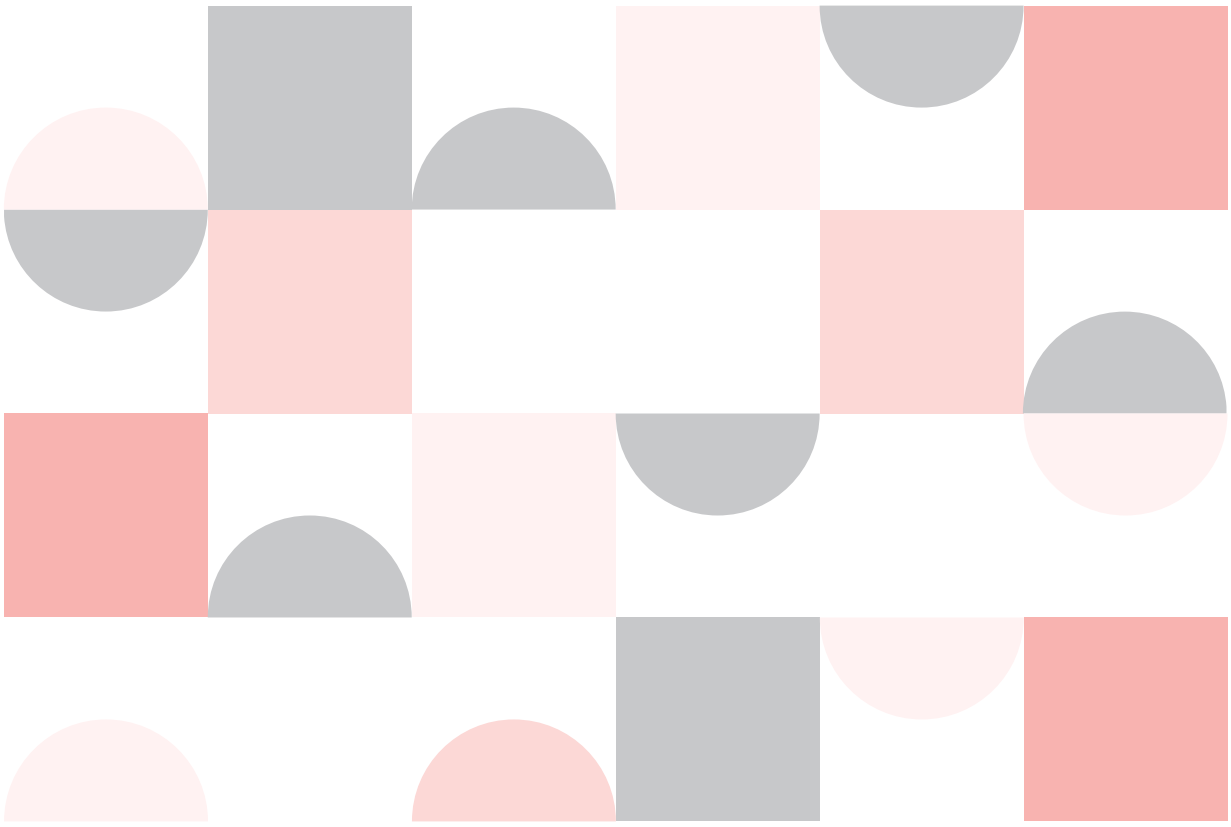
Australian Government

STEM Equity Monitor

Data report 2025



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Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this Nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities.

We Acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

Meeting Place icon by DISR employee Amy Huggins.

Acknowledgements

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The department would like to thank the following agencies, departments and other organisations who contributed data for the *STEM Equity Monitor*.

- Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
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- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
- Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
- Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)
- Australian Research Council (ARC)
- Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
- Department of Education
- Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG)
- Geoscience Australia (GA)
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
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- Social Research Centre
- YouthInsight – Student Edge
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

We would also like to thank:

- the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS)
- case study participants
- all those who contributed support and advice to the development of the monitor.

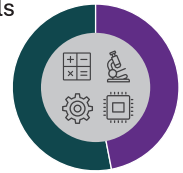
2025 Gender equity in STEM insights

2023 enrolments in Year 12 subjects

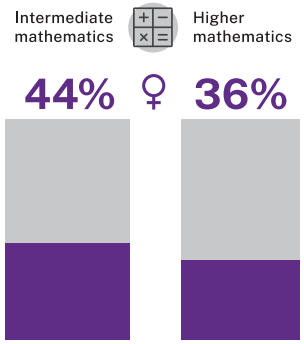
Proportion of enrolments in STEM subjects, by gender

♀ 47% Girls

♂ 53% Boys



Proportion of enrolments in mathematics subjects from girls



STEM women at university

2023 undergraduate enrolments and completions

% of university STEM enrolments — ♀ 37%

% of university STEM completions — ♀ 39%↓

2023 undergraduate earnings

Women earned less than men for 3 of the 4 STEM fields following undergraduate study

2023 postgraduate earnings

Women earned less than men for 3 of the 4 STEM fields

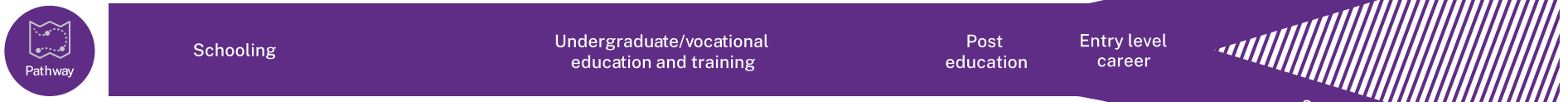
2023 women researchers

31%↑

of research workforce in STEM fields by headcount

2023 women at level E in STEM fields

20%



2024–25 results – Parents, teachers & career advisers

Importance of STEM skills for getting a good job

Parents' perceptions of boys' and girls' confidence in STEM subjects

♀ 16% Girls more confident

♂ 69% Boys more confident

Educators' perceptions of boys' and girls' confidence in STEM subjects

♀ 13% Girls more confident

♂ 75% Boys more confident

STEM women in VET

2023 VET STEM enrolments and completions

% of VET STEM enrolments — ♀ 17%

% of VET STEM completions — ♀ 20%↑

2024 VET STEM graduate earnings

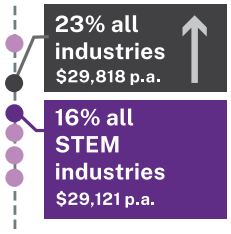
Women earned less than men after graduating from all 4 STEM fields

STEM-qualified industries

2024 STEM-qualified industry employees

♀ 29% Women

2024 gender pay gap



2024 STEM-qualified occupations

2024 Women in leadership positions

Representation of women at senior management level in STEM-qualified industries

27%↑

Representation of women at CEO level in STEM-qualified industries

12%↑

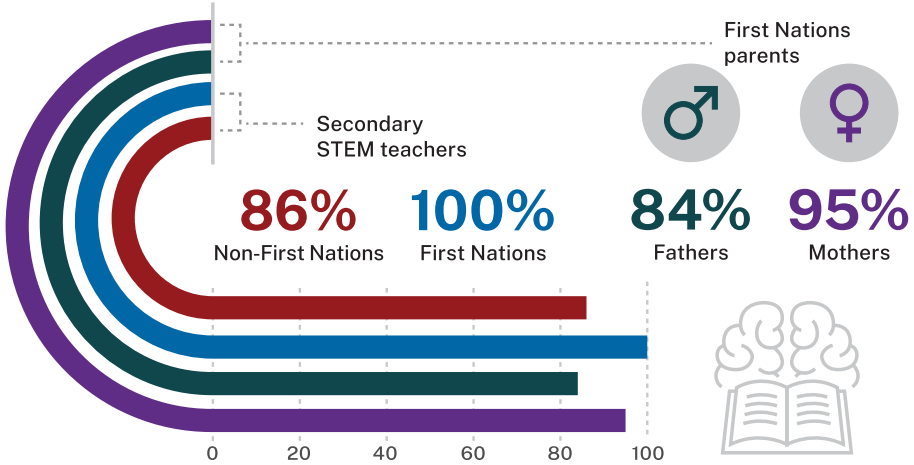
↑ Arrows next to percentages indicate a change since last report. This may not be a statistically significant change and should be treated with caution.

