

PROFILE & TRENDS 2006: NEW ZEALAND'S TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR

People in the New Zealand population with a tertiary qualification – an explanatory note

Profile & Trends 2006 uses two different data sources for the proportion of the adult population with school and tertiary qualifications:

- the *2006 Census of Population and Dwellings*, and
- the *Household Labour Force Survey*.

The survey and the census provide similar estimates of the proportions of the adult population with no formal educational qualification and with a bachelors or higher qualification. However, their estimates of the proportions with school qualifications and non-degree qualifications are different. There is a 9 percent difference in the proportion estimated to have a tertiary qualification – 40 percent for the *Census* and 49 percent for the *Household Labour Force Survey*.

Table 1: Proportion of population aged 15 years and over by highest educational qualification

	Household Labour Force Survey (June 2006 qtr)	2006 Census of Population and Dwellings
No qualifications	26%	25%
School qualification	25%	35%
Other tertiary qualification	34%	24%
Bachelors degree or higher	15%	16%

Source: Statistics New Zealand.

There are several factors contributing to this 9 percent difference:

1. In the census, for example, someone with university entrance and a tertiary level 1 certificate is included in school qualifications as university entrance is counted as their highest qualification. In the survey, all tertiary qualifications are counted as higher than school qualifications. The difference between the survey and the census is reduced by 2 percent when only post-school qualifications are considered (see table 2).

The *Census of Population and Dwellings* provides a five-yearly 'snapshot' of our society and it is the official count of population and dwellings in New Zealand. The response rates to questions in the Census vary however, and 10 percent of the population aged 15 years and over did not provide valid responses to the questions relating to highest qualification in 2006.

The *Household Labour Force Survey* collects information on the employed, the unemployed and people not in the labour force. The survey population is the total, usually resident, non-institutionalised, civilian population of New Zealand aged 15 years and over. The survey is conducted quarterly, sampling 15,000 households and about 30,000 individuals. It provides estimates of quarterly and annual trends and it is subject to sampling error as well as non-sampling errors.

More technical information about the census and the survey is provided at the end of this note.

2. Another difference is that the census questionnaire only asks for tertiary qualifications requiring at least three months' full-time study, thus excluding 'short award' qualifications. The survey does not explicitly exclude these qualifications. Some of the remaining difference may be explained by the inclusion of these 'short award' qualifications in the *Household Labour Force Survey* responses.

3. The census includes people in both private and non-private dwellings. Non-private dwellings include hostels, prisons and health-care facilities. The survey only samples from people in private dwellings. This may result in the number with a tertiary qualification being over-represented in the *Household Labour Force Survey*.

Table 2: Proportion of population aged 15 years and over by highest post-school qualification

	Household Labour Force Survey (June 2006 qtr)	2006 Census of Population and Dwellings
No post-school qualifications	51%	58%
Other tertiary qualification	34%	26%
Bachelors degree or higher	15%	16%

Source: Statistics New Zealand.

Bearing in mind the differences in the data sources, two conclusions can be drawn:

1. That at least 40 percent of the adult population have as their highest qualification a tertiary qualification which required at least three months full-time study.
2. That up to 50 percent of the adult population may have completed a tertiary qualification, including qualifications that were lower than their highest school qualifications and/or qualifications that required less than three months' full-time study.

Technical notes:

2006 Census of Population and Dwellings:

'Other tertiary qualifications' includes all tertiary qualifications below degree-level.

Post-school qualifications, for which a subject was given but not a level, are included in 'other tertiary qualifications.'

In the census, degree-level diplomas and certificates (level 7) are coded to the category called 'bachelors degree or higher.'

For further details on the definitions of school, post-school and highest qualifications see:

www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-information-about-data/information-by-variable/qualification-secondary-school-post-school

In this explanatory note, the non-response categories have been excluded from the population when calculating the proportions. This approach is also used by Statistics New Zealand in their reporting and it provides the closest match between census and survey results.

Household Labour Force Survey:

'Other tertiary qualifications' includes all tertiary qualifications other than bachelors degrees, postgraduate degrees, postgraduate diplomas and postgraduate certificates.

The category called 'no qualification' includes 'qualification not specified.'

Further information on the survey can be found at:

www.stats.govt.nz/datasets/work-income/household-labour-force-survey