

2007 Follow-up International Student Survey

Vocational Education and Training



Australian Government
Australian Education International

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About this report

In late 2005, Australian Education International commissioned research to assess the overall satisfaction of international students studying in Australia. The 2006 International Student Survey report prepared by Ipsos Australia Pty Ltd focussed on international students in their final year of study. The research included all four education sectors: higher education, Vocational Education and Training (VET), secondary school and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

This report, the *2007 Follow-up International Student Survey—Vocational Training and Education*, relates to employment and further education outcomes of international and Australian graduates (control group), a year after completing a course of study in a higher education institution in Australia in 2006. These graduates had also participated in the 2006 benchmark survey during the final year of their course.

About Australian Education International (AEI)

Australian Education International (AEI) is the international arm of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). AEI supports the development of a world class international education and training industry in Australia. For further information, please visit the website, www.deewr.gov.au or www.aei.gov.au. DEEWR/AEI owns exclusive usage rights to this study unless otherwise noted or agreed.

Ipsos Australia Pty Ltd

Ipsos Australia Pty Ltd is a public opinion, market and social research firm. The Ipsos research team included: Graeme Peacock, Stanislav Bondjakov, Preslav Bondjakov, Fiona Collis, Elishia Finger and Erik Okerstrom.

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Executive summary

In August 2005, Australian Education International (AEI) commissioned the International Student Survey (ISS). The first stage of the ISS, completed late in 2006, surveyed 14,946 international and Australian final year students who were completing a course of study in higher education institutions, in Vocational Education and Training (VET), in a secondary school or in an English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) institute in Australia. AEI published separate reports in September 2007 presenting detailed feedback from each of these four sectors and a consolidated report of overall key findings (The 2006 International Student Survey).

The 2006 International Student Survey aimed to obtain a comprehensive view of the expectations and experiences of international students in Australia. Australian students were also sampled in 2006 (and for this report), allowing comparisons to be made between international and Australian students.

This 2007 Follow-up International Student Survey—Vocational Education and Training, collected further information from 198 graduates of VET courses previously surveyed in 2006, being 130 international and 68 Australian graduates who had responded to the online or hard-copy self-completion questionnaire sent in August/September 2007. This represented an overall response rate of 13% of the 2006 VET respondents (11% for international and 23% for Australian respondents) of those who agreed to participate in the 2007 Follow-up Survey.

The 2007 Follow-up Survey aimed to measure whether students' attitudes to, and satisfaction with, Australian VET institutions has changed significantly over time, and to ascertain the extent to which their career or further education aspirations were being achieved following course completion.

The key findings of the 2007 Follow-up Survey are highlighted under the following headings.

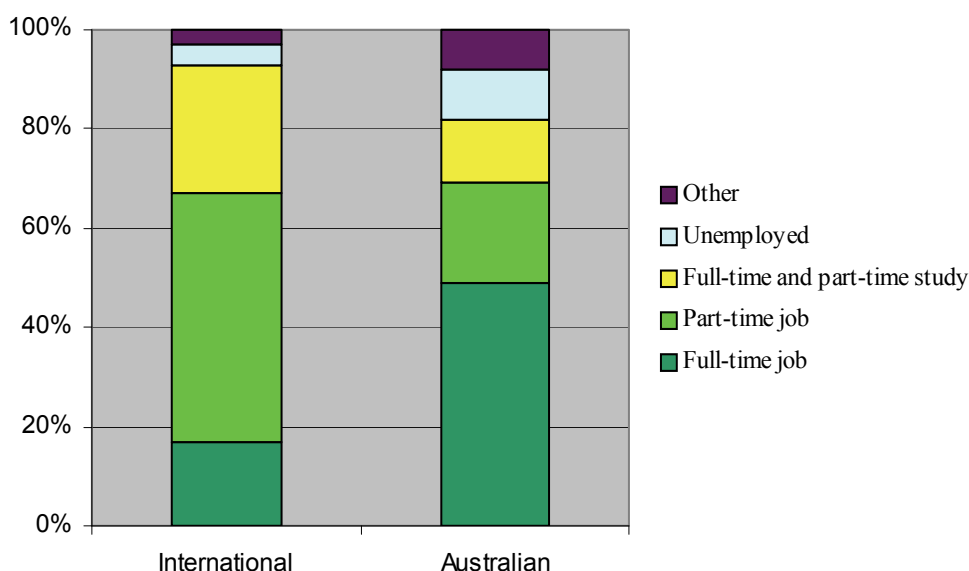
Outcomes

Overall employment and education outcomes (at August 2007)

- 17% of international, and 49% of Australian respondents, were working full-time or had accepted a full-time position; another 50% of international, and 20% of Australian respondents, had a part-time job.
- 84% of international and 100% of Australian respondents, with a full or part-time job were working in Australia.
- 26% of international, compared with 13% Australian respondents, were undertaking further study, either full-time or part-time, and not seeking immediate employment.
- Only 4% of international and 10% of Australian respondents reported being unemployed and actively seeking a job.

- Overlaying the above breakdown, many international respondents were both studying and working. The proportion of all respondents doing any further full or part-time study was 84% and almost all of them (95%) were studying in Australia.
- In 2006, the majority (73%) of international respondents indicated that their English language skills were up to the level required to undertake their studies. In 2007, the majority indicated that their English language skills were up to the level required to continue their studies or seek suitable employment (79% for written, and 83% for spoken English skills).

2007 respondents' employment and further education outcomes



Hours worked per week

On the average, employed international respondents were working 24 hours per week compared with 35 hours per week for the Australian respondents.

Their main paid job (held on 1 August 2007) met a lower proportion of international respondents' (50%) employment expectations when they finished their course compared to their Australian counterparts (61%).

Perceptions of study in Australia

Study satisfaction

Overall, a high proportion of international respondents expressed satisfaction with studying in Australia and with their course experience, although this reported satisfaction had declined slightly

since 2006. There was no significant difference in the reported satisfaction of Australian respondents between 2006 and 2007.

Perceptions of satisfaction with the quality of education changed minimally across both groups of respondents between 2006 and 2007. In 2007, 82% of international were satisfied, compared with 84% of Australian respondents.

The USA was perceived to offer better quality courses than Australia by 25% of international respondents (6% of Australians), while 22% of international respondents (7% of Australians) perceived the UK to offer better quality courses. Only 11% of international respondents perceived that their home country offers better courses than Australia and 38% indicated that their home country offers courses that are worse.

Willingness to recommend study in Australia

A high proportion of respondents indicated that they would continue to recommend studying in Australia, the course and the VET institution they attended, to family and friends.

88% of international and 90% of Australian respondents in 2007 indicated that they would recommend studying in Australia to their family and friends. However, the response rate for international respondents was significantly higher in 2006 (93%) than 2007.

70% of international respondents in 2007 were willing to recommend the course they completed, compared with 82% of Australian respondents.

80% of international respondents in 2007 indicated that they would recommend the VET institution they attended to family and friends, compared with 79% of Australian respondents.

