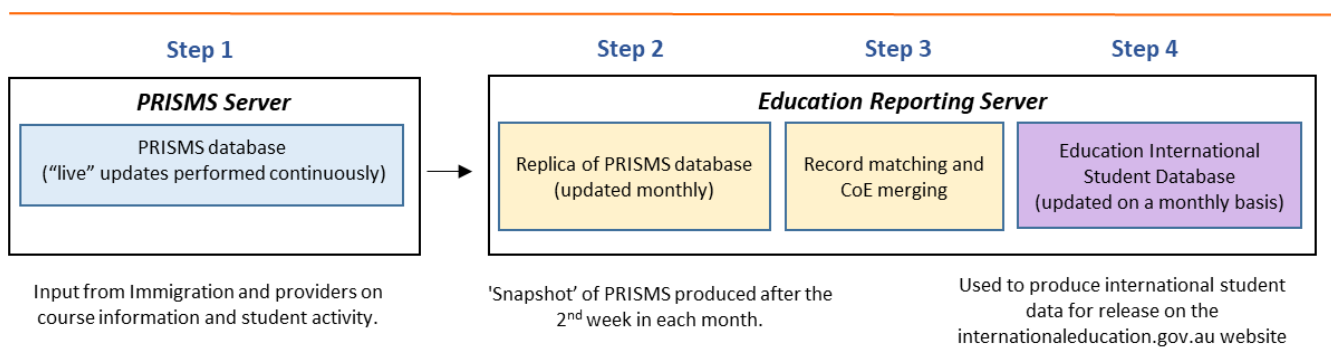**Australian Government**
Department of Education

Production of International Student Data—Explanatory Note

This explanatory note provides information about the derivation of the Department of Education's monthly and annual data on international student enrolments and commencements (for students studying on a student visa). The international student data are derived from the department's Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) database and are based on the student's confirmation of enrolments (CoEs). They include student enrolment data from the approximately 2,200 providers registered on the Commonwealth Register for Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to teach students on a student visa in any sector (higher education; vocational education and training (VET); schools; English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS); and non-award).

There are four main steps involved in converting the information held on PRISMS into department's international student data. These steps are summarised in the following diagram and explained in more detail below.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
PRISMS Server	**Education Reporting Server**		
PRISMS database ("live" updates performed continuously)	Replica of PRISMS database (updated monthly)	Record matching and CoE merging	Education International Student Database (updated on a monthly basis)
Input from Immigration and providers on course information and student activity.	'Snapshot' of PRISMS produced after the 2nd week in each month.		Used to produce international student data for release on the internationaleducation.gov.au website

Step 1   Every time an international student is enrolled in a CRICOS registered course to study in Australia, a CoE is generated by the relevant education and training institution (provider) on the PRISMS database. Statutory regulations require that CoE information is always up-to-date and reflects the correct status of the student. Updates to this information can be made by providers, the Department of Education or the Department of Home Affairs (Immigration). Updates by providers must be made every time the student's enrolment details change—for example, where the student changes their course. This information uploaded to PRISMS in real time. Updates generated by Immigration include the granting of a new visa against a CoE or when the student leaves the country. The Immigration system updates PRISMS with these amendments every 24 hours.

Step 2   Education produces a snapshot of the PRISMS database two weeks after the end of the reference month. This process replicates PRISMS, effectively 'freezing' the data at that particular point in time.

Step 3   The snapshot file produced in Step 2 is transferred to the Education reporting server. A process of matching student enrolment records* and new CoE information is undertaken to ensure that the latest student enrolment data are on Education's international student database. This process can take up to two weeks. Only information on enrolments of students who have *started studying and completed at least 10% of their course* is included in Education's international student data.

Step 4   Once the data are confirmed as complete, Education produces a new set of current year monthly files which include the latest month's data and any revised data for earlier periods. From these, Education produces a standard set of tables and a summary analysis incorporating the latest monthly data. Detailed data on *Excel* Pivot tables are also produced. All these products are made available on the department's website after the data are cleared for release by the Minister for Education. This usually occurs between four to six weeks after the end of the reference month.

> Note: As PRISMS is a "live" database, it is not uncommon for the data to change from month to month—providers are required to report any changes to a student's enrolment within a required timeframe under section 19 of the ESOS Act. It should also be noted that the information retrieved by Education from the PRISMS database is still protected by privacy laws. Information on individual providers or students is not publicly available.

* For further details on the record matching process of PRISMS records and CoE information, see the 'Counting Methodology' section of the *Explanatory Notes for the international student data* collection at https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Pages/ExplanatoryNotesforStudentEnrolmentData.aspx#4.

International student data is available at: https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/international-student-data/pages/default.aspx.

For further information about this explanatory note contact the International Research and Analysis Unit by email IEResearch@education.gov.au.

The Research Snapshot series can be accessed from https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/research-snapshots/pages/default.aspx