Drivers of Participation and Completion of VET – Quantitative Findings

NSW Skills Board

May 2017

Background

- There has been a proliferation of private and non-government providers in the VET market, historically dominated by TAFE institutes.

- NSW recorded lower participation rates in VET compared to Victoria and Australia nationwide across all age groups in 2014. Completion rates have also been declining.

- The NSW Skills Board wished to understand how people make decisions to participate in VET and how this affects completion.

- Previous research (including the literature review component of this research) has identified multiple factors, in particular relating to demographic factors, parental and peer influences, schools, geographic factors, social influences and "critical events and disruptions".

- It was felt that further research was needed on the decision making process, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of participation in and completion of VET courses.

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Objectives

The project objectives were to identify:

- Relevant factors influencing a student's decision to participate in VET (and how these affect completion);

- Factors that influence a student's decision to complete VET.

The outcomes will inform the development of policy interventions to improve participation and completion rates.

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Research Design

This presentation relates to **Phase 3** of a three phased project to investigate drivers of student participation, completion and non-completion in VET courses.

Phase 1: Desktop research

This involved a literature review of relevant past research from both national and international jurisdictions (a separate report has been provided on this component). -

Phase 2: Qualitative Research

Involving groups and depth interviews amongst considerers, current and past VET students (a separate presentation is available on this component).

Phase 3: Quantitative Research

An online survey of considerers, current and past VET students.

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Research Design

Phase 3: Quantitative Research

An online panel survey of n=1006 students along with an additional n=1066 responses from students from within the Student Outcomes Survey.

The sample was as follows:

	Currently Completing	Completed	Did not complete	Considering
Online panel provider	250	300	250	206
Student Outcomes Survey	0	705	361	0
TOTAL	250	1005	611	206

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Weighting

The Student Outcomes Survey listing presented two potential sources of sampling bias:

1. The listing contained only Smart and Skilled funded students, and
2. Email addresses for TAFE students usually contained an @TAFE domain name, meaning that many of those who had finished with their studies were no longer looking at that address and so did not respond to the emailed survey.

In order to overcome these sampling irregularities, respondents were weighted to accurately reflect total 'government funded VET participants' as defined by the NCVER. This resulted in weighting factors being applied to:

1. Age
2. Proportion studying at TAFE
3. Proportion studying diplomas/advance diplomas
4. Proportion receiving online only tuition

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Influencers on course choice

Influenced by: (strong/moderate)	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Current Students (n=250)	Considering (n=206)
Family	61	72	77
Friends	52	69	73
Peers / Colleagues	44	65	73
Employer	42	69	64
TAFE / RTO Careers Advisor	40	69	67
TAFE / RTO sales person	34	60	57
Advertising	34	65	56
Expo / Event	33	61	63
Broker	32	59	55
School Careers Advisor	31	63	53

Q7. How much influence were each of the following on your decision to study the particular course? RANDOMISE

Base: All respondents

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Influencers on course choice

Influenced by: (strong/moderate)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Family	60	61
Friends	49	53
Employer	48	41
Peers / Colleagues	47	44
TAFE / RTO Careers Advisor	40	40
Advertising	39	33
Broker	34	32
Expo / Event	34	32
TAFE / RTO sales person	33	34
School Careers Advisor	31	30

* Completed students were more likely to be influenced by employers and did not completes by friends.

Q7. How much influence were each of the following on your decision to study the particular course? RANDOMISE
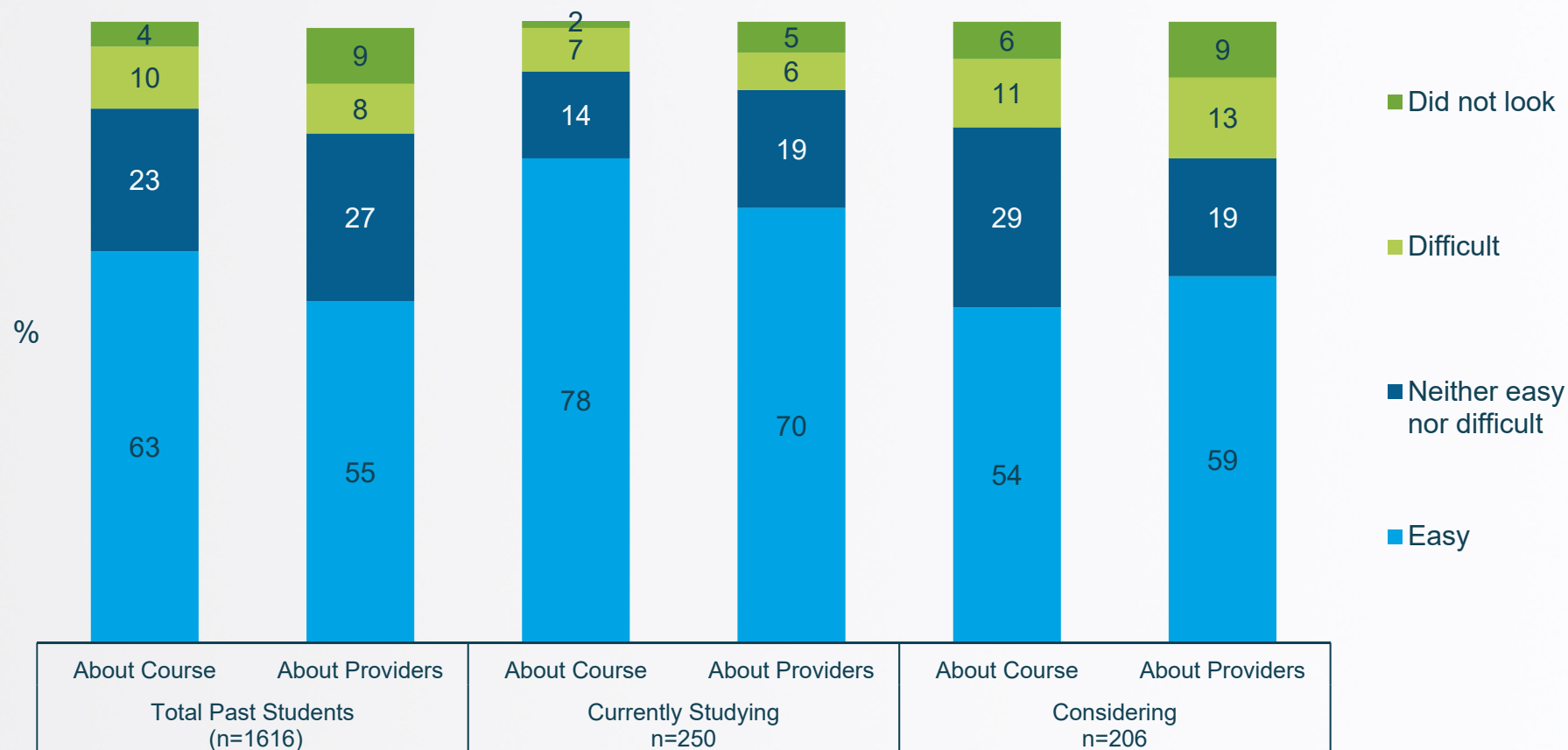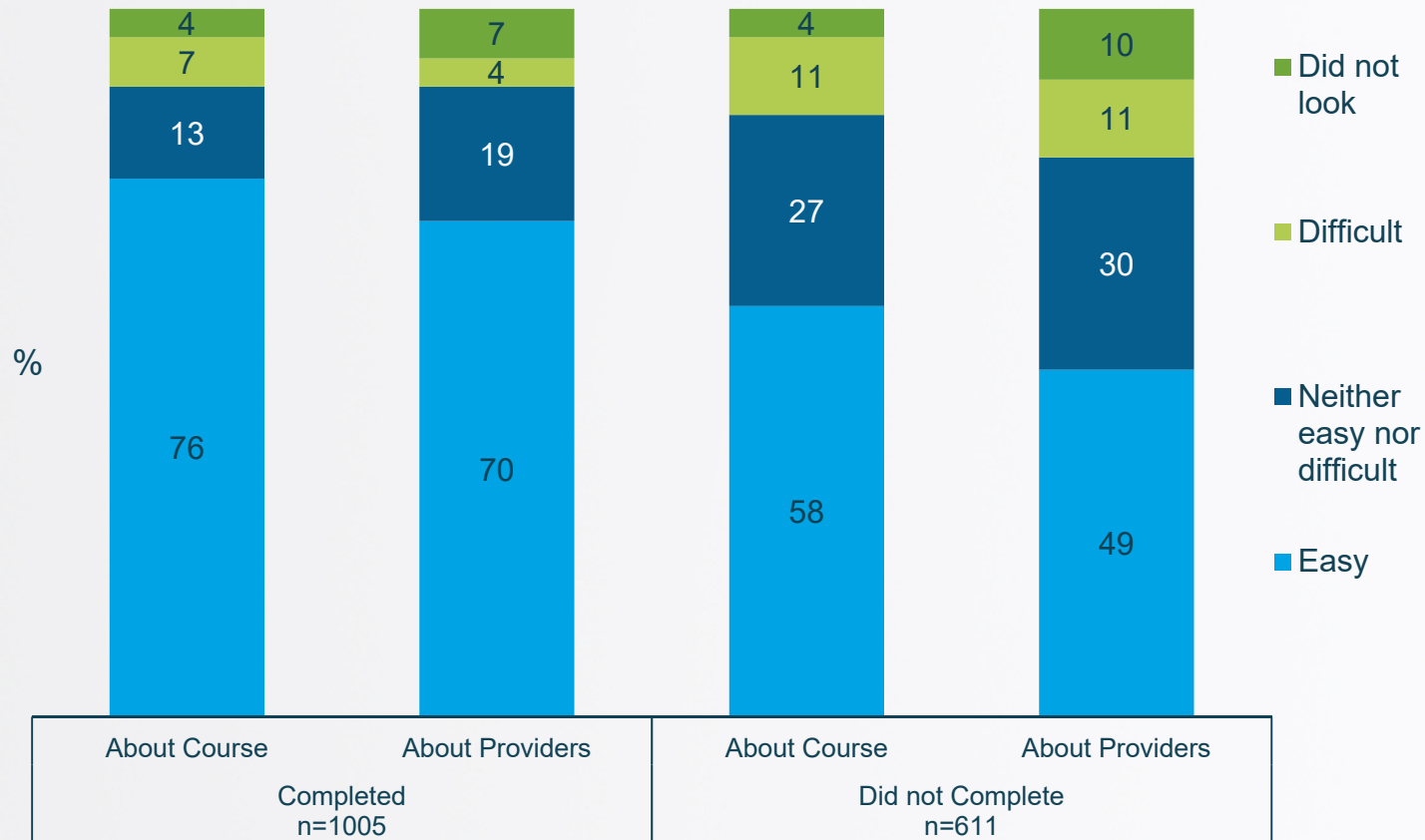
Base: All respondents

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Ease of obtaining information

Q10. How easy was it for you to find the information you wanted about providers?

Base: All respondents

Ease of obtaining information

%

	Completed n=1005		Did not Complete n=611	
	About Course	About Providers	About Course	About Providers
Did not look	4	7	4	10
Difficult	7	4	11	11
Neither easy nor difficult	13	19	27	30
Easy	76	70	58	49

Completed students were more likely to say finding information about courses and providers was easy.

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Use of information to assist in course selection

Usage of information sources (before starting course) Yes answers	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Currently Studying (n=250)	Considering (n=206)
Summary of course content and expected workload	60	66	68
Description of jobs that courses lead to	57	59	(63)
Clear information on course costs for comparison	47	58	58
Clear information about different courses for comparison	(40)	53	57
Information on industry demand & expected future income	39	(51)	42
Clear information about different providers for comparison	38	48	(50)
Careers advice by training providers	(32)	49	50
Total info sources used	313	384	388

Q11a. Before starting, did you use any of the following to help you choose a course that was right for you? [Currently] Did you have access to

Base: All respondents

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Use of information to assist in course selection

Usage of information sources (before starting course) Yes answers	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Summary of course content and expected workload	60	59
Description of jobs that courses lead to	57	57
Clear information on course costs for comparison	55	44
Clear information about different courses for comparison	49	37
Information on industry demand & expected future income	47	37
Clear information about different providers for comparison	37	38
Careers advice by training providers	36	31
Total info sources used	341	303

* Completed students were more likely to have used this information before starting the course.

Q11a. Before starting, did you use any of the following to help you choose a course that was right for you? [Currently] Did you have access to

Base: All respondents

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Degree to which the information was felt to be useful

(Yes, it was 'very' helpful)	Total Past Students		Currently Studying		Considering	
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base
Clear information on course costs for comparison	(56)	n=430	65	n=147	(60)	n=122
Summary of course content and expected workload	53	n=512	(71)	n=162	(61)	n=134
Clear information about different courses for comparison	54	n=355	54	n=141	41	n=111
Clear information about different providers for comparison	50	n=305	58	n=127	51	n=102
Careers advice by training providers	50	n=264	56	n=125	45	n=79
Description of jobs that courses lead to	49	n=448	(67)	n=149	47	n=121
Information on industry demand & expected future income	41	n=258	61	n=131	56	n=89
Total helpfulness of info sources	392		432		361	

Of the people who used it, information on course costs was thought to be the most useful by past students.

Q11b. How helpful was the information in helping you to **choose a course**?

Base: Respondents who sad "yes" in Q11a

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Degree to which the information was felt to be useful

(Yes, it was 'very' helpful)	Completed		Did not Complete	
	%	Base	%	Base
Summary of course content and expected workload	67	n=568	48	n=324
Description of jobs that courses lead to	57	n=508	46	n=284
Clear information on course costs for comparison	57	n=464	56	n=237
Clear information about different courses for comparison	56	n=411	54	n=215
Careers advice by training providers	55	n=341	48	n=181
Clear information about different providers for comparison	53	n=339	49	n=186
Information on industry demand & expected future income	47	n=405	38	n=232
Total helpfulness of info sources	392		339	

* Completed students were more likely to find this information very helpful

Q11b.How helpful was the information in helping you to **choose a course**?

Base: Respondents who sad "yes" in Q11a

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Degree to which the information would have been helpful

(Yes, it would have been 'very' helpful)	Total Past Students N=1616		Currently Studying n=103		Considering n=84	
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base
Clear information about different courses for comparison	28	N=266	27	n=109	23	n=95
Clear information on course costs for comparison	25	N=213	43	n=103	30	n=84
Summary of course content and expected workload	24	N=159	31	n=88	36	n=72
Clear information about different providers for comparison	21	N=216	25	n=123	30	n=114
Information on industry demand & expected future income	21	N=207	21	n=119	26	n=118
Description of jobs that courses lead to	20	N=138	34	n=101	25	n=85
Careers advice by training providers	19	N=212	24	n=125	24	n=127
Total potential helpfulness of info sources	158		205		194	

Q11c. FOR ALL THOSE THEY SAY NO OR DON'T KNOW TO IN Q11a – How helpful would this information have been in helping you to **choose a course**?

Base: Respondents who sad "no" or "don't know" in Q11a

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Degree to which the information would have been helpful

(Yes, it would have been 'very' helpful)	Completed n=541		Did not Complete n=374	
	%	Base	%	Base
Clear information on course costs for comparison	24	n=541	25	n=374
Clear information about different courses for comparison	24	n=594	(29)	n=396
Description of jobs that courses lead to	22	n=497	19	n=327
Careers advice by training providers	22	n=664	18	n=430
Clear information about different providers for comparison	21	n=666	22	n=425
Information on industry demand & expected future income	20	n=600	21	n=379
Summary of course content and expected workload	18	n=437	(27)	n=287
Total potential helpfulness of info sources	151		161	

* Did not complete students were more likely to feel this information would have been very helpful

Q11c.How helpful would this information have been in helping you to **choose a course**?

