

Summary of the 2011 first half year higher education student statistics

Student numbers

1. A total of 1 066 987 domestic and international students enrolled at higher education providers (HEPs) in the first half of 2011, an increase of 2.8 per cent from the first half of 2010.
2. There were 796 431 domestic students in the first half of 2011 (74.6 per cent of all students) an increase of 3.3 per cent from the first half of 2010. Overseas student enrolments increased by 1.3 per cent over the same period to 270 556.
3. Postgraduate students increased by 0.9 per cent to 261 863 while undergraduate students increased by 3.6 per cent to 781 177.
4. More than half of all students enrolled were female (55.9 per cent).
5. Nearly three quarters of students (73.7 per cent) were studying full-time.
6. Over ninety per cent of students were enrolled at public universities (93.7 per cent). Public university enrolments increased 2.6 per cent in the first half of 2011 (1 000 001 students, up from 974 608 students in the first half of 2010), while private provider enrolments increased by 5.8 per cent (66 986 students at 86 providers in the first half of 2011, up from 63 337 students at 84 providers in the first half of 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 1.1 per cent to 361 958 in the first half of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. Domestic commencements accounted for 76.8 per cent of all commencements, an increase of 1.6 per cent from the first half of 2010, while overseas commencements marginally decreased by 0.3 per cent to 83 957 students over the same period.
9. Commencing students in enabling courses¹ increased by 5.3 per cent between the first half of 2010 and the first half of 2011 (9 179 to 9 666), while commencements in non-award courses² decreased by 8.4 per cent (11 149 to 10 207) over the same period. Commencements in postgraduate courses decreased by 1.3 per cent to 96 824, while undergraduate commencements increased by 2.5 per cent to 245 261.
10. More than half of all commencing students were female (57.0 per cent).
11. Commencements in part-time study decreased by 1.4 per cent in the first half of 2011 compared to the first half of 2010 (83 339 to 82 184).

Indigenous student numbers

12. Students who self identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comprised 0.9 per cent of all enrolments in the first half of 2011 (up 5.9 per cent to 10 018 students) and 1.1 per cent of commencements (up 4.0 per cent to 4 115).
13. Increases in Indigenous student numbers were recorded across most broad fields of education where students were enrolled. The largest increase was in *Information Technology* (up 32.3 per cent to 131 students), while *Mixed Field Programs*³ decreased by 11.6 per cent to 312 students.
14. The main fields of education in which Indigenous students were enrolled were *Society and Culture* (3 203 students, or 32.0 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by *Health* (2 121 students or 21.2 per cent); and *Education* (1 835 students or 18.3 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.

³ Mixed Field Programs provide general and personal development education.

National priority areas and courses of special interest

15. Commencements in priority area courses in the first half of 2011 increased in courses leading to registration as a dental practitioner (up 1.7 per cent to 595 students); courses leading to registration as a medical practitioner (up 1.4 per cent to 3 815 students); and courses in clinical psychology (up 1.2 per cent to 693 students).
16. In the first half of 2011, there was a decrease in commencing students undertaking courses leading to registration as a veterinary practitioner (down 4.7 per cent to 469 students); in courses providing initial teacher training (down 1.0 per cent to 24 483 students); and in courses for initial registration as nurses (down 0.8 per cent to 14 534 students).

Regional and remote^{4 5}

17. Commencing students in regional areas in the first half of 2011 decreased by 0.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2010 (from 51 119 to 50 862 students), while commencing students in remote areas decreased by 0.4 per cent to 2 762 students.

Field of Education

18. Increases in the number of commencing students were recorded across most broad fields of education in the first half of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010, with *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* (up 5.2 per cent); *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 4.7 per cent); and *Architecture and Building* (up 4.0 per cent); *Health* (up 3.8 per cent); *Creative Arts* (up 1.7 per cent); *Information Technology* (up 1.2 per cent); *Society and Culture* (up 1.2 per cent); *Engineering and Related Technologies* (up 1.1 per cent); *Education* (up 0.9 per cent); and *Management and Commerce* (up 0.1 per cent). Decreases were recorded for *Non-award courses* (down 8.5 per cent); *Mixed Field Programs* (down 2.3 per cent); and *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* (down 1.2 per cent).
19. The largest increase in overseas student numbers was in *Mixed Field Programs* with commencements up 96.9 per cent to 376 students and all enrolments up 105.2 per cent to 509 students. *Management and Commerce* comprised around half of all overseas commencements (39 748 out of 83 957) as well as half of all overseas enrolments (136 310 students out of 270 556).

⁴ Regional and remote categories are derived from MCEETYA classifications.

⁵ Excludes overseas students and domestic students where permanent home address is overseas.