2025 Diversity in STEM insights – First Nations people

women men
First Nations people non-First Nations people

Schooling

2024–25 parents, teachers and career advisers survey – proportion of people who agreed STEM skills were important for future careers



Higher education

STEM enrolments, 2023

	University	VET
Proportion of total STEM enrolments from First Nations people	1%	6%
Among First Nations people, proportion of STEM enrolments from women	45% ♀	21% ♀
STEM fields with highest proportion of enrolments from First Nations people	2%	11%

Agriculture, environmental and related studies

Graduate outcomes

Median STEM graduate income in the year after graduation

$72,000
University undergraduates 2023

$72,000
VET 2024

Proportion of 2011 university STEM graduates working in STEM occupations 10 years after graduation (2020–21)

34% Women — 66% non-STEM ♀

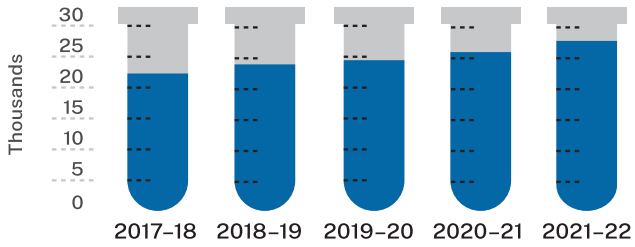
40% Men — 60% non-STEM ♂

STEM workforce

Proportion of all people working in STEM-qualified occupations who were First Nations people, 2021-22

2%
First Nations people

Number of First Nations people in STEM occupations, 2017–18 to 2021–22



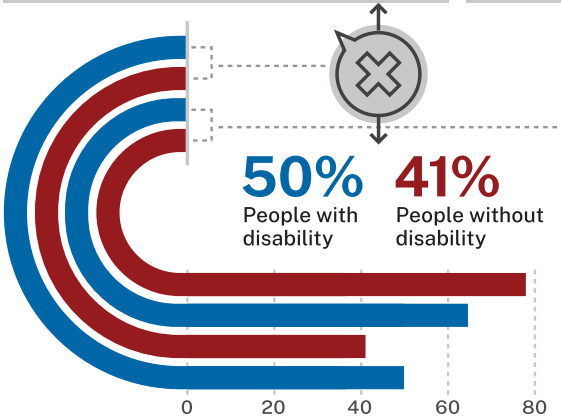
2025 Diversity in STEM insights – People with disability

women | men
people with disability | people without disability

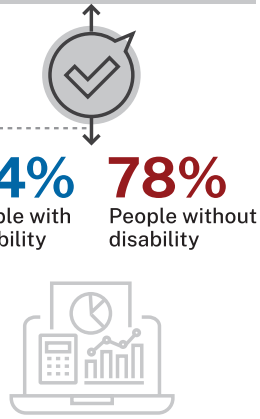
*People with disability were those who required assistance with everyday activities of self-care, mobility and/or communication

Graduate outcomes - Skill use

Proportion of employed university undergraduates who felt their skills were not fully utilised in their job, 2023



Proportion of employed VET graduates who found their skills were relevant to their job, 2024

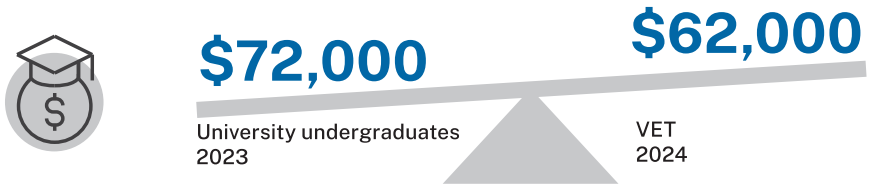


Higher education

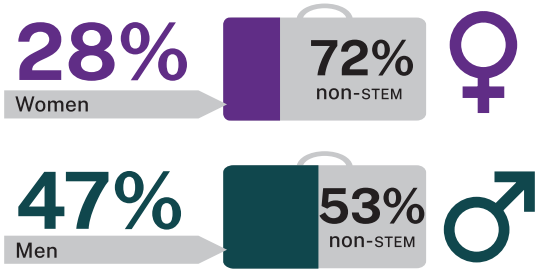
STEM enrolments, 2023	University	VET
Proportion of total STEM enrolments from people with disability	12%	6%
Among people with disability, proportion of STEM enrolments from women	48% ♀	23% ♀
STEM fields with highest proportion of enrolments from people with disability	15% Natural and physical sciences	13% Information technology

Graduate outcomes - Income and retention

Median STEM graduate income in the year after graduation



Proportion of 2011 university STEM graduates working in STEM occupations 10 years after graduation (2020–21)

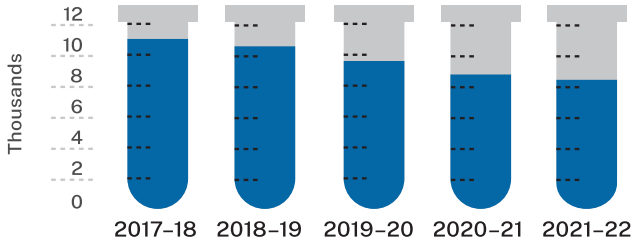


STEM workforce*

Proportion of all people working in STEM-qualified occupations who were people with disability, 2021–22

1%
people with disability

Number of people with disability in STEM occupations, 2017–18 to 2021–22



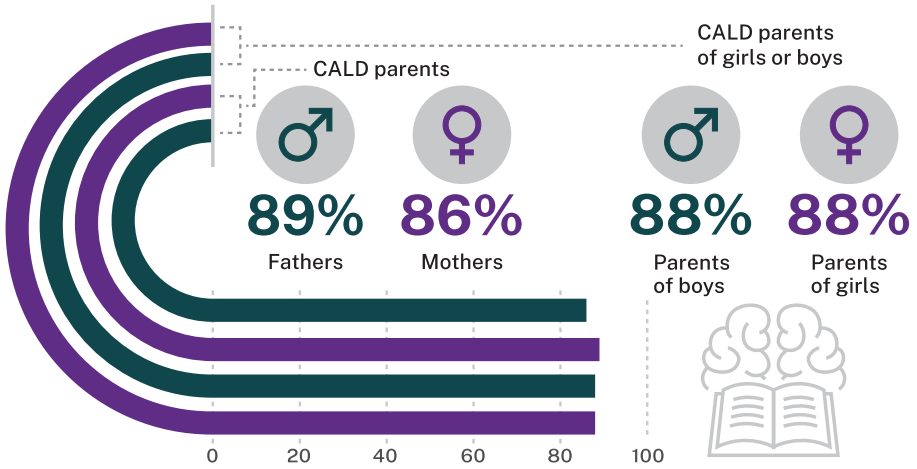
2025 Diversity in STEM insights – CALD people

People who are culturally and linguistically diverse

women | men
CALD people | non-CALD people

Schooling

2024–25 parents, teachers and career advisers survey – proportion of people who agreed STEM skills were important for future careers

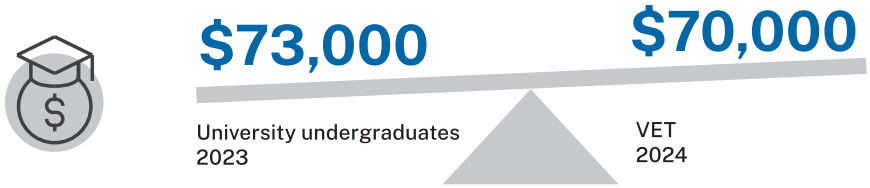


Higher education

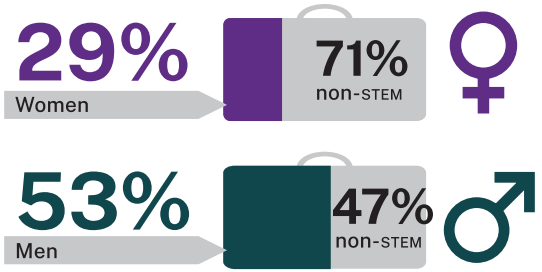
STEM enrolments, 2023	University	VET
Proportion of total STEM enrolments from CALD people	5%	10%
Among CALD people, proportion of STEM enrolments from women	42% ♀	26% ♀
STEM fields with highest proportion of enrolments from CALD people	6% Engineering, and related technologies; information technology	27% Natural and physical sciences

Graduate outcomes

Median STEM graduate income in the year after graduation



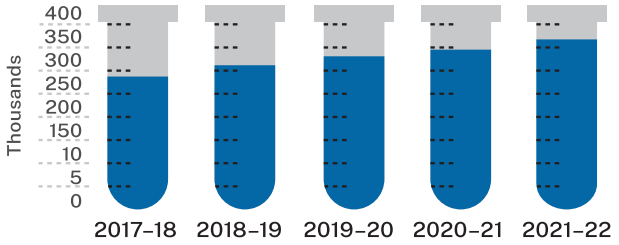
Proportion of 2011 university STEM graduates working in STEM occupations 10 years after graduation (2020–21)



STEM workforce

Proportion of all people working in STEM -qualified occupations who were people from a non-English speaking background, 2021–22

Number of people from a non-English speaking background in STEM occupations, 2017–18 to 2021–22



STEM Equity Monitor data report

STEM Equity Monitor

The *STEM Equity Monitor* (the monitor) is an annual national data resource on women and other diverse groups in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

In 2025, for the first time, the monitor includes data on people from diverse groups where available, including:

- women and gender diverse people
- First Nations people
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people
- people with disability
- people from regional and remote locations
- people in low socioeconomic areas.