Base: Respondents who sad "no" or "don't know" in Q11a

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Awareness of Smart and Skilled

* Completed students were more likely to be aware of smart and skilled

53

37 *

%

20

Total Past Students
n=1616

Currently Studying
n=250
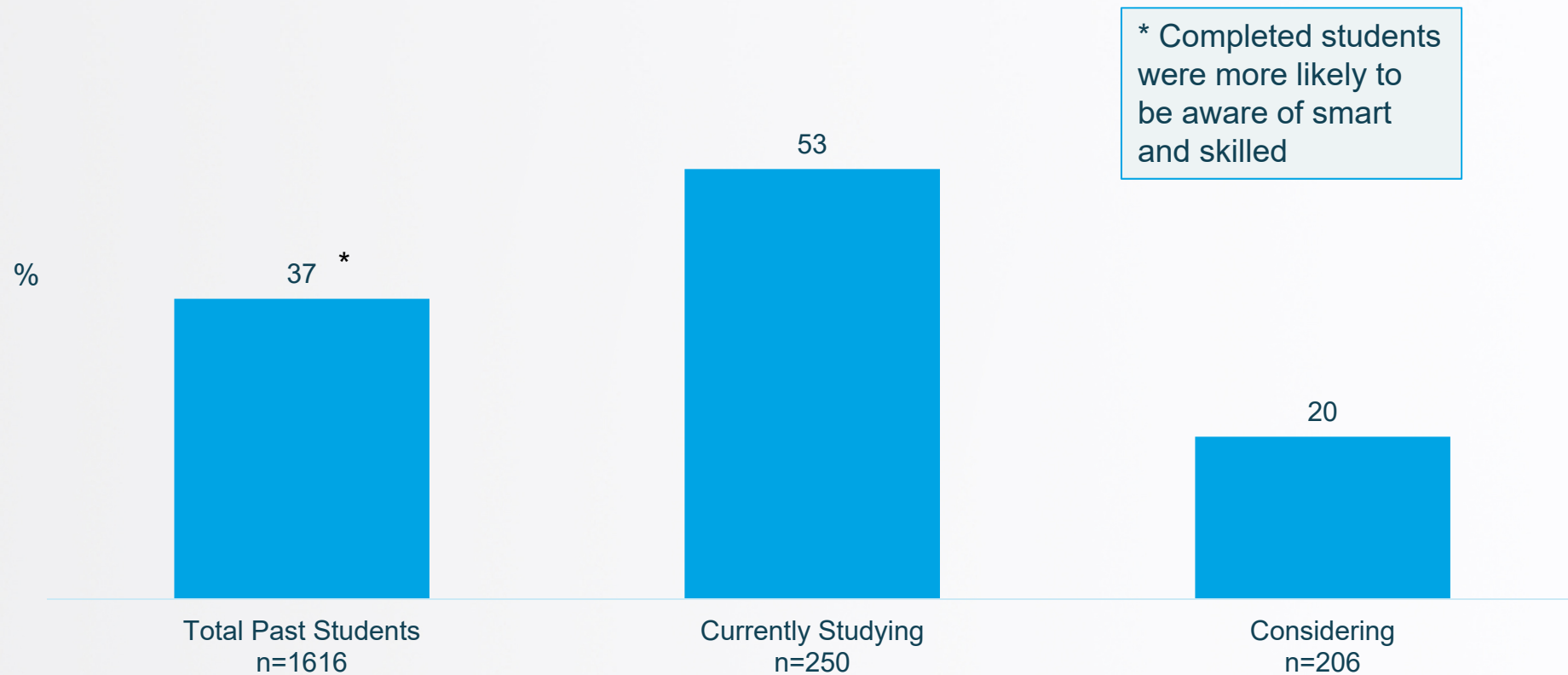
Considering
n=206

Q18. Have you heard of Smart and Skilled?

Base: All respondents

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Importance of aspects of the course in decision making for considerers

Considerers
(n=206)

%

	Flexibility to help maintain study/life balance	Level of guidance and support from the provider (e.g. study skills support, mentoring programs)	High quality learning materials and resources (e.g. text books, equipment…)	Teaching quality
Not important	5	6	4	3
Quite important	34	34	36	27
Very important	61	59	60	70
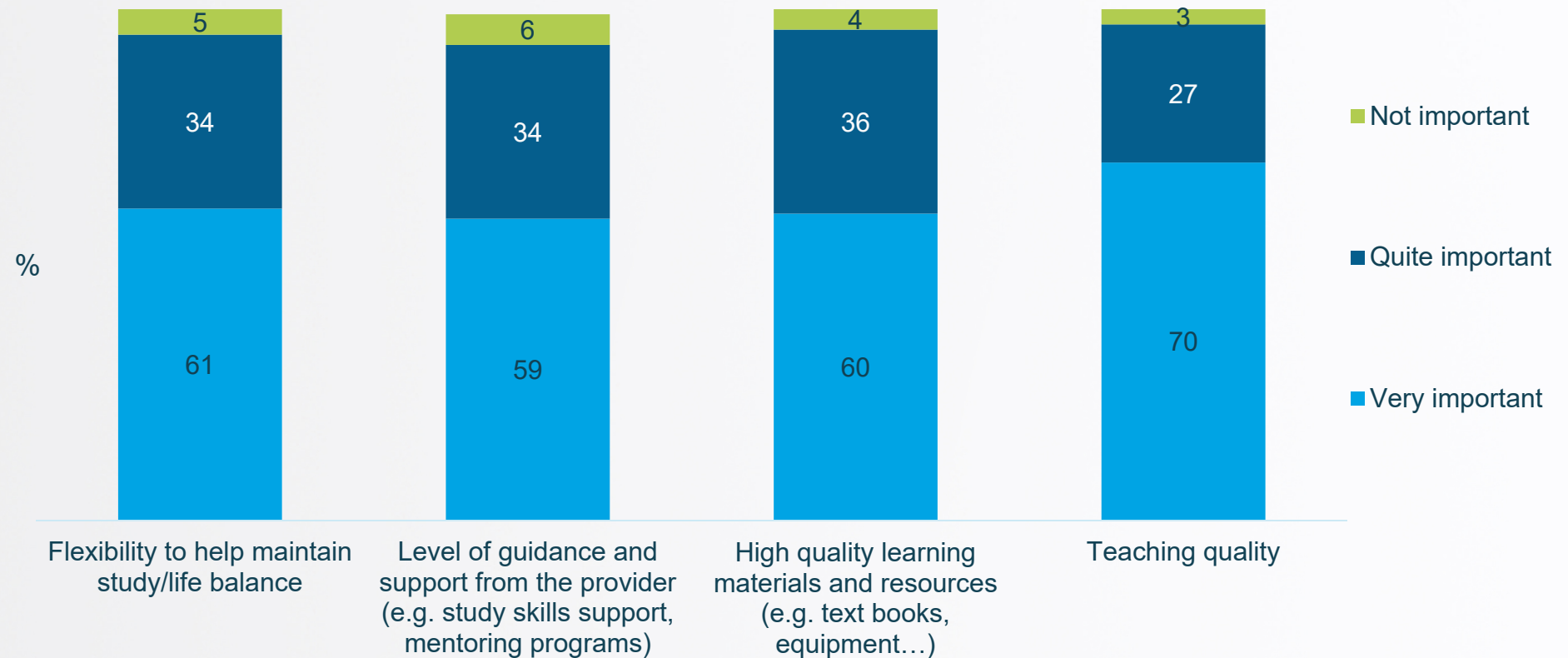
Q12. How important would the following factors be to you if you did enrol in the course?

Base: Respondents considering doing a VET course (n=206).

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Drivers of Participation

Main reason for doing the course

	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Currently Studying (n=250)	Considering (n=206)
Help me get the job I want	29	29	18
Requirement of my job	23	24	14
Change my job/career	12	10	18
Help get back into workforce	8	9	10
Part of an apprenticeship or traineeship	6	10	2
Get the chance to do more interesting or different work	6	4	3
For personal development/interest	5	2	5
Help advance my career/get a promotion	5	3	7
To set up my own business / expand business	3	5	6
Increase my pay	2	3	10
Do my job better	1	2	3
Get into another course of study	1	0	0
Requirement of government welfare benefits	0	0	1
Get skills for community work / volunteering	0	0	3

Q6b. Of the reasons that you selected, which was your main reason for doing the course?

Base: All respondents

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Total reasons for doing the course

	Total Past Students (n=1616	Currently Studying (n=250)	Considering (n=206)
Help me get the job I want	44	50	36
For personal development/interest	26	15	27
Change my job/career	23	22	31
Get the chance to do more interesting or different work	19	17	14
Help get back into workforce	15	21	22
Help advance my career/get a promotion	14	11	10
Requirement of my job	14	26	10
Do my job better	11	15	15
Get into another course of study	10	7	3
Part of an apprenticeship or traineeship	10	18	10
Increase my pay	9	12	15
To set up my own business / expand business	7	12	12
Get skills for community work / volunteering	5	8	8
Requirement of government welfare benefits	4	1	1
Other	1	0	1

Q6a. Why did you do this course? *Choose all that apply*

Base: All respondents

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Total reasons for doing the course

All reasons	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Help me get the job I want	39	46
For personal development/interest	35	22
Get the chance to do more interesting or different work	23	17
Change my job/career	21	24
Do my job better	19	9
Help advance my career/get a promotion	15	14
Requirement of my job	15	14
Help get back into workforce	14	15
Get into another course of study	12	9
Part of an apprenticeship or traineeship	10	10
Increase my pay	9	9
Get skills for community work / volunteering	9	4
To set up my own business / expand business	8	6
Requirement of government welfare benefits	3	4
Other	2	1

Non-completers were more often originally motivated by job change related factors rather than personal development reasons.

Non-completers more often had 'no idea' about their future (35% vs 26%), or were driven simply by 'the qualification' (45% vs 36%).

Q6a. Why did you do this course? *Choose all that apply*

Base: All respondents

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Finance

Payment for course

	Total Past Students (n=1616)		Currently Studying (n=250)		Considerers expectation of funding (n=206)	
Student or Parents	29		40		45	
Employer	18	**47**	24	**64**	13	**62**
VET FEE-HELP	29		23		20	
Other Government Funding	1	**30**	1	**24**	1	**21**
No fees required		**20**		**12**		**10**
Don't Know		**-**		**-**		**11**

Q17. How was your course paid for?

Base: All respondents

Payment for course

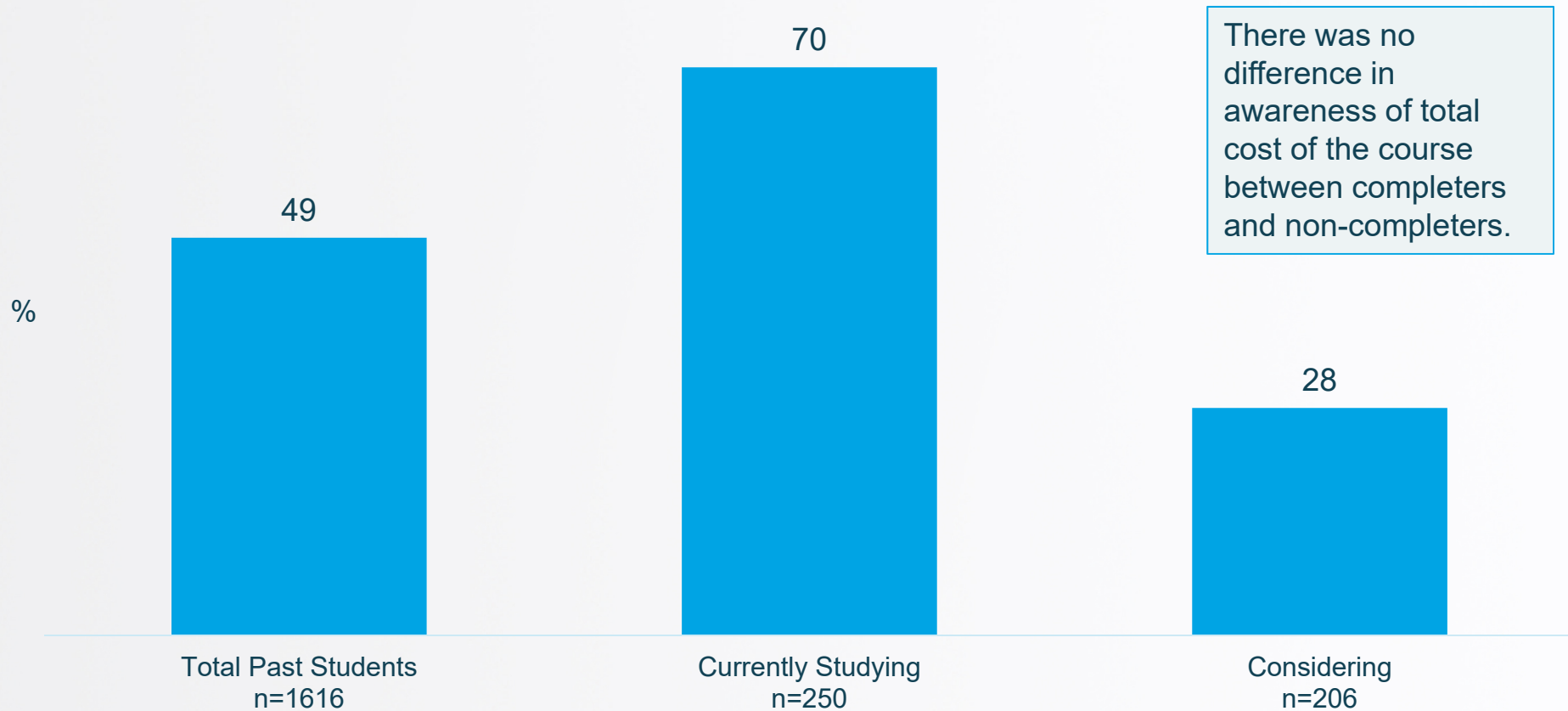| Method of payment	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Student or Parents	(41)	24
Employer	21	17
Commonwealth VET FEE-HELP loan	13	(36)
No fees required	21	20
Other	5	4

Completed students were more likely to be funding their course themselves, whereas non-completers were more likely to be using VET FEE HELP.

Q17. How was your course paid for?
Q19. Do you know the total cost of your course (including/before any government subsidy)?

Base: All respondents

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Awareness of the total cost of the course (including any government subsidy)

There was no difference in awareness of total cost of the course between completers and non-completers.

%

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49 — Total Past Students n=1616
70 — Currently Studying n=250
28 — Considering n=206
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Willingness to pay for course

Considerers
(N=206)

%

Less than $250 $250-$799 $800-$1999 $2000-$4999 $5000-$9999 $10000-$14999 $15000 or more

11   22   43   19   5   1   1

Q20. How much would you be willing to pay for the course?

Base: Respondents considering doing a VET course (n=206).

