

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN AUSTRALIAN VET OFFSHORE

KEY FINDINGS FROM ONE LARGE TAFE PROVIDER

THEME 1: Complex context-specific factors determine which 'international' programs are offered offshore and who enrolls in them



Program characteristics - high-status, relatively expensive, in-demand, aligned to government priorities

Student characteristics - lower socio-economic group, aspirational, hard-working, international perspective



THEME 2: Students considered a range of factors during the decision-making process

1. Two-thirds enrolled because **the school or college recommended it.** 
2. **Key influencers are parent(s) or family members;** Information about the course; and Teachers/other staff the most influential factors in decision-making.
3. Students are most interested in information:
 - a. **costs** and affordability
 - a. **language** of instruction (i.e. English)
 - b. **outcomes** (i.e. employment)
 - c. **pathways** into higher level qualifications

Example 1:

"There are **two certificates** at the end. We are studying in this school, and our certificates are the same as those students who have been studying in Australia. So **it saves a lot of money.**

After we finish studying this course, if we want to choose some interconnected majors from Australia, **our course will give us some credit.**

There is certainly a difference. Two different education systems, so they are all different. For example, the things they teach, the way they teach, the way of thinking. **We have some advantage compared to other students in China** because we can get to know both sides.

The Chinese teachers teach us the foreign course, and the teacher has their own system. I felt that our course provides advantages compared to others after we studied this course."

THEME 3: Students anticipated benefits from completing their international VET qualification

Students perceive a range of benefits and advantages to participating in and completing an international program:

1. Graduate with **two qualifications** – one Australian and one from the local provider 
2. Opportunities to **improve English-language proficiency**
3. An international qualification creates a **point-of-difference** in an increasing competitive job market
4. Opportunities to learn about **foreign cultures** and international perspectives 
5. **Pathways to further education and training** at home and overseas
6. Learning through a **different and distinctive approach** to training
7. **Gain access to systems and technologies** not available in local alternatives 

THEME 4: Students had post-training plans that build on their international VET qualification

1. **Further education and training in China** focusing on pathways from diploma to Bachelor's degrees
2. Further education and training in Australia/overseas appears less common 
3. Students will usually recommend the course (but it depends on the student and family circumstances)
4. Almost two-thirds are likely or very likely to recommend an Australian VET provider 

Example 2:

"About the job opportunities, even without them saying anything, we knew that if we had received an education from a western institution, **we would have a head start over students who did not choose the mixed language course.**

The main reason for choosing this school, is because the school provides this major. The **major is very well regarded and will provide strong qualifications.** It provides a strong guarantee of finding a job, both in China and overseas."

Example 3:

"The main reason for choosing this school, is because the school provides this major. The major is very well regarded and will provide strong qualifications. It provides a strong guarantee of finding a job, both in China and overseas."