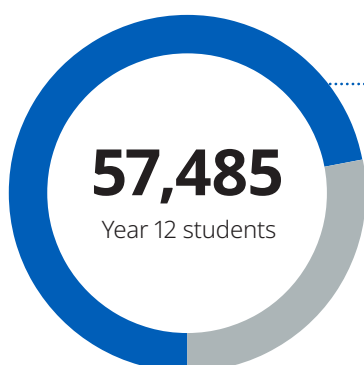
Since 2005, the Department of Education's **Next Step** survey has captured information about the journey from school to further study and employment for Year 12 completers.

Insights gained from **Next Step** assist schools to review and plan their services for students, and school system personnel to evaluate education policies as they affect the transition from school to further study and employment.

The survey is conducted between March and June, approximately six months after the end of the school year, timed to occur after tertiary education places for the year have been accepted. All students who attend state, Catholic and independent schools in Queensland are included.

2026 Next Step survey

Year 12 students from 2025 were included in the 2026 survey from Queensland schools



41,517
respondents

72.2%
response rate

24,024 State schools

8,160 Catholic schools

9,333 Independent schools

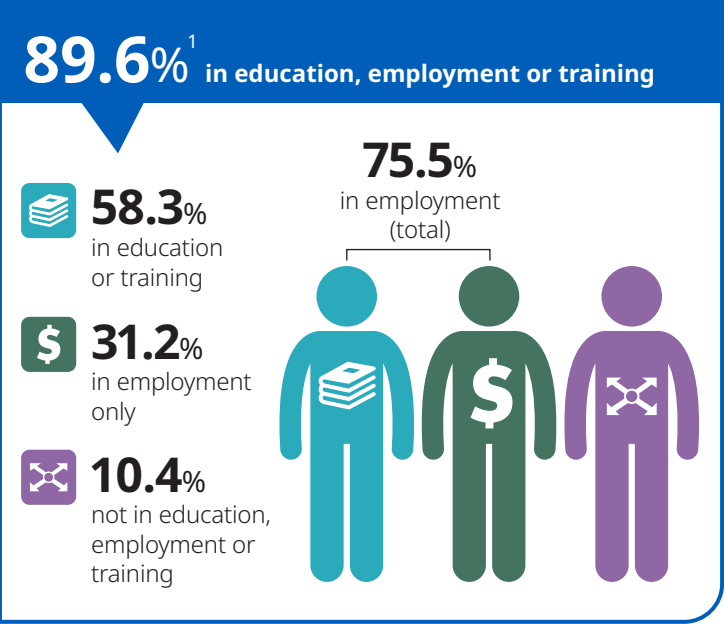
Find out more



For more information on the survey or to build a customised **Next Step** report for your region visit the **Next Step** website www.qld.gov.au/year12completers

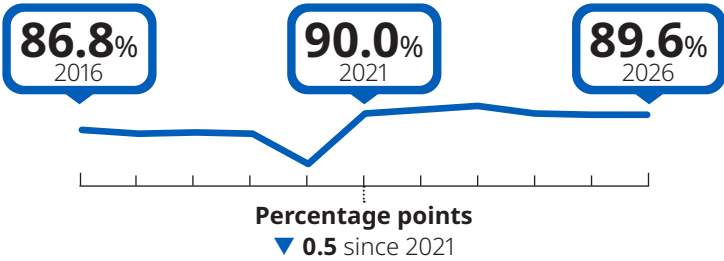
Post-school engagement

Engagement in education, employment or training



All Year 12 completers were assigned to a **main destination**. This categorisation system prioritises education related destinations over other destinations. Those who were both studying and working are reported as studying for their main destination.

In 2026, 89.6% of Year 12 completers were engaged in education, employment or training. While participation in education and training returned to levels similar to those seen before the pandemic, employment outcomes remained comparatively strong in the context of historically low unemployment.