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Drivers of Completion

Reasons for Non-Completion

Main reason for not completing the course

Main reason for non-completion	Did not Complete (n=611)
The training was not what I expected	19
Family or Personal Reasons	19
I just lost motivation / interest	13
Changed jobs / Started a new job	12
I lost my job	8
I learnt the skills I needed for my job	6
I achieved my training goals	4
Started other training	3
Training timetable not flexible enough	3
Training no longer met my plans	2
The college closed/dumped the course	2
I wasn't happy with the support/materials/the trainer	2
I have a few more components/haven't been offered the chance to do them/can't afford the extra fee	1
I just found it too hard/overwhelming	1
Other	7

The most frequently cited reasons for non-completion were: changed or lost job 20%, family/ personal reasons, training not what I expected or lost motivation
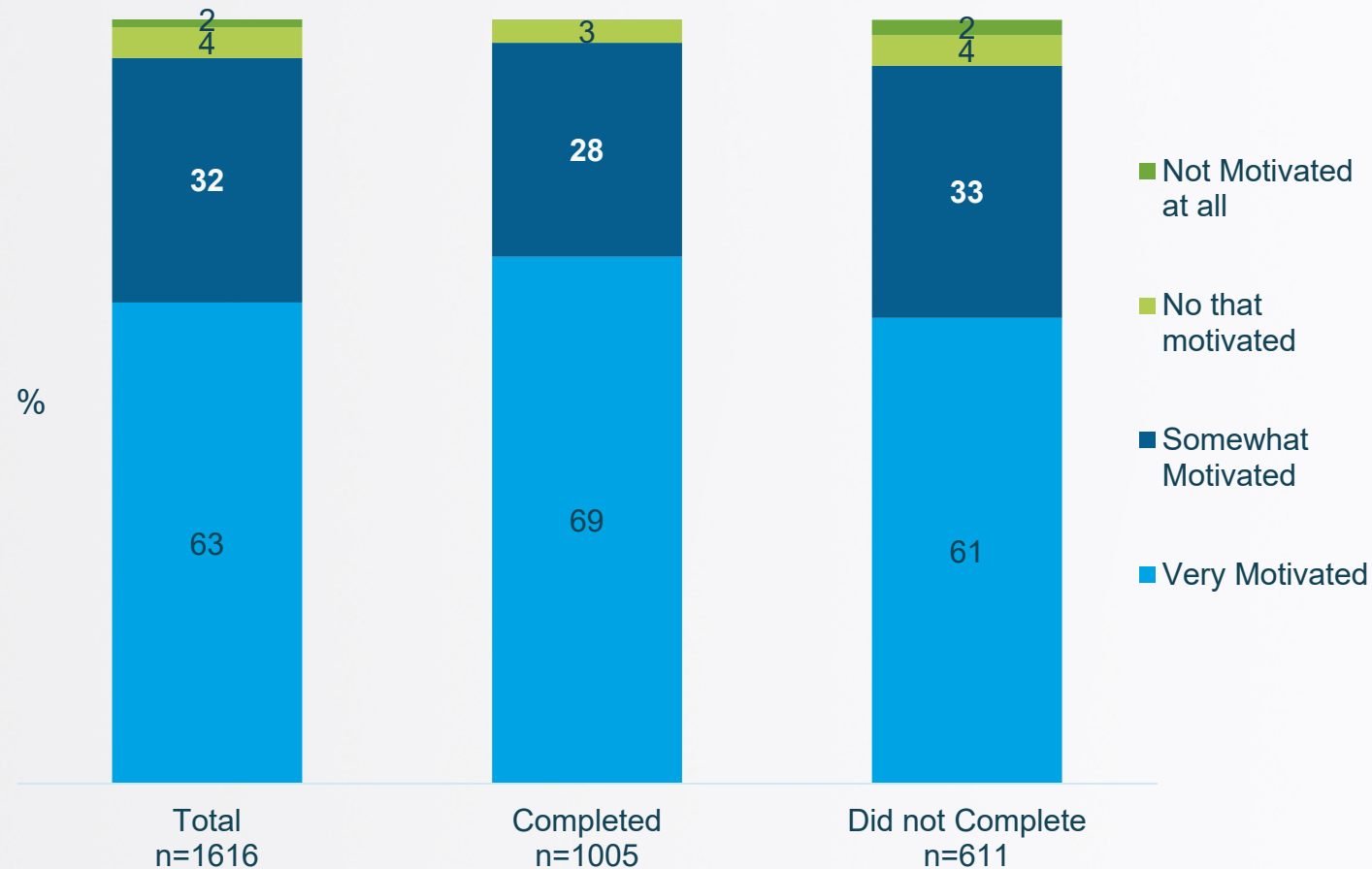
41% found out information after the course had started that made it difficult to complete (e.g. number of practical hours, expected workload)

Q20. What was the **main** reason for choosing not to continue the training?
Q21. Did you find out information after the course started that made it difficult to complete, e.g. number of practical hours involved, expected workload?

Base: Respondents who did not complete the course they were enrolled in (n=611)

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Level of motivation to complete the course

%

Legend:
- Not Motivated at all
- No that motivated
- Somewhat Motivated
- Very Motivated

Total
n=1616
- 2
- 4
- 32
- 63

Completed
n=1005
- 3
- 28
- 69

Did not Complete
n=611
- 2
- 4
- 33
- 61

There was only a moderate difference between the original level of motivation to complete the course

Q8. How motivated were you to complete the course before you started?

Base: All respondents

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Drivers of Completion

Course Characteristics

Course characteristics - summary

	Completed (n=1005) %	Did not Complete (n=611) %
TAFE NSW	63	67
Diploma/Advanced diploma	20	(42)
Fully online	24	(46)
Duration - Over a year	27	(43)

It was more likely that students not completing were studying a Diploma rather than a Certificate I-IV.

Students who did not complete their course were more often undergoing the course fully online compared to using other methods.

Those who did not complete their courses were more likely to be attempting a longer duration course of more than a year

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Institution

Legend: ■ TAFE NSW ■ Private Training Organisation ■ TAFE Non-NSW ■ Community College ■ Other

%

Total
n=1616
- 66
- 22
- 8
- 3
- 2

Completed
n=1005
- 63
- 22
- 12
- 2
- 1

Did not Complete
n=611
- 67
- 22
- 6
- 3
- 2
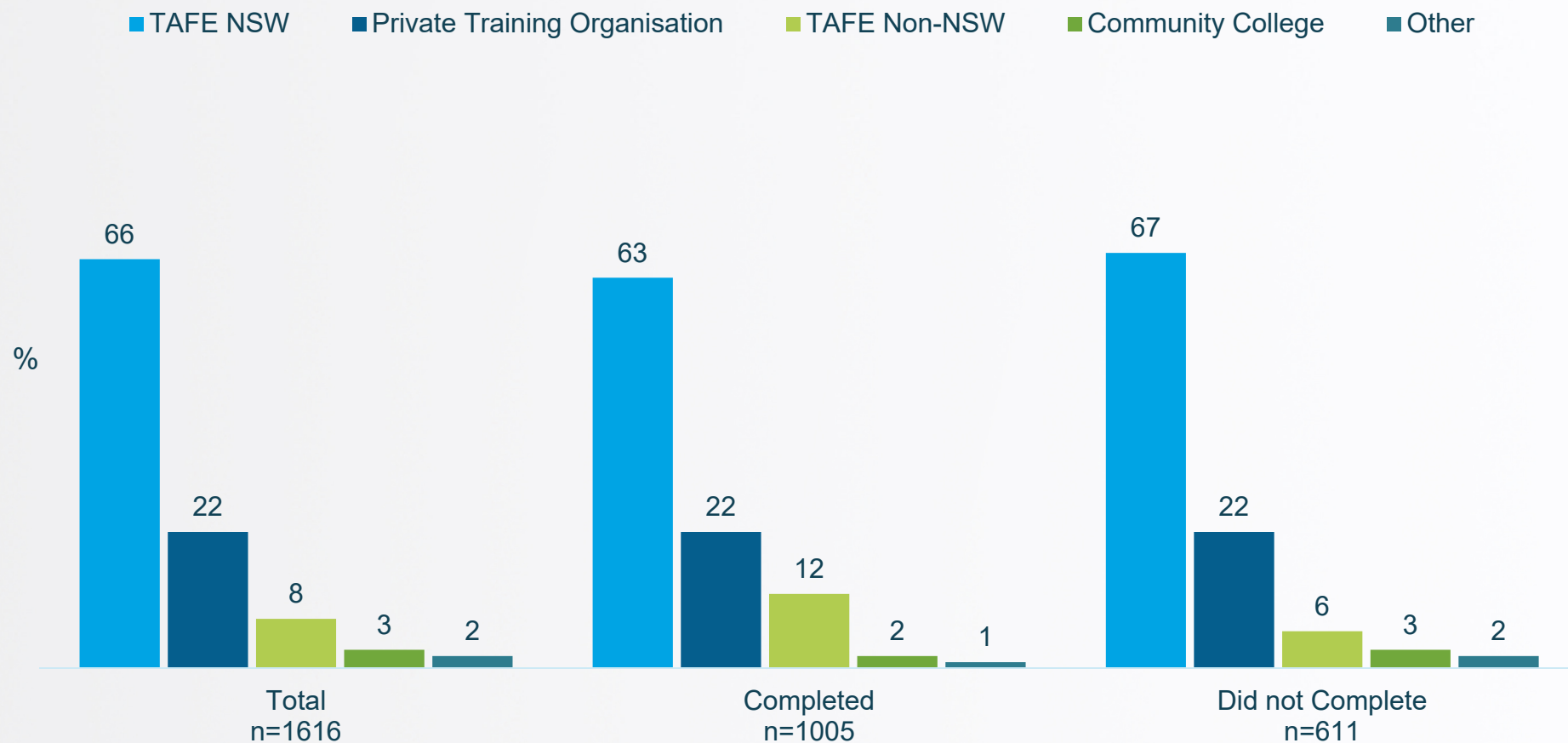
Q3. Where did you start your training?

Base: All respondents

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Level of course studied

Legend: ■ Cert 1-3   ■ Cert 4   ■ Advanced Diploma/Diploma

%

	Cert 1-3	Cert 4	Advanced Diploma/Diploma
Total n=1616	51	12	36
Completed n=1005	65	14	20
Did not Complete n=611	46	11	42
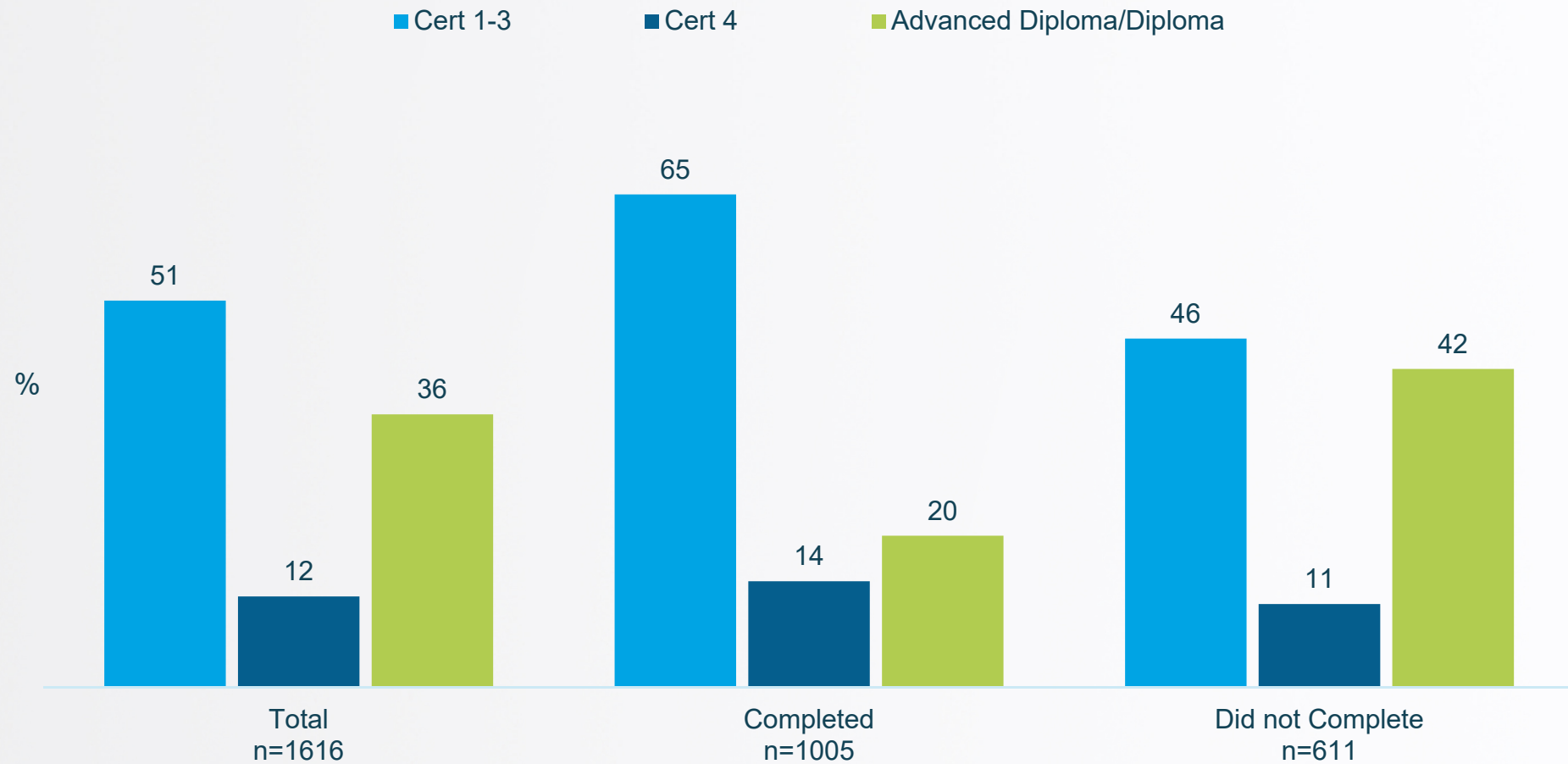
Q2. What level was the course?

Base: All respondents

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Length of course

Legend: Less than a month | 1-3 months | 4-6 Months | 7-12 months | 1-2 years | Over 2 years

