

2.05 Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Years 10 and 12 retention rates and Year 12 attainment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Data sources

Data for this measure come from the ABS National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The NSSC is a collaborative arrangement between all Australian government education authorities and the ABS. The NSSC comprises an annual collection of data on schools, students, staff and finance that is undertaken by the ABS in the government sector and by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training in the non-government sector. Student data are collected through a school census in August of each year and selected results are published annually by the ABS in *Schools Australia*. Only full-time students were included in the analysis; part-time students were not included.

Care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students due to the small number of Indigenous students represented.

Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates are the percentage of full-time students of a given cohort group who continue from the commencement of secondary schooling to a specified year level. The term apparent is used as the retention rate does not account for students repeating a year of school or migrating in or out of the Australian school student population or between states/territories. All full-time students enrolled at a school, including 'VET in Schools' students are included in retention calculations.

Year 10 and 12 apparent retention rate

- Year 10 and 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).

Year 12 attainment rate

- The proportion of Year 11 students who went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate.

Data analyses

Apparent retention rates

Table 2.05.1 presents the apparent retention rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 and Year 12.

- In 2005, there were approximately 8,881 Indigenous students in Year 10 (approximately 3.4% of all Year 10 students) and 3,427 Indigenous students in Year 12 (approximately 1.8% of all students in Year 12).

- In 2005, the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 was 88.3% compared to 98.6% for non-Indigenous students.
- In the same year, the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was much lower – 39.5% compared to 76.6% for non-Indigenous students.

Apparent retention rates by sex

- The apparent retention rates for Indigenous females were slightly higher than for Indigenous males from Year 7/8 to Year 10 (91% compared to 86%) and Year 7/8 to Year 12 (44% compared to 35%).

Apparent retention rates by state/territory

- Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory had the highest retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 (103% and 101% respectively), while New South Wales and Victoria had the lowest (80% and 81% respectively).
- Retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 were highest in the Australian Capital Territory (60%) and Queensland (54%) and lowest in Western Australia (29%) and New South Wales (31%).
- Rates for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory should be interpreted with caution, as due to the small size of these jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create large movements in retention rates. Some rates exceeded 100%, largely reflecting the movement of students from non-government to government schools in Years 11 and 12; and in the Australian Capital Territory, some New South Wales residents from surrounding areas enrolled in Australian Capital Territory schools during secondary school.

Table 2.05.1: Apparent retention rates,^(a) by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2005^{(b)(c)(d)(e)}

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA ^(f)		SA		Tas		ACT ^(g)		NT		Australia	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Males																		
Year 10																		
Number	1,133	41,632	195	30,635	1,410	26,333	826	13,980	233	9,695	225	3,174	37	2,413	328	874	4,387	128,736
Per cent	77.3	96.4	75.0	96.6	87.7	99.5	90.5	101.3	84.4	99.2	103.2	99.4	100.0	98.0	95.9	99.0	85.7	97.9
Year 12																		
Number	331	27,861	67	23,274	363	19,068	199	9,380	79	6,315	66	1,824	27	2,040	122	559	1,527	90,321
Percent	26.6	67.2	30.5	74.2	48.6	76.7	24.7	69.8	31.5	65.1	37.3	59.6	77.1	87.3	40.0	62.5	35.1	71.1
Females																		
Year 10																		
Number	1,197	40,252	228	30,011	1,428	25,337	788	13,398	269	9,260	192	3,006	46	2,336	346	809	4,494	124,409
Per cent	83.1	97.2	87.4	99.7	96.2	101.2	95.4	101.8	88.8	99.9	103.2	100.5	102.2	100.3	87.2	92.0	90.9	99.4
Year 12																		
Number	462	31,167	119	26,392	746	20,553	250	10,286	95	7,159	99	2,193	14	2,069	115	598	1,900	100,417
Per cent	35.5	77.6	52.0	87.9	59.9	86.0	33.2	80.6	35.1	78.8	58.9	77.5	42.4	88.5	35.9	71.2	44.0	82.3

(continued)

Table 2.05.1 (continued): Apparent retention rates,^(a) by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2005^{(b)(c)(d)(e)}

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA ^(f)		SA		Tas		ACT ^(g)		NT		Australia	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Persons																		
Year 10																		
Number	2,330	81,884	423	60,646	2,838	51,670	1,614	27,378	502	18,955	417	6,180	83	4,749	674	1,683	8,881	253,145
Per cent	80.2	96.8	81.2	98.1	91.8	100.0	92.8	101.6	86.7	99.5	103.2	100	101.2	99.1	91.2	95.5	88.3	98.6
Year 12																		
Number	793	59,028	186	49,666	1,382	39,621	449	19,666	174	13,474	165	4,017	41	4,109	237	1,157	3,427	190,738
Per cent	31.1	72.3	41.4	80.9	54.1	81.3	28.8	75.1	33.3	71.8	47.8	68.2	60.3	87.9	37.9	66.7	39.5	76.6

