



Student visa grants trends in 2019

International student enrolment data in 2019 showed another year of steady growth (10%) for the sector. A recent release of visa grants data by the Department of Home Affairs provides some insight into expected trends for the 2020 academic year. The data only captures activity prior to the travel restrictions imposed on 1 February 2020 to constrain the novel coronavirus outbreak, but does offer a baseline picture of how 2020 might have unfolded under normal circumstances.

Below are student visas granted in the last six months of 2019, with both total and offshore grants. The latter reflects expected new students arriving from overseas, while the number of total grants also captures student visas granted to applicants who were already in Australia. Figures for the visa subclasses Independent ELICOS and Non-award do not reflect expected trends in the corresponding education sectors as most ELICOS and Foundation (non-award) students follow study pathways. For example, a student studying an ELICOS or Foundation course ahead of a higher education course is likely to have a higher education visa.

The grants data below anticipates sustained growth in international student enrolments in 2020, although numbers of new students arriving from overseas are constrained. Moderate declines in new students in higher education (including postgraduate research) and VET are anticipated, largely due to declines in new students from India and Nepal.

At this time, the outlook for Chinese students is unclear due to prevalent travel restrictions. The visa data from 2019 indicates no growth in new students, but growth in overall numbers was anticipated due to students who commenced in earlier years continuing their studies.

Total grants by student visa sub-class	July-Dec 2018	July-Dec 2019	Volume change	% change	Offshore grants by student visa sub-class	July-Dec 2018	July-Dec 2019	Volume change	% change
Higher education	83,391	86,517	3,126	4%	Higher education	56,206	54,424	-1,782	-3%
Independent ELICOS	18,379	20,010	1,631	9%	Independent ELICOS	14,525	15,381	856	6%
Non-award	8,223	8,888	665	8%	Non-award	8,022	8,733	711	9%
Postgraduate research	3,276	3,410	134	4%	Postgraduate research	2,205	2,025	-180	-8%
Schools	4,584	4,901	317	7%	Schools	4,019	4,138	119	3%
VET	41,963	47,119	5,156	12%	VET	14,371	9,849	-4,522	-31%
Grand Total	159,816	170,845	11,029	7%	Grand Total	99,348	94,550	-4,798	-5%

Total grants by top 10 nationalities	July-Dec 2018	July-Dec 2019	Volume change	% change	Offshore grants by top 10 nationalities	July-Dec 2018	July-Dec 2019	Volume change	% change
China	38,313	40,589	2,276	6%	China	25,500	25,470	-30	0%
India	24,698	25,904	1,206	5%	India	16,285	12,505	-3,780	-23%
Nepal	10,859	8,637	-2,222	-20%	USA	3,919	4,113	194	5%
Brazil	7,942	8,267	325	4%	Colombia	3,600	4,044	444	12%
Colombia	6,371	7,653	1,282	20%	Brazil	3,659	3,624	-35	-1%
Vietnam	4,714	5,616	902	19%	Vietnam	2,862	3,379	517	18%
Philippines	3,748	4,932	1,184	32%	Nepal	7,716	3,211	-4,505	-58%
Thailand	3,707	4,836	1,129	30%	Philippines	2,535	2,939	404	16%
South Korea	4,316	4,533	217	5%	Japan	2,501	2,300	-201	-8%
USA	4,322	4,501	179	4%	Thailand	1,636	2,229	593	36%
Rest of world	50,826	55,377	4,551	9%	Rest of world	29,135	30,736	1,601	5%
Grand Total	159,816	170,845	11,029	7%	Grand Total	99,348	94,550	-4,798	-5%

Source: Department of Home Affairs

Visa data gratefully sourced from the [Department of Home Affairs](#).

International student data for 2019 is available at: <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/international-student-data/pages/default.aspx>. For more information contact IEResearch@dese.gov.au.