Perceptions of living in Australia

Satisfaction with living in Australia

For international and Australian respondents, the level of satisfaction with living in Australia remains high. 83% of international respondents in 2007 were satisfied with living in Australia which was not significant from their reported satisfaction in 2006.

Making friends

Most international respondents reported that they kept in touch with other international students (88%), Australian students (75%) and with people they worked with (82%) while studying in Australia.

67% of international and 44% of Australian respondents were satisfied with being able to make close friends with each other.

Permanent residency

In 2007, 78% of international respondents either had applied for (30%) or planned to apply (48%) for permanent resident status in Australia.

Willingness to recommend living in Australia

87% of international respondents in 2007 would recommend living in Australia and the city they lived in to family and friends.

Conclusions

Former international VET students are generally satisfied with the experience of studying and living in Australia. One year after course completion, 67% of international respondents held full or part-time jobs. The majority (84%) of graduates who found employment did so in Australia and the majority (95%) of those enrolled in further study were studying in Australia. Seventy-eight per cent planned to be living in Australia in 12 months time, and the same percentage had, or planned to, apply for permanent resident status.

The levels of satisfaction with the overall VET experience were generally positive for international respondents, though not as high as their satisfaction with the experience of living in Australia. However, levels of satisfaction around education quality were stronger than those around employment outcomes.

In 2006, 37% of international respondents anticipated seeking a job on course completion. In 2007, 17% were working full-time and a further 50% were working part-time. At the same time, more respondents (64%) were undertaking further full-time study in 2007 than had anticipated doing so in 2006 (46%).

Both groups felt that the qualification from which they had graduated had prepared them well for further study. However, compared with the Australian respondents, significantly more international respondents reported finding it difficult to find the employment in Australia they were aspiring for. Although it cannot be deduced unequivocally from the data, it may be that the high rate of part-time work was a necessary option for international respondents due to their visa conditions on working 20 hours per week while studying.

The majority have found the general skills developed while studying to be important and useful; and the majority of those employed are satisfied with the industry and profession in which they are working. Most are advocates for studying in Australia, for the course they completed and the VET institutions they attended. Most feel that their international networks of contact have been extended.

A significantly higher proportion of international respondents (68%) reported dissatisfaction with the cost of Australian VET courses than Australian respondents (49%). Also, more than half of the international respondents were dissatisfied with the cost of living. More information provided

about the total cost of courses and of the cost of living in Australia, prior to enrolment, could help reduce the levels of dissatisfaction felt by future international students.

1. Research Background and Method

Australia is the world's fifth largest provider of education and training to international students (following the United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany and France¹). AEI commissioned Ipsos Australia Pty Ltd to conduct an International Student Survey to obtain a comprehensive, up-to-date measure of the experiences of international students in Australia and to ascertain their future career plans and aspirations.

The International Student Survey (ISS) research project involved two phases: a 2006 benchmark survey and a 2007 Follow-up Survey. The first phase, completed late 2006, surveyed 14,946 international and Australian (control group) final year students who were completing a course of study in higher education, Vocational Education and Training (VET), secondary school or in an English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) institute in Australia. AEI published separate reports² presenting detailed feedback from each of these four sectors and a Consolidated Report which presented the key findings.

The 2006 benchmark survey aimed to obtain a comprehensive, up-to-date measure of the experience of international students in Australia, and factors that influenced their decision to study in Australia, prior to their arrival. Topics explored included their pre-arrival experiences of their choice to study in Australia; their level of satisfaction with their education; pastoral and support services; social integration and overall satisfaction with their stay in Australia; and their aspirations upon course completion concerning their future career plans in terms of employment, further education or some other activity. Australian higher education and VET students were also sampled as a control group in 2006 (and in the follow-up report), allowing valid comparisons to be made between the groups.

The main objectives for the 2007 Follow-up Survey were to:

- examine employment and/or further education outcomes of 2006 benchmark survey respondents after course completion
- examine, in retrospect, international students' level of satisfaction with studying, and living in Australia during their studies and compare with the 2006 benchmark survey, and
- ascertain the future career plans and aspirations of international respondents post the 2007 Follow-up Survey.

¹ Source UNESCO Institute for Statistics – *Global Education Digest 2007: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World* at http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2007/EN_web2.pdf

² These reports published by Australian Education International were: *2006 International Student Survey - Higher Education Summary Report, September 2007*; *2006 International Student Survey - Vocational Education and Training Summary Report, September 2007*; *2006 International Student Survey - Final Year Secondary School Students Summary Report, September 2007*; *2006 International Student Survey - English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students Summary Report, September 2007*; *2006 International Student Survey - Report of the consolidated results from the four education sectors in Australia, September 2007*, and *2006 International Student Survey - Sector Executive Summaries, September 2007*.

This report focuses on the VET graduates only; feedback from the higher education graduates is presented in the 2007 Follow-up International Student Survey—Higher Education available through AEI.

This report details the findings regarding the experiences of international and Australian graduate (control group) respondents who completed a course of study in a VET institution in Australia in 2006 and participated in the 2006 benchmark survey.

The data contained in this document has been reported at the national level.

1.1. Quantitative research

In 2007 a self-completion survey instrument (Appendix A) designed for mail and online administration was distributed to two groups of VET graduates: international graduates and a sample of Australian graduates acting as a control group. The survey consisted of one questionnaire, with appropriate skips for each respondent group. The questionnaire consisted of 25 multi-part questions and took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

1.1.1. Comparative data

One of the main objectives of the 2007 Follow-up Survey was to compare key measures with the 2006 benchmark survey, and thus, where appropriate, comparisons have been made between the two survey periods. In order to make valid comparisons, the 2006 benchmark survey data was based on those participants who responded to the 2007 Follow-up Survey (referred to in this report as ‘2006 respondents’ or ‘2006 respondents participated in 2007’).

Tests of statistical significance were applied to the 2006 and 2007 data to highlight differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between the two groups. Throughout this report, the term ‘significant’ has been used to refer only to statistically significant differences.

1.1.2. Response rate

As highlighted in Table 1, all respondents to the 2006 benchmark survey who provided their contact details for the 2007 Follow-up Survey were contacted -1,504 respondents (1,193 international and 311 Australian). A total of 494 respondents updated their contact details (349 international and 145 Australian). Although 1,010 (844 international and 166 Australian) did not confirm their contact details, invitations were sent to all potential respondents, to obtain the highest sample size possible. Cash incentives were also offered to all participants to increase the response rate.

Of the 1,504 potential respondents, 32 dropped out of the survey and 37 did not complete the full survey.

An overall response rate of 13% was achieved, with a total of 1,472 eligible students invited, resulting in 198 responses. The response rate by respondent group was 11% for international and 23% for Australian respondents.

Table 1: Fieldwork analysis by respondent type

Respondent Type	Total Follow up invites sent	Total number of updated details	Total number of ineligible respondents	Total number dropped out midway	Total number completed
International respondents	1193	349	22	30	130
Australian respondents	311	145	10	7	68
Total	1504	494	32	37	198

As shown in Table 2, the majority (93%) of international respondents completed their degrees in 2006 in New South Wales (45%), Western Australia (19%), Victoria (18%) or Queensland (11%). Eight per cent completed their degrees in South Australia, Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. Significantly more international than Australian respondents completed their studies in Western Australia (19% vs. 6%). Significantly fewer international (11%) than Australian respondents (31%) completed their studies in Queensland.