%

Total
n=1616
4, 10, 23, 24, 29, 10

Completed
n=1005
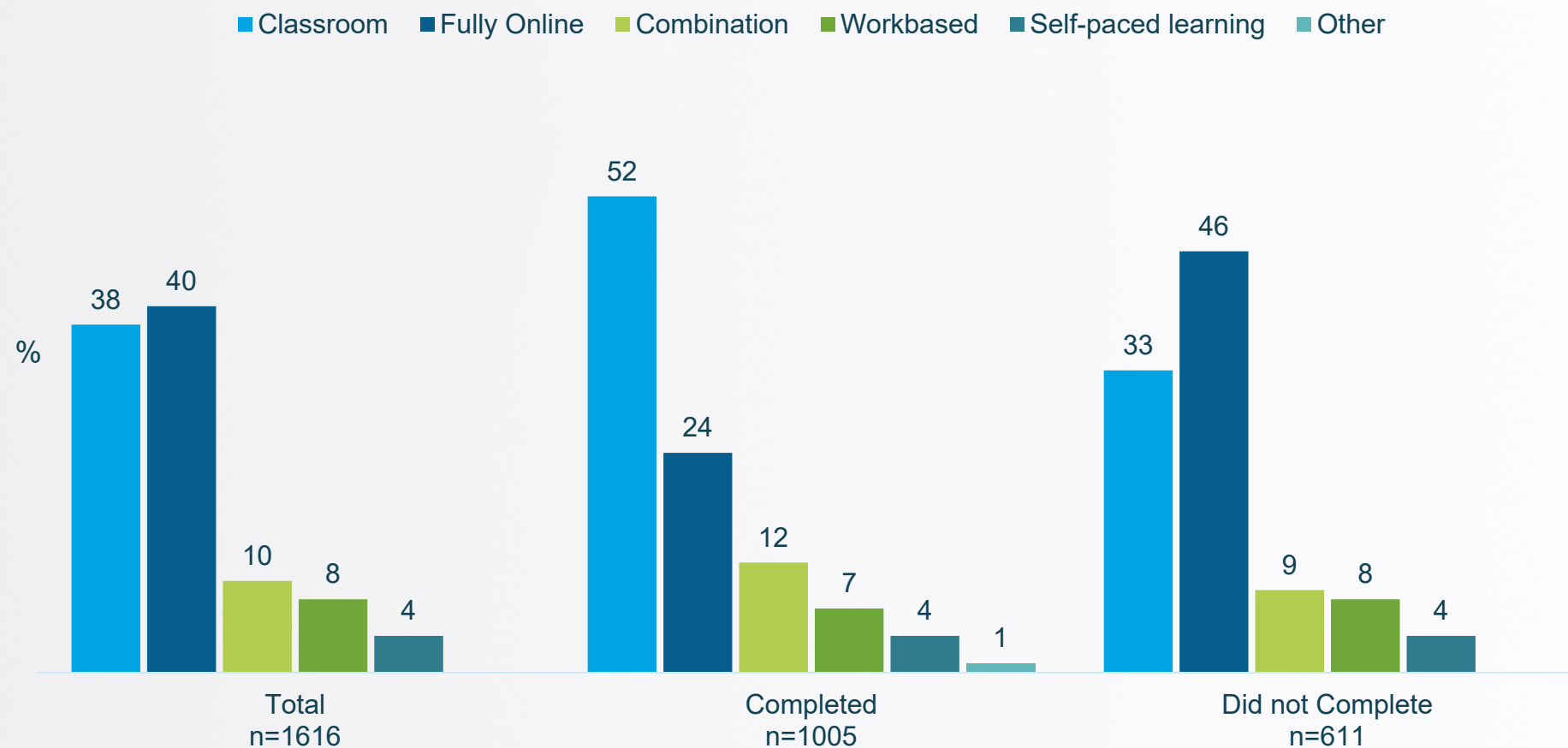5, 15, 31, 21, 19, 8

Did not Complete
n=611
4, 8, 20, 26, 32, 11
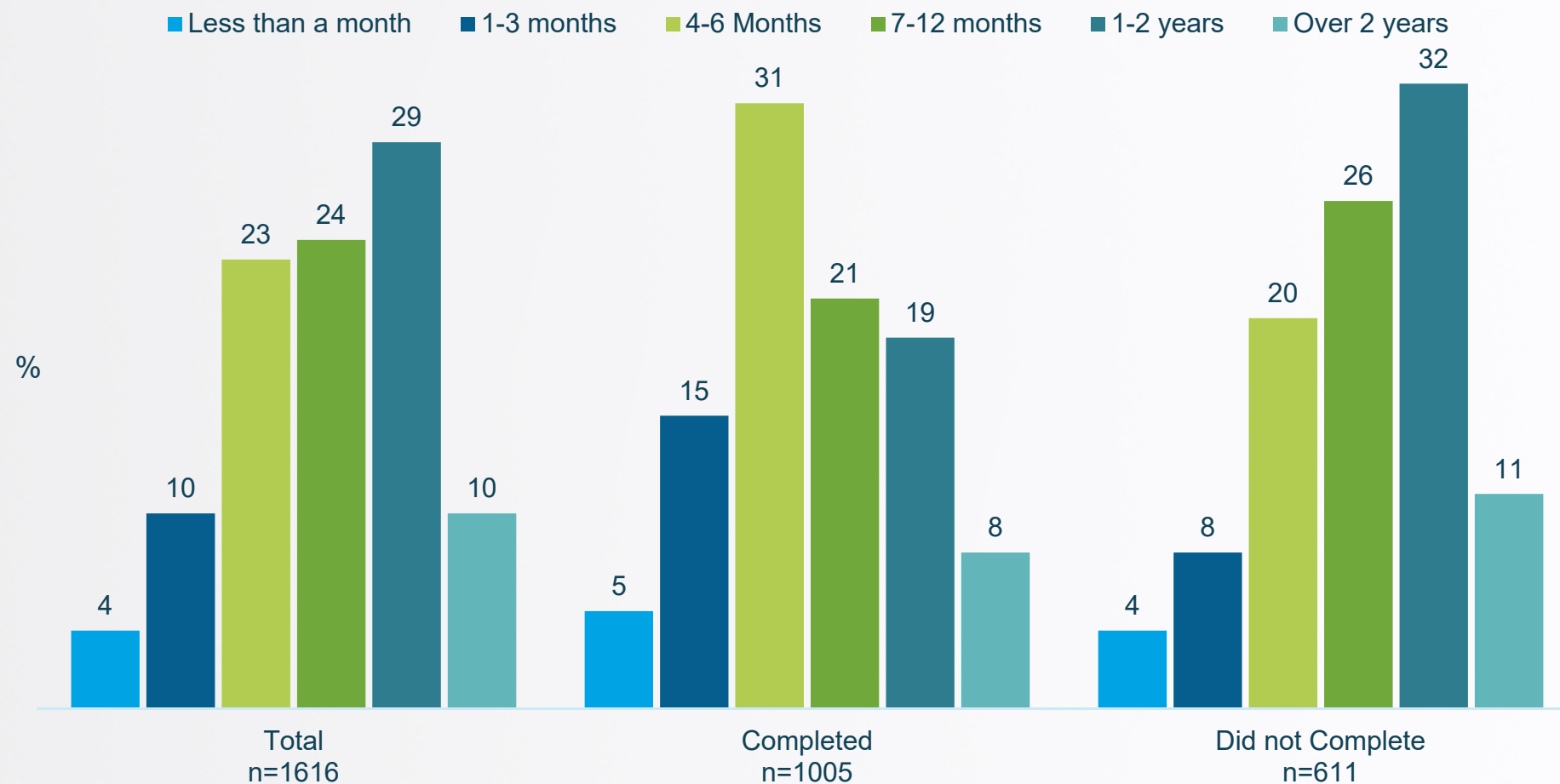
Q5. How long was the course? In total, not how much you completed.
[Considering] What is your ideal course length?

Base: All respondents

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Method of course delivery

Classroom ■ Fully Online ■ Combination ■ Workbased ■ Self-paced learning ■ Other

%

Total
n=1616
38 40 10 8 4

Completed
n=1005
52 24 12 7 4 1

Did not Complete
n=611
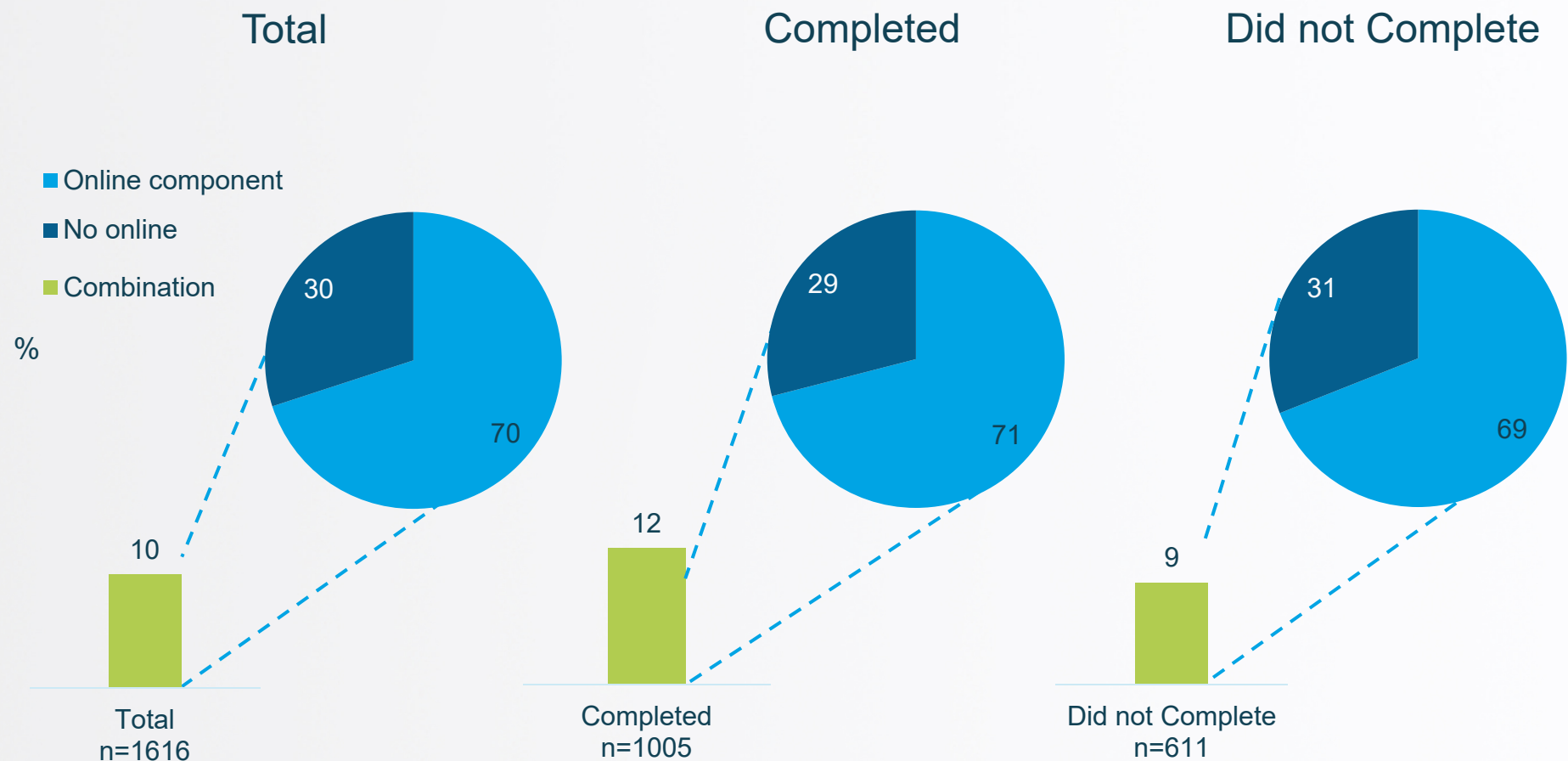33 46 9 8 4

Q4a. How was the course delivered?
[Considering] How would you best like to do the course?

Base: All respondents

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Incidence of any of the course being delivered online

Total

Completed

Did not Complete

■ Online component
■ No online
■ Combination

%

Total
n=1616

Completed
n=1005

Did not Complete
n=611

Total pie: 30 / 70 — bar: 10

Completed pie: 29 / 71 — bar: 12

Did not Complete pie: 31 / 69 — bar: 9

Q4b. Was any part of the course or assessment done online?

Base: Respondents whose course used a combination of different delivery methods

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Drivers of Completion

Experience of the course

Satisfaction with the course

Total Satisfied	Total (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Course Flexibility	65	(80)	59
Course Length	64	(80)	58
Content relevant & up to date	64	(82)	57
Teaching Quality	63	(81)	56
Course Organisation & Admin	61	77	54
Guidance & support from provider	59	(82)	50
Responsiveness to queries	57	(80)	48
Learning Materials & Resources	40	34	42
Training & Facilities	33	32	34

There were major differences between completed and not completed students with regard to their satisfaction with the course

Q13. When doing the course how satisfied were you with the following?

Base: All respondents

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Perception of course content as difficult

Too easy

Quite easy

About right

Quite Difficult

Too Difficult

Non-completers found the course content more difficult than students who completed the course
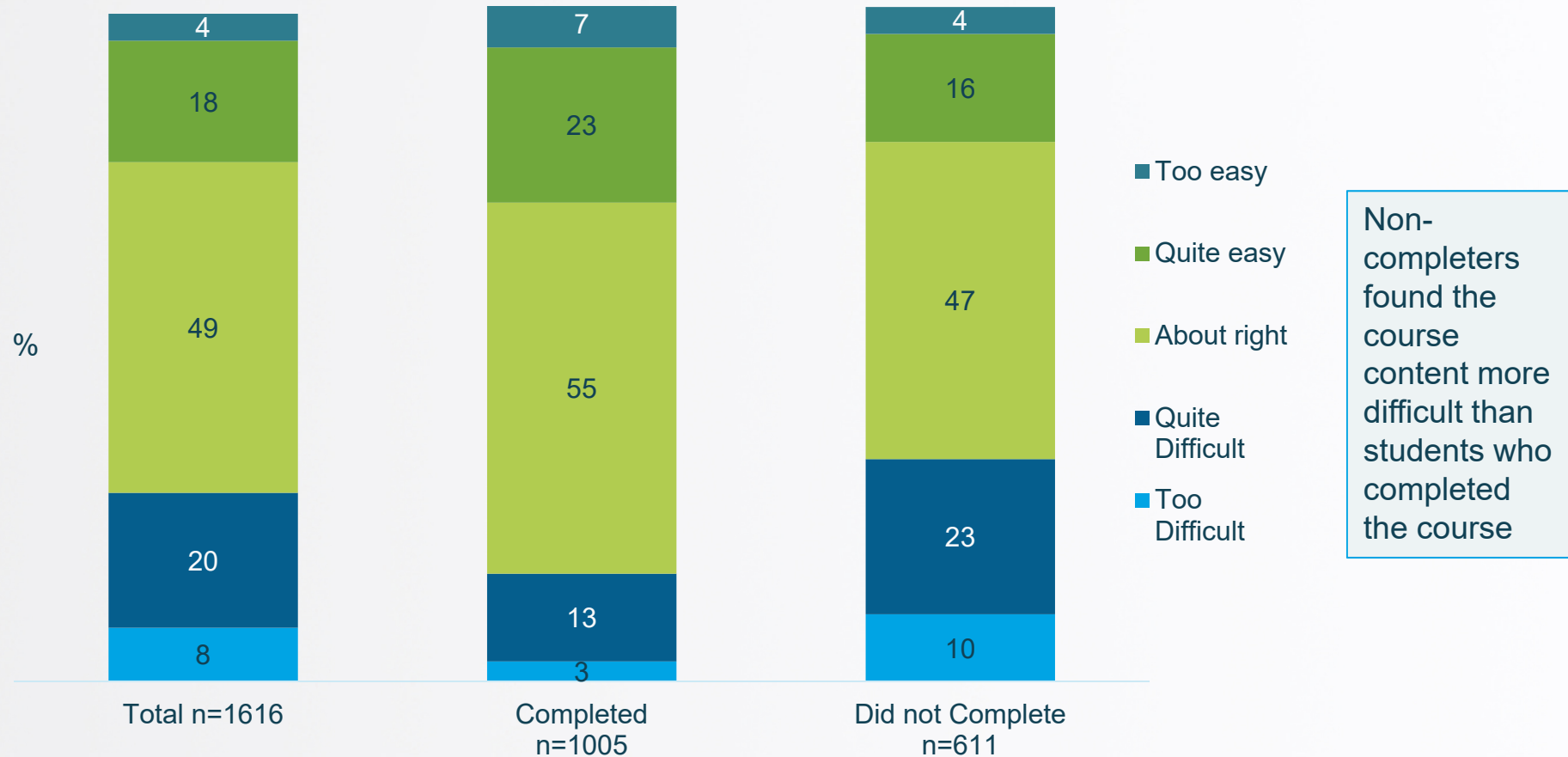
Q15. Did you find the course content difficult or easy?

Base: All respondents

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Drivers of Completion

Support

Use of additional support to complete training

Used support	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Study Skills Guidance & Support	22	(31)
Mentoring Programs	15	17
Extra Tutoring	14	16

Very helpful	Completed		Did not Complete	
	%	Base	%	Base
Study Skills Guidance & Support	63	n=241	(36)	n=149
Mentoring Programs	62	n=156	59	n=115
Extra Tutoring	60	n=131	50	n=93

Non completers were more likely to have used study skills guidance and support but were much less likely to have found that support helpful.

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Perceived helpfulness of other initiatives

Potential/perceived helpfulness "very helpful"	Total		Completed		Did not Complete	
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base
Shorter length of course	51	n=1616	26	n=1005	19	n=611
Increased flexibility from course provider for deadlines for assessments, exam timetables etc.	32	n=1616	32	n=1005	32	n=611
Teachers managing disruptive students better	26	n=1616	29	n=1005	24	n=611
Mentoring programmes	23	n=1345	15	n=849	(26)	n=496
Extra tutoring	20	n=1392	13	n=874	(23)	n=518
Study skills guidance and support	18	n=1226	14	n=764	19	n=462
Career planning and support services	12	n=1345	11	n=836	13	n=509

Non completers were more likely to see mentoring programmes and extra tutoring as potentially helpful.