- (a) Retention rate = Year 10 and 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).
- (b) While most students are recorded, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the standard Indigenous status question has not yet been implemented in some jurisdictions.
- (c) The following factors have not been taken into account in these statistics: students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population, enrolment policies (including year starting high school which contributes to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfer and interstate movements of students.
- (d) In small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates.
- (e) The inclusion or exclusion of part-time students can also have a significant effect on apparent retention rates, especially in SA, Tas and the NT which have relatively large proportions of part-time students.
- (f) Data for WA have been affected by changes in scope and coverage over time.
- (g) Some ACT rates exceed 100%, largely reflecting the movement of students from non-government to government schools in Years 11 and 12, and of NSW residents from surrounding areas enrolling in ACT schools.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.

Apparent retention rates over time

- Apparent retention rates for Indigenous full-time students, from Year 7/8 to both Year 10 and Year 12, have continued to increase over the last five years. The rate to Year 10 increased from 79.2% in 2000 to 85.7% in 2005 for Indigenous males and from 87.0% in 2000 to 90.9% in 2005 for Indigenous females. The rate to Year 12 increased from 33.5% in 2000 to 35.1% in 2005 for Indigenous males and from 39.3% in 2000 to 44.0% in 2005 for Indigenous females (Table 2.05.2).
- The apparent retention rate for non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 was 98.6% in 2005 compared to 98.0% in 2000; and from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was 76.6% in 2005 compared to 73.3% in 2000.

Table 2.05.2: Apparent retention rates,^(a) by Indigenous status and sex, 2000 and 2005^{(b)(c)(d)(e)}

	2000			2005			Change		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year 10									
Indigenous	79.2	87.0	83.0	85.7	90.9	88.3	6.5	3.9	5.3
Non-Indigenous	96.9	99.1	98.0	97.9	99.4	98.6	1.0	0.3	0.6
Year 12									
Indigenous	33.5	39.3	36.4	35.1	44.0	39.5	1.6	4.7	3.1
Non-Indigenous	67.0	79.8	73.3	71.1	82.3	76.6	4.1	2.5	3.3

(a) Retention rate = Year 10 and 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).

(b) While most students are recorded, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the standard Indigenous status question has not yet been implemented in some jurisdictions.

(c) The following factors have not been taken into account in these statistics: students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population, enrolment policies (including year starting high school which contributes to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfer and interstate movements of students.

(d) In small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates.

(e) The inclusion or exclusion of part-time students can also have a significant effect on apparent retention rates, especially in SA, Tas and the NT which have relatively large proportions of part-time students.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.

Table 2.05.3 and Figure 2.05.1 present apparent retention rates over the period 1998–2005.

- Between 1998 and 2005 there was a significant increase in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to both Year 10 and Year 12. The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.8% for Year 10 and 1.0% for Year 12.
- Over the same period, there was also a significant increase in apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 and Year 12. The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.2% for Year 10 and 0.7% for Year 12.

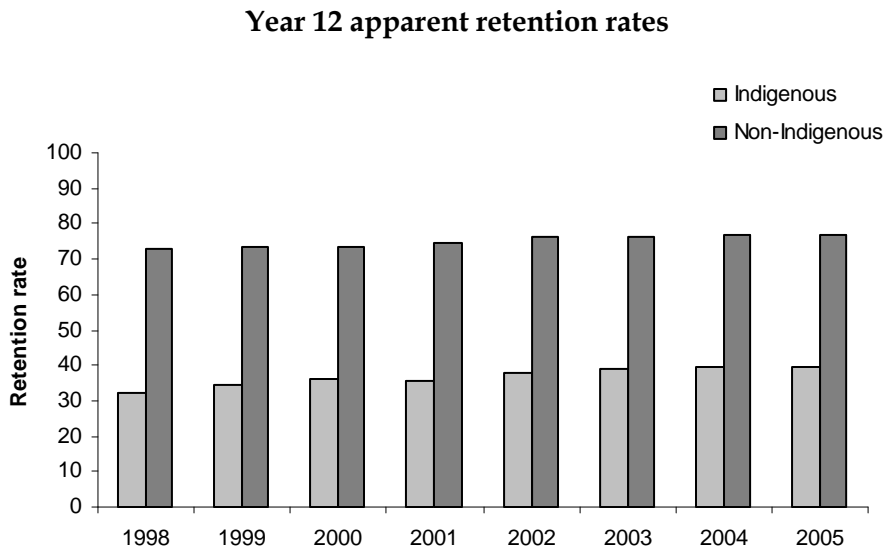
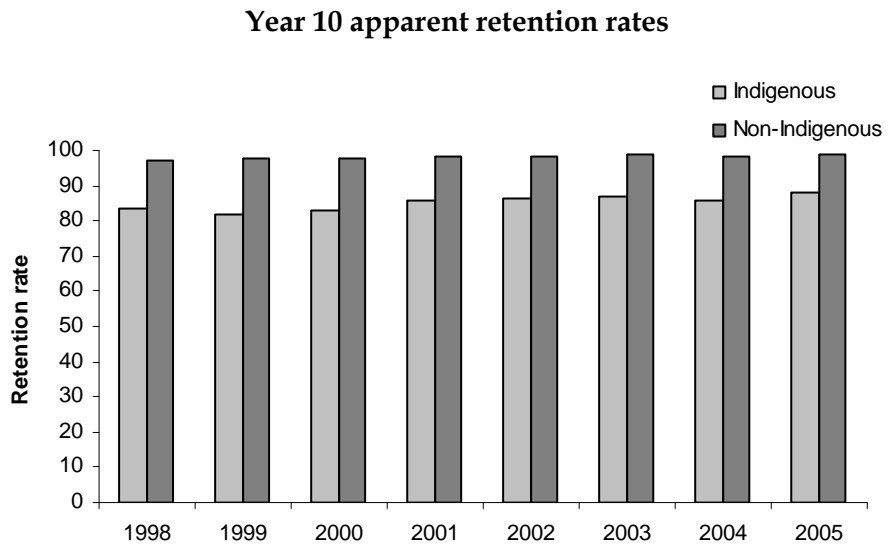
Table 2.05.3: Apparent Year 10 and Year 12 retention rates, by Indigenous status, 1998–2005

