

ASVET Conference 2021 Panel 1

Course Selection and Study

The aim of the panel was to provide a space for students to speak about their experiences in undertaking ASVET courses. They each reflected on and bravely shared, the key environmental and personal strengths and challenges that they had considered when choosing their courses and studying.

Panellists included:

- Mature aged ASVET students
- ASVET students who had also studied in Australian secondary schools
- ASRC Education Advisor volunteers

The panellists were asked to consider answers to three questions, which were tailored to their experience as either a student or advisor:

1. Students: What are you studying/what are your goals?
Advisors: What made you want to volunteer with the ASVET Program?
2. Students: What did you have to consider when choosing your courses?
Advisors: What are the factors that you consider when providing individual tailored advice to potential students?
3. Students: What are your key strengths that have helped you during your study or that you have gained during your studies?
Advisors: Based on your experience at ASRC, what do you think might be a significant strength that will assist a student to engage and complete a VET course?

Question 1: Study and goals

All students aimed to be working in their chosen fields. Other goals and values included

- Supporting their families and communities; both financially and in navigating the Australian education system
- Freedom and platform to be seen and heard

Question 2: Key considerations when choosing a course

Key considerations that were identified during the panel session included;

- Previous academic strengths and work experience
- Course location and travel time
- Course cost. All students had received additional scholarships from VET providers at some point to cover further tuition fees, and mentioned that this was critical for them to continue studying.
- Length of the course
- Course pathways and credits as students pursue further education.

- Industry and employment prospects beyond the course.
- The course and training organisation's connection to their chosen industry. This included their teacher's connections in industry, the training organisation's partnerships and established work experience opportunities.
- Beginning their education pathway at a certificate or diploma level which they found challenging yet manageable.

Question 3: Key strengths

Particular strengths highlighted included:

- Networking skills, most specifically with teachers, as well as other students and community organisations. All three students highlighted that they had been made aware of job opportunities through networking while they were studying.
- Resilience and adaptability. All students recalled times when they needed to create additional pathways or add a 'plan B' to their goal. Mature aged students particularly reflected on adapting to a new education system, including to significant age and culture gap between themselves and other students in the class.
- English language skills.
- Time management. Students mentioned that prior coming to Australia they had experienced further education systems with classes that would run 5 days per week for up to 12 hours per day, but with very little personal work required out of class hours. Although the contact hours for most VET courses will be significantly less than what students who have studied overseas may expect, panellists cautioned other students to consider what time they need to dedicate to study outside of the classroom.
- Initiative. Students stressed the need to approach teachers if they had missed something, not understood something, or needed extra time for an assignment, and that education in Australia is far more student-directed than the learning environments they had previously experienced.