

## **Assessing our educational foundations: A scoping review of Australian alcohol and other drug-specific vocational education and training provider and program attributes**

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**Introduction / Issues:** Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is a fundamental precursor to an Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) workforce which is knowledgeable, capable and adaptable. However, while the AOD field has advanced rapidly in its clinical, policy and research capabilities, over a decade has passed since the last review of AOD VET qualifications in Australia.

**Method / Approach:** We undertook a scoping review to locate and describe currently available AOD-specific VET programs, and to identify characteristics of the associated programs including structure, delivery, cost, and legitimacy. Web-based searches of government and VET databases were conducted in December 2022.

**Key Findings:** We identified 45 AOD-specific VET programs offered by 30 training providers. Programs identified were the Certificate IV in AOD (n=27, 60%; median fee: \$5,050), the Diploma in AOD (n=13, 29%; median fee: \$7,223) and the AOD skill set (n=5, 11%; median fee: \$1,465). Providers were most commonly private organisations (n=15, 50%), TAFE (n=7, 23%) and Universities (n=4, 13%). Funding in the form of government subsidisation was available for most courses (76%).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** The proportion of AOD-specific VET course providers appears to have contracted, with the overall number of AOD-specific programs declining 66% since 2011, when the availability of AOD-specific VET was last reviewed. An increase in the proportion of programs provided by private providers was also observed. Barriers to enrolment identified included the cost of some qualifications and the absence of local courses in some Australian jurisdictions.

**Implications:** There is a need for a national review of course quality and output of AOD-focussed VET courses to ensure that the VET system is equipped to meet the sector's workforce development needs in the face of contractions in program offerings.

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