



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.