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Annual change ^(a)
Year 10									
Indigenous	83.3	82.0	83.0	85.7	86.4	87.2	85.8	88.3	0.8*
Non-Indigenous	97.4	97.9	98.0	98.4	98.5	98.9	98.5	98.6	0.2*
Year 12									
Indigenous	32.1	34.7	36.4	35.7	38.0	39.1	39.8	39.5	1.0*
Non-Indigenous	72.7	73.2	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.9	76.6	0.7*

* Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < .05$ level over the period 1998–2005

(a) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.



Source: ABS 2006.

Figure 2.05.1: Apparent Year 10 and Year 12 retention rates, full-time students, by Indigenous status, 1998-2005

Attainment rates

Table 2.05.4 presents the attainment rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Year 12 by sex and state and territory.

- In 2005, approximately 65% of Indigenous Year 11 students went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate compared to 86% of non-Indigenous students.

Attainment rates by sex

- Attainment rates were higher for females than for males in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Approximately 69% of Indigenous females in Year 11 went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate compared to 61% of Indigenous males, and approximately 89% of non-Indigenous females who began Year 11 went on to complete Year 12 compared to 83% of non-Indigenous males.

Attainment rates by state/territory

- Attainment rates of Indigenous students were highest in the Australian Capital Territory (89%) and Queensland (78%), and were lowest in the Northern Territory (42%) and Western Australia (53%).

Table 2.05.4: Attainment rates,^(a) by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2005^{(b)(c)}

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT		Australia	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Males																		
Year 12																		
Number	331	27,861	67	23,274	636	19,068	199	9,380	79	6,315	66	1,824	27	2,040	122	559	1,527	90,321
Per cent	60.2	86.2	56.8	83.0	76.2	85.7	46.6	78.5	54.9	72.7	61.1	81.7	93.1	86.6	42.2	70.9	61.1	83.2
Females																		
Year 12																		
Number	462	31,167	119	26,392	746	20,553	250	10,286	95	7,159	99	2,193	14	2,069	115	598	1,900	100,417
Per cent	71.1	89.7	65.7	89.9	78.7	89.9	58.3	86.3	55.6	83.0	79.8	92.8	82.4	87.7	41.5	79.0	67.9	88.9
Persons																		
Year 12																		
Number	793	59,028	186	49,666	1,382	39,621	449	19,666	174	13,474	165	4,017	41	4,109	237	1,157	3,427	190,738
Per cent	66.1	88.0	62.2	86.5	77.5	87.8	52.5	82.4	55.2	77.8	71.4	87.4	89.1	87.1	41.9	74.9	64.7	86.1

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Attainment rate = proportion of Year 11 students who went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate.

(b) Only full-time students were included in this analysis; part-time students were not included. This will have an effect on the results as around 11% of Indigenous high school students study part time.

(c) Because of the small number of Indigenous students represented, care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.

Attainment rates over time

- Attainment rates for Indigenous male students were slightly lower in 2005 (61%) than in 2000 (62.9%), while attainment rates for Indigenous female students were slightly higher in 2005 (67.9%) than in 2000 (67.0%) (Table 2.05.5).
- The attainment rates for non-Indigenous male and female students were 83.2% and 88.9% in 2005 compared to 81.7% and 87.8% in 2000.

