



## Outgoing international mobility of Australian university students

A recent Australian universities survey found that in 2012, 13.1% of completing Australian undergraduate students enrolled onshore in Australian universities had undertaken an international study experience during their course, up from 12.3% in the previous year<sup>1</sup>. An equivalent figure for US undergraduates studying abroad in 2011-12 was 14.2%<sup>2</sup>.

In 2012, a total of 24,763 international study experiences at all levels were reported by the 38 universities that participated in the survey (Table 1). This was an 18.4% increase on the number of experiences reported by 36 universities in 2011. This statistic counts all international study experiences regardless of duration. The majority (66.4%) of study experiences in 2012 were of less than one semester in duration<sup>3</sup>. In 2005, only 46.2% of recorded experiences were less than one semester in duration.

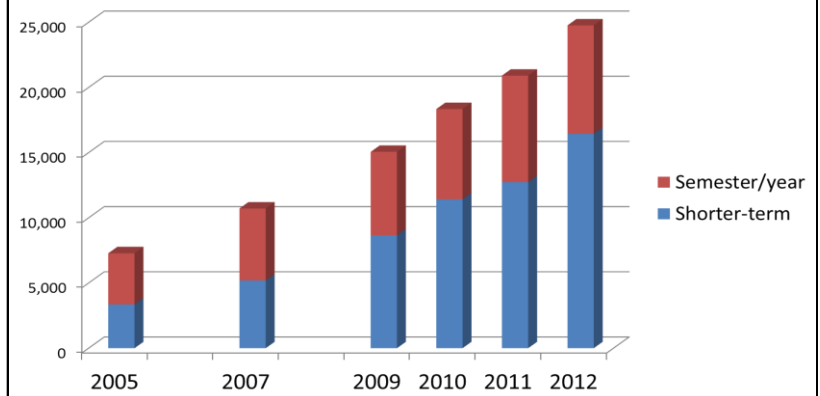
In 2012, the top four destination countries for Australian university students were USA, China, UK and Canada. Almost one in ten (8.9%) went to New Colombo Plan pilot countries in 2012 (Table 2). In 2012, Japan was the 8<sup>th</sup> most popular single destination country, Singapore was 14<sup>th</sup>, Indonesia was 15<sup>th</sup> and Hong Kong 17<sup>th</sup>.

The majority (74.1%) of international experiences were undertaken by undergraduates. Just 14.9% and 11.0% of international experiences were undertaken by postgraduate research and coursework students respectively in 2012. Of all international experiences, 92.8% were for credit. By field of education, students were most commonly enrolled in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (28.5%), then Health (17.5%), Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (17.9%), and Management and Commerce (14.0%)<sup>4</sup>.

The latest UNESCO data for 2011 show there were 10,234 Australian students enrolled in tertiary courses in other countries<sup>5</sup>. This is a decline of 1.1% on the previous year. This statistic only counts Australians enrolled in a course of more than 2 years duration in an offshore institution and does not include data from some significant study destinations, such as China and Singapore. It is assumed that these students mostly represent an additional cohort of Australians studying full award courses in foreign institutions who would not be counted by the AUIDF survey of Australian university students.

The Australian Higher Education Statistics Collection indicates that in the years 2011 and 2012, there were 580 and 493 Australian domestic students respectively enrolled at an offshore campus of an Australian higher education institution<sup>6</sup>.

Figure 1. Australian university students studying abroad for credit



Data for 2006 and 2008 are not available. Source (AUIDF)

Table 1. Australian university students abroad - by type, 2009 -2012

Type of experience	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exchange	6,073	6,696	7,703	7,813
Other Semester or Year Programs	329	228	473	513
Short Term Programs	4,450	5889	7,137	8,570
Placements or Practical Training	1,790	2,650	2,727	3,707
Research	2,283	2,309	2,448	3,868
Other	133	568	418	292
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,058</b>	<b>18,340</b>	<b>20,906</b>	<b>24,763</b>
Number of Universities reporting	36	37	36	38

Table 2. Australian university students abroad - by country, 2011 and 2012

Countries	2011	2011	2012	2012
Top 5 destinations	Number of experiences	% of all experiences	Number of experiences	% of all experiences
USA	3,159	15.3	3,672	15.5
China	2,009	9.7	2,145	9.1
UK	1,812	8.8	2,115	8.9
Canada	1,080	5.2	1,277	5.4
Italy	953	4.6	996	4.2
<b>New Colombo Plan pilot countries<sup>7</sup></b>				
Japan	555	2.7	835	3.5
Singapore	334	1.6	461	1.9
Indonesia	455	2.2	442	1.9
Hong Kong	378	1.8	384	1.6
Other	9,921	48.0	11,337	47.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,656*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23,664*</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Total of instances where destination was reported are less than the totals in table 1.

1. Olsen, A. (2013), 2013 Research Agenda: Australian Universities International Directors' Forum, available at <http://www.spre.com.au/download/AIEC2013AUIDFResearchPaper.pdf>. Data for earlier years has been drawn from previous iterations of this publication and journal article (Olsen, 2008, International mobility of Australian University students: 2005).

2. For more information, see <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors>

3. Estimated as the sum of 'Exchange' and 'Other Semester or Year Programs'.

4. Field of Education refers to students' major field of study in Australia and may not always reflect the area of study undertaken overseas.

5. UNESCO data used in this snapshot is from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/tableviewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143>. Students in countries which did not report to UNESCO are not included.

6. Higher Education Statistics available from [university.statistics@innovation.gov.au](mailto:university.statistics@innovation.gov.au) (Department of Education).

7. For more information on New Colombo Plan pilot countries, see <https://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/pilot-locations.html>

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