Table 2: Survey responses by state/territory where degree completed in 2006

State/Territory	International respondents	Australian respondents
	n=130	n=68
NSW	45%	32%
WA	19% (a, b)	6%
VIC	18%	24%
QLD	11% (a, b)	31%
SA	2%	0%
ACT/TAS	6%	7%

ACT and TAS have been combined as individual state returns were too small to report separately.

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b)

As shown in Table 3, international respondents from 45 countries participated in the survey. The largest numbers of respondents came from China (19%), Indonesia (7%), Thailand (5%), Hong Kong (4%), Japan (4%) and South Korea (4%).

In terms of gender, 52% of the international respondents were female as were 75% of Australian respondents.

Table 3: Survey responses by home country—international respondents

Home country	International respondents n=129
China	19%
Indonesia	7%
Thailand	5%
Hong Kong	4%
Japan	4%
South Korea	4%
Other countries	57%

'Other countries' category includes 39 countries represented by 3% of respondents or less each, such as India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Sri Lanka, UK, and Italy.

1.2. Qualitative research: case studies

Case study research is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”³. It is an excellent way to bring researchers to an understanding of a complex issue or phenomenon, and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research⁴. In this context, the purpose of conducting case study research as part of this project was to provide an in-depth understanding of the attitudes and experiences of international and Australian respondents regarding both their study experiences in Australia and their lives following the completion of their course (with a particular emphasis on employment).

Four case studies of 2007 international and Australian respondents were conducted.

The key issues explored as part of the case study research included:

- former students’ overall satisfaction with their study experience

³ Yin, R.K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods* (1st ed.). Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publishing.

⁴ Soy, S. K. (1997). *The case study as a research method*. Unpublished paper, University of Texas at Austin. Downloaded from <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> on 13 March 2008.

- former students' satisfaction with particular aspects of their study experiences, including the quality of the university, university support services, social integration and social networks, clubs and societies, course content, quality of teaching, future career opportunities, holding a part-time job, and living arrangements
- how soon after graduation did former students return to their home country? For what reasons?
- how long did it take to find work following graduation? How did they find their job? Was finding a job easier or harder than they expected?
- did former students feel their job matched their course of study? Provide them with good pay? Job security? Opportunities for long term career progression? And are these the things they are seeking in their jobs?
- employer perceptions of Australian qualifications, relative to competing markets
- parents' perceptions of their child's study experience and future career opportunities
- plans for the future, and
- likelihood of recommending Australian education to others.

The case studies were prepared after four face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 2007 follow-up respondents:

- two case studies examined students from China, conducted in Australia as the majority of those surveyed in 2006 had not left, and
- two case studies examined Australian respondents.

Recruitment was conducted using participant lists generated from the 2006 benchmark survey. Potential participants were telephoned by researchers in the first instance, and if telephone details were unavailable or incorrect, potential participants were sent an email which outlined the purpose and scope of the case study research.

Ideally, it would have been desirable to interview more former VET students as part of the case study research. While researchers attempted to do so, the lists of VET students provided proved limiting.

Insights from the case study research are incorporated in the main body of this report, where appropriate.

The case studies are provided at Appendix C.

The 2007 Follow-up International Student Survey - VET was based on feedback from 198 graduates of VET courses completed in Australia in 2006. The total comprised 130 international and 68 Australian respondents who responded to the online or hard-copy self-completion survey sent to them in August/September 2007. Each respondent had previously participated in the 2006 benchmark survey.

This 'repeated measures' design, in which feedback was obtained approximately 12 months apart from the same respondents, was employed to measure whether students' attitudes to, and satisfaction with Australian education had changed significantly over time, as well as to ascertain the extent to which their future career plans or education aspirations were being achieved following graduation. More information was obtained through 4 in-depth case studies completed with two international and two Australian respondents.

2. Education and employment outcomes

Key findings

- In 2006, 37% of final year international respondents reported intending to find a job on course completion—by 1 August 2007, 17% achieved full-time employment, with a further 12% working part-time (and not studying full-time).
- In 2006, 46% of the final year international VET respondents planned to enrol in further studies following course completion, and by 1 August 2007, 64% were undertaking full-time study with another 5% in part-time study.
- In 2006, 52% of final year Australian respondents reported intending to find a job on graduation—by 1 August, 2007, 49% had gained full-time employment, with a further 5% working part-time (and not studying full-time).
- In 2006, 30% of the final year Australian respondents planned to enrol in further studies following course completion, and by 1 August 2007, 25% were undertaking full-time study, with another 11% studying part-time.
- The 2007 survey found 92% of the international respondents who continued further studies (69% of the total respondent group) did so in Australia. The same proportion of Australian respondents continued further studies (36% of the total respondent group).
- The majority (86%) of international respondents who completed a course in 2006 and enrolled in further studies in 2007 believe their Australian qualification has adequately prepared them for the course they were currently studying, slightly higher than those reported by Australian respondents (70%).
- Among those international respondents from 2006 who were working part-time or full-time on 1 August 2007, or have accepted full-time job offers (67% of the total respondent group), the majority (84%) found their jobs in Australia. All the Australian 2006 respondents who were employed on 1 August 2007, or who had accepted a full-time job offer (69% of the total respondent group), were working in Australia.
- Thirty-one per cent of international respondents who found jobs indicated it was very difficult or somewhat difficult to find this job, more than reported by their Australian counterparts (15%).
- The main difficulties faced by international respondents with regard to finding jobs included lack of work experience, English language barriers, visa conditions not allowing more than 20 hours work per week, and lack of permanent resident status.
- Just under half (47%) of international respondents who actively sought employment thought employers highly valued the course they studied in Australia. This perception was shared by 54% of the Australian respondents.

- One-third (32%) of the employed respondents found jobs in the hospitality industry (accommodation, cafes and restaurants), 13% in health and community services, 12% in retail trade, 12% in property services, 7% in manufacturing, and 22% in other areas such as personal services, utilities and education.
- The average number of hours per week for employed international respondents working in their main paid job was 24 hours, compared with 35 hours for employed Australian respondents.
- Sixty per cent of the employed international respondents reported working 20 hours or fewer in their main paid job each week, compared to 16% for the employed Australian respondents. Fifteen per cent of the international group and 35% of the Australian group report working 39 hours or more in an average week.
- The main paid job held on 1 August 2007 met the employment expectations of Australian respondents (61%) when they finished their course as it did 50% of their international counterparts. Conversely, international respondents (29%) were more likely to feel that their main job did not meet the expectations they had when they finished studying, compared with the Australian employed VET respondents (14%).
- Employed international respondents were only slightly less satisfied than the Australian respondents with the industry and profession in which they were now working; although at least three-quarters of both groups reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their current industry or profession (international—75% satisfied; 11% dissatisfied; Australian—79% satisfied; 7% dissatisfied; though both based on small sample sizes).