Q20c. How helpful would the following have been in helping you to complete your course?

Base: Respondents who said "no it was not available" or "no, it was available but I didn't use it" in Q20a

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Suggested other factors that would have assisted completion

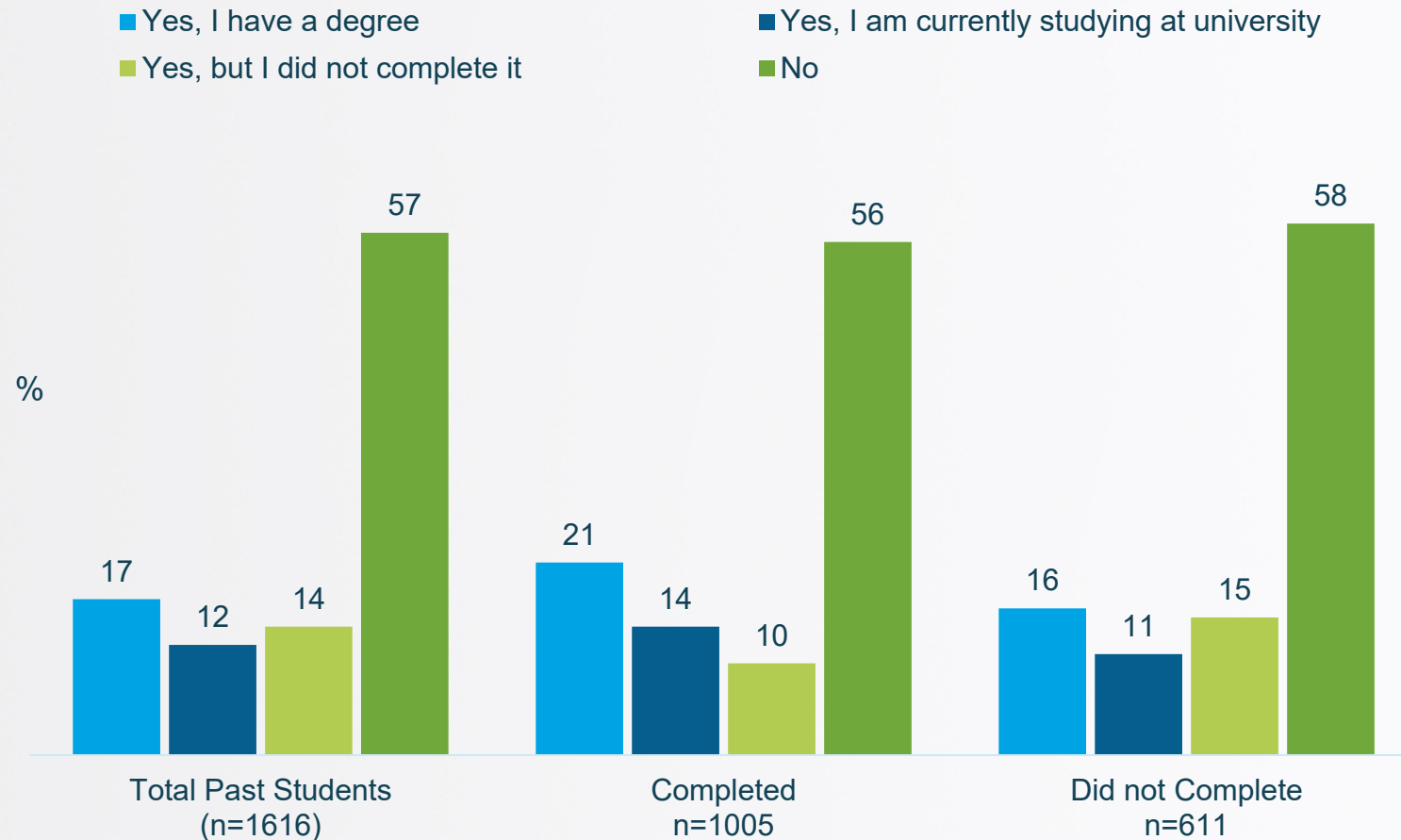|	Did not Complete (n=611)
Nothing	32
More in class time	10
Better personal circumstances	7
The course being managed more professionally/being better organised	5
Better teachers	4
More flexibility/being able to go at my own pace	3
Employment data/job prospects on completion	3
Honesty from the provider/if I had known their reputation/I would have enrolled in TAFE	2
The course was too difficult for the time allocated/the level	2
Placement services being available/careers assistance/work experience	2
An online course/more of an online component	2
Cheaper courses/fee support	2
Friends/colleagues/family advice/support	2
More accessible support/better response from trainers	1
Tutorial support/teachers guidance	1
Detailed info/content, requirement, delivery method etc	1
More money from Austudy/or paid work placement to help make ends meet	1
Other	15
Don't know	11

Non completers suggested more in-class time, better organisation/ management and better teachers.

Support was also raised in many ways.

Q21. Is there anything else that would have helped you to complete your course?

Base: Did not complete

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Drivers of Completion

Educational background

Incidence of having a past University degree

■Yes, I have a degree   ■Yes, I am currently studying at university
■Yes, but I did not complete it   ■No

Those with a degree were slightly more likely to complete.

%

Total Past Students
(n=1616)

Completed
n=1005

Did not Complete
n=611

Q23. Have you started a university course previously?

Base: All respondents

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VET courses while at school

VET course while at school	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)	Currently Studying (n=250)	Considering (n=206)
Yes, I did a VET course/s while at school and got a Certificate	17	18	16	(26)	8
Yes, I did a VET course/s while at school and got a Statement of Attainment	5	7	4	(19)	5
I started a VET course while at school but dropped the subject(s)	5	5	5	7	3
I started a VET course while at school but left school early	4	2	4	3	6
No, I did not want to do a VET course while at school	24	26	22	15	18
No, VET courses were not offered at my school	46	41	48	30	(60)

Q25. Did you do a VET course while at school? (e.g. Construction, Hospitality, Business Services, Automotive, Hairdressing etc)

Base: All respondents

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VET courses started and finished after leaving school

Means					
1.7	1.0	2.0	1.7	1.6	0.7

Legend:
- 5+
- 2 to 4
- 1
- 0
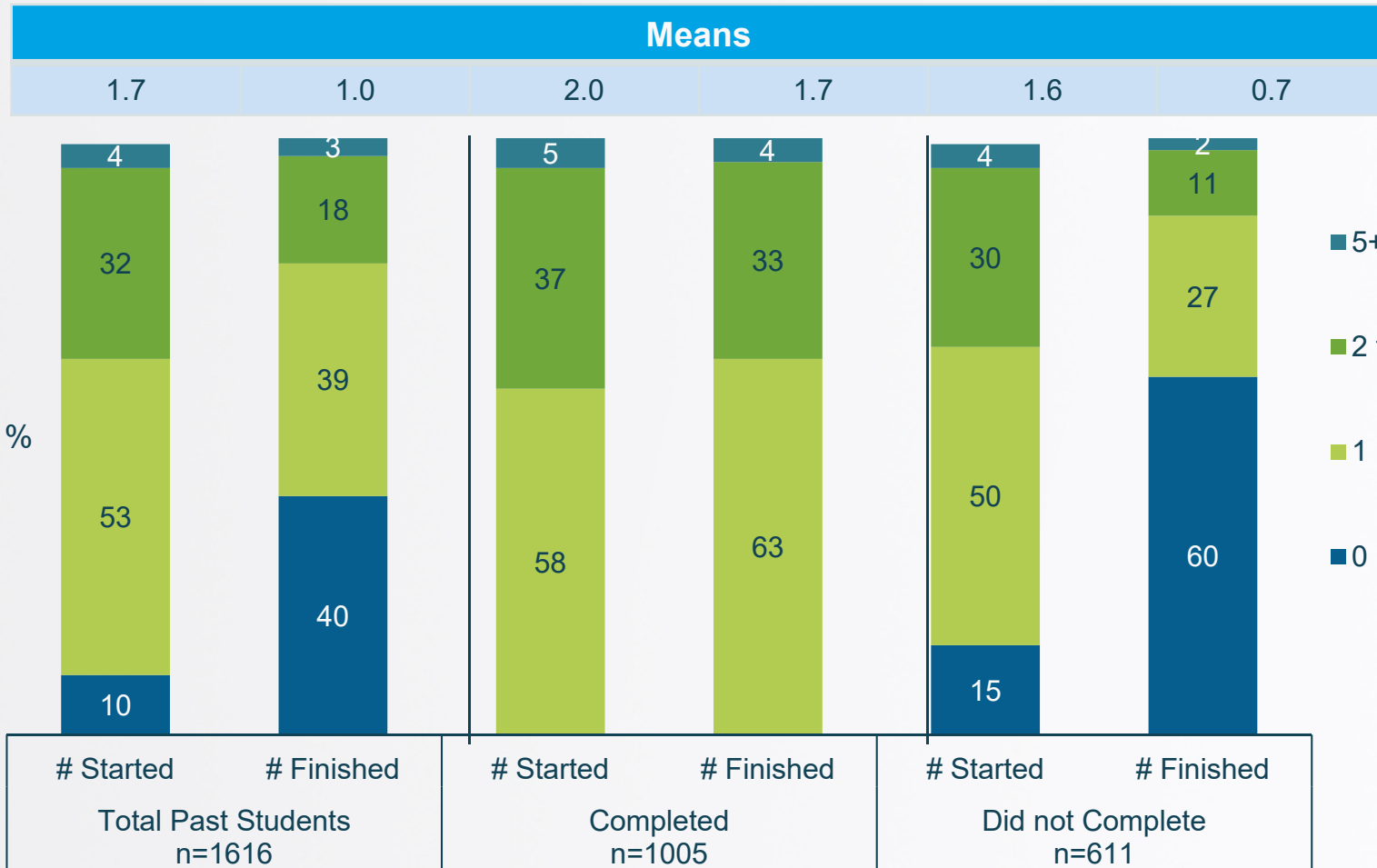
Non completers were more likely to have started courses and not finished them in the past.

# Started	# Finished	# Started	# Finished	# Started	# Finished
Total Past Students n=1616		Completed n=1005		Did not Complete n=611	

Q26. How many different VET courses have you started since leaving school?
Q27. How many of those courses have you completed?

Base: All respondents

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Drivers of Completion

Demographics

Age and gender

Gender	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Male	38	40	38
Female	62	60	62
Age			
Under 22	30	26	(33)
22-25	17	22	15
26-35	19	20	18
Over 35	33	32	34

Non-completers were more often younger than completers.

F1. Please record your gender
S6. How old are you?

Base: All respondents   * Less than 1%

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Languages other than English

Language other than English spoken at home	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
No	88	82	90
Hindi	1	0	1
Korean	1	0	1
Mandarin / Chinese	*	*	*
Filipino	*	1	0
Other	10	17	9

F4. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

Base: All respondents

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ATSI and Disabled

ATSI	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Yes	7	6	8
No	92	94	91
Refused	1	1	1
Disabled			
Yes	14	11	15
No	83	86	81
Refused	4	3	4

Non-completers seemed slightly more likely to be disabled.

F5. Do you have a disability?
F3. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Base: All respondents

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Employment situation

Employment situation before starting course	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Working full time	30	34	29
Unemployed	23	17	(25)
Working part time	22	25	20
Student	13	13	13
Engaged in home duties	7	6	7
Retired	1	1	*
None of the above	5	3	6

Non-completers were more often unemployed

F7. Which of the following best describes your situation before you started the course?

Base: All respondents

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Access to benefits

Access to Benefits	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Newstart Allowance	16	13	17
Youth Allowance	14	9	16
Disability Support	6	5	7
ABSTUDY	4	3	4
Austudy	4	3	4
Other	7	5	8
No benefits	52	65	47

Non-completers were more often on benefits.

F10. Are you on any of the following benefits?

Base: All respondents

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Income

Personal income	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Under $20,000	35	29	38
$20,0000-$39,999	20	20	20
$40,000-$59,999	14	17	13
$60,000-$99,999	9	13	7
> $100,000	4	5	4
Refused	17	15	18

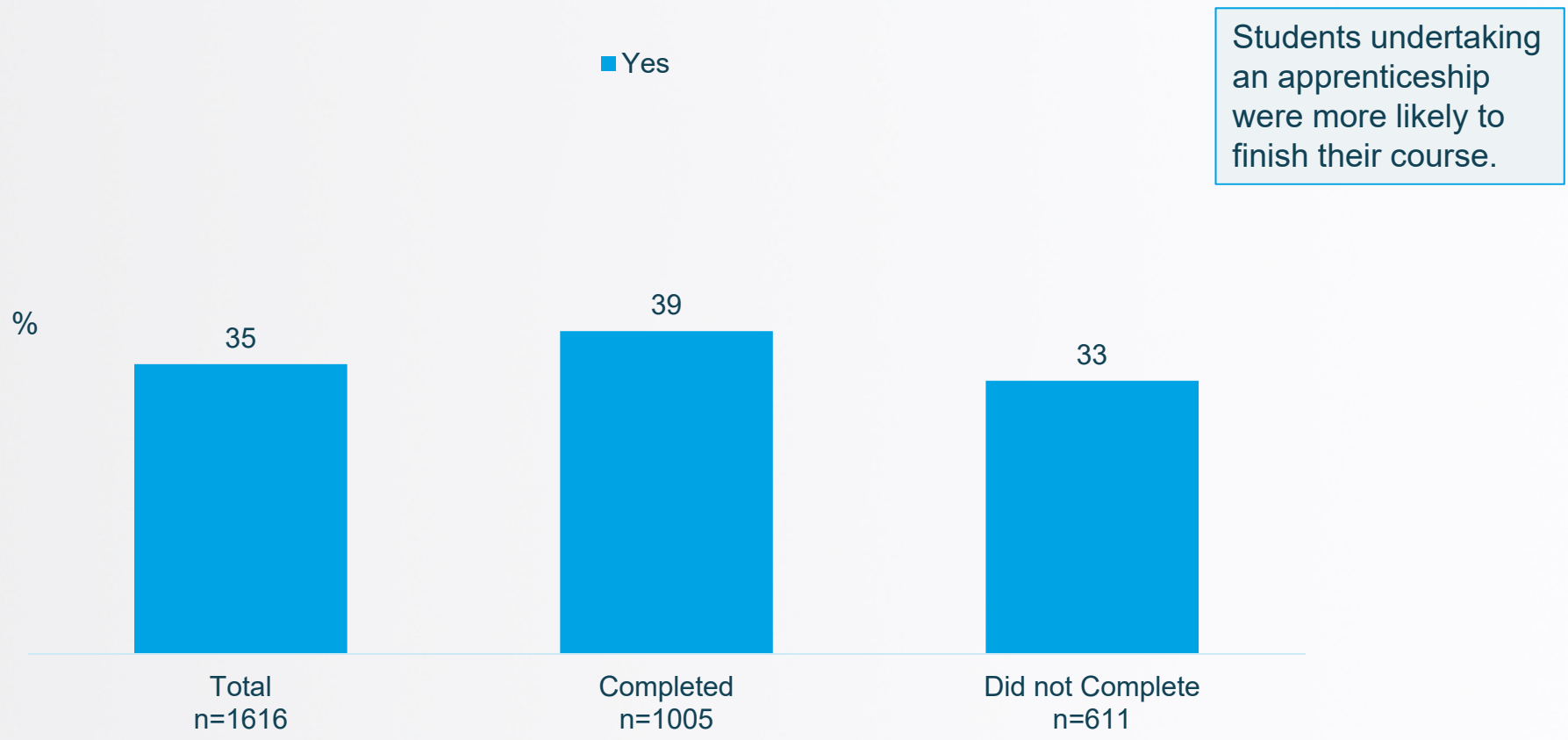| Household income	Total Past Students (n=1616)	Completed (n=1005)	Did not Complete (n=611)
Under $20,000	15	11	16
$20,0000-$39,999	12	11	12
$40,000-$59,999	16	16	16
$60,000-$99,999	16	18	15
> $100,000	17	20	16
Refused	25	24	25

Non-completers were on lower incomes (personal and household).

