

International students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Australian higher education institutions

This snapshot provides an overview of international student enrolments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses in higher education institutions in Australia in 2015.

Of all international student enrolments in Australia, 42.3% were in higher education sector in 2015, and of those, 71,951 or 26.5% were enrolments in STEM courses¹. More than half (53.5%) of international postgraduate research enrolments in 2015 were in STEM related courses (Table 1).

Figure 1 shows the growth in international postgraduate research enrolments in STEM courses since 2002 which saw an average annual growth rate of 11.8% per year up to 2015. Postgraduate research enrolments in STEM fields surpassed those in other fields of study in 2009. In 2015 enrolments in STEM courses topped at 10,138 a 2.8% growth on 2014 (9,859).

In 2015, China contributed the largest proportion (27.7%) of postgraduate research enrolments in STEM courses. The next largest source countries were Iran (8.2%), India (6.4%) and Bangladesh (5.0%).

Almost a third (31.7%) of all postgraduate research students at Australian higher education institutions in 2015 were international students². Even higher proportions were in STEM fields, including Engineering and Related Technologies (53.0%), Information Technology (51.0%) and Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies (46.9%) (Table1, far right column).

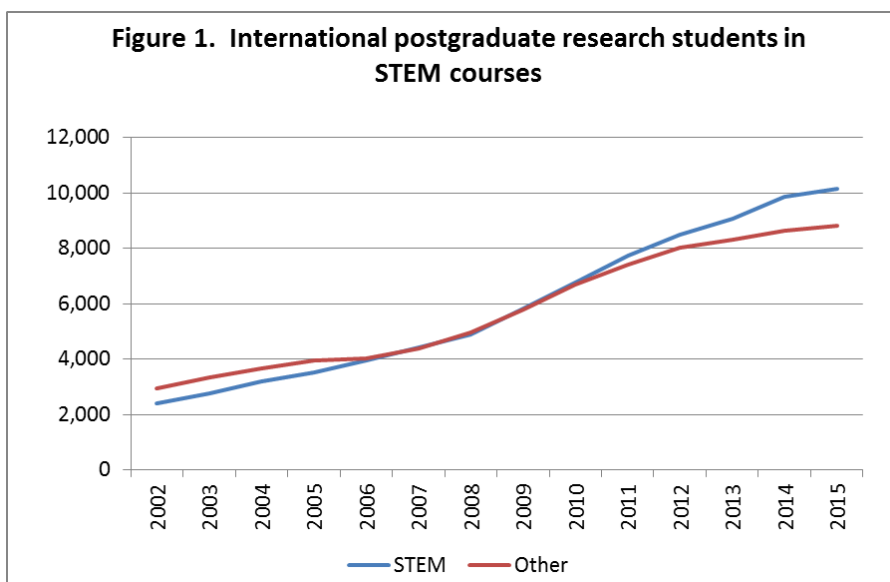


Table 1. International student enrolments in Higher Education: STEM Fields by Level of Study, 2015

Broad Field Of Education	International students ¹				International student proportion of total students in post-graduate research ²
	Under-graduate	Post-graduate (Research)	Post-graduate (Other)	Total (Higher Education)	
Engineering & Related Technologies	16,518	4,414	9,365	30,297	53.0%
Information Technology	9,777	743	13,307	23,827	51.0%
Agriculture, Environmental & Related Studies	1,506	619	956	3,081	46.9%
Natural and Physical Sciences ³	8,093	4,143	1,984	14,220	39.1%
Mathematics related ⁴	118	219	189	526	37.6%
All other broad field of education	111,181	8,819	79,767	199,767	21.6%
Total (Higher Education)	147,193	18,957	105,568	271,718	31.7%

¹ International student enrolment data is available at the Department of education and Training's website at: <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/international-student-data/pages/default.aspx>.

² Sourced from unpublished *Student 2015 Full Year data: Selected Higher Education Statistics* from the University Statistics Unit at: university-statistics@education.gov.au

³ Excludes Mathematics related.

⁴ A sub-category of 'Natural and Physical Sciences' and comprises Mathematical Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics.