

## Summary of the 2012 first half year higher education student statistics

### Student numbers

1. A total of 1 094 672 domestic and international students enrolled at higher education providers (HEPs) in the first half of 2012, an increase of 2.6 per cent from the first half of 2011.
2. There were 831 391 domestic students in the first half of 2012 (75.9 per cent of all students) an increase of 4.4 per cent from the first half of 2011. Overseas student enrolments decreased by 2.7 per cent over the same period to 263 281.
3. Postgraduate students increased by 1.9 per cent to 266 946 while undergraduate students increased by 2.9 per cent to 803 465.
4. More than half of all students enrolled were female (56.0 per cent).
5. Nearly three quarters of students (73.8 per cent) were studying full-time.
6. Over ninety per cent of students were enrolled at public universities (93.8 per cent). Public university enrolments increased 2.6 per cent in the first half of 2012 (1 026 473 students, up from 1 000 001 students in the first half of 2011), while private provider enrolments increased by 1.8 per cent (68 199 students at 88 providers in the first half of 2012, up from 66 986 students at 86 providers in the first half of 2011).

### 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 3.6 per cent to 374 962 in the first half of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011. Domestic commencements accounted for 78.7 per cent of all commencements, an increase of 6.2 per cent from the first half of 2011, while overseas commencements decreased by 5.1 per cent to 79 686 students over the same period.
9. Commencing students in Enabling courses<sup>1</sup> increased by 11.6 per cent between the first half of 2011 and the first half of 2012 (9 666 to 10 791), while commencements in Non-award courses<sup>2</sup> decreased by 6.1 per cent (10 207 to 9 589) over the same period. Commencements in postgraduate courses increased by 3.4 per cent to 100 112, while undergraduate commencements increased by 3.8 per cent to 254 470.
10. More than half of all commencing students were female (57.0 per cent).
11. Commencements in part-time study increased by 2.8 per cent in the first half of 2012 compared to the first half of 2011 (82 184 to 84 466).

### Indigenous student numbers

12. Students who self identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comprised 1.0 per cent of all enrolments in the first half of 2012 (up 6.2 per cent to 10 635 students) and 1.2 per cent of commencements (up 6.1 per cent to 4 364).
13. Increases in Indigenous student numbers were recorded across most broad fields of education where students were enrolled. The largest increase was in *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 17.2 per cent to 553 students), while *Non-award courses*<sup>2</sup> decreased by 44.7 per cent to 26 students.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

14. The main fields of education in which Indigenous students were enrolled were *Society and Culture* (3 396 students, or 31.9 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by *Health* (2 257 students or 21.2 per cent); and *Education* (1 918 students or 18.0 per cent).

#### **National priority areas and courses of special interest**

15. Commencements in priority area courses in the first half of 2012 increased in courses for initial registration as nurses (up 9.6 per cent to 15 925 students); in courses providing initial teacher training (up 6.4 per cent to 26 038 students); courses leading to registration as a veterinary practitioner (up 4.7 per cent to 491 students); and courses in clinical psychology (up 4.3 per cent to 723 students).
16. In the first half of 2012, there was a decrease in commencing students undertaking courses leading to registration as a medical practitioner (down 10.3 per cent to 3 423 students); and courses leading to registration as a dental practitioner (down 3.4 per cent to 575 students).

#### **Low socioeconomic status<sup>3 4</sup>**

17. Low SES commencing students in the first half of 2012 increased by 7.2 per cent compared to the same period in 2011 (from 45 723 or 16.6 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students to 49 032 or 16.8 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students), while all low SES students increased by 5.8 per cent (from 122 321 to 129 476 students).

#### **Regional and remote<sup>3 5</sup>**

18. Commencing students in regional areas in the first half of 2012 increased by 5.2 per cent compared to the same period in 2011 (from 50 862 to 53 521 students), while commencing students in remote areas increased by 5.6 per cent to 2 917 students.

#### **Field of Education**

19. Increases in the number of commencing students were recorded across most broad fields of education in the first half of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011, with *Mixed Field Programs* (up 19.1 per cent); *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 11.4 per cent); *Health* (up 7.2 per cent); *Education* (up 5.9 per cent); *Society and Culture* (up 3.9 per cent); *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* (up 3.8 per cent); *Information Technology* (up 2.3 per cent); *Engineering and Related Technologies* (up 1.4 per cent); and *Management and Commerce* (up 0.5 per cent). Decreases were recorded for *Non-award courses* (down 6.1 per cent); *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* (down 1.9 per cent); *Architecture and Building* (down 1.7 per cent); and *Creative Arts* (down 0.4 per cent).
20. Overseas commencing student numbers decreased across all broad fields of education except *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* which remained unchanged. *Management and Commerce* comprised around half of all overseas commencements (37 818 out of 79 686) as well as half of all overseas enrolments (131 028 students out of 263 281).

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<sup>3</sup> Excludes overseas students and domestic students where permanent home address is overseas.

<sup>4</sup> 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 DIISRTE over many years.

<sup>5</sup> Regional and remote categories are derived from MCEETYA classifications.