

How workplace experiences while at school affect school leavers' pathways NVETRE (formerly NREC)

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The research will examine school students' past-school pathways and the extent to which they are influenced by the engagement with workplaces that they experienced while at school. The research will be undertaken using two existing databases gained through previous NREC studies, comprising 798 recent school-leavers all of whom expressed interest in being involved in a follow-up study. The first database comprises 413 students from NSW and SA and the second database comprises 385 students (all school-based new apprentices) from Qld, Vic and SA.

The first project (Project 1) (Smith & Green, 2001) examined students' learning from workplaces and covered all three forms of engagement with workplaces: paid part-time work, work experience, and vocational placements. The projects found clear differences between the types of engagement with workplaces in terms of amount of learning, nature of learning, and the way in which young people were managed and trained by employers. The results of that project for the students undertaking school-based new apprenticeships (SBNAs) were so striking in terms of high learning outcomes that a further project (Project 2) (Smith & Wilson, 2002a) was initiated, focusing exclusively on school-based new apprentices and their learning and training.

A survey will be sent to all students (**n=798**) who took part in the two previous projects and who indicated their willingness to be contacted at a later stage for a follow-up project.

The questionnaire will include the following sections:

- Year level of leaving school
- Completion of VET course/SBNA (where appropriate)
- Additional workplace experiences
- Retrospective views about their workplace engagements while at school
- Immediate and subsequent post-school activities
- Multiple combinations of study and work
- Discipline/industry area of study/work
- Qualitative questions about the effects of their school-day workplace experiences on decisions about study (including staying-on) and work
- Challenges and facilitators in their pathways
- Future work and study intentions