This data report summarises the main points of the 2025 edition of the monitor. The online version has more detailed data insights in written and visually interactive formats.

The monitor shows how fairly STEM in Australia represents people from these groups. The monitor allows users to investigate datasets in several ways. This includes measuring changes and trends over time in key sectors and career phases of girls', women's and other diverse groups' engagement with STEM.

The monitor follows the participation pathway in STEM through:

- schooling
- higher education
- graduate outcomes
- the workforce.

STEM definitions and diversity group data labels

The monitor defines STEM as science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It uses the education fields defined by the *Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)*. This is consistent with the *Australia's STEM workforce* report (Office of the Chief Scientist 2020).

The monitor also matches education fields to research fields from the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)*. It considers an occupation or industry to be STEM-qualified if the majority of people in the occupation or industry reported a STEM qualification in the 2021 *Census of Population and Housing* (ABS 2022)

However, the monitor recognises that STEM-qualified graduates work in wide range of sectors, including health fields. It does not include health in its definition of STEM but recognises it as a closely related field that STEM-qualified people may enter. The online interactive version of the monitor lets users combine health and STEM data for results on STEMM – science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine.

The terms 'women' and 'men' (and 'girls' and 'boys' for minors) include cisgender (someone whose gender corresponds to their birth sex), transgender, non-binary and intersex people who identify as women/ girls or men/boys. Some data may have been collected and recorded by sex. However, consistent with the *Australian Government guidelines on the recognition of sex and gender* the terms 'gender', 'women' and 'men' are used throughout the monitor.

Definitions for other diversity groups may vary depending on the source. See 'about the data' sections of each page of the online STEM Equity Monitor for more information.

Data interpretation and methodology

The monitor shows data from a range of sources and applies a common STEM definition. Each section highlights areas of interest and high-level observations from the data.

Data custodians have used different methods to generate the data at each stage of the pathway (for example, surveys, Census responses and counts). This means users should compare data between sections with care.

If you want to use data from the monitor to analyse changes and trends over time, you should:

- consider the original data generation method
- apply appropriate statistical techniques where necessary.

We haven't conducted significance testing on data unless otherwise indicated.

See the methodology section of the online monitor for our full methodology of classifying into a standard STEM definition, as well as a list of sources and definitions.

STEM and diversity group definition references

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2022) *Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Australian Government, accessed 16 November 2022.

Attorney-General's Department (AGD) (2015) *Australian government guidelines on the recognition of sex and gender*, AGD, Australian Government, accessed 13 January 2022.

Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) (2020) *Australia's STEM workforce*, OCS, Australian Government, accessed 13 January 2022.

Schooling

Attitudes and perceptions towards STEM

Many factors influence confidence and interest in STEM from a young age. Understanding how key influencers, such as parents and educators, view STEM will help inform how to further support girls and women. This support can help them engage in STEM and consider STEM careers.

We commissioned YouthInsight to survey about 1,500 parents and 700 educators on their attitudes and perceptions toward STEM.

Key data from YouthInsight's 2024–25 STEM Influencers Survey

Impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on future careers

In 2024–25 parents were asked, for the first time, about the impact of recent advances in AI on future careers. Almost 9 in 10 (86%) parents agreed that generative AI tools will have a significant impact on work and careers in the future. A third (33%) of parents had already spoken to their children about AI and its impact on future careers. A further 45% planned to speak to them about this, adding to a total of 8 in 10 (78%).

STEM importance

In 2024–25, most parents (91%) agreed that a STEM-skilled workforce is important for the Australian economy. While this was slightly more than the previous STEM influencer survey (2022–23) with a 90% agreement, the difference was not significant.

Compared to the 2022–23 survey, a lower proportion of parents agreed that their child needed the following skills to get a good job in the future, although the differences across surveys were not significant. For example:

- science skills (75% in 2024–25, down from 76% in 2022–23)
- engineering skills (71% in 2024–25, down from 72% in 2022–23).

In the 2024–25 survey, there were significant increases in the proportion of parents who agreed their child needed the following to get a good job in the future, including:

- technology skills (90% in 2024–25, up from 87% in 2022–23)
- mathematics skills (87% in 2024–25, up from 83% in 2022–23)
- STEM as a general set of skills (84% in 2024–25, up from 81% in 2022–23).

Parents in metropolitan areas were more likely to view science (77%) and engineering (73%) as important compared to parents in regional or remote areas (science 70%, engineering 67%). Parents with a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background were more likely to view all STEM skills as important compared to non-CALD parents.

Across all educators, regardless of whether they teach STEM subjects or not, 97% agreed that STEM skills are important for the Australian economy. Again, across all educators, 90% also thought these skills will help give job security to future workers. These results show no significant differences to the previous educators' survey (2022–23).

Most educators saw STEM as an integrated set of skills, with all 4 STEM areas important for getting a good job. These results are similar to the 2022–23 survey outcomes and included the views that:

- technology skills are very important (53%)
- mathematics skills are very important (43%)
- science skills are very important (31%)
- engineering skills are very important (20%).

Teachers with STEM qualifications were significantly more likely to identify STEM skills as very important to getting a good job. Of these teachers, 47% said integrated STEM skills are very important, compared to 31% of those without STEM qualifications.

STEM engagement

Seventy-seven per cent of parents said they had a general interest in STEM, with technology (78%) and science (75%) the most popular subjects. These results are slightly lower than in 2022–23, however these changes are not statistically significant.

General interest in STEM was significantly higher among parents from:

- metropolitan locations (79%), compared to parents from regional and remote locations (72%)
- higher socio-economic areas (79%), compared to parents from lower socio-economic areas (73%)
- CALD backgrounds (86%), compared to parents from a non-CALD background (74%).

More than a third of parents (38%) reported having at least weekly discussions with their children about STEM topics. There were no significant differences in weekly conversations about STEM topics among fathers compared to mothers, or parents of boys compared to parents of girls.

For educators across all teaching settings, 91% of men felt qualified to teach at least one STEM topic, compared to 83% of women. This difference was not significant. Across all teaching settings and STEM subject areas, educators felt least qualified to teach engineering, with only 31% saying they felt qualified to teach this subject.

A significantly higher proportion of women than men reported no confidence in teaching STEM subjects (16%, compared to 9%). This result may be impacted by a greater proportion of men educators in the population sample having a STEM qualification and teaching STEM compared to women.

In STEM subjects overall, educators and parents perceived a gendered difference in children's confidence in STEM subjects. A large proportion of educators and parents reported that boys were more confident in STEM subjects than girls. Surveys revealed that:

- 75% of educators believed that boys were more confident in STEM subjects, compared to 13% of educators who believed that girls were more confident
- 69% of parents believed that boys were more confident in STEM subjects, compared to 16% of parents who believed that girls were more confident.

Key data from YouthInsight's 2023–24 Youth in STEM Survey

Australia's 2023–24 Youth in STEM Survey by YouthInsight explored young people's awareness and perceptions of STEM subjects and careers. YouthInsight surveyed about 3,000 young people aged between 12 and 25 years.

Interest in STEM

Science was the most interesting STEM subject for girls in 2023–24. Surveys revealed that:

- 63% of girls were interested in science in 2023–24, compared to 62% in 2021–22
- 62% of boys were interested in science in 2023–24, compared to 64% in 2021–22.

Girls continue to be least interested in engineering. Surveys revealed that:

- 29% of girls were interested in engineering in 2023–24, compared to 31% in 2021–22
- 56% of boys were interested in engineering in 2023–24, the same as 2021–22.

Confidence in STEM

Girls are most confident in science and least confident in engineering. This has remained the same since the survey program began in 2018–19.

Generally, girls' confidence in all STEM subjects fell as they got older.

The following table shows girls' confidence in STEM subjects at different ages.

Subject	12–13 years	14–17 years	18–21 years	22–25 years
Science	69%	66%	57%	60%
Technology	74%	48%	49%	59%
Engineering	31%	30%	24%	30%
Mathematics	54%	65%	51%	50%

Source: YouthInsight (2023).

Importance of STEM knowledge for jobs

Girls considered that technology and mathematics were important to future employment. This is consistent with results across the survey program.

- Technology was the most important subject for girls in 2023–24. A total of 80% of girls thought it was important, compared with 85% of boys.
- Engineering remained the least important subject for girls. Just 55% of girls thought it was important to get a good job in the future, compared with 69% of boys.

Intention to study and work in STEM in the future

Consistent with previous surveys, girls in years 6 to 8 were less likely than boys to choose STEM elective subjects overall in the future (60% compared to 81%).