F11. Which of the following categories best describes your personal income before tax?
F12.. Which of the following categories best describes your household income before tax?
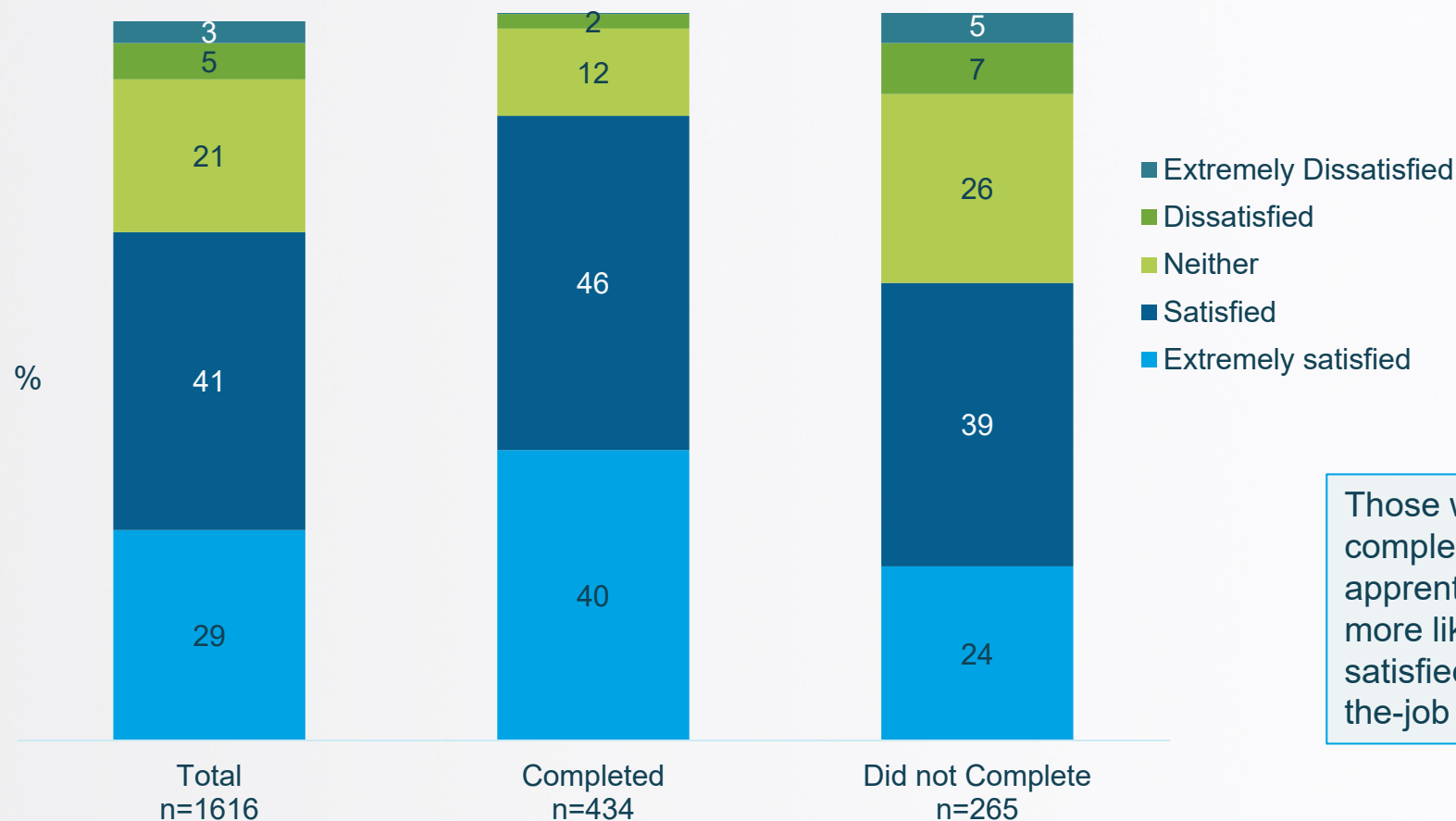
Base: All respondents

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Drivers of Completion

Trainee/apprenticeship

Incidence of training being part of an apprenticeship

Students undertaking an apprenticeship were more likely to finish their course.

■ Yes

%

Total n=1616	Completed n=1005	Did not Complete n=611
35	39	33

Q5b. Was your training part of an apprenticeship or traineeship?

Base: All respondents

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Satisfaction with the on-the-job training

%

Legend:
- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither
- Satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Total n=1616
- 3
- 5
- 21
- 41
- 29

Completed n=434
- 2
- 12
- 46
- 40

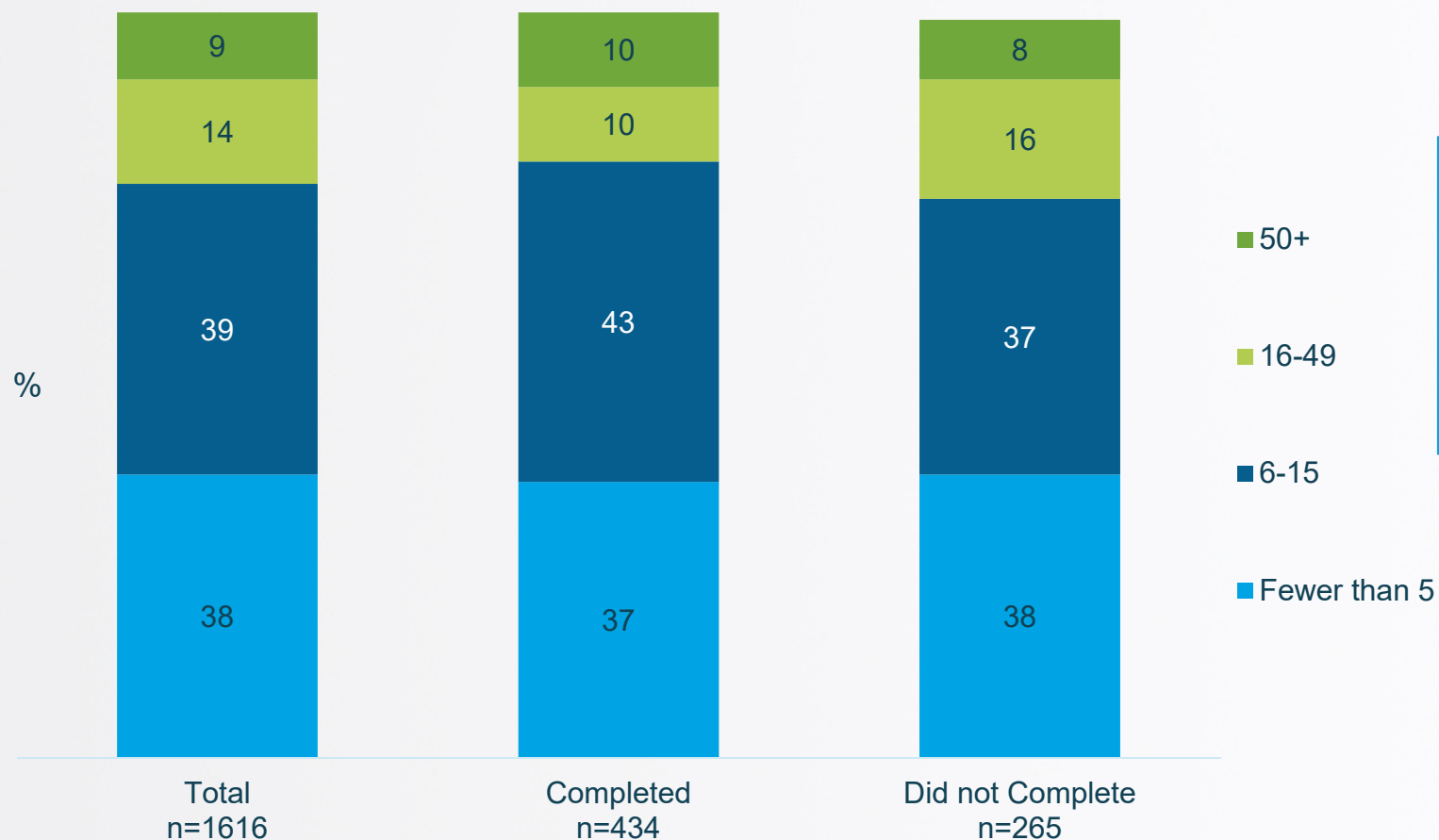**Did not Complete** n=265
- 5
- 7
- 26
- 39
- 24

Those who completed their apprenticeships were more likely to be satisfied with the on-the-job training.

Q14a. How satisfied were you with the on-the-job training provided by your work supervisor?

Base: Respondents whose training was part of an apprenticeship or traineeship.

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Number of employees during on-the-job training

%

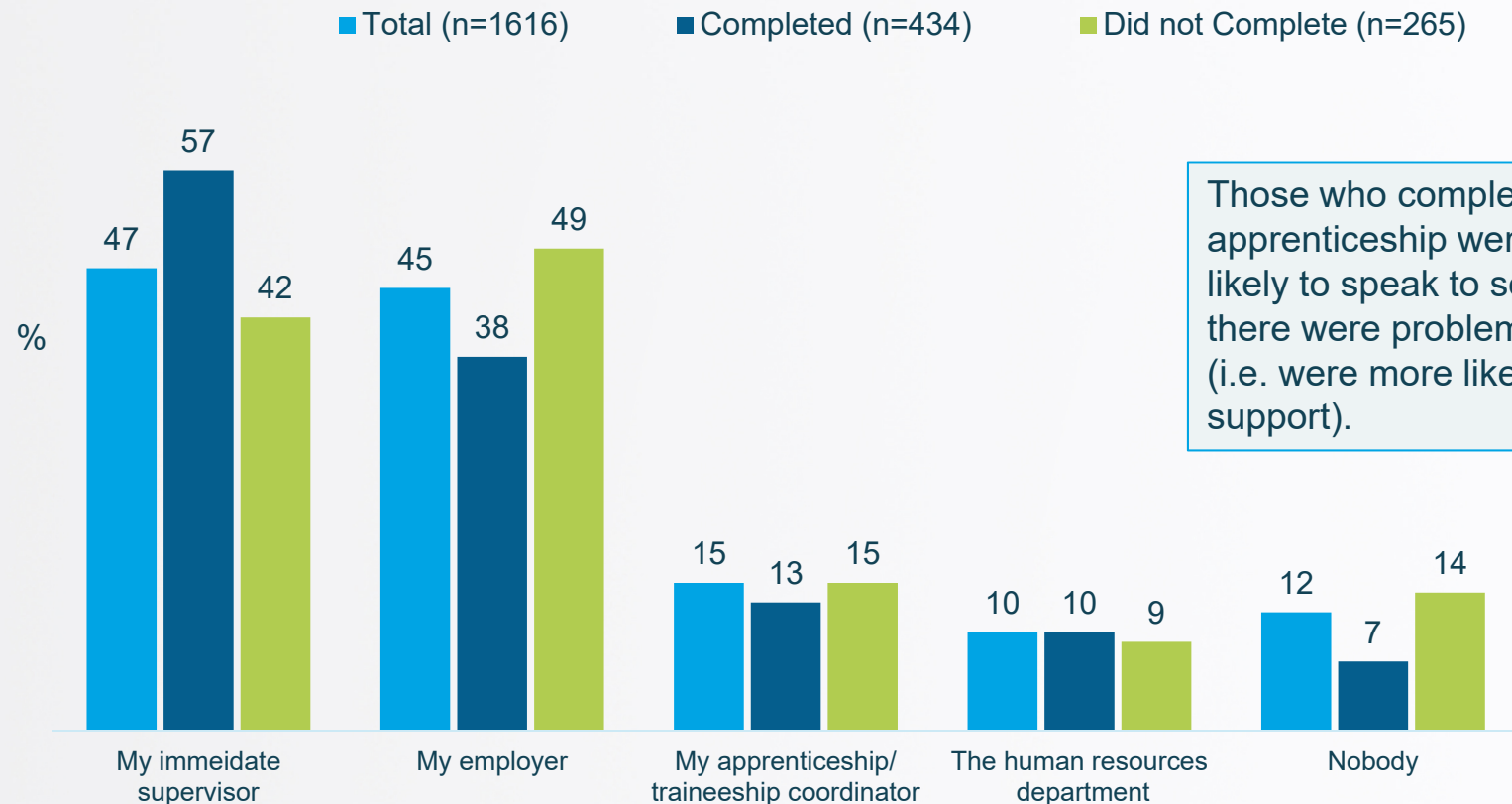|	Total n=1616	Completed n=434	Did not Complete n=265
50+	9	10	8
16-49	14	10	16
6-15	39	43	37
Fewer than 5	38	37	38

However, there were no differences in the number of employees (size of employer).

Q14b. How many employees did your workplace/organisation have during the on-the-job training?

Base: Respondents whose training was part of an apprenticeship or traineeship

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Person sought if there were problems at work

■ Total (n=1616)   ■ Completed (n=434)   ■ Did not Complete (n=265)

%

My immeidate supervisor: 47, 57, 42
My employer: 45, 38, 49
My apprenticeship/ traineeship coordinator: 15, 13, 15
The human resources department: 10, 10, 9
Nobody: 12, 7, 14

Those who completed their apprenticeship were more likely to speak to someone if there were problems at work (i.e. were more likely to seek support).

Q14c. If you had any problems at work, who did you speak to? If you didn't have any problems, who would you have spoken to if you had?

Base: Respondents whose training was part of an apprenticeship or traineeship

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Analysis by
Key Segments

Contextual introduction

- Within the qualitative phase, we found that there was a great deal of overlap between the completers, non-completers, considerers and currents. It was theoretically possible for one person to fit all four and many were 'completers' and 'did not completers'.

- Therefore there are not always clear differences **between people** who complete and do not complete VET courses, rather there are differences in the **motivations to participate in and reasons for not completing specific courses at that particular time, and often more than one reason**.

- For this reason it did not make sense to try to uncover mutually exclusive segments of people. We focussed on a deeper level of analysis and it emerged that students tended to fall into '**mindsets**' which were based on their motivations to study, which then influenced completion.

- The mindsets within each category are not mutually exclusive, and people can move between mindsets and categories.

