



Visa grants for international students studying ELICOS

Student visa data provides a useful indicator of likely future international student enrolment trends in different education sectors. Prior to 2018, the only visa data available on the ELICOS sector was for the Independent ELICOS visa class, which only represented students studying an ELICOS course with no intention of doing further study in Australia. The larger number of students doing an ELICOS course as part of a pre-defined study pathway were generally studying on a different visa sub-class corresponding to the end-point of their study pathway. For example, a student intending to undertake an ELICOS course prior to commencing higher education is generally granted a higher education visa.

In 2018, it became possible to identify any student visa grantee intending to study ELICOS either independently or as part of a study pathway from PRISMS data system. The Department of Home Affairs agreed that the Department of Education and Training should release this data publicly and it is anticipated the data will be released in detailed tables biannually covering the period January to June and subsequently July to December. This Research Snapshot summarises findings for 2018. A detailed table of this data by source country and period is available [here](#).

Table 1: Summary of 2018 student visa grants to international students intending to do an ELICOS course

2018	Total ELICOS	% change from 2017	Independent ELICOS	% change from 2017	Pathway ELICOS	% change from 2017
January-June	40,952	0.1%	17,883	-10%	23,069	9%
July-December	44,901	0.8%	18,612	3%	26,289	-1%
Full year	85,853	0.5%	36,495	-4%	49,358	4%

This analysis relies on a number of assumptions to generate the data and should be considered as indicative only. Nonetheless, it is encouraging to note that the growth rate in total visa grants associated with an ELICOS course in 2018 (0.5%) from Table 1 closely corresponds to the growth rate in ELICOS enrolments in 2018 (0.8%), as captured in the Department of Education and Training's published data on international student enrolments in Australia¹.

Analysis of the visa grants data by source country demonstrates that over 95% of grantees from China, India and Nepal intended to study ELICOS as part of a study pathway. Reference to the department's data on established study pathways² allows some insight into the pathways future students are likely to follow. For example, of those students who studied their first-ever ELICOS course in 2017:

- 81 per cent of Chinese students either went straight onto higher education (68%) or did so via a non-award foundation course (13%);
- 84 per cent of Indian students went straight on to a higher education course, with few choosing to proceed through a foundation course; and
- 70 per cent of Nepalese students went straight on to a higher education course, with few choosing to proceed through a foundation course, while 19 per cent went straight on to a VET course.

¹ <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/international-student-data/pages/default.aspx>

² <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/DataVisualisations/Pages/pathways.aspx>