In years 9 and 10, there was no significant difference in intention to study STEM elective subjects overall in the future. The likelihood of choosing specific STEM electives was affected by gender, but not as much as in the 2021–22 survey.

Girls were significantly more likely to choose biology, which was also found in the 2021–22 survey. While girls were also indicatively more likely to choose chemistry in 2023–24, this difference is no longer significant.

Boys were significantly more likely to choose industrial technology, which was also found in the 2021–22 survey.

In years 11 and 12, the significant difference between girls and boys reappears. Girls in years 11 and 12 were less likely than boys to choose STEM elective subjects overall in the future (31% compared to 47%). As people in these year levels are considering their higher education study intentions, this finding suggests a gender difference. Girls are more likely than boys to complete their formal STEM education at high school. Girls who continue their studies are less likely to choose STEM fields of education.

Girls were half as likely as boys to aspire to a career in STEM. This is similar to previous surveys. A total of 22% of girls wanted a STEM career compared to 43% of boys.

Reasons for not studying STEM in the future

Respondents who indicated they were not considering further study in STEM were asked for their reason.

Most girls in this group agreed they wouldn't study STEM in the future because they weren't interested in the subjects and it wouldn't lead to the career they wanted.

Girls' agreement with the following reasons was significantly higher than boys:

- it's not related to the career I want (76% compared to 69%)
- I'm not really interested in the subjects (72% compared to 59%)
- they are too hard for me (52% compared to 40%)
- I'm not very good at math (48% compared to 39%)
- I don't think I'm smart enough (42% compared to 31%).

NAPLAN numeracy results

Key data by gender

In 2024, average numeracy scores were higher for boys than girls across all year levels. This was also the case in 2023.

Average numeracy scores in 2024 were closest in the Northern Territory, with boys scoring 9 points higher than girls when averaged across all year levels. They were furthest apart in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, where boys scored 17 points higher than girls when averaged across all year levels.

Between 11% and 16% of boys at each year level were in the 'exceeding' proficiency level for numeracy in 2024. For girls, the range was 7% to 11%. The proportion of girls in the 'exceeding' proficiency level was consistently lower than boys across all year levels.

NAPLAN numeracy results for diversity groups

Children in regional and remote locations have consistently lower average numeracy scores compared to children in major cities. The difference in average scores between children in very remote locations and children in major cities ranged between 109 points (for year 3) and 127 points (for year 7).

Nationally, the proportion of First Nations students in years 3, 5 and 7 in the 'needs additional support' proficiency level decreased between 2023 and 2024. First Nations students in year 9 remained the same at 35%.

Children with a language background other than English (LBOTE) had higher average numeracy scores than non-LBOTE children. At the national level in 2024, average numeracy scores were:

- 411 for year 3 LBOTE students, compared to 401 for year 3 non-LBOTE students
- 504 for year 5 LBOTE students, compared to 483 for year 5 non-LBOTE students
- 559 for year 7 LBOTE students, compared to 533 for year 7 non-LBOTE students
- 583 for year 9 LBOTE students, compared to 559 for year 9 non-LBOTE students.

Year 12 enrolments

The number of enrolments in year 12 STEM subjects increased from 2022 to 2023 for both girls (up 3,200 enrolments or 1.9%) and boys (up 4,500 enrolments or 2.4%). Enrolments also increased for non-STEM subjects, by 6.9% (20,700 enrolments) for girls and 10.2% (24,400 enrolments) for boys.

The proportion of STEM subject enrolments by girls was 47% in 2023. This proportion has slightly increased over time. From 2013 to 2018 it increased from 45% to 47% and has remained steady since. In contrast, the proportion of non-STEM enrolments by girls slightly decreased from 57% to 55% over this time.

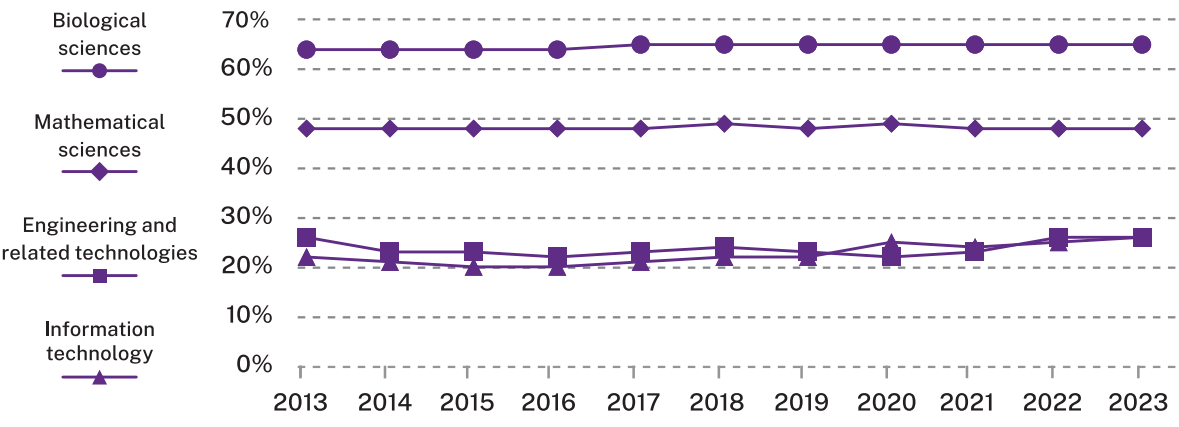
In 2023, girls made up the majority of student enrolments in:

- biological sciences (65%, similar to 64% in 2013)
- other natural and physical sciences, such as general or mixed science (57%, down from 61% in 2013)
- earth sciences (53%, up from 48% in 2013)
- agriculture, environmental and related studies (51%, similar to 49% in 2013).

Girls remained underrepresented in:

- information technology (26% of enrolments, up from 22% in 2013)
- engineering and related technologies (26%, the same as 2013)
- physics and astronomy (24%, similar to 23% in 2013).

Year 12 enrolments by girls in selected STEM subjects (proportion of all enrolments)



Sources: Department of Education (2025); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001); Australian Institute of Family Studies (2016)

Enrolments in year 12 STEM subjects represented 36% of total year 12 enrolments in 2023 (363,800 STEM subject enrolments out of 1,010,200 total subject enrolments). This was similar to 2022, where STEM subject enrolments were 37% of total year 12 enrolments (356,200 STEM subject enrolments out of 954,700 total subject enrolments).

The Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) identified 4 levels of mathematics subjects. From lowest to highest, they are:

- elementary – generally non-ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank)
- elementary – (ATAR)
- intermediate
- higher.

The total number of enrolments in mathematics subjects at all levels has decreased for both girls and boys since 2013.

The proportion of enrolments for girls remained similar for most levels of mathematics subjects since 2013, staying within a range of only 2 percentage points.

For higher mathematics subjects, the proportion of enrolments for girls remained the same in 2023 as it was in 2013, at 36%. Higher mathematics had the lowest proportion of girls out of all levels.

Schooling data references

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2001) *Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001*, cat no. 1272.0, ABS, Australian Government, accessed 6 October 2022.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2024) *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) Achievement in Reading, Writing and Numeracy: National Results 2024*, ACARA, accessed 28 November 2024.

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Higher education

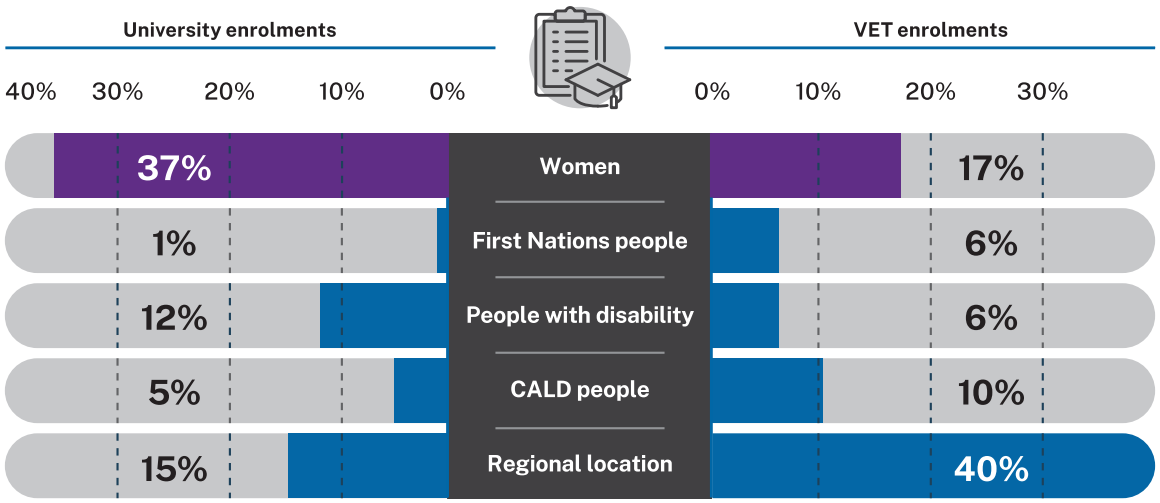
VET and university enrolments and completions

Students who study STEM at primary and secondary school may choose to continue their STEM studies through university or vocational education and training (VET). Understanding how women and people from other diverse groups participate in STEM higher education can help the government and other sectors give targeted support as they progress from schooling to the workforce. It can also help focus support on particular fields and education types. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research and the Department of Education collect data that informs this understanding.