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Recap of segmentation from the qualitative phase
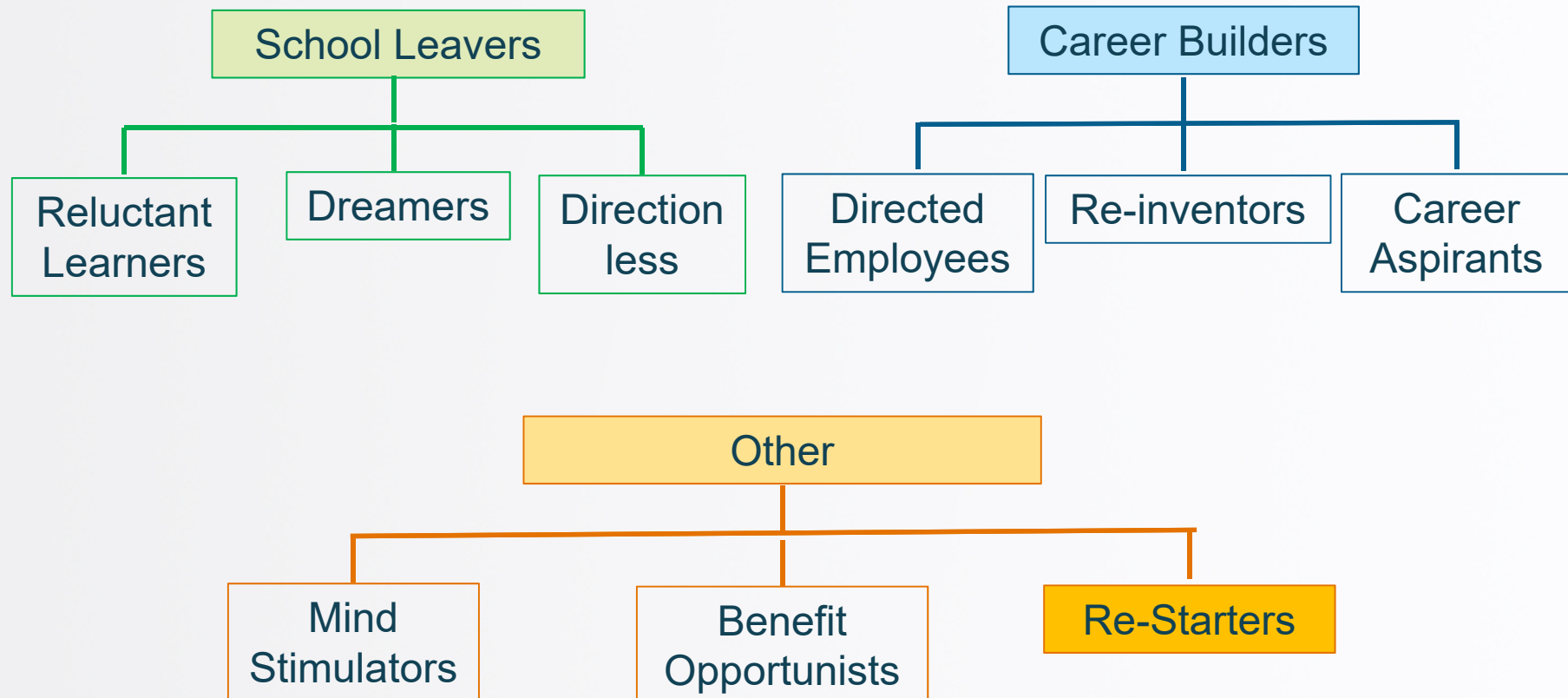
Defining the segments – school leavers

| School Leavers | Aged 21 or under, working or student before studying. Doing the course for work reasons. |

and

| Reluctant Learners | Agree that only did the course because I needed a qualification to get a job |

| Dreamers | Agree that I've always had a strong desire to do the kind of work this course would lead to |

| Directionless | Agree that I have no clear idea about what job I want |

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Defining the segments – career builders

Career Builders	Aged 22 and over, working or student before studying. Doing a course for work reasons.

and

Directed Employees	It was a requirement of my job
Re-inventors	To help me get the job I want, change my job, get back into the workforce, set up or expand own business
Career Aspirants	To help me advance my career/get a promotion, increase my pay, do my job better, do more interesting work

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Defining the segments - other

Other	Any age and unemployed, home duties or retired prior to studying

and

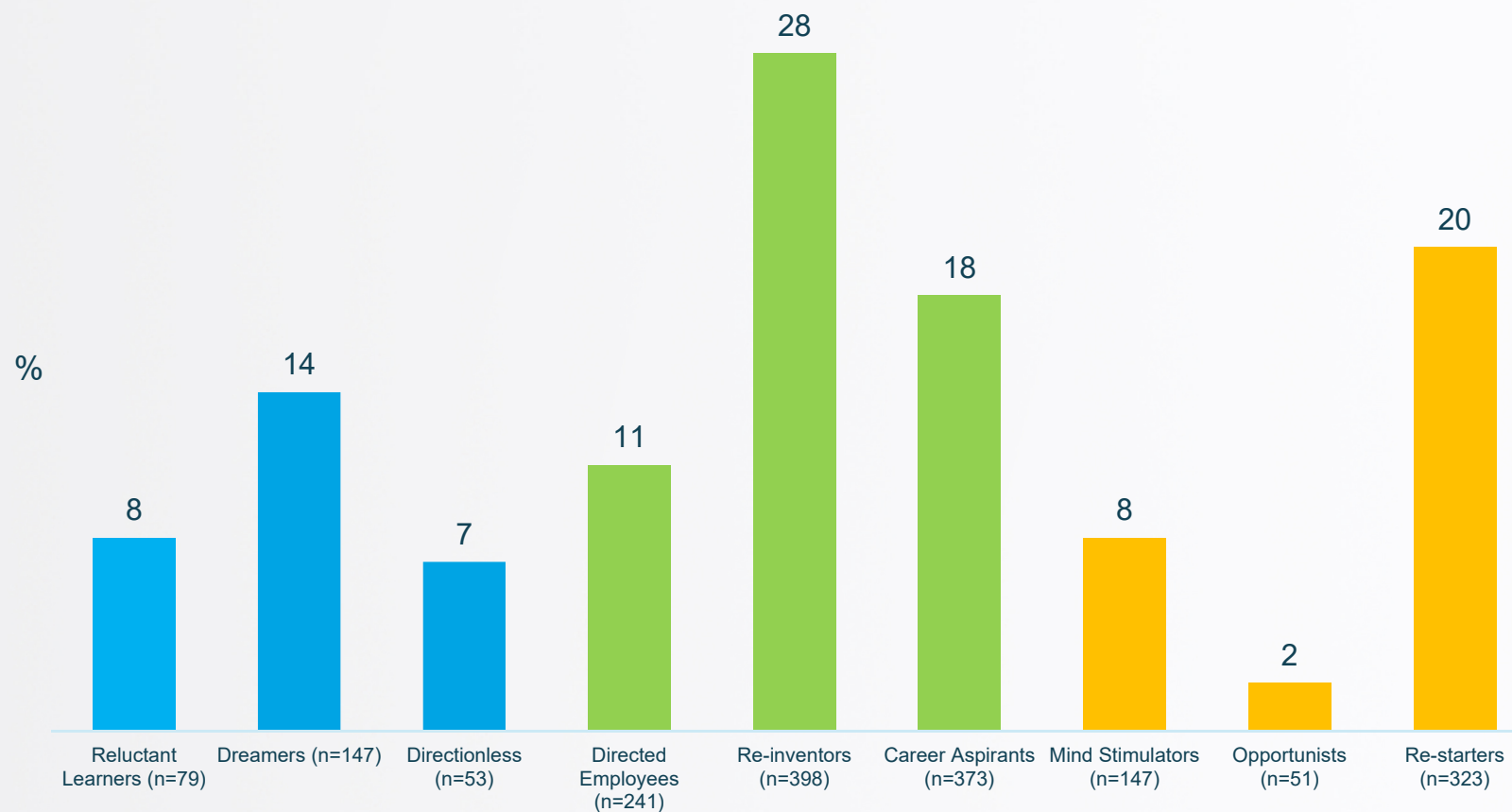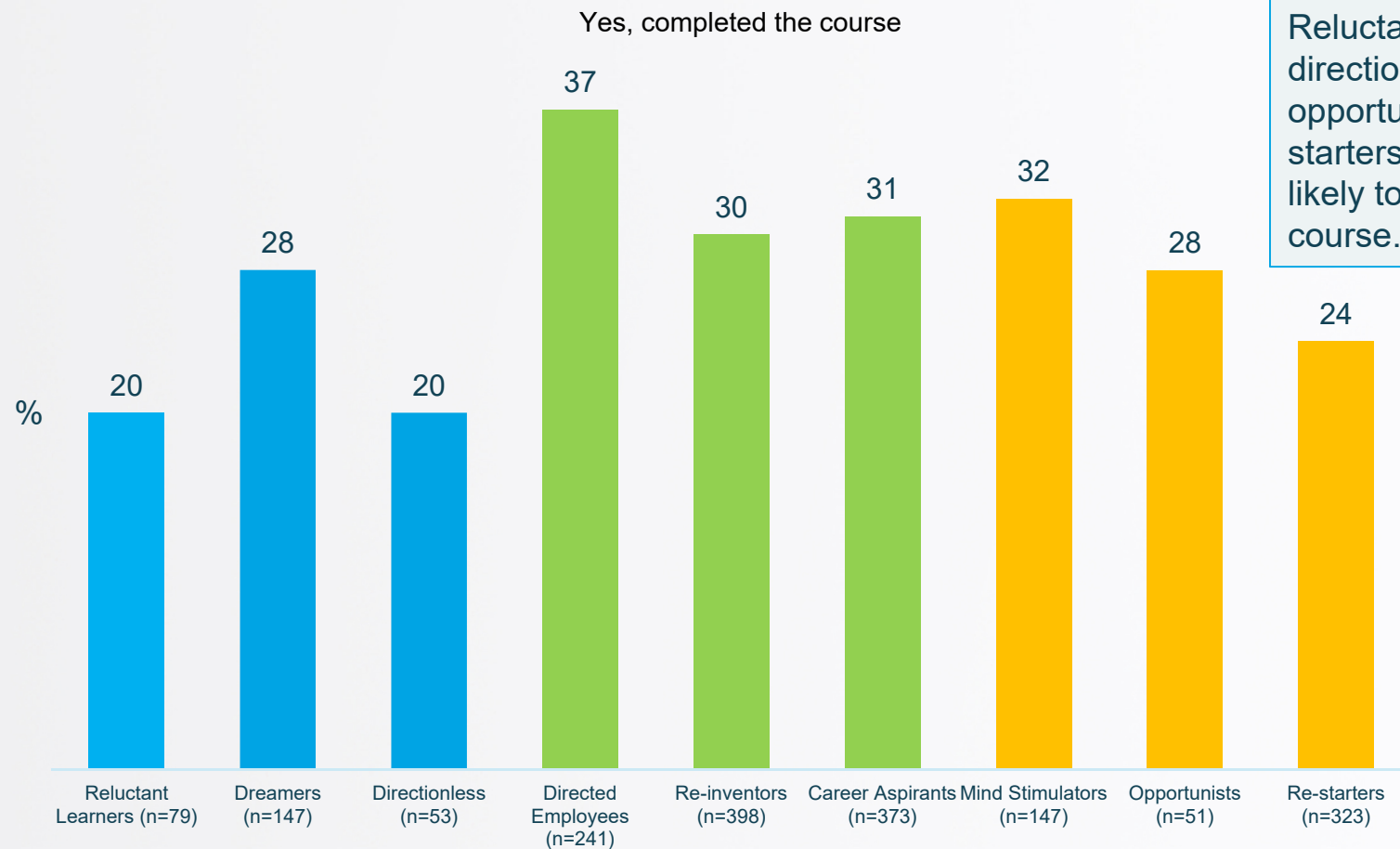|	
Mind Stimulators	Studying for personal development/interest
Benefit Opportunists	It was a requirement of my Govt welfare benefits
Re-Starters	To help me get the job I want, to help get back into the workforce, to set up my own business/expand my business

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Size of Segments

%

Reluctant Learners (n=79)	Dreamers (n=147)	Directionless (n=53)	Directed Employees (n=241)	Re-inventors (n=398)	Career Aspirants (n=373)	Mind Stimulators (n=147)	Opportunists (n=51)	Re-starters (n=323)
8	14	7	11	28	18	8	2	20

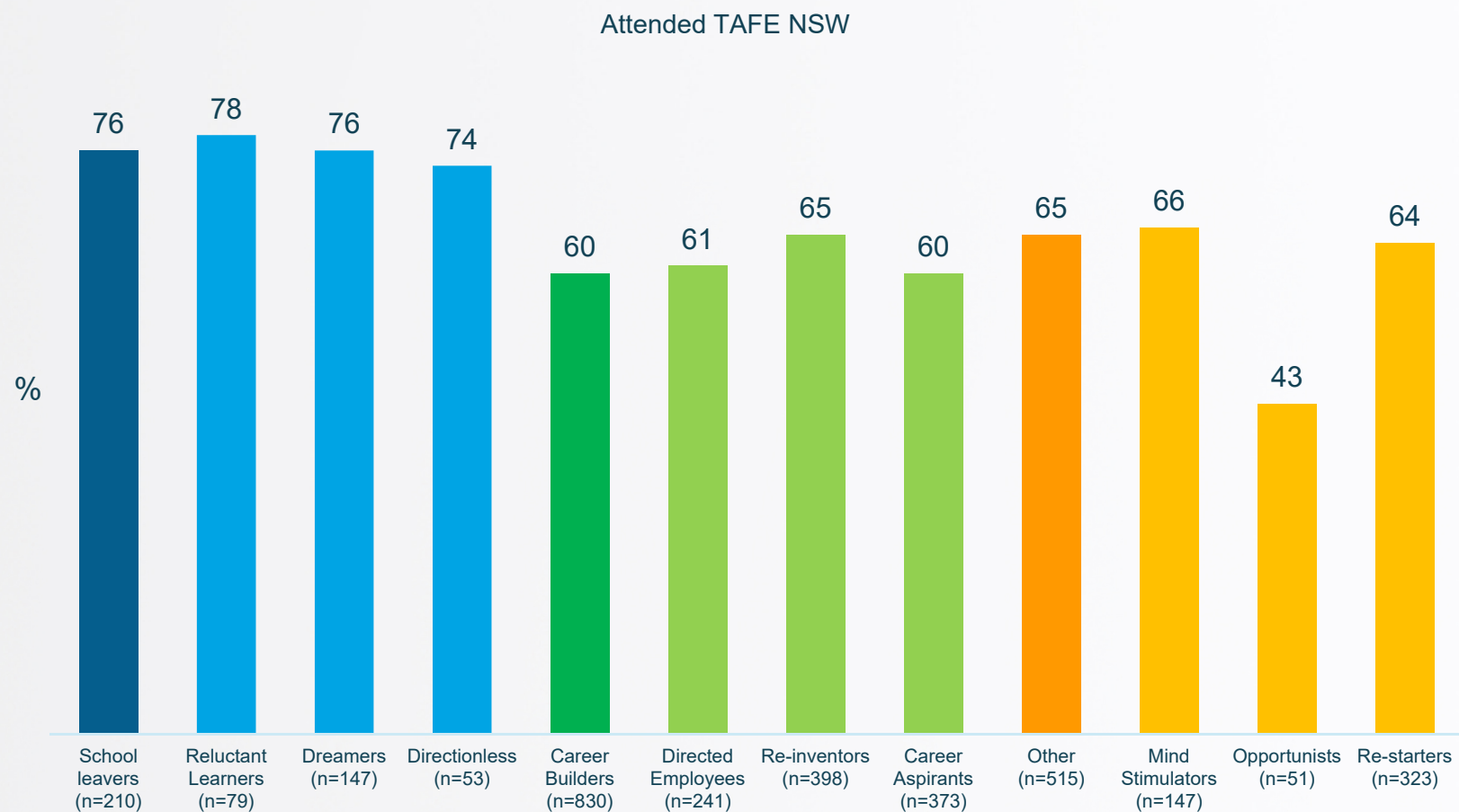WOOLCOTT
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Proportion of students completing course

Yes, completed the course

Reluctant learners, directionless, opportunists and re-starters were least likely to finish the course.

%

Reluctant Learners (n=79)	Dreamers (n=147)	Directionless (n=53)	Directed Employees (n=241)	Re-inventors (n=398)	Career Aspirants (n=373)	Mind Stimulators (n=147)	Opportunists (n=51)	Re-starters (n=323)
20	28	20	37	30	31	32	28	24

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Proportion attending TAFE NSW

Attended TAFE NSW

Category	Value
School leavers (n=210)	76
Reluctant Learners (n=79)	78
Dreamers (n=147)	76
Directionless (n=53)	74
Career Builders (n=830)	60
Directed Employees (n=241)	61
Re-inventors (n=398)	65
Career Aspirants (n=373)	60
Other (n=515)	65
Mind Stimulators (n=147)	66
Opportunists (n=51)	43
Re-starters (n=323)	64

Q3. Where did you complete your training?

Base: All respondents

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School Leaver Segments

Profile	Reluctant learners % (n=79)	Dreamers % (N=147)	Directionless % (n=53)
Male	49	47	38
Female	51	53	**62***
Living with parents	66	68	66
On benefits	38	38	31
Incidence of disability	4	2	5
Incidence of completing VET in school	**31**	32	43*
Started VET in school but left school early	22	**14**	23
No. of courses **started** since school	1.2	1.4	1.2
No. of courses **completed** since school	0.7	0.9	0.7
Proportion completing most recent course	20	28	20

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School Leaver Segments

The Course	Reluctant learners % (n=79)	Dreamers % (N=147)	Directionless % (n=53)
Fully online	26	25	48*
Class room	42	51*	27
Work based	14	10	16
Part of an apprenticeship	54*	46	49
Attended TAFE	80	82	79
Course type:			
Cert I-III	66	74	75
Cert IV	18	10	20
Diploma/Advanced Dip	16	16	5
Course Length:			
Less than a month	3	2	13*
More than one month, less than 12 months	47	51	41
More than one year	50	47	45

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School Leaver Segments

Influencers	Reluctant learners % (n=79)	Dreamers % (N=147)	Directionless % (n=53)
Influenced by careers advisor at school	40	32	51*
Influenced by careers advisor at Tafe	31	29	31
Influenced by family	52*	47	44
Influenced by advertising	29	23	36*
Degree of motivation to complete the course ('very')	43	66*	35
Ease of finding information about courses ('very easy')	34	33	24
Ease of finding information about providers ('very easy')	23	29*	18
Main Reasons for starting:			
- It was a requirement of my job	31	29	43*
- To help me get the job I wanted	31*	25*	18

All school leavers more influenced. Directionless more influenced by careers advisor and advertising. Dreamers highly motivated and more likely to find sourcing info. easy.

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School Leaver Segments

Barriers to completion	Reluctant learners % (n=79)	Dreamers % (N=147)	Directionless % (n=53)
Reason for non completion:			
- Family reasons	15	12	16
- I achieved my training goals	15	10	15
- I lost my job	13	10	0
- The training was not what I expected	13	15	21
- I changed jobs	26	20	17
Aspects that would have helped completion: (very helpful)			
- Clear information on course costs for comparison	20	15	31*
- A summary of course content etc before enrolment	32*	21	24
- Increased flexibility from course provider for assessment deadlines	**54***	39	**56***
- Mentoring programmes	83	**87***	80
- Extra tutoring	74	65	**91***
- Study skills guidance and support	**62**	53	**68***

Directionless more likely to find most aspects helpful for completion particularly extra tutoring, mentoring and study skills guidance and support.

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Career Builder Segments

Profile	Directed Employees % (n=241)	Re-inventors % (N=398)	Career Aspirants % (n=373)
Male	49	45	48
Female	51	55	52
Working full time	**66***	**50**	**57**
Working part time	**31**	**37**	**35**
Incidence of children at home under 18	**35**	**36**	**34**
Incidence of having a degree	**41***	**28**	**27**
Incidence of completing VET in school	**48***	23	23
Started VET in school but left school early/dropped out	6	15	11
No. of courses **started** since school	1.6	1.9	**2.2***
No. of courses **completed** since school	**1.2**	1.1	**1.3***
Proportion completing most recent course	**37***	30	31

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Career Builder Segments

The Course	Directed Employees % (n=241)	Re-inventors % (N=398)	Career Aspirants % (n=373)
Fully online	42	41	**29***
Class room	**27**	33	34
Work based	12	6	7
Part of an apprenticeship	**78***	37	35
Attended Tafe	65	72	68
Course type:			
Cert I-IV	**78***	51	50
Diploma/Advanced Dip	20	**48***	**49***
How course was paid for:			
- By me	**10**	**23**	26
- By employer	**62***	16	**25***
- VET FEE HELP	**17**	**38***	33

Career Builder Segments

Influencers	Directed Employees % (n=241)	Re-inventors % (N=398)	Career Aspirants % (n=373)
Influenced by careers advisor at TAFE RTO (strong)	30	24	23
Influenced by Sales person from RTO (strong)	27	18	10
Influenced by peers/colleagues (strong)	40*	18	18
Influenced by employer (strong)	54*	21	33*
Degree of motivation to complete the course ('very')	59	69*	60
Ease of finding information Course ('very easy')	43*	30	32
Ease of finding information Provider ('very easy')	41*	33	36

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Career Builder Segments

Reasons for starting	Directed Employees % (n=241)	Re-inventors % (N=398)	Career Aspirants % (n=373)
Reasons for starting (main):			
- It was a requirement of my job	**75***	**8**	14
- It was part of an apprenticeship	**41***	**6**	9
- To help me get the job I wanted	**21**	**60***	**37**
- To change my career job	**10**	**47***	**35***
- To help me advance my career	13	21	**53***
- To get the chance to do more interesting work	**8**	24	**48***

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Career Builder Segments

Barriers to completion	Directed Employees % (n=241)	Re-inventors % (N=398)	Career Aspirants % (n=373)
Reason for non completion:			
- I changed jobs	**32***	12	16
- I lost my job	**21***	12	5
- I achieved my training goals	**13***	4	3
- I started other training	**13***	3	3
- I lost motivation/interest	2	16	**22***
Aspects that would have helped completion:			
Careers advice and guidance by providers(very helpful)	**33***	24	17
Industry demand for the course and future outcomes (very helpful)	19	**27***	22
Mentoring	**75***	65	77
Shorter length	**41***	24	25

Reasons for non-completion differed between the segments as well as the aspects they would've found helpful.

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Other Segments

Profile	Mind Stimulators % (n=147)	Benefit Opportunists % (n=51)	Restarters % (n=323)
Male	29	30	22
Female	71	70	78
Living with parents	19	**44***	19
On benefits	71	74	68
ATSI	3	10*	5
LOTE at home / CALD	13	7	11
Incidence of disability	**28***	12	**13**
Incidence of completing VET in school	17	6	9
Did not want to do a VET course while at school	22	**47***	24
No. of courses **started** since school	1.9	1.7	1.5
No. of courses **completed** since school	0.8	0.8	0.6
Proportion completing most recent course	32	28	24

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Other Segments

The Course	Mind Stimulators % (n=147)	Benefit Opportunists % (n=51)	Restarters % (n=323)	
Fully online	30	29	56*	Did not completes a lot more likely to be doing online courses
Class room	53	68	35	
Part of an apprenticeship	16	35^	16	
Attended Tafe	72	43*	71	
Influenced by peers/colleagues (strong)	5	19*	7	
Influenced by family (strong)	14	5	36*	
Influenced by sales person (strong)	3	17*	10	
Influenced by advertising (strong)	7	5	12	
Degree of motivation to complete the course ('very')	77	32*	74	
Ease of finding information ('very easy')	20	1	20	
Reasons for starting:				
- To help me get the job I wanted	19	24	56*	
- It was a requirement of my job	28	37*	1	
- For personal development/interest	20*	8	3	

Other Segments

Barriers to completion	Mind Stimulators % (n=147)	Benefit Opportunists % (n=51)	Restarters % (n=323)
Found the course content 'too difficult'	4	4	10
Reason for non completion:			
- family/personal reasons	45*	44*	24
- training was not what I expected	12	8	40*
- Lost motivation/interest	17	0	13
Aspects that would have helped completion: (very helpful)			
- Increased flexibility from course provider for deadlines for assessments, exam timetables etc…	49*	27	27
- Better management of disruptive students	19	12	37*
- Mentoring programmes	11	20	42*

Reasons for non-completion differed between the segments as well as the aspects they would've found helpful.

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Other Segments

Barriers to completion	Mind Stimulators % (n=147)	Benefit Opportunists % (n=51)	Restarters % (n=323)
Other aspects that would have helped completion:			
- The course being better managed more professionally	4	10	2
- Some/more in class time	**0**	**0**	**33***
- Tutorial support/teachers guidance	0	**42***	2
- Nothing	**48***	29	**22**

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Implications

Implications

The research suggests that a lot of non-completion is driven by **poor choice of course**

- **lack of clear direction**/ career aspiration amongst students themselves;

- **lack of assistance** in making a sound choice:
    - poor/non-existent careers advice
    - difficulty in finding easy to use information about courses; providers; costs; & job demand

- **poor information** on course content and expected student workload.

Course choices can therefore be **inappropriate** and/or expectations can be **unrealistic**

Once in the course, there seems to be a **lack of support**, **guidance** and **responsiveness to queries** and a perception of **poor content and teaching quality** (particularly with online courses).

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Implications

So, possible interventions fall into three broad categories:

1. Actions relating to the **Federal government** (e.g. providing information and funding);

2. Actions which can be implemented by **NSW Skills**
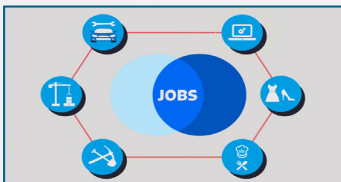
3. Actions which are the responsibility of **providers** (NSW Skills may be able to influence either directly or indirectly)

The following slides take each step in the process in turn and provide recommendations relating to these aspects.

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Career guidance

Career Guidance

- Consider the possibility of an **online 'calculator'** whereby people put in personal information such as best subjects at school; interests/hobbies; answer a short battery of vocational guidance questions and then the site suggests some possible career options.

  o The Federal government site MyFuture may be providing this service but it is hard to find and you have to register with contact details to be able to use it.

- If this was put up as a NSW Skills initiative, it could then **link to relevant course information** for the suggested career solutions, i.e. a 'filter down' approach whereby prospects are progressively guided through:

  1. Broad career choice (via the 'calculator)
  2. More specific job options
  3. Optimal level of course (cert I-IV; diploma)
  4. Specific course
  5. Ideal delivery method (with the pros and cons of online clearly pointed out)
  6. Finally, provider choice

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Easy to use information

Information

Objective consumer information is not currently actively promoted to prospective students :

- o Currently the 'myskills' website is a federal government initiative and so is probably out of scope for NSW Skills.
- o The Smart & Skilled website is a useful list of courses for someone who knows what they are looking for but not for those who don't (i.e. a young, not so well educated person unsure about what they want to do)

Potential students need an **easy to use** Government website that helps guide prospective students through the choice process and provides easy to use course & provider information.

Government sites could be **better optimised for search engines** e.g.:

- o Search 'hairdressing courses' - myskills is on page 5
- o Search 'trade courses' - myskills is page 7; smart & skilled not in first 10 pages

A major website optimisation project is recommended for myskills (although it's federal) and smart & skilled.

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Course content and student workload

Course Content and workload

This is the responsibility of course providers (but could NSW Skills suggest/ recommend/demand?)

1. Providers should give an **expected weekly time requirement**, including online courses. The latter are obviously flexible, but prospects must be given some indication of a typical weekly workload to enable realistic expectations to be established.

2. Similarly, providers should be encouraged to give a **description of course content which is more than just a simple listing of topics**.

   o It should describe in simple terms what is being taught, how this benefits the student and in what way it will be taught - again especially for online courses.

   o For online delivery, prospects should ideally be able to weed out providers who are just putting up a series of videos, all in the same format, with no interactive component.

Support and guidance for students

Support and Guidance

This emerged as a major issue, especially for online delivery where face to face contact is minimal or non-existent.

Options are for NSW Skills to offer a **generic service to students**, or for providers to be encouraged to improve their performance in this area.

Support, guidance and responsiveness to queries need to be established as critical quality components for course providers.

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Content and teaching quality

Content and teaching quality

This was more of an issue for online courses

Auditing online course delivery for 'suspect' providers could assist. This may be able to identify those who are delivering sub-standard online courses with remedial action suggested.

Maybe a standard could be developed which providers are encouraged to meet, whereby a **base level of interaction is required**, at a minimum via online dialogue, or preferably by a minimum element of face to face contact.

It may be possible to incorporate some **simple involvement indicators** which flag possible drop-outs early, allowing for intervention by the provider to re-build waning motivation.

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Appendix:
Typical Pathway of a
Non-completer

Typical non-completer pathway

Megan is now 19 years old. She didn't really enjoy her time at school, was only a 'fair' student and left after completing the school certificate. She was keen to start earning some money to give her independence from her parents and started work as a shop assistant.

She began to get quite bored standing behind the counter all day and started to think about other possible employment. Her parents and friends were all very positive about the idea of her getting some kind of qualification in order to get a better job. Megan had always loved children and thought that working at a preschool might be a good career choice.

Career Guidance

EDUCATION
GOALS   VISION
CAREER
VALUES   SKILLS
INTERESTS

Intervention: School careers advisor could have provided information as to possible VET courses and encourage further education before she started work.

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Typical non-completer pathway

She looked up courses online and found that most of the websites were for various colleges trying to sell their particular course. She didn't find any information that compared courses, the different providers, or costs; and she didn't see anything about the demand for early childhood teachers or the salaries they were paid.

Career Guidance

EDUCATION
GOALS
VISION
CAREER
VALUES
SKILLS
INTERESTS

Intervention: Online calculator could have helped her understand the different options for careers with children. Better information up front on course content, methods of delivery, costs, provider comparisons could have facilitated her completion.

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Typical non-completer pathway

After looking at a few different provider websites, Megan put in her contact details with one of them and downloaded an information brochure for a diploma of early childhood education. The brochure gave a brief outline of the course, which was conducted online, with a practical experience component at a childcare centre. It didn't really set out how much time she would need to put into studying, or how long the course would take, apart from a reference to 'up to two years'.

Information

Intervention: More/better detailed course information would have allowed her to be more familiar with the course and the requirements before she started. She may have been better to do a CERT I-IV course first to see if this direction really suited her, rather than leap into an online diploma course.

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Typical non-completer pathway

A consultant from the college got in touch with Megan and told her that the course fee could be paid by the government under a scheme called VET FEE HELP, although the details of the scheme were not really spelt out in full. Megan thought that since she didn't have to pay any fees she might as well give it a go and so enrolled in the course.

Information

Intervention: If she knew that she would need to repay the intuition fees and the extent of the fees, it may have made her think more seriously before starting her course, and she may have opted for a lower level course with lower fees.

It needs to be clearer to people that they must repay fees even if they do not complete their course.

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Typical non-completer pathway

As she got into the course, Megan found the online instruction a bit tedious and dry, reminding her of school. She didn't get much guidance or support from the college and they were not very responsive when she tried to ask questions. She started to find the content a bit irrelevant from her point of view; she found the quality of some of the online teaching poor; and she began to struggle a bit with the difficulty of the course.

Content and teaching quality

Focus on Quality

Intervention: Introducing standards for online courses, to ensure they are relevant and interesting. Introduce some interactive component and face to face time.

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Typical non-completer pathway

The practical part of the course was not until the end, so Megan was just left to carry on with the online sessions on her own - and she began to lose interest. She was still working part time as a shop assistant and that combined with the demands of her social life meant that Megan began to put less and less time into going online. She got further and further behind in her studies.

After six months she finally decided to not bother with any further studying and dropped out of the course.

Support and Guidance

ASSISTANCE
SUPPORT
GUIDANCE

Intervention: Support, guidance and responsiveness to queries need to be established as critical quality components for course providers.

If she had more support and guidance during her course, she may have been encouraged to continue.

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