



International student numbers 2015

This snapshot provides an overview of the number of international students¹ studying in Australia on a student visa in 2015. The department's monthly international student data records student 'enrolment' and 'commencement' numbers rather than actual student numbers. This approach avoids double counting students who follow study pathways, for example enrolling in English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and then a higher education course in the same year. However, at the completion of a calendar year, it is possible to reconcile enrolments data to calculate the number of students who studied in Australia over the year.

There were 498,155 international students studying on a student visa in Australia in 2015. This represents a 10.0 per cent increase over 2014 figures.

Students from China contributed 27.3 per cent of all international students in Australia, the highest of any nationality. India was second, contributing 10.8 per cent. Nationalities in the top ten countries (Table 2.) together contributed just over two thirds (66.2%) of total international student numbers. Of these top ten, seven countries had more students in the higher education sector than any other. The exceptions were the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Brazil which had larger share of students in vocational education and training (VET) than in higher education. Brazil had a larger proportion of students in ELICOS in 2015, the second highest student numbers in ELICOS sector after China.

Table 2 shows there were slightly more international male students to females at 52.5 per cent and 47.5 per cent respectively, across all nationalities in 2015. However, the gender distribution varied with student nationality. Seven out of ten (71.5%) students from India were male. In contrast, almost two in three (65.1%) students from Thailand were female.

The most common age range of international students in 2015 was between 20 and 24 years (43.0%) while 6.0 per cent were 35 years and over and 3.7 per cent were under 18 years. Students in the VET sector tended to be slightly older, where 33.3 per cent were aged 25 to 29 years. Students in the schools sector were commonly younger with 67.4 per cent under 18 years of age. Students in the higher education, ELICOS and non-award sectors were mostly aged between 20 and 24 years (50.9%, 40.4% and 64.1% respectively).

Table 2. International Student Numbers, 2015

Top 10 Nationalities	2014	2015	Change	Nationality proportion	Age group (years)							Gender Distribution	
					<18	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	≥ 35	Total	Female	Male
China	120,094	136,097	13.3%	27.3%	9,365	16,993	72,170	33,127	3,564	878	136,097	52.6%	47.4%
India	46,299	53,568	15.7%	10.8%	166	3,161	24,814	18,417	5,475	1,535	53,568	28.5%	71.5%
Vietnam	21,983	21,807	-0.8%	4.4%	1,425	2,950	10,325	4,829	1,569	709	21,807	55.0%	45.0%
Republic of Korea	20,140	20,790	3.2%	4.2%	1,128	786	5,414	6,020	4,545	2,897	20,790	49.8%	50.3%
Malaysia	19,136	20,641	7.9%	4.1%	374	2,116	11,706	3,409	1,547	1,489	20,641	49.0%	51.0%
Brazil	14,968	17,267	15.4%	3.5%	276	480	6,158	5,813	3,141	1,399	17,267	47.5%	52.5%
Thailand	16,100	17,245	7.1%	3.5%	348	611	3,901	5,822	3,930	2,633	17,245	65.1%	34.9%
Nepal	13,444	15,219	13.2%	3.1%	15	961	6,624	5,315	1,804	500	15,219	38.8%	61.2%
Indonesia	13,710	14,189	3.5%	2.8%	410	2,564	6,663	2,465	1,101	986	14,189	48.1%	51.8%
Hong Kong	11,745	12,864	9.5%	2.6%	768	1,942	6,618	2,238	797	501	12,864	46.8%	53.2%
Other nationalities	155,331	168,468	8.5%	33.8%	4,111	8,159	59,892	51,916	28,171	16,219	168,468	46.8%	53.2%
Grand Total	452,950	498,155	10.0%	100.0%	18,386	40,723	214,285	139,371	55,644	29,746	498,155	47.5%	52.5%

Note: Highlighted cells indicate the largest shares within 'age group' and 'gender'

¹ The numbers of international students in Australia on a student visa were derived from the Department of Education and Training's enrolment data by matching a number of different variables such as date of birth and gender.