In 2023, a larger proportion of:

- Women and people with disability were enrolled in university qualifications.
- First Nations people, CALD people and people from a regional location were enrolled in VET qualifications.

Proportion of STEM enrolments by diversity group, 2023



Sources: Department of Education (2025); National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2024).

VET enrolments and completions

Gender equity

The number of VET STEM enrolments from women increased by 4,000 or 4% from 2022 to 2023. The number of enrolments from men increased by 2,600 or 1%.

Since 2021, the proportion of VET STEM enrolments from women has remained stable at 17%. This was higher than 2016, when the proportion of STEM enrolments from women was 14%.

From 2022 to 2023, the number of both men and women who completed VET STEM qualifications increased. The proportion of VET STEM completions from women also slightly increased, from 19% in 2022 to 20% in 2023.

Engineering and related technologies consistently had the largest number of VET enrolments of all STEM fields. However, women continued to be underrepresented, making up only 12% of all VET enrolments in engineering and related technologies. Of enrolments for apprentices and trainees in this field, 9% were women, compared to 13% for enrolments who were not apprentices and trainees.

Among the broad fields of education, STEM had the lowest proportion of women enrolled in VET training as part of an apprenticeship or traineeship. Women made up 10% of STEM enrolments for apprentices and trainees, compared to 82% of health and 45% of non-STEM enrolments.

Equity by diversity groups

First Nations people represented 6% of enrolments in VET STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 5% for health and 6% for non-STEM enrolments.

For some groups, there was lower representation in enrolments in VET STEM subjects compared to the other fields of education.

- People with disability represented 6% of enrolments in VET STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 8% for health and 7% for non-STEM enrolments.
- People who spoke another language at home represented 10% of enrolments in VET STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 14% for health and 18% for non-STEM enrolments.

For people in regional and remote locations there was higher representation in enrolments in STEM subjects compared to the other fields of education. People in regional and remote locations represented 40% of enrolments in STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 31% for health and 29% for non-STEM enrolments. According to the 2021 Census, 28% of the Australian population lived in regional and remote locations.

University enrolments and completions

Gender equity

Between 2015 and 2023, the number of enrolments from women in university STEM courses increased from 70,200 to 87,900. This was an increase of 25%, compared to 8% for men.

Since 2020, the proportion of university STEM enrolments from women has remained stable at 37%. This is higher than in 2015, when the proportion of STEM enrolments from women was 34%.

The number of university STEM course completions by women increased from 14,500 in 2015 to 18,100 in 2023, which was an increase of 25%. This includes both undergraduate and postgraduate completions. However, from 2021 to 2023, the proportion of university STEM course completions from women remained the same, at 39%.

Equity by diversity groups

The proportion of STEM university program enrolments from First Nations people was 1.2% in 2023, compared to 2.2% for non-STEM and 2.4% for health enrolments. First Nations people account for 3.2% of the Australian population, according to the 2021 Census.

The number of university STEM enrolments from First Nations people decreased 4% from 2022 to 2023. The number of university STEM completions from First Nations people also decreased very slightly.

For some groups, there was lower representation in enrolments in university STEM subjects compared to the other fields of education.

- People from regional locations represented 15% of university enrolments in STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 17% for non-STEM and 22% for health enrolments. According to the 2021 Census, 26% of the Australian population lived in regional locations.
- People from low socio-economic areas represented 14% of university enrolments in STEM subjects in 2023, compared to 15% for non-STEM and 18% for health enrolments.

Among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, there was higher representation in university enrolments in STEM subjects compared to the other fields of education. CALD people represented 5% of university STEM enrolments in 2023, compared to 4% for health and 3% for non-STEM enrolments. People with disability had a higher representation in university STEM enrolments (12%) than health (10%) but lower representation than non-STEM enrolments (13%).

Higher education data references

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) *Census of Population and Housing*, ABS, Australian Government, accessed 16 November 2022.

Department of Education (unpublished) (2025) *Student enrolments and award completions by field of education, selected characteristics and year*, data set supplied to the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science and Resources, Department of Education, Australian Government, accessed 30 January 2025.

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Graduate outcomes

VET and university graduate outcomes

A successful transition into the workforce can be impacted by many factors. This includes job availability, relevance of training to jobs, working conditions and pay. Understanding graduate employment outcomes for STEM-qualified people can give valuable insights into factors that continue to affect diverse peoples' progression and retention in STEM.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research collects data on these indicators for VET students. Data from the annual Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Graduate Outcomes Survey helps build a picture of skills use and university graduate satisfaction.

VET graduate outcomes

Outcomes by gender

In 2024, 65% of women VET STEM graduates reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs. A higher proportion of men STEM graduates than women reported their training had some or high relevance to their job (79% compared to 65%).

In 2024, 70% of women graduates in engineering and related technologies reported their training was highly or somewhat relevant to their job. This was the highest proportion of all STEM fields, followed by agriculture, environmental and related technologies (65%).

In 2024, the proportion of women whose employment outcomes improved, by gaining employment, being employed at a higher skill level and/or reporting a job related benefit, after graduating in a VET STEM field was 55%. This was a decrease from 58% in 2023. This was lower than the proportion of men whose employment outcomes improved after graduating in a VET STEM field, which was 68% in 2024.

Across all VET STEM fields, women's median full-time annual income was $62,000 in 2024, an increase from $59,000 in 2023. Men's median full-time annual income was $76,000, an increase from $72,000 in 2023. The larger increase in income for men saw the income gap for VET graduates widen in 2024.

Outcomes by diversity groups

A lower proportion of VET STEM graduates with disability reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs compared to those without disability. In 2024, 64% of STEM graduates with disability reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs, compared to 78% of STEM graduates without disability.

A higher proportion of graduates from a non-English speaking background and graduates from a remote location found their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs.

- A total of 81% of STEM graduates from a non-English speaking background reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs, compared to 75% of STEM graduates from an English speaking background.
- A total of 84% of STEM graduates from a remote location reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs, compared to 75% of STEM graduates from a major city.

Information technology was the STEM field with the lowest proportion of people from diverse groups who reported their training was somewhat or highly relevant to their jobs in 2024.

- A total of 51% of information technology graduates from non-English speaking backgrounds reported this. This was in comparison to engineering and related technologies, which was the STEM field with the highest proportion of graduates from non-English speaking backgrounds reporting this, at 89%.
- A total of 44% of information technology graduates with disability reported this. This was in comparison to agriculture, environmental and related technologies, which was the STEM field with the highest proportion of graduates with disability reporting this, at 74%.

Employment outcomes improved after graduating from a VET STEM field, by gaining employment or being employed at a higher skill level and/or receiving a job related benefit, for a lower proportion of graduates from most diversity groups in 2024. However, the proportion of STEM graduates from a remote location whose employment outcomes improved (72%) was higher than STEM graduates from a major city (62%).

Across all VET STEM fields, the median full-time annual income was lower for graduates from all diversity groups in 2024. This gap was significant for STEM graduates from non-English speaking backgrounds and graduates with disability.

- Annual income for STEM graduates from non-English speaking backgrounds was $70,000 in 2024, compared to STEM graduates from English speaking backgrounds, at $73,000.
- Annual income for STEM graduates with disability was $62,000 in 2024, compared to STEM graduates without disability at $75,000.

University graduate outcomes

Outcomes by gender

In most STEM fields in 2023, similar proportions of employed women and men undergraduates felt their skills weren't being fully used. The largest difference between genders was in computing and information systems, where 38% of employed men graduates felt they weren't using their skills, compared to 29% of employed women graduates.

Median full-time income for women STEM graduates remained the same or increased in all undergraduate STEM fields from 2022 to 2023. The largest increases were in:

- engineering ($71,000 in 2022, compared to $75,000 in 2023)
- computing and information systems ($69,000 in 2022, compared to $73,000 in 2023).

Median incomes for men graduates in STEM fields also increased from 2022 to 2023.

In 2023, the proportion of women undergraduates employed part-time was higher than men in each of the STEM fields.

In every year since 2018, women undergraduates employed part-time were equal to or higher than men in each of the STEM fields. The exceptions were engineering in 2020 and computing and information systems in 2018 and 2019.

Outcomes by diversity groups

A higher proportion of employed STEM graduates with disability reported their skills weren't fully utilised in their job (50%), compared to STEM graduates without disability (41%). For STEM graduates in other diversity groups:

- 45% of CALD graduates reported this feeling, compared to 42% of non-CALD graduates
- 36% of graduates from a remote location reported this feeling, compared to 43% of those from a metropolitan location.

From 2022 to 2023, the median full-time average income of STEM graduates with undergraduate qualifications grew across all diversity groups, except for graduates from remote locations.

The largest growth in median full-time annual income was for CALD graduates from STEM undergraduate qualifications. Their income grew from $65,000 in 2022 to approximately $73,000 in 2023. This was the same for CALD graduates from a STEM postgraduate research qualification. Their income grew from $90,000 in 2022 to $97,000 in 2023.

Longitudinal outcomes of graduates

Longitudinal data can give insights into the career progression of people after graduation. We commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to perform longitudinal analysis of a cohort of 162,000 people who graduated with a university qualification in 2011, and can be shown in linked datasets. The analysis explored the characteristics and outcomes of graduates in the 10 years since their graduation.

Key data on longitudinal career outcomes

Occupation outcomes

In 2011, about 162,000 people graduated with a university qualification and about 26,000 people received a STEM qualification. This represents 16% of all 2011 graduates.

While women comprised 61% of all graduates, they made up 38% of STEM graduates.

Following the 2011 cohort over time shows that in 2016, or 5 years after graduating, when not including graduates whose occupation was not stated or not applicable:

- 31% of women STEM graduates were working in STEM occupations
- 57% of men STEM graduates were working in STEM occupations.

Following the same cohort to 2021, or 10 years after graduating, shows:

- 31% of women STEM graduates were working in STEM occupations
- 56% of men STEM graduates were working in STEM occupations.

For both women and men STEM graduates, health-qualified occupations become more prevalent in the years after graduation.

- For women, 4% of 2011 graduates were in health occupations in 2012–13, but this increased to 18% in 2020–21.
- For men, 1% of 2011 graduates were in health occupations in 2012–13, compared to 7% in 2020–21.

This shows that attraction to STEM occupations is lower for women STEM graduates than men STEM graduates over the 10-year timeline. It also shows that, while STEM occupations do retain STEM graduates over a 10-year timeline, there is a gradual decrease over time for both genders.

Industry outcomes

Looking at industry, 10% of employed women with a STEM qualification worked in a STEM-qualified industry in 2021 (783 out of 7,979 employed women graduates). By comparison, 22% of men with a STEM qualification were in a STEM-qualified industry in 2021 (2,886 out of 13,360 employed men graduates.

The only 2021 STEM industry with a higher number of women 2011 STEM graduates than men was scientific research services. In 2021, 259 women STEM graduates were working in scientific research services (33% of women 2011 STEM graduates employed in a STEM industry). This was in comparison to 205 men STEM graduates (7% of men 2011 STEM graduates employed in a STEM industry).

Employment status

In 2021, employed STEM-qualified women were more than twice as likely to work part-time as STEM-qualified men (23% of women, 10% of men).

For women, this was lower than:

- women with non-STEM qualifications (27% part time)
- women with health qualifications (39% part time).

There were lower rates of part time employment for men. A total of 10% of men with STEM qualifications worked part time, compared to:

- men with non-STEM qualifications (12% part time)
- men with health qualifications (17% part time).

Income over time

In 2012–13, about 2 years after graduating with their STEM qualification:

- 67% of employed women earned less than $50,000 annually, compared to 45% of employed STEM-qualified men
  - 11% earned $75,000 or more, compared to 23% of men.

By 2020–21, the proportion of employed men who earned $75,000 or more was 78%. That was 1.4 times higher than the proportion of women with that income, at 57%. This increased further with men 1.8 times more likely to have earned $100,000 or more than women (55% and 30% respectively).

STEM participation among diversity groups

Analysis of outcomes for intersectional groups is shown below. It highlights the pervasive impact of gender on STEM occupation outcomes.

For women who graduated with a STEM qualification in 2011 and were born in another country, STEM occupation outcomes 10 years later in 2021 were similar to women who were born in Australia. Analysis showed that:

- 31% of women born overseas who graduated with a STEM qualification in 2011 were working in a STEM occupation in 2021
- this is the same proportion as for women born in Australia or not stated (31%).

For men who graduated with a STEM qualification and were born in another country, a lower percentage were working in STEM occupations in 2021 (54%) compared to men born in Australia or not stated (56%).

These proportions and relationships are similar for the language and disability diversity groups. However, there is a slightly larger difference between men graduates with disability (47% working in STEM occupations) and men graduates without disability (54% working in STEM occupations).

For First Nations people who graduated with a STEM qualification in 2011:

- there was a higher proportion of women working in STEM occupations in 2021 (34%) than non-First Nations women (30%)
- there was a lower proportion of men working in STEM occupations in 2021 (40%) than non-First Nations men (56%). This difference of 16 percentage points between First Nations men and non-First Nations men is the largest of any group shown in this analysis.

Child care responsibilities

Among women who gained a STEM qualification in 2011 and were unemployed or not in the labour force in 2021, the majority had child care responsibilities (53%). This was different to men, where 18% of STEM-qualified men who were unemployed or not in the labour force in 2021 had child care responsibilities.

This is similar when looking at graduates from other fields of education:

- 55% of women with a 2011 non-STEM qualification who were unemployed or not in the labour force in 2021 had child care responsibilities, compared to 22% of men
- 61% of women with a 2011 health qualification who were unemployed or not in the labour force in 2021 had child care responsibilities, compared to 25% of men.

Looking at all employed people shows the group with the lowest proportion of child care responsibilities is STEM-qualified women. Of the cohort of all employed STEM-qualified women, 36% reported they provided unpaid child care to their own or other children in 2021. This was lower than:

- employed STEM-qualified men (38%)
- employed people with non-STEM qualifications (44% of women had child care responsibilities and 40% of men)
- employed people with health qualifications (52% of women had child care responsibilities and 46% of men).

STEM was also the only field of education where the proportion of men with child care responsibilities was higher than women with child care responsibilities.

Graduate outcomes data references

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Workforce

Research workforce and funding outcomes

STEM skills are important for people in the research workforce, including academic staff who do research and have teaching responsibilities.

Understanding women's participation in the STEM research workforce can help build inclusive and diverse workplaces.

Key data on teaching and research workforce

In 2023, Department of Education data showed that 31% of university staff in STEM teaching and research roles, by headcount, were women. This increased from 30% in 2022. The proportion of teaching and research roles held by women in STEM was lower than the proportion of women across all subjects together, including STEM, health and non-STEM, at 47%.

Men outnumbered women at all academic staffing levels for STEM teaching and research roles. In other fields, men only outnumbered women at the higher academic staffing levels, including:

- in non-STEM teaching and research roles, where men only outnumbered women at staffing levels D and E
- in health roles, where men only outnumbered women at level E.

The proportion of First Nations university staff working in STEM teaching and research roles was only 0.4% in 2023. This was lower than the proportion of First Nations staff in both health (1.3%) and non-STEM (1.9%) roles.

The proportion of women in each field of teaching and research was higher among First Nations people than non-First Nations people. In STEM teaching and research roles in 2023, 50% of First Nations people were women while 30% of non-First Nations people were women.

Key data on research funding outcomes

Similarly to 2023 and previous years, fewer women than men were named on grant applications for STEM research in 2024. Across all STEM fields in 2024, 26% of applicants for ARC funding were women and 36% of NHMRC applicants were women.

As fewer women than men applied, fewer women than men gained funding, for example:

- 588 women received ARC funding, with 471 as chief investigator. In comparison, 1,567 men received ARC funding, including 1,182 as chief investigator.
- 126 women received NHMRC funding, with 57 as chief investigator. In comparison, 202 men received NHMRC funding, including 79 as chief investigator.

Success rates for women and men applying for research funding in STEM fields were similar. For example:

- 23% of women investigators who applied for an ARC grant in 2024 were successful, down from 28% in 2023. In comparison, 21% of men were also successful, down from 26% in 2023.
- 23% of women chief investigators who applied for an ARC grant in 2024 were successful, down from 25% in 2023. In comparison, 21% of men were also successful, down from 24% in 2023.
- 14% of women investigators who applied for an NHMRC grant in 2024 were successful, down from 17% in 2023. The success rate for men remained stable at 14%.
- 15% of women chief investigators who applied for an NHMRC grant in 2024 were successful, down from 18% in 2024. In comparison, 14% of men were also successful, down from 16% in 2023.

Industries and occupations

STEM skills can be used in many different occupations and industries. Understanding women and other diverse people's participation in STEM-qualified occupations can highlight industries that are leading the change and industries where more effort is needed. Understanding how STEM-qualified industries are taking action to support women's participation can provide similar insights.

