

Study, Life & Work:

The work-life situation of
full-time VET students who
combine study and work


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Background

What do we already know?


- 
- ≈ Working is almost ‘the norm’ for full-time students in tertiary education
 - ≈ There are both positive and negative social, emotional and educational outcomes
 - ≈ From the experience of workers, participation in training increases work-life pressure
 - ≈ Support mechanisms during study assist students to overcome a range of barriers which may exist for individuals

Research Aims

To expand knowledge and understanding of the experiences of full-time students studying Vocational Education and Training

- ∞ To explore the intersecting commitments and work-life situation of full-time VET students.
- ∞ To explore whether working whilst studying changes the work-life situation of full-time VET students.
- ∞ To explore whether students are satisfied with the support structures available to them in TAFE SA.


Research Methodology & Design

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- Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative phases
 - Quantitative: survey
 - Modelled on the Australian Work And Life Index (AWALI)
 - 164 valid responses
 - Participation rate of 97%
 - Qualitative: interviews
 - Nine interviews
 - Encompassed a range of courses, working conditions & levels of work-life interference

The findings

The experiences of
working students

An overview

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- ≈ Working students within hospitality courses at Regency Campus
 - ≈ 66% employment rate
 - ≈ 54% earning \$20/hr or less
 - ≈ 22% work more than 20hr/week
 - ≈ 83% employed in casual positions
 - ≈ Reason for working:
 - ≈ 66% financial support for self/family
 - ≈ 20% to enhance future employment opportunities
 - ≈ 10% to fulfil 'field experience' requirements

The findings

The experiences of
working students

A work/life perspective

∞ AWALI


- ∞ Interference with activities outside of work
- ∞ Interference with enough time with family & friends
- ∞ Interference with community connections
- ∞ Feeling rushed or pressed for time
- ∞ Satisfaction with work-life balance



The findings

The experiences of
working students

A work/life perspective

- 
- ↪ Interference between work & study
 - ↪ Work to study spillover
 - ↪ Study to work spillover
 - ↪ Stress
 - ↪ High levels of stress reported
 - ↪ Particularly evident for students working longer hours and/or in high paid jobs

The findings

The experiences of
working students

A work/life perspective

	VET Results (VETSALI 2011) Often/Almost Always	National Results (AWALI 2010) Often/Almost Always
Work interferes with activities outside of work	38.5%	24.2%
Work interferes with time with family & friends	46.2%	26.6%
Work interferes with community connections	34.6%	17.9%
Feels rushed or pressed for time	66.4%	53.5%
Satisfied with work-life balance	60.5%	75.4%

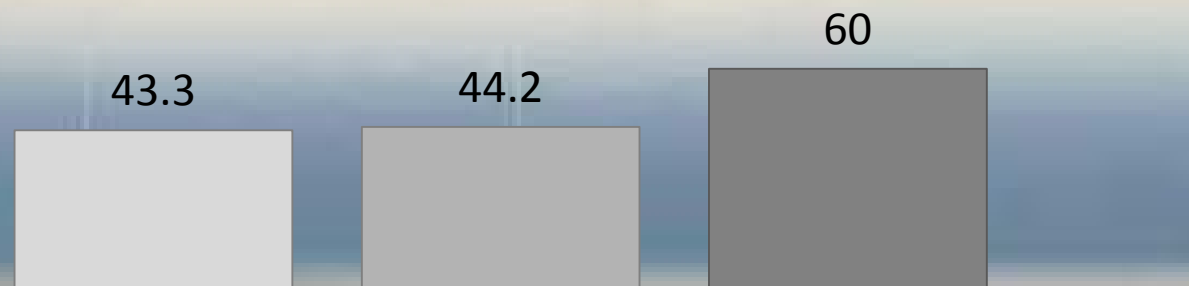
The findings

The experiences of
working students

A work/life perspective

Work-Life Index Scores

- National AWALI 2009 - all workers
- National AWALI 2009 - Workers participating in education & training
- VET AWALI 2011 - Full-time students who are working



The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

A study/life perspective

∞ Working students expressed the highest rates of study-life interference

Study often/almost always interferes with:	Working	Not working
Activities outside of study	54.4%	32.1%
Enough time with family or friends	48.5%	43.4%
Community connections	34.0%	26.4%

The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

A study/life perspective

∞ Working and non-working student felt
equally rushed for time:

Study often/almost always makes me feel:	Working	Not working
Rushed or pressed for time	64.1%	64.2%

The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

A study/life perspective

Stress reported by students

■ Working ■ Not working

81%

68%


All participants



The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

A study/life perspective

- 
- ↪ Timetables and class schedules were the most common source of interference for working students
 - ↪ Hospitality students – changing timetables which could vary weekly
 - ↪ Cookery/Patisserie students – long hours of attendance