Table 2.05.5: Attainment rates,^(a) by Indigenous status and sex, 2000 and 2005^{(b)(c)}

	2000			2005			Per cent change		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year 12									
Indigenous	62.9	67.0	65.0	61.1	67.9	64.7	-1.8	0.9	-0.3
Non-Indigenous	81.7	87.8	84.8	83.2	88.9	86.1	1.5	1.1	1.3

(a) Attainment rate = proportion of Year 11 students who went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate.

(b) Only full-time students were included in this analysis; part-time students were not included. This will have an effect on the results as around 11% of Indigenous high school students study part time.

(c) Because of the small number of Indigenous students represented, care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.

Table 2.05.6 and Figure 2.05.2 present Year 12 attainment rates over the period 1998–2005.

- Between 1998 and 2005 there was no significant change in attainment rates for Indigenous or non-Indigenous students.

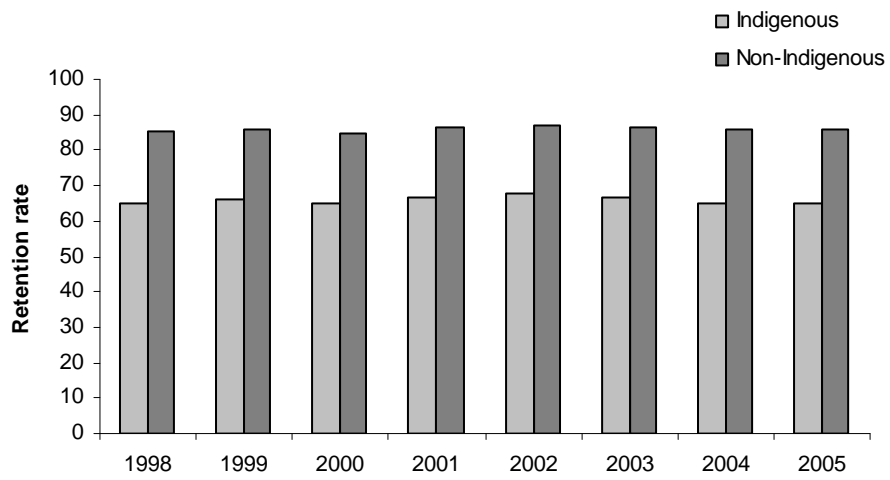
Table 2.05.6: Attainment rates, by Indigenous status, 1998–2005

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Annual change ^(a)
Year 12									
Indigenous	64.7	66.2	65.0	66.6	67.8	66.4	64.7	64.7	0.0
Non-Indigenous	85.2	85.7	84.8	86.5	87.1	86.3	86	86.1	0.2

* Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < .05$ level over the period 1998–2005

(a) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.



Source: AIHW analysis of ABS National Schools Statistics Collection.

Figure 2.05.2: Year 12 attainment rates, full-time students, by Indigenous status, 1998–2005

Data quality issues

National Schools Statistics Collection

Indigenous identification

The incompleteness of Indigenous identification means the number of students recorded as Indigenous is an underestimate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population.

Standard Indigenous status question

Although the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to use the standard Indigenous status question in the schools sector, this has still not been implemented in some jurisdictions.

Retention data

There is no Australia-wide standard method of allocating students and classes to a certain year of school education (grade) and a number of schools do not maintain a formal grade structure. Students at these schools have been allocated to equivalent grades where possible, but otherwise appear against the ungraded category in either the primary or secondary level of school education.

Care should be exercised in the interpretation of apparent retention rates as the method of calculation does not take into account a range of factors. At the Australia level these include students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population. At lower levels of disaggregation, additional factors affecting the data, such as enrolment policies (which contribute to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfers and interstate movements of students, have not been taken into account. These and other factors affecting the interpretation of apparent retention rates are being addressed, where possible, in the ABS's review of apparent retention rates. A progress report on the review is included in this publication.

Particularly in small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates. In addition, the rates in the smaller jurisdictions may also be noticeably affected by changes in such factors as the proportion of ungraded and/or mature aged students from year to year. The inclusion or exclusion of part-time students can also have a significant effect on apparent retention rates, especially in South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory which have relatively large proportions of part-time students (ABS 2006).

Attainment data

The following points should be considered when interpreting attainment statistics:

- *Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program data are not subject to external review or validation, except where specific performance indicators draw on the National Schools Statistics Collection.*
- *only full-time students were included in this analysis; part-time students were not included. This will have an effect on the results as around 11% of Indigenous high school students study part time.*
- *because of the small number of Indigenous students represented, care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students.*

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2006. Schools Australia 2005. ABS cat. no. 4221.0. Canberra: ABS.