The monitor uses data from relevant employers that reported to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). We source data on detailed occupations by gender from the Australian Labour Force Survey. We source occupations by diversity groups from data in the Person Level Integrated Data Asset, which is combined and linked from multiple sources.

Workforce gender equality and pay gaps

In 2024, women made up 29% of workers in STEM industries. This was unchanged from 2023.

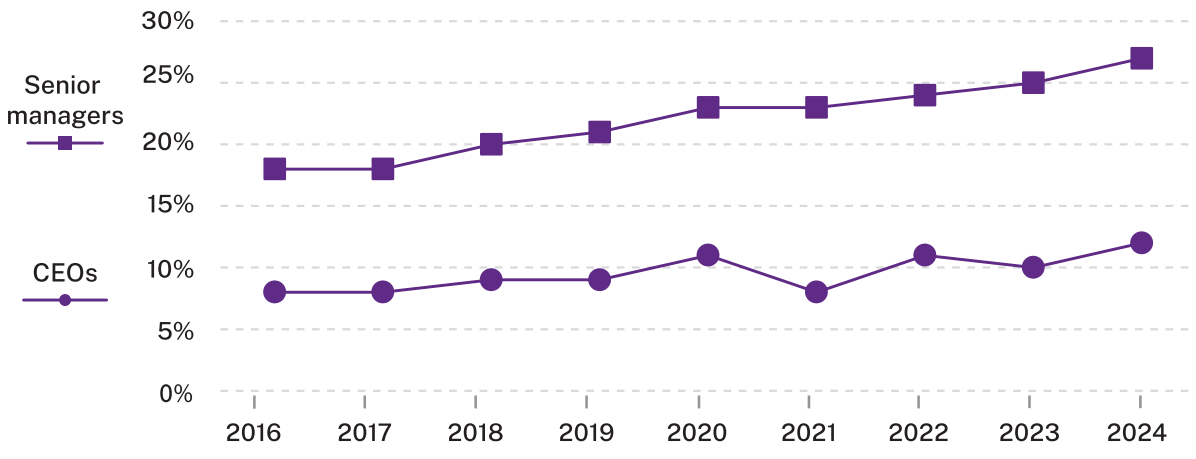
Women made up 78% of workers in health industries and 51% of workers in all industries, which includes STEM, health and non-STEM industries. These results were the same as 2023.

The highest proportion of women in senior STEM management positions was in key management personnel (27%), senior managers (27%), and other executives and general managers (27%) roles. There has been an increase in women in senior manager positions in all STEM industries, from 25% in 2023 to 27% in 2024, and in other executive and general manager positions, from 24% in 2023 to 27% in 2024.

The lowest proportion of women in senior STEM management positions were in CEO roles. Women made up 12% of CEOs across all STEM industries, an increase from 10% in 2023. This proportion was low compared to all health industries, where women made up 48% of CEOs, and all industries, where women made up 25% of CEOs.

The proportion of women in both CEO and senior manager positions in STEM industries has increased from 2016 to 2024.

Proportion of women in CEO and senior manager positions, STEM industries, 2016 to 2024:



Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2025).

In STEM industries in 2024, the pay gap between women's and men's full-time total remuneration, which includes discretionary pay, was $29,121, or 16%. This pay gap is slightly higher than it was in 2023, when it was $26,420 (16%). Despite this, progress has been made since 2016 when the gender pay gap was 22%.

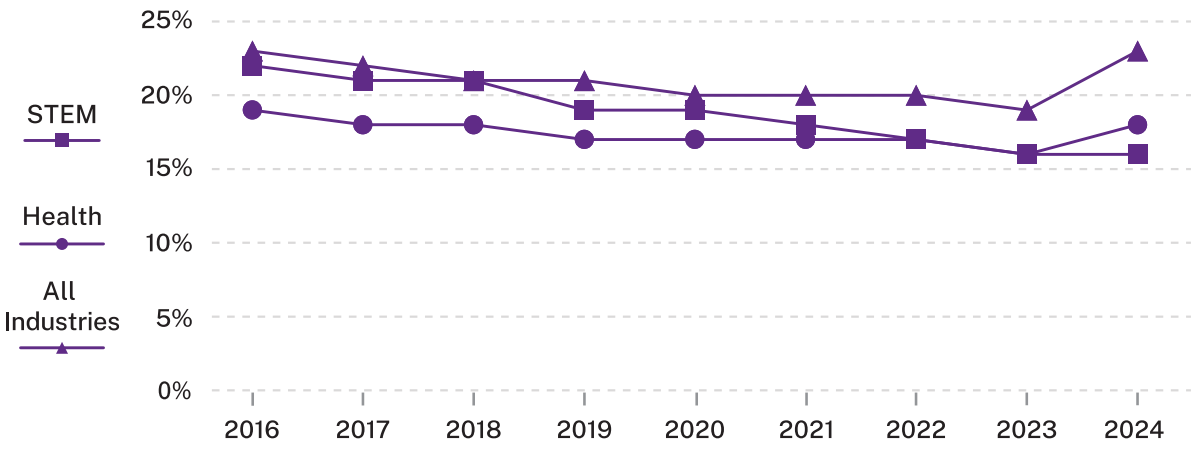
The gender pay gap for all industries, which includes STEM, health, and non-STEM industries, also increased from 19% in 2023 to 23% in 2024. For health industries, the pay gap increased from 16% in 2023 to 18% in 2024.

In 2024, the STEM industries with the largest percentage gender pay gaps were:

- machinery and equipment repair and maintenance, 26%
- architectural, engineering and technical services, 22%
- electricity generation, 21%
- oil and gas extraction, 21%.

The gender pay gap in STEM industries has decreased from 22% in 2016 to 16% in 2024, lower than health and all industries.

Gender pay gap in STEM, health and all industries, 2016 to 2024



Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2025).

Occupations by gender

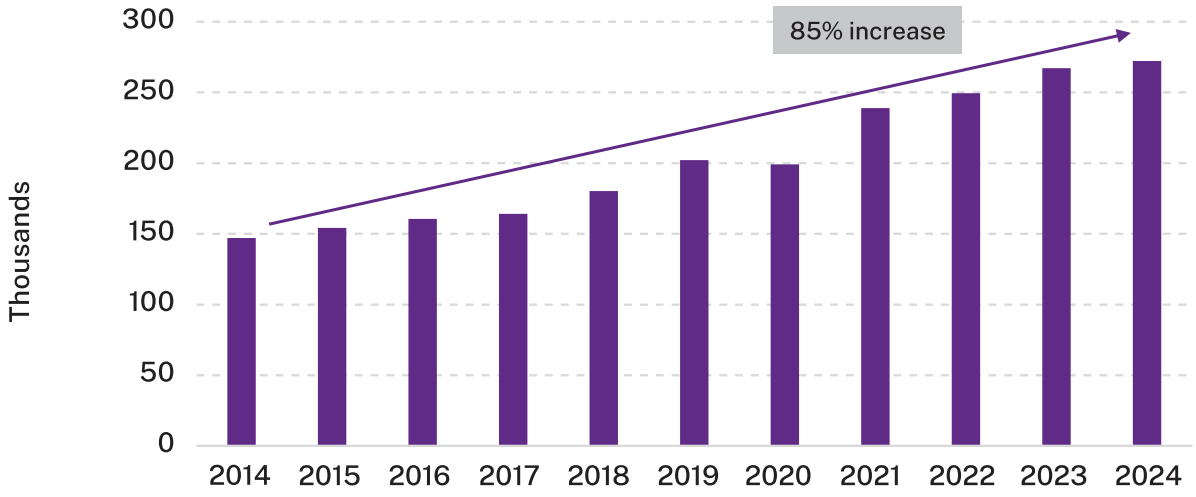
The number of women in STEM-qualified occupations increased by around 5,100 (2%) from 2023 to 2024. The number of men grew by around 29,200, also a 2% increase.

From 2021 to 2024, the proportion of women in STEM-qualified occupations has remained at 15%. This was an increase from 11% in 2004. In comparison, since 2004, women have consistently made up about 50% of people in non-STEM occupations and 75% of health occupations.

In the 10 years from 2014 to 2024, the number of women in STEM-qualified occupations rose from approximately 147,000 to 272,200, an increase of 85%. The number of men in STEM-qualified occupations increased by around 25% during this time, from 1,202,400 to 1,506,800.

