

Summary of the 2011 full year higher education student statistics

Student numbers

1. A total of 1 221 008 domestic and international students enrolled at higher education providers (HEPs) in 2011, an increase of 2.4 per cent from 2010.
2. There were 888 431 domestic students in 2011 (72.8 per cent of all students) an increase of 3.6 per cent from 2010. Overseas student enrolments decreased by 0.8 per cent over the same period to 332 577.
3. Postgraduate students increased by 0.5 per cent to 321 958 while undergraduate students increased by 3.3 per cent to 861 130.
4. More than half of all students enrolled were female (55.7 per cent).
5. Over seventy per cent of students (70.4 per cent) were studying full-time.
6. Over ninety per cent of students were enrolled at public universities (93.2 per cent). Public university enrolments increased 2.4 per cent in 2011 (1 137 511 students, up from 1 111 352 students in 2010), while private provider enrolments increased by 2.7 per cent (83 497 students at 88 providers in 2011, up from 81 305 students at 87 providers in 2010).

Commencing student numbers

7. Commencements provide an early indicator of how the higher education system evolves over time.
8. The total number of commencing students increased by 0.4 per cent to 489 959 in 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. Domestic commencements accounted for 70.4 per cent of all commencements, an increase of 2.5 per cent from 2010, while overseas commencements decreased by 4.3 per cent to 145 064 students over the same period.
9. Commencing students in enabling courses¹ increased by 7.0 per cent between 2010 and 2011 (15 181 to 16 247), while commencements in non-award courses² decreased by 9.8 per cent (19 151 to 17 283) over the same period. Commencements in postgraduate courses decreased by 1.7 per cent to 146 291, while undergraduate commencements increased by 1.8 per cent to 310 138.
10. More than half of all commencing students were female (56.2 per cent).
11. Commencements in full-time study increased by 0.7 per cent in 2011 compared to 2010 (358 526 to 361 143).

Indigenous student numbers

12. Students who self identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comprised 1.0 per cent of all enrolments in 2011 (up 6.5 per cent to 11 807 students) and 1.1 per cent of commencements (up 6.2 per cent to 5 381).
13. Increases in Indigenous student numbers were recorded across most broad fields of education where students were enrolled. The largest increase was in *Management and Commerce* (up 16.6 per cent to 1 315 students); while *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* decreased by 8.8 per cent to 186 students.
14. The main fields of education in which Indigenous students were enrolled were *Society and Culture* (3 787 students, or 32.1 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by *Health* (2 344 students or 19.9 per cent); and *Education* (2 075 students or 17.6 per cent).

¹ A course of instruction that enables a person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award. Enabling courses do not include a course leading to a higher education award or any course that the Minister determines is not an enabling course under the ACT HESA Schedule 1.

² A program of study which does not lead to an award and which comprises a unit or units of study which: is a unit or units of study from an award course or courses at the higher education provider; and is able to be counted as a credit towards some award course at the higher education provider by all students who complete the unit or units of study.

National priority areas and courses of special interest

15. Commencements in priority area courses in 2011 increased in courses leading to registration as a dental practitioner (up 17.8 per cent to 595 students) and courses leading to registration as a medical practitioner (up 1.6 per cent to 3 821 students).
16. In 2011, there was a decrease in commencing students undertaking courses leading to registration as a veterinary practitioner (down 5.1 per cent to 468 students); in courses providing initial registration as nurses (down 1.7 per cent to 16 338 students); in courses for initial registration in teacher training (down 1.5 per cent to 28 203 students); and in courses in clinical psychology (down 0.8 per cent to 722 students).

Low SES³⁴

17. Low SES commencing students in 2011 increased by 3.3 per cent compared to the same period in 2010 (from 54 902 or 16.5 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students to 56 710 or 16.7 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students), while all low SES students increased by 5.4 per cent (from 130 069 to 137 151 students).

Regional and remote³⁵

18. Commencing students in regional areas in 2011 increased by 0.6 per cent compared to the same period in 2010 (from 63 461 to 63 833 students), while commencing students in remote areas increased by 3.2 per cent to 3 786 students.

Field of Education

19. Increases in the number of commencing students were recorded across most broad fields of education in 2011 compared to the same period in 2010, with *Mixed Field Programs*⁶ (up 4.8 per cent); *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 4.7 per cent); *Architecture and Building* (up 3.9 per cent); *Health* (up 3.7 per cent); *Education* (up 1.7 per cent); *Society and Culture* (up 1.5 per cent); *Engineering and Related Technologies* (up 0.8 per cent); and *Creative Arts* (up 0.2 per cent). Decreases were recorded for *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* (down 19.9 per cent); *Non-award courses* (down 9.8 per cent); *Management and Commerce* (down 1.5 per cent); *Information Technology* (down 1.3 per cent); and *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* (down 0.2 per cent).
20. The largest increase in overseas student numbers was in *Mixed Field Programs* with commencements up 25.8 per cent to 649 students and all enrolments up 38.7 per cent to 778 students. *Management and Commerce* comprised over half of all overseas commencements (73 630 out of 145 064) as well as over half of all overseas enrolments (170 447 students out of 332 577).

³ Excludes overseas students and domestic students where permanent home address is overseas.

⁴ Low SES postcode measure is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2006 SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for postal areas, where postal areas in the bottom 25% of the population aged 15-64 being classified as Low SES. This is the normal method that has been used by DEEWR over many years.

⁵ Regional and remote categories are derived from MCEETYA classifications.

⁶ *Mixed Field Programs* provide general and personal development education.