Engagement by subgroups



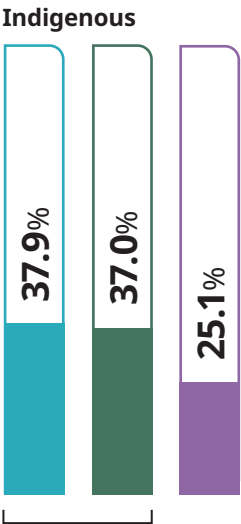
in education or training



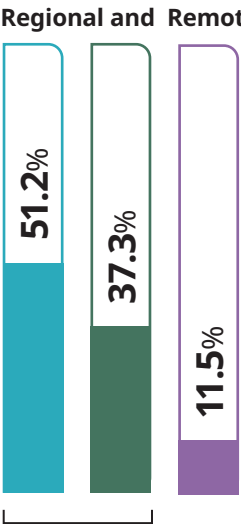
in employment only



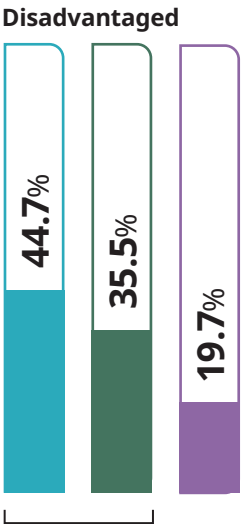
not in education, employment or training



74.9%
of 2,375
Indigenous respondents²
were engaged



88.5%
of 13,339
regional and remote
respondents³ were engaged



80.3%
of 6,079
respondents from
disadvantaged areas⁴
were engaged

¹ Percentages in this report have been rounded to one decimal point.

² The word Indigenous in this document refers to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Comparisons with other groups should be interpreted with caution due to the lower survey response rate for Indigenous persons (63.5%).

³ Students who were not living in a 'Major Cities' category area of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Remoteness Structure (2021).

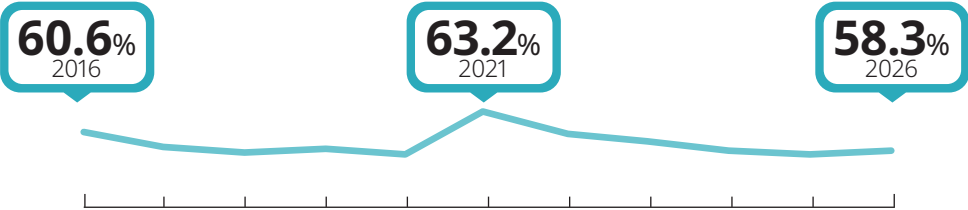
⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics' Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Queensland, Quintile 1, area based).

Main destination



In education or training

Percentage point change

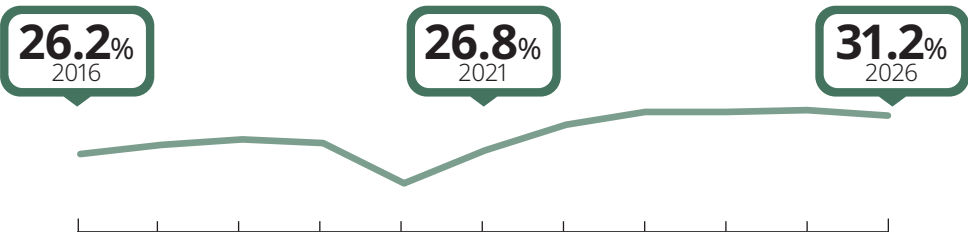


Following a peak in 2021, engagement in education and training continued to return to pre-pandemic levels, reaching 58.3% in 2026, similar to the 2019 level of 58.6%. This reflects a gradual easing of the elevated participation observed during the COVID period across both higher education and vocational pathways.

Bachelor Degree	39.8%
▲ 0.6 since 2025	
VET Certificate	8.2%
▼ 0.2 since 2025	
Apprenticeship	8.4%
▲ 0.4 since 2025	
Traineeship	1.9%
▼ 0.5 since 2025	



In employment only

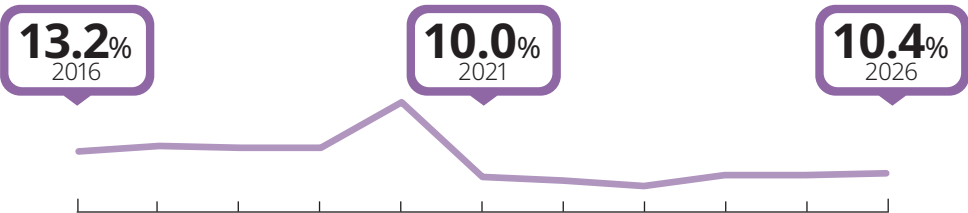


Employment outcomes remained strong in 2026 despite a small decline from the previous year. At 31.2%, employment-only destinations remained well above pre-pandemic levels, with both full-time and part-time employment continuing to exceed historical norms.

