



## International education data sources in 2020

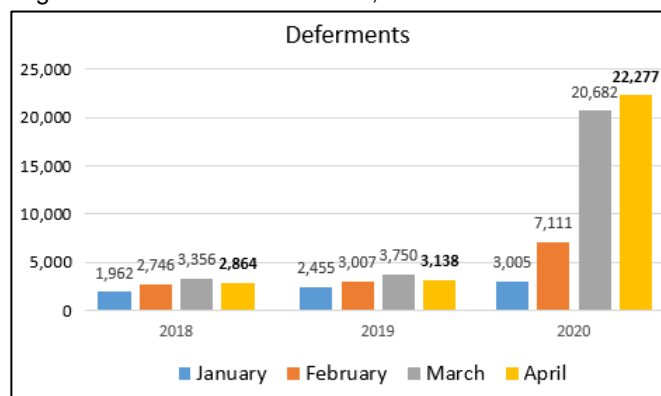
The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has had a substantial impact on Australia's international education sector. A range of new and existing data sources are available to quantify and monitor that unfolding impact, as summarised below.

### International student deferments

As detailed in a recent [Research Snapshot](#), there has been an rise in student deferments in 2020, involving either a delayed commencement or temporary suspension of an existing enrolment. The effect of these deferments is apparent in the April 2020 enrolment data where the year-to-date counts of enrolments are slightly lower in the some sectors than the year-to-date March 2020 counts.

As shown in Figure 1, for the year-to-date April 2020 deferments (53,075) were 40,725 higher than for the same period in 2019 (12,350).

Figure 1: Enrolment deferments, all sectors



### Student visa holders

International student enrolment data includes location information, but this only relates to location of study and hence only identifies the location of a student's education provider. In 2020, the Department of Home Affairs has been providing regular updates about student visa holders both in and outside Australia, which reflects the impact of travel restrictions on student mobility in 2020. This data was detailed in an earlier [Research Snapshot](#), with explanatory notes emphasising that not all visa holders are necessarily enrolled students (though most are). On 31 May 2020, 20 per cent (121,472) of all primary student visa holders (606,485) were outside Australia<sup>1</sup>.

### International student arrivals in 2020

In 2020, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has provided unprecedented details on student visa holder arrivals from its Overseas Arrivals and Departures (OAD) data collection, which quantifies the impact of 2020 travel restrictions. Following the 12 May 2020 release of the ABS March 2020 OAD data<sup>2</sup>, the ABS provided additional detailed tables student visa holder arrivals to Australia [here](#), including visa sub-class and state/territory breakdowns. In the first quarter of 2020 there were 21 per cent less total arrivals than in the first quarter of 2019. This incorporated 48 per cent less arrivals from China, while for the rest of the world excluding China there were just 3 per cent less arrivals. The ABS will continue to make this data available on a monthly basis in 2020.

### Export income from international education

In 2020, the ABS is focused on a detailed analysis of trade data in the 2019-20 financial year, which will capture the early impact of COVID-19 on the economy. As a consequence, there will only be a limited release of data for the 2019 calendar year. At this time, the only data available on export income arising from education services to international students is a value of \$40.366 billion in 2019, a 14 per cent increase on 2018<sup>3</sup>. Unlike previous years, the data will not be available for states/territories in 2019, but such breakdowns will again be available in subsequent releases. As shown in Table 1, an ABS May 2020 data release also included a preliminary estimate of education export earnings in the first quarter of 2020 (\$10.582 billion), which was 0.4 per cent higher than in the first quarter of 2019. This figure estimates the contribution of international students in Australia only.

Table 1: Education-related personal travel (ABS data)

Quarter	\$ million	
Jan - March 2019	10,540	
April - June 2019	9,076	2019 total
July - Sept 2019	10,317	40,336
Oct - Dec 2019	10,403	
Jan - March 2020	10,582	

1. The statistic used here is primary student visa holders excluding the Foreign Affairs and Defence visa sub-class. This definition gives the closest match to international students counted in monthly enrolment data. On 31 May 2020, there were a total of 689,976 student visa holders and 19 per cent (129,877) were outside Australia.  
 2. <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3401.0Main+Features1Mar%202020?OpenDocument>  
 3. 5368.0 International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia, March 2020 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5368.0?OpenDocument>  
 For more information, visit <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/international-student-data/pages/default.aspx> or contact [IEResearch@dese.gov.au](mailto:IEResearch@dese.gov.au).