

Summary of the 2014 first half year higher education student statistics

Student numbers

1. A total of 1 176 801 domestic and international students enrolled at higher education institutions in the first half of 2014, an increase of 3.6 per cent from the first half of 2013.
2. There were 905 307 domestic students in the first half of 2014 (76.9 per cent of all students) an increase of 3.3 per cent from the first half of 2013. Overseas student enrolments increased by 4.7 per cent over the same period to 271 494.
3. Postgraduate students increased by 6.7 per cent to 297 540 while undergraduate students increased by 2.3 per cent to 850 629.
4. More than half of all students enrolled were female (55.6 per cent).
5. Nearly three quarters of students (74.2 per cent) were studying full-time.
6. Over ninety per cent of students were enrolled at Public Universities (92.9 per cent). Public University enrolments increased 3.1 per cent in the first half of 2014 (1 093 422 students, up from 1 060 316 students in the first half of 2013), while Private Universities and Non-University Higher Education Institutions (NUHEIs) enrolments increased by 10.1 per cent (83 379 students at 96 institutions in the first half of 2014, up from 75 725 students at 93 institutions in the first half of 2013).

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 4.1 per cent to 405 462 in the first half of 2014 compared to the same period in 2013. Domestic commencements accounted for 78.3 per cent of all commencements, an increase of 2.6 per cent from the first half of 2013, while overseas commencements increased by 9.9 per cent to 87 966 students over the same period.
9. Commencing students in Enabling courses¹ increased by 9.3 per cent between the first half of 2013 and the first half of 2014 (11 655 to 12 738), while commencements in Non-award courses² increased by 13.3 per cent (9 067 to 10 276) over the same period. Commencements in postgraduate courses increased by 6.4 per cent to 111 824, while undergraduate commencements increased by 2.6 per cent to 270 624.
10. More than half of all commencing students were female (56.4 per cent).
11. Commencements in part-time study increased by 0.9 per cent in the first half of 2014 compared to the first half of 2013 (86 604 to 87 417).

Indigenous student numbers

12. Students who self identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comprised 1.1 per cent of all enrolments in the first half of 2014 (up 9.0 per cent to 12 730 students) and 1.2 per cent of commencements (up 6.5 per cent to 5 050).
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 15.0 per cent to 199 students), while *Management and Commerce* increased by 13.7 per cent to 1 333 students.

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 HESA Act 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 institution; and is able to be counted as a credit towards some award course at the higher education institution 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* (4 117 students, or 32.3 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by *Health* (2 641 students or 20.7 per cent); and *Education* (2 187 students or 17.2 per cent).

National priority areas and courses of special interest

15. Commencements in priority area courses in the first half of 2014 increased in courses for initial registration as nurses (up 6.0 per cent to 17 581 students); courses leading to registration as a medical practitioner (up 3.4 per cent to 3 718 students); courses in clinical psychology (up 2.8 per cent to 870 students); courses providing initial teacher training (up 2.2 per cent to 26 291 students); and courses leading to registration as a dental practitioner (up 0.4 per cent to 670 students).
16. In the first half of 2014, there was a decrease in commencing students undertaking courses leading to registration as a veterinary practitioner (down 10.6 per cent to 609 students).

Low socioeconomic status^{3 4}

17. Low SES commencing students in the first half of 2014 increased by 5.6 per cent compared to the same period in 2013 (from 52 080 or 16.9 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students to 55 015 or 17.2 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students), while all low SES students increased by 5.0 per cent (from 138 470 to 145 452 students).

Regional and remote^{3 5}

18. Commencing students in regional areas in the first half of 2014 increased by 6.2 per cent compared to the same period in 2013 (from 60 856 to 64 635 students), while commencing students in remote areas increased by 9.9 per cent to 2 923 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 2014 compared to the same period in 2013, with *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* (up 117.5 per cent); *Mixed Field Programs* (up 18.4 per cent); *Information Technology* (up 14.1 per cent); *Non-award courses* (up 11.8 per cent); *Health* (up 5.9 per cent); *Education* (up 4.8 per cent); *Management and Commerce* (up 4.1 per cent); *Engineering and Related Technologies* (up 4.0 per cent); *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 3.1 per cent); and *Society and Culture* (up 2.8 per cent). Decreases were recorded for *Creative Arts* (down 0.1 per cent); *Architecture and Building* (down 0.9 per cent); and *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* (down 9.6 per cent).
20. The largest increase in overseas student numbers was in *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* with commencements up 84.2 per cent to 105 students and all enrolments up 137.3 per cent to 420 students. *Management and Commerce* comprised around half of all overseas commencements (40 887 out of 87 966) as well as nearly half of all overseas enrolments (130 442 students out of 271 494).

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 2011 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 the Department over many years.

⁵ Regional and remote categories are derived from 2011 ASGS classifications.