Respondents were asked to specify their position with regard to study and paid work as of 1 August 2007. As shown in Table 4, the majority (81%) of international respondents were either working or studying full-time, with 17% in full-time employment and 64% occupied with full-time study. Similarly, 49% of Australian respondents were engaged in full-time employment and 25% were in full-time study.

Table 4: Situation as at 1 August 2007

Situation as at 1 August 2007	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample
	n=130	n=68
Working full-time or had accepted full-time job offer	10% (a, b)	32%
Working full-time but seeking another job	6%	10%
Working full-time and studying part-time	1%	7%
Working part-time but seeking full-time work	6%	0%
Working part-time but not seeking full-time work	2%	4%
Not working but seeking full-time work only	2%	4%
Not working but seeking any work (full-time or part-time)	2%	6%
Studying full-time only	26% (a, b)	10%
Studying full-time and working part-time	38% (a, b)	15%
Studying part-time and working part-time	4%	1%
Studying part-time only	0%	3%
Other	3%	6%

Q7b As at 1 August 2007, which one of the following best describes your position with regard to study, paid work (including self-employment) or something else?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b)

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

2.1. Qualifications completed in 2006

Respondents were asked to indicate details about the qualifications they completed in Australia in 2006.

The majority of international respondents qualified in full for the award in which they were enrolled (85%), similar to Australian respondents (78%).

More international respondents studied at diploma or advanced diploma level in 2006 (62%), than did Australian respondents (52%). Twenty-six per cent of 2007 follow-up international respondents studied at certificate level, similar to Australian respondents (31%). Relatively low proportions of international (9%) and Australian (15%) respondents were studying at degree level in their respective VET institutions.

Forty-two per cent of international respondents studied in business studies fields such as accounting, finance and marketing, significantly more than Australian respondents (25%). Seventeen per cent of international and 25% of Australian respondents studied in information technology fields. Significantly more (28%) of international respondents studied in hospitality related areas such as hotel, tourism management, and cookery and food preparation courses, than the Australian respondents (15%).

Half of the international respondents (52%) indicated the qualification they completed in 2006 was recognised in their home country, while 14% said it was not recognised and 35% did not know.

Nearly half (48%) of international respondents believed the qualification they completed in 2006 would be recognised in overseas countries other than their home country, similar to Australian respondents (40%).

2.2. Path taken after completing 2006 studies

In the 2006 benchmark survey, respondents were asked about their educational and/or employment outcomes, as well as their intended path after completing their studies. In the 2007 Follow-up Survey, respondents were asked about the actual path they took immediately following their studies.

As shown in Table 5, while 37% of 2006 international respondents intended to find jobs following graduation, significantly fewer actually looked for and found jobs immediately following their studies (24%). In comparison, similar proportions of 2007 follow-up Australian respondents intended to find jobs in 2006 actually found jobs in 2007 (52% in 2006 vs. 41% in 2007).

Eight per cent of 2006 international respondents were still looking for jobs immediately after completing their studies, similar to Australian respondents (10%). Similar proportions of international respondents (45%) enrolled for further studies in 2007 compared with those who intended to do so 2006 (46%). Similarly, study intentions of Australian respondents were congruent with what they did in 2007, with 30% of the respondents intending to study and 29% actually enrolled.

Eight per cent of international and 4% of Australian respondents travelled or took extended time off in 2007.

Table 5: Path taken immediately after completing 2006 studies

Immediately after completing studies in 2006/7, next thing done	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=123	n=68	n=67
Enrolled for further studies	45% (a, c)	46%	29%	30%
Looked for and found a job in 2007 (follow-up survey)/ Intended to find a job in 2006 (2006 benchmark survey)	24% (a, b); (a, c)	37%	41%	52%
Travel/extended time off	8%	9%	4%	13%
Still looking for a job	8%	-	10%	-
No plans for the future	4%	2%	6%	1%
Continued working	3%	-	3%	-
Other	9%	7%	6%	3%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q4a Immediately after you completed your studies in Australia in 2006/7, what was the next thing you did?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q36a/Q30a Immediately after you complete your current course, what is the next thing you are most likely to do?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c)

2.2.1. Enrolled for further studies in 2007

As shown in Table 6, more than half (56%) of international respondents who enrolled for further studies in 2007 were enrolled at a university in Australia, more than the proportion of Australian respondents (45%). Over one-third (36%) of international respondents were enrolled at a VET college in Australia.

Similar proportions of international respondents who intended to study at the same institution in 2006 actually did so in 2007 (38% vs. 48%, respectively). This trend was consistent for Australian respondents—58% intended to study at the same institution in 2006, while 55% actually did so in 2007.

Similar proportions of international respondents who intended to study at a different institution in 2006 fulfilled their plans in 2007 (53% vs. 44%, respectively). This trend was consistent for Australian respondents—37% intended to study at a different institution in 2006, while 30% actually did so in 2007.

Forty-five per cent of international respondents indicated their major field of study, which they started subsequent to completion of their 2006 studies, was business studies related, including accounting, finance, marketing and management. One-fifth (19%) reported studying hospitality disciplines, while 12% were enrolled in information technology disciplines.

Forty-three per cent of international respondents were enrolled in a diploma course, while 41% had commenced a bachelor's degree. Sixteen per cent commenced other qualifications, including a masters degree, honours degree and graduate certificate.

Table 6: Place of enrolment for further studies

	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
Where enrolled for further studies	n=58	n=55	n=20	n=19
At the same university in Australia	22%	11%*	30%	21%*
At a different university in Australia	34%	-	15%	-
At the same VET/TAFE college in Australia	26%	27%	25%	37%
At a different VET/TAFE college in Australia	10%	-	15%	-
At a different institution in Australia (2006 only)	-	53%	-	37%
At another private/public institution in your home country (2007)/ In your home country (2006)	0%	2%	5%	-
At a university in another country overseas (2007)/ In another country overseas (2006)	3%	7%	5%	5%
Other	3%	0%	5%	0%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q4b Where did you enrol for further studies?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q36b/Q30b Where are you planning to enrol for further studies?

Percentages in each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*These percentages represent VET respondents who studied in a VET provider, which was part of a university

As shown in Table 7, the majority of international respondents were enrolled in institutions in New South Wales (28%), Western Australia (22%), Queensland (14%) or Victoria (10%). In comparison, the majority of Australian respondents were enrolled in institutions in Victoria (40%) or New South Wales (25%).

Table 7: Location of institution attended

Location of Institution	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample n=58	Follow-up sample n=20
NSW	28%	25%
WA	22%	0%
QLD	14%	10%
VIC	10%	40%
ACT/SA/TAS/NT	10%	15%
Institution located overseas	3%	5%
Unspecified location	10%	5%
Don't know	2%	0%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q5f What is the name of the institution you are, or will be attending?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b)

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

One half of international respondents (52%) who enrolled in further studies received a credit or advanced standing as a result of their Australian studies, while 26% did not. These results were similar for Australian respondents (55% and 20%, respectively).

