



International Education

Australia plays a significant role in international education and is the third most popular country in which to study, behind the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Students choose Australia not only for its quality of education but also for its diversity of educational and cultural experiences, the integrity of its qualifications, and its reputation for a safe and friendly environment.

International education is Australia's third largest export industry. Total export income generated by all international education activity in 2014-15 was \$18.2 billion. School students are a small proportion of the total number of international students in Australia, accounting for just 3.8 per cent (\$691 million) of the total export income from international education and 3.2 per cent of the total number of international students studying in Australia .

In 2015 total international student enrolments reached their highest point ever with 645,185 enrolments, growing by 9.8% over 2014. School sector enrolments grew by 11.8% over the same period to 20,596 enrolments although non-government sector enrolment growth over this period was 7.8%.

International students in Independent schools

Non-government schools enrol just under 40% of international students in the school sector.

Just over 6,300 overseas students, approximately 30 per cent of international school students in Australia, were enrolled in Independent schools in 2015.

The majority of international students in Independent schools – 85 per cent – are in the secondary years, with senior secondary accounting for the majority of enrolments. The remaining 15 per cent are in primary schools.

The major source country for the non-government school sector is China, accounting for approximately 50 per cent of total enrolments in the sector in 2015.

Together Hong-Kong, South Korea and Papua New Guinea account for a further 20 per cent of the total.

International student enrolments in non-government school sector – Top 10 source countries, 2015

Nationality	Number of enrolments	% of total enrolments
China	3,642	147,388
Hong Kong	637	80,082
South Korea	500	62,728
Papua New Guinea	392	50,861
Vietnam	306	43,538
Japan	294	40,225
Malaysia	223	29,917
Thailand	202	20,460
Taiwan	157	19,607

Source: Austrade

Note: This data covers student visa holders only.

Enrolment trends

International student enrolments in schools had been growing fairly steadily until 2009. This marked the beginning of a downturn across all sectors of education. The decline was due to a range of factors including the strength of the Australian dollar, changing visa arrangements, quality issues associated with some providers in some education sectors and changes in the relative attractiveness of competitor countries.

However Australia's education system is well regarded, and the assurance of its quality, underpinned by the Australian Qualifications Framework, ensures that Australia remains an attractive study destination and 2015 data shows that enrolments and commencements across all sectors of education are growing strongly.

The 2015 data from the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training shows continued growth in commencements of 14.8% in the schools sector, including 11.2% growth in commencements in the non-government school sector.