The number of women in STEM occupations increased by around 85% from 2014 to 2024

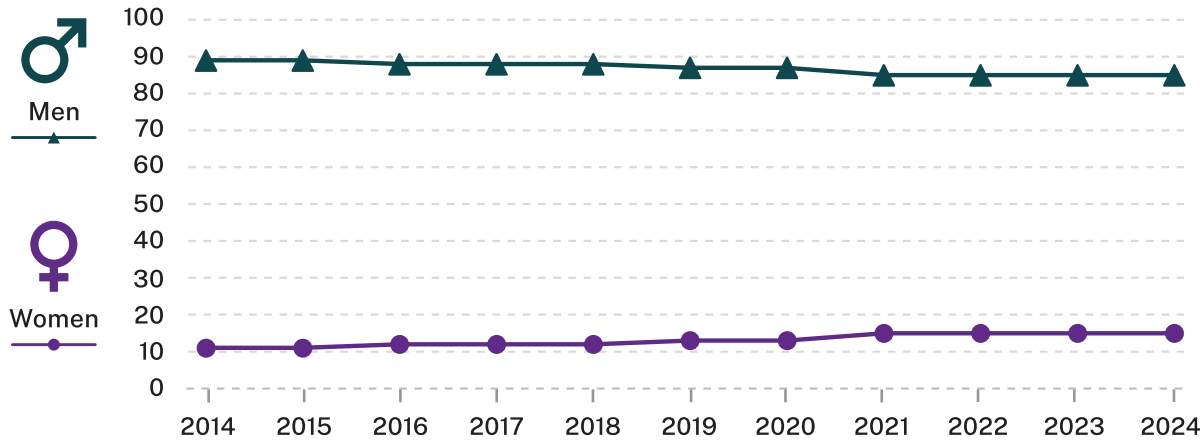
Number of women in STEM-qualified occupations, 2014 to 2024



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025).

The proportion of women in STEM-qualified occupations increased from 11% in 2014 to 15% in 2024

Proportion of women and men in STEM-qualified occupations, 2014 to 2024



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025).

Occupations by diversity groups

In diversity groups in 2021–22:

- First Nations people made up 2% of people in STEM-qualified occupations, compared to 3% of people in other occupations, including health and non-STEM occupation types
- people with disability made up 1% of people in STEM-qualified occupations, compared to 1% of people in other occupations

- people from a non-English speaking background made up 28% of people in STEM-qualified occupations, compared to 22% of people in other occupations
- people born in a country other than Australia made up 38% of people in STEM-qualified occupations, compared to 31% of people in other occupations
- people from remote and very remote locations made up 2% of people in STEM-qualified occupations, compared to 2% of people in other occupations.

There was an increase over time in the representation of people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people born in a country other than Australia in STEM-qualified occupations. These increases were larger in university STEM-qualified occupations, which include actuaries, mathematicians and statisticians, civil engineering professionals, computer network professionals, environmental scientists and medical laboratory scientists.

- In 2012–13, 28% of people in university STEM-qualified occupations were from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 2021–22, this increased to 40%.
- In 2012–13, 44% of people in university STEM-qualified occupations were born in a country other than Australia. In 2021–22, this increased to 52%.

From 2012–13 to 2021–22, the number of First Nations people in STEM-qualified occupations increased 36% from 20,200 to 27,600 people. Of the First Nations people in STEM-qualified occupations in 2021–22:

- 6,200, or 23% were in university STEM-qualified occupations
- 17,000, or 62% were in VET STEM-qualified occupations including aircraft maintenance engineers, cabinetmakers, electricians and motor mechanics
- 4,400, or 16% were in mixed STEM-qualified occupations, including air transport professionals, ICT managers and science technicians.

There were higher proportions of people from regional and remote locations in VET STEM-qualified occupations than university or mixed STEM-qualified occupations. In 2021–22:

- 37% of people in VET STEM-qualified occupations were from regional and remote locations, (including inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote locations), and 63% were from major cities
- 15% of people in university and mixed STEM-qualified occupations were from regional and remote locations, and 85% were from major cities.

Australian Public Service (APS) workforce

Gender equity

In 2024, 39% of APS employees working in STEM and health roles were women. This proportion has remained stable since 2022. In comparison, women made up 63% of employees in non-STEM role**s.**

Of all employees, 12% were in a STEM and health role. This equated to about 23,000 people out of the total 185,000 in all role types. These roles included:

- data and research
- engineering and technical
- information and communications technology and digital solutions
- science and health.

The majority of women working in STEM and health roles were employed at the APS 5 or 6 level. Of all women in STEM and health roles, 54% were working at the APS 5 or 6 level.

Gender equity in STEM and health roles is also highest at the APS 5 or 6 level. Of all people working in STEM and health roles at the APS 5 or 6 level, 43% were women. This compares to:

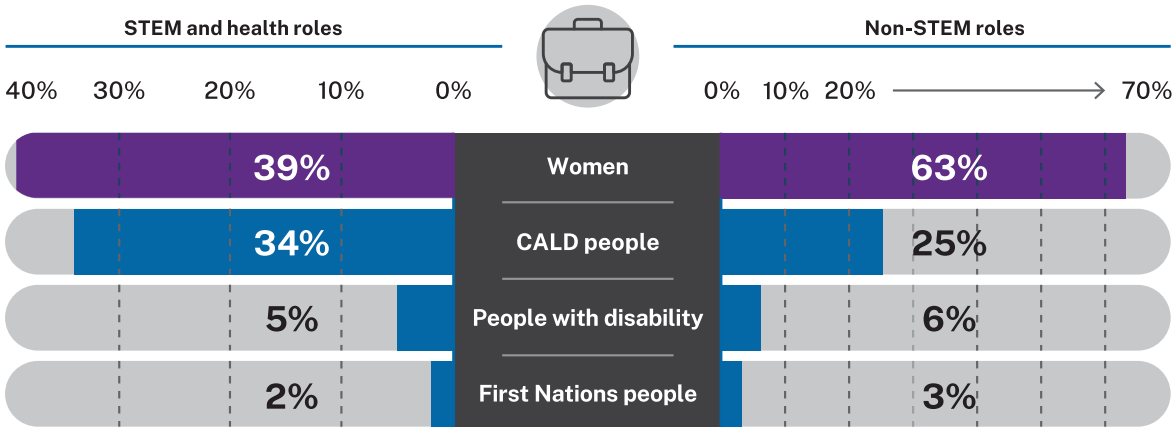
- 37% women at the APS 3 or 4 level
- 34% women at both the APS 1 or 2, trainee and graduate level, and the executive level/ senior executive service (EL/SES) level.

In 2024, a larger proportion of the following groups were working in public service non-STEM roles:

- women
- First Nations people
- people with disability

A larger proportion of CALD people were working in public service STEM and health roles.

Proportion of public service employees by diversity group, 2024



Source: Australian Public Service Commission (2025).

Equity by diversity groups

In 2024, 3% of employees in all APS roles were First Nations people. Around 500 First Nations people had a STEM and health role, accounting for 2% of all employees working in STEM and health. First Nations people made up 3% of employees working in non-STEM roles. First Nations people account for 3.2% of the Australian population, according to the 2021 Census.

The largest numbers of First Nations STEM and health employees were working at the APS 5 or 6 level or APS 1 or 2, trainee and graduate level. The APS 1 or 2, trainee and graduate level had the highest proportion of First Nations employees. At this level, 16% of all people in STEM and health roles were First Nations people. Around 50 First Nations STEM and health employees were working at the EL/SES level, accounting for 1% of all employees at this level in STEM and health roles.

People with disability made up 5% of employees in all roles in 2024. This proportion was the same for people with disability working in STEM and health roles. In comparison, people with disability made up 6% of those working in non-STEM roles.

Around 600 people with disability in STEM and health roles were working at the APS 5 or 6 level in 2024. This represents 55% of people with disability working in STEM and health roles. Across all levels, the proportion of APS employees with disability was between 4% and 6%.

CALD people made up 26% of employees in all roles and 34% of those working in STEM and health roles. The largest number of CALD employees in STEM and health roles were working at the APS 5 or 6 level, accounting for 35% of all employees at this level. This is followed by the EL/ SES level (2,400), where CALD employees made up 32% of all employees at this level.

Publicly funded research agencies (PFRAs) workforce

In 2024, 69% of all people working in the sampled PFRAs were in STEM occupations, about 10,000 people out of the total 14,000 in all role types. This is a one percentage point decrease from 2023.

Women made up 31% of people in STEM occupations in 2024, a one percentage point increase from 2023. In comparison, women made up 59% of non-STEM and 42% of health occupations in PFRAs.

The largest number of women in STEM were working at the EL1 level (1,011). The largest number of men in STEM were also at the EL1 level (2,413). Although the EL1 level had the highest number of STEM employees, it had one of the lowest proportions of women in STEM roles in 2024. The gender split for STEM employees at the EL1 level was 30% women and 70% men.

The EL2 level had the largest difference between men and women in STEM roles, with only 23% of EL2 STEM roles held by women. This was a slight improvement on the proportion of women in EL2 roles in 2023, where the gender split was 22% women and 78% men.

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