The majority of international respondents (86%) believed their Australian qualification has adequately prepared them for the course they were currently studying, as did 70% of Australian respondents (70%).

2.3. Looked for and found a job in 2007

Respondents who looked for and found a job since completing their Australian studies were asked a range of questions including sources of information used, difficulties in finding work, perceived value of the course, extent to which their job meets employment expectations, and satisfaction with current industry and profession.

The majority of international respondents (84%) and all (100%) Australian respondents found their job in Australia.

International and Australian respondents were asked to indicate how they first found out about their job. As shown in Table 8, a third (34%) of international and 13% of Australian respondents indicated they first found out about their job through family and friends, while a fifth (20%) of international and 17% of Australian respondents first found about their job through an advertisement on the internet or on an online job board.

Just 13% of international and 15% of Australian respondents approached an employer directly, while 10% of international and 12% of Australian respondents found out through an advertisement in the newspaper or other printed media. The Australian respondents approached employment agencies more frequently (12%) than international respondents (4%). Similarly, more Australian (12%) than international respondents (5%) first found out about their job through work contacts or networks.

Table 8: Finding a job

How first found out about job	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample
	n=91	n=52
Family/friends	34%	13%
Advertisement on the internet/online job board	20%	17%
Approached employer directly	13%	15%
Advertisement in the newspaper or other print media	10%	12%
Work contacts/networks	5%	12%
Australian university, VET/TAFE college careers service	4%	13%
Employment agency	4%	12%
Approached by employer directly	3%	2%
Other university, VET/TAFE college source (e.g. lecturer, faculty)	2%	2%
Other	3%	2%

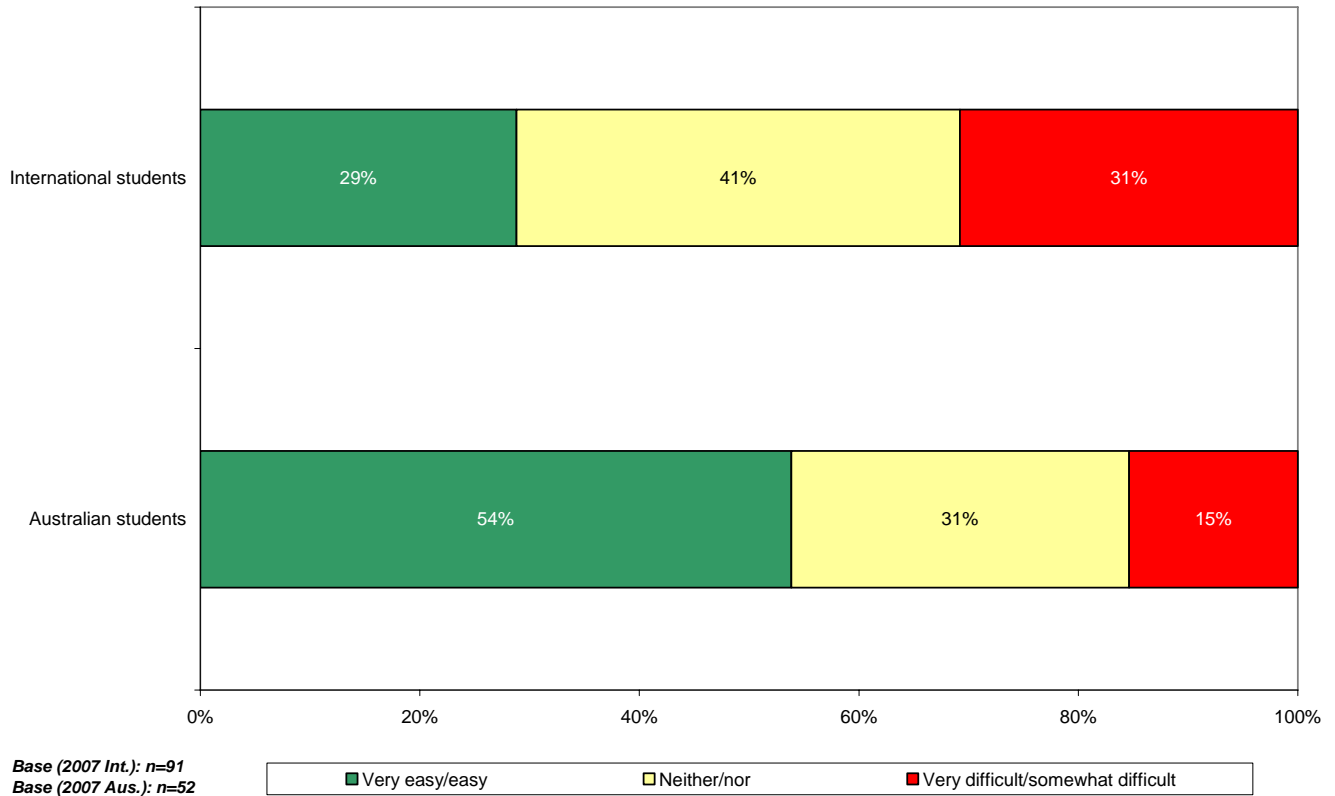
(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q8f Please indicate how you first found out about this job:

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Almost all international and Australian respondents used their college careers services as a source of information when they actively sought employment after completing their studies.

As shown in Figure 1, 31% of international respondents who found jobs indicated it was very difficult or difficult to find, more than their Australian counterparts (15%). The main difficulties faced by international respondents, included lack of work experience, English language barriers, visa conditions not allowing more than 20 hours of work per week, and lack of permanent resident status.