The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

Supporting students in VET

∞ Formal Support

- ∞ Teachers/lecturers
- ∞ Counsellors
- ∞ Learning Support
- ∞ Other professional sources of support

∞ Informal Support

- ∞ Family
- ∞ Friends
- ∞ Peers
- ∞ Social networks



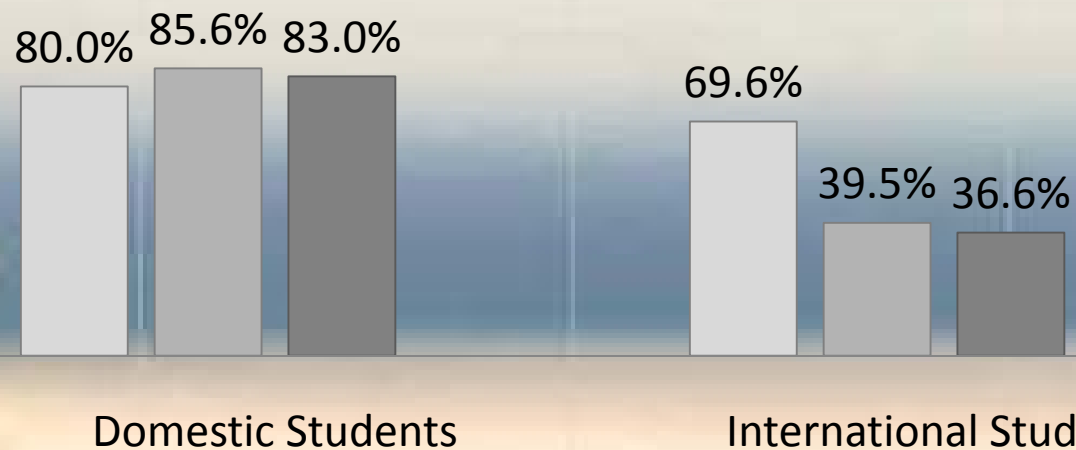
The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

Supporting students in VET

Satisfaction with formal support

- Satisfaction with support from Teaching Staff
- Satisfaction with support from Student Counsellors
- Satisfaction with support from Learning Support



The findings

The experiences of
full-time students

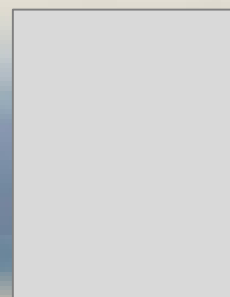
Supporting students in VET

Financial support options for students


□ VET-FEE HELP loans ■ Fees By Installment

85.9%


91.3%



Implications for service providers

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- Stress, time strain and financial burdens are significant issues for full-time students
 - Access to flexible and equitable payment systems
 - Consideration of supportive class structuring and timetable provisions
 - Support services which act as a springboard, to increase engagement in education and workforce participation

Implications for further research

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- Research into the work-life situation for working students in the broader VET context
 - The experiences and support services for international students.

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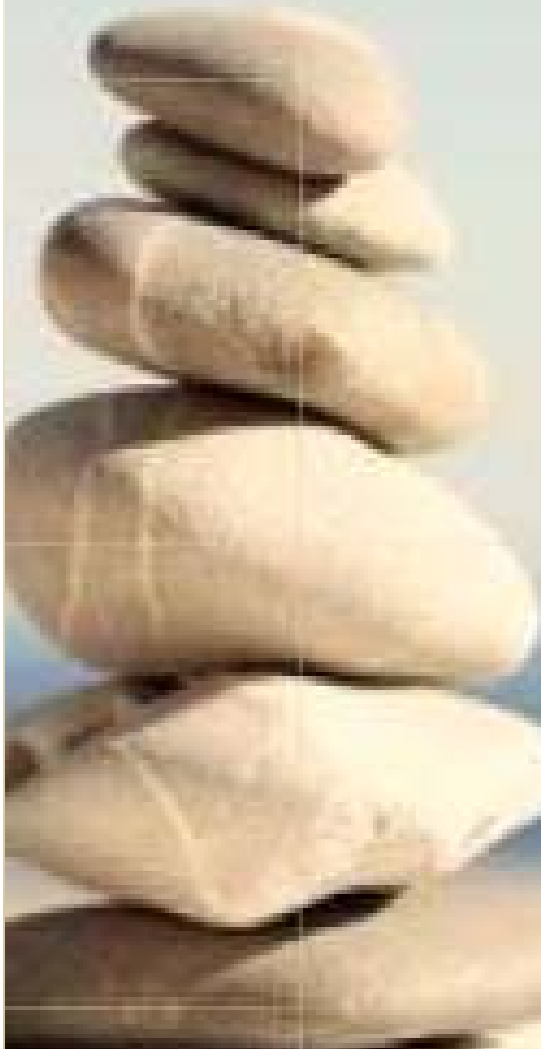
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