Full-time employment	10.4%
▼ 0.4 since 2025	
Part-time employment	20.8%
▼ 0.2 since 2025	



Not in education, employment or training



Seeking work	7.8%
▲ 0.3 since 2025	
Not in the labour force, education or training	2.7%
▼ 0.1 since 2025	

Among Year 12 completers not engaged in study or work, 42.2% had either deferred a university place and/or were taking a gap year. A further 7.7% were waiting for a job or study course to begin.

Females
91.1% engaged in work or study



More likely than males to be undertaking Bachelor Degree study
45.3% compared to 33.8%

Males
87.9% engaged in work or study



More likely than females to be undertaking employment-based training as an apprentice
15.0% compared to 2.4%

Destination:

Education and training



58.3%
24,215
of Year 12 completers
continuing in education
or training

▲ 0.3 since 2025

In education or training

Females

60.0%



More likely than
males to study in the
fields of Health or
Society and Culture

Males

56.5%



More likely than
females to study in the
field of Engineering and
Related Technologies

5 Field of study categories are based on the Australian Standard Classification of Education (broad, narrow and detailed).

6 Both fields of study are counted where students are enrolled in a double degree in different study fields.

Where are they studying?

◆ Percentage point change



University

71.6%

▲ 0.8 since 2025



TAFE

14.8%

▼ 0.4 since 2025



Private training provider

8.6%

▲ 0.1 since 2025



Other institution

5.0%

▼ 0.5 since 2025

What are they studying?^{5,6}



Health

21.3%
5,155

2,019 Nursing
921 Rehabilitation Therapies
322 Pharmacy



Engineering and
Related Technologies

19.5%
4,728

1,273 Electrical & Electronic
683 Mechanical & Industrial
486 Automotive



Society and Culture

16.9%
4,097

1,196 Law
1,059 Behavioural Science
483 Human Welfare



Management
and Commerce

13.4%
3,237

1,631 Business & Management
569 Banking & Finance
372 Sales & Marketing

How are they studying?



enrolled in a double degree

15.2%



studying full-time

73.9%



combining study with paid employment

75.9%

Destination: Employment



75.5%
31,334

of Year 12 completers
were in paid employment

No change since 2025

In paid employment

Females
76.6%



More likely than
males to be working
as Sales Workers or
Community and Personal
Service Workers

Males
74.3%



More likely than
females to be working
as Technician and Trades
Workers or Labourers

Which industries are they working in?

Percentage point change



Accommodation
& Food Services

29.6%

▼ 0.9 since 2025



Retail Trade

23.8%

▲ 0.3 since 2025



Construction

9.6%

▲ 0.7 since 2025



Health Care
& Social
Assistance

7.9%

▼ 0.1 since 2025



Education
& Training

4.5%

▼ 0.7 since 2025

What jobs are they doing?⁸



Sales Workers

29.4%
9,203

▼ 2.6 since 2025

6,994 Sales Assistants & Salespersons

1,474 Checkout Operators

601 Misc. Sales Support Workers



Community and
Personal Service
Workers

25.7%
8,045

▲ 3.0 since 2025

4,464 Hospitality Workers

996 Sport and Fitness Workers

887 Early Childhood Educators and
Child Carers



Labourers

17.4%
5,466

▼ 0.3 since 2025

2,001 Fast Food Cooks and Food
Preparation Assistants

884 Freight Handlers and Shelf Fillers

587 Construction & Mining Labourers



Technicians and
Trades Workers

13.3%
4,180

▲ 0.4 since 2025

868 Electrical Trades Workers

525 Carpenters & Joiners

494 Automotive Technicians and
Trades Workers

How are they working?



employed on a casual basis

68.0%



working full-time

28.2%



combining work with further study

58.6%

⁷ This section examines the labour market outcomes for all Year 12 completers. The 75.5% figure includes 31.2% who were only working and 44.2% who were both working and studying. Those who were working and studying are reported as studying for their main destination.

⁸ Occupation categories are based on the Occupation Standard Classification of Australia (major and minor groups).

Destination:

Not in education, employment or training



10.4%
4,336

of Year 12 completers were not in education, employment or training

▲ 0.2 since 2025

Not in education, employment or training

Females
8.9%



More likely than males to take a gap year but intend to study in the future

Males
12.1%



More likely than females to prioritise getting a job or apprenticeship over further study



22.5% of job seekers believe that the main reason they have been unsuccessful in getting a job is due to **lack of experience, skills or qualifications** and a further **16.2%** say there are **not enough jobs available**.