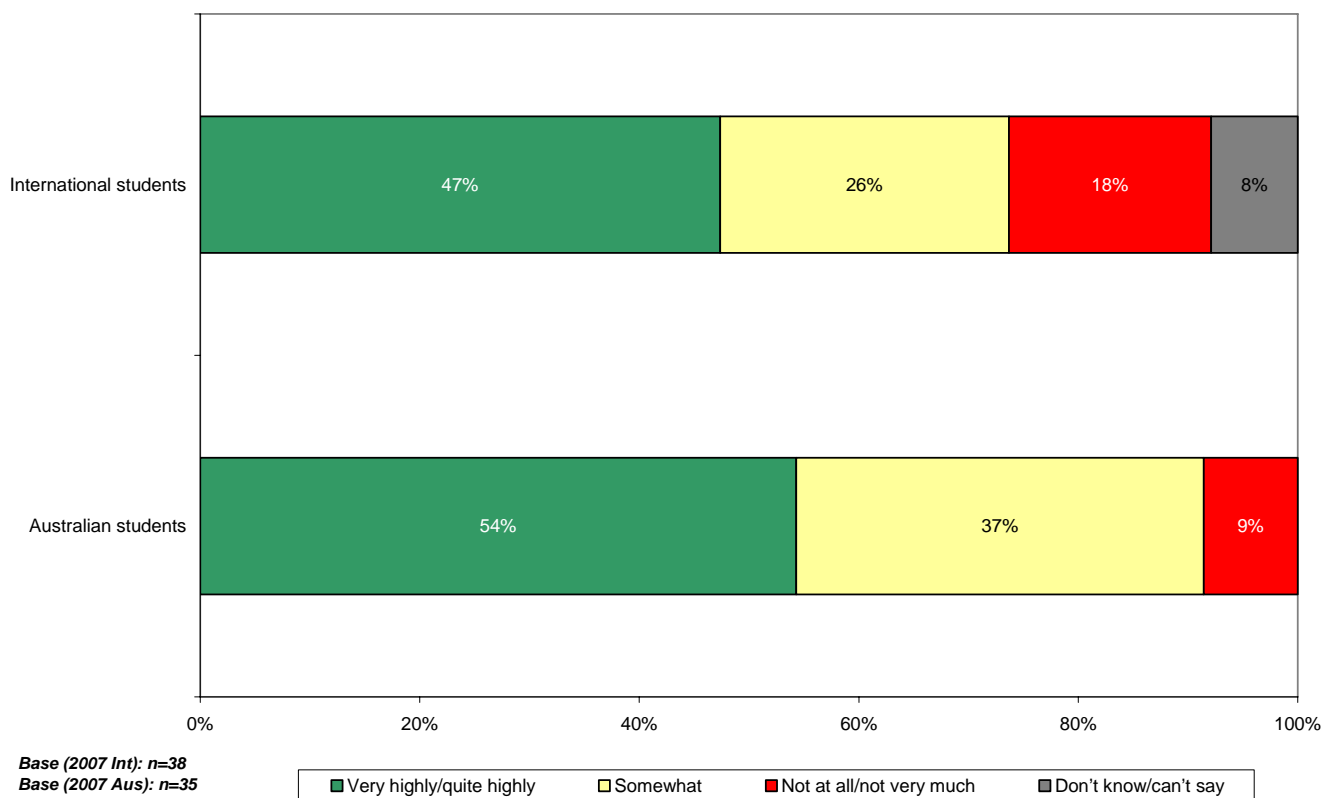
Figure 1: Ease of finding job



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q10 How difficult was it for you to find this job?
Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

International and Australian respondents in 2007 were asked to indicate the extent to which they think employers valued the Australian course they completed in 2006. As shown in Figure 2, nearly half of international (47%), and 54% of Australian respondents, who found jobs believed employers highly valued the Australian course they completed. However, 18% of international, and 9% of Australian respondents, believed employers did not value their course.

Figure 2: Employers' perception of Australian course value



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q6f In your experience, do you think employers value the course you studied in an Australian institution?

Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

As shown in Table 9, the majority of international respondents (79%) found jobs in the non-government sector, while 11% found employment in the government sector. Comparatively, fewer Australian respondents found jobs in the non-government sector (62%) and slightly more were employed in the government sector (19%).

Table 9: Type of employer

Is your employer in	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=91	n=39	n=52	n=32
Other Private Sector	54%	49%	38%	38%
Self-employed	21%	10%	17%	3%
Own/family business	-	15%	-	12%
Not for profit organisation	4%	-	6%	-
Total Non-Government	79%	74%	62%	53%
Government, Local	7%	-	2%	-
Government, State, Provincial	3%	-	12%	-
Government, Federal	1%	-	6%	-
Total Government	11%	18%	19%	9%
Other, not known	10%	8%	19%	38%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q8b Is your employer in:

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q36e/Q30f Once you graduate from your current course, where are you likely to work?

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Forty-four per cent of international respondents were employed on a casual basis, 35% were employed on a permanent basis (which was likely to be more than 12 months), and 20% were employed on a temporary basis (which was likely to be less than 12 months). More Australian respondents were employed on a permanent basis (75%), while fewer were in casual employment (12%).

International respondents found work in a variety of areas: one-third (32%) found a job in the hospitality industry (accommodation, cafes and restaurants), 13% in health and community services, 12% in retail trade, 12% in property services, 7% in manufacturing, and 22% in other areas such as personal services, utilities and education.

As shown in Table 10, international respondents reported that in their main job, they worked 24 hours on average, lower than their Australian counterparts (35 hours). The majority of international respondents (84%) indicated they worked in a part-time capacity, less than 39 hours per week. More Australian respondents reported working full-time than international respondents (35% vs. 15%, respectively).

Table 10: Hours work per week in main paid job

Hours worked in main job in an average week	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample
	n=91	n=52
10 hours or less per week	13%	8%
11 to 20 hours per week	47%	8%
21 to 30 hours per week	10%	13%
31 to 38 hours per week	14%	37%
39+ hours per week	15%	35%
Mean number of hours	24 hours	35 hours

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q8g How many hours do you/will you work in your main paid job in an average week?

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

As shown in Table 11, international respondents in 2007 reported receiving an average annual salary of \$15,300, considerably less than Australian respondents (\$29,300).

Table 11: Expected gross annual salary in main paid job

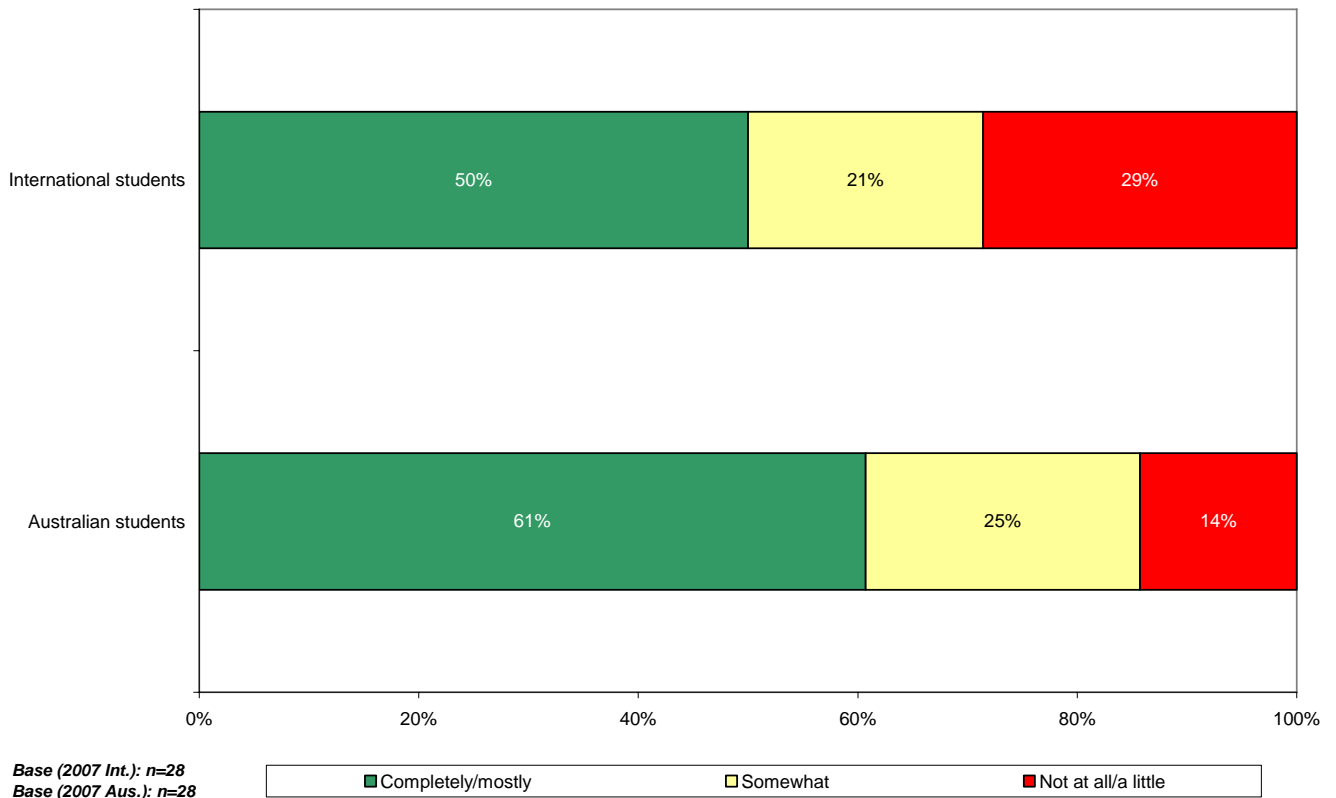
Gross annual salary in \$AUD	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample
	n=91	n=52
Less than \$5K	32%	17%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	11%	2%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	30%	13%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	10%	23%
\$30,001 - \$40,000	14%	25%
More than \$40K	3%	19%
Mean salary (\$)	\$15,300	\$29,300

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q8i What is/will be your gross (pre-tax) annual salary in \$AUD? (estimate will be sufficient)

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

As shown in Figure 3, 50% of international, and 61% of Australian respondents felt their job completely or mostly met their employment expectations when they finished their studies in 2006. More international (29%), than Australian respondents (14%), felt their job did not meet their employment expectations when they finished their studies in 2006.

Figure 3: Extent to which job meets employment expectations when finished 2006 studies

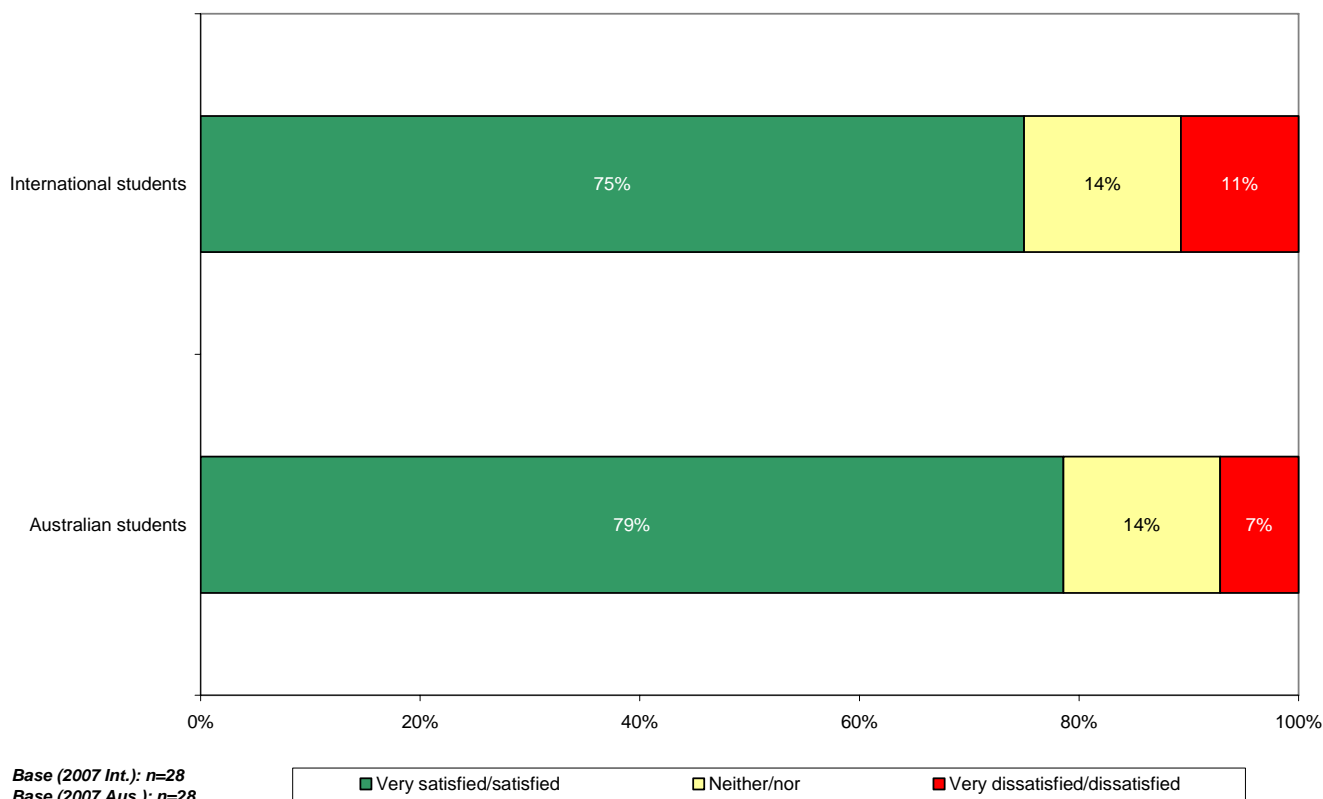


(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q9a To what extent does this job meet the employment expectations you had when you finished your course in Australia?

The main reasons offered by international and Australian respondents for their current job not meeting their expectations were lack of permanent resident status (international), lack of practical work experience, and the need to earn a living.

As shown in Figure 4, high proportions of international (75%) and Australian respondents (79%) were very satisfied or satisfied with the industry and profession in which they were currently working.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with industry and profession in which currently working



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q9c How satisfied are you with the industry and profession in which you are now working?

High proportions of international respondents (67%) indicated they would prefer employment with good job security, despite earning an average income, similar to Australian respondents (69%). One-third of international respondents (33%) indicated they would prefer a job with above average income but which may deliver little job security, similar to Australian respondents (31%).

High proportions of international and Australian respondents (72% and 72%) indicated they believe the course they studied has adequately prepared them for the work force.

International and Australian respondents who were working or studying full-time were asked to indicate the extent of ease in balancing their study or work commitments with their family and social life. As shown in Table 12, 34% of international and 41% of Australian respondents found it very easy or easy to balance their study or work commitments with family and social life, while 31% of international and 27% of Australian respondents found it very difficult or somewhat difficult to achieve this balance.

Table 12: Ease of balancing work/ and family/ social life

Ease of balancing work and family/ social life	International respondents	Australian respondents
	a	b
	2007	2007
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample
	n=105	n=51
Very easy/easy	34%	41%
Neither difficult nor easy	34%	31%
Very difficult/somewhat difficult	31%	27%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q7c Now that you are working full-time or studying full-time, how easy do you find it to balance your study or work commitments with your family and social life?

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Fewer international respondents were working than was their reported aspiration as 2006 respondents, and similar proportions were enrolled in further studies as they planned.

The majority of international respondents who enrolled for further studies in 2007 did so in an Australian institution—more than half attended a university, while just over one-third enrolled at a VET college. Almost equal proportions of international respondents were enrolled at the same Australian institution as were at a different institution, similar to their intentions in 2006.

The majority of international respondents enrolled in further studies believe their Australian qualification has adequately prepared them for the course they were currently studying, slightly higher than the finding reported by Australian respondents.

The majority of international and all Australian respondents found their job in Australia. Almost one-third of international respondents who were in employment found it difficult to find their job, fewer Australian graduates had the same experience. The main difficulties for international respondents, were lack of work experience, English language barriers, and visa conditions not allowing more than 20 hours of work per week during study.

International and Australian respondents who were working or studying full-time in 2007 were asked about the ease of balancing their study and work commitments with their family and social life. One-third of international and 41% of Australian respondents found this balance easy or very easy, while around one-third of both groups reported this balance to be somewhat or very difficult.

3. Study in Australia

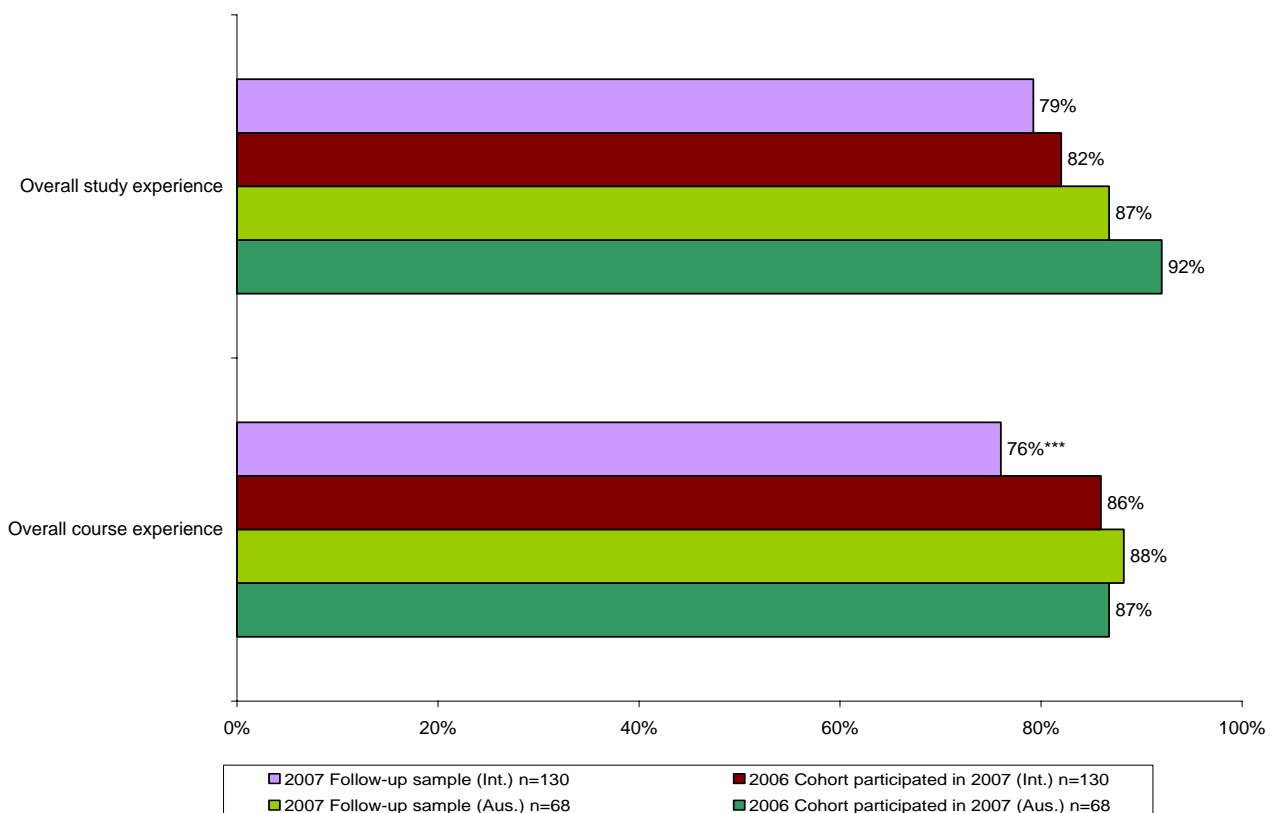
Key findings

- High proportions of international (88%) and Australian respondents (90%) indicated they would recommend studying in Australia to family and friends. In addition, 70% of international respondents were willing to recommend the course they completed, lower than the 80% in 2006, but not statistically significant. This compares to 82% of Australian respondents who reported they were willing to recommend their course, versus 84% in 2006.
- Eighty per cent of international respondents indicated they would recommend the VET college they attended to family and friends. This was 8% higher than 2006 (72%), albeit not statistically significant. Australian respondents recorded a slight decrease in 2007 of 3% to 79% saying they would recommend their VET college to family and friends.
- A high proportion of international and Australian respondents were satisfied with their study experience and overall course experience in Australia. The quality of education and course content were also rated as satisfactory by about 80% of international and Australian respondents.
- Satisfaction with the cost of Australian VET courses was generally an issue of concern. In 2007, international respondents were significantly less satisfied (32%) than Australian respondents (51%).
- Although it is still an issue of concern, there was a significant improvement in the proportion of VET respondents that were satisfied with getting work experience in their field of study between 2006 and 2007. More Australian respondents were satisfied with this aspect in 2007 (57%) compared with 2006 (38%) and significantly more international respondents (62%) were satisfied with their ability to get work in their field of study in 2007 compared to 44% in 2006.
- Overall, 82% of international VET respondents were satisfied with their learning about the Australian culture (significantly higher than the proportion of Australian respondents (54%) who were satisfied with learning about new cultures).
- Both international and Australian VET respondents regarded a range of general cognitive, analytical, inter-personal and communications skills as important to develop during their education in Australia, and are subsequently finding the skills that they developed to be useful. For the international respondents, the thirteen general skills investigated range in importance and usefulness ratings from 'effective communication' (94% important, 94% useful) to gaining an 'international perspective' (83% important, 85% useful).

- In 2007, international respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of written and spoken English language skills when they completed their course in Australia. The majority of international respondents in 2007 indicated that their English language skills were up to the level required to continue their studies or seek suitable employment (79% for written, and 83% for spoken English skills).
- Around half the international (48%) and Australian (47%) VET respondents were satisfied with the help they received in getting a good job in their field of study.

3.1 Study satisfaction

Figure 5: Satisfaction with overall study and course experience (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20b/Q16 Overall, how satisfied are you with your study experience in Australia?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q22/Q18 Overall, how satisfied are you with the course you are currently completing?

Three asterisks (***) indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample and international respondents in the 2006 Respondents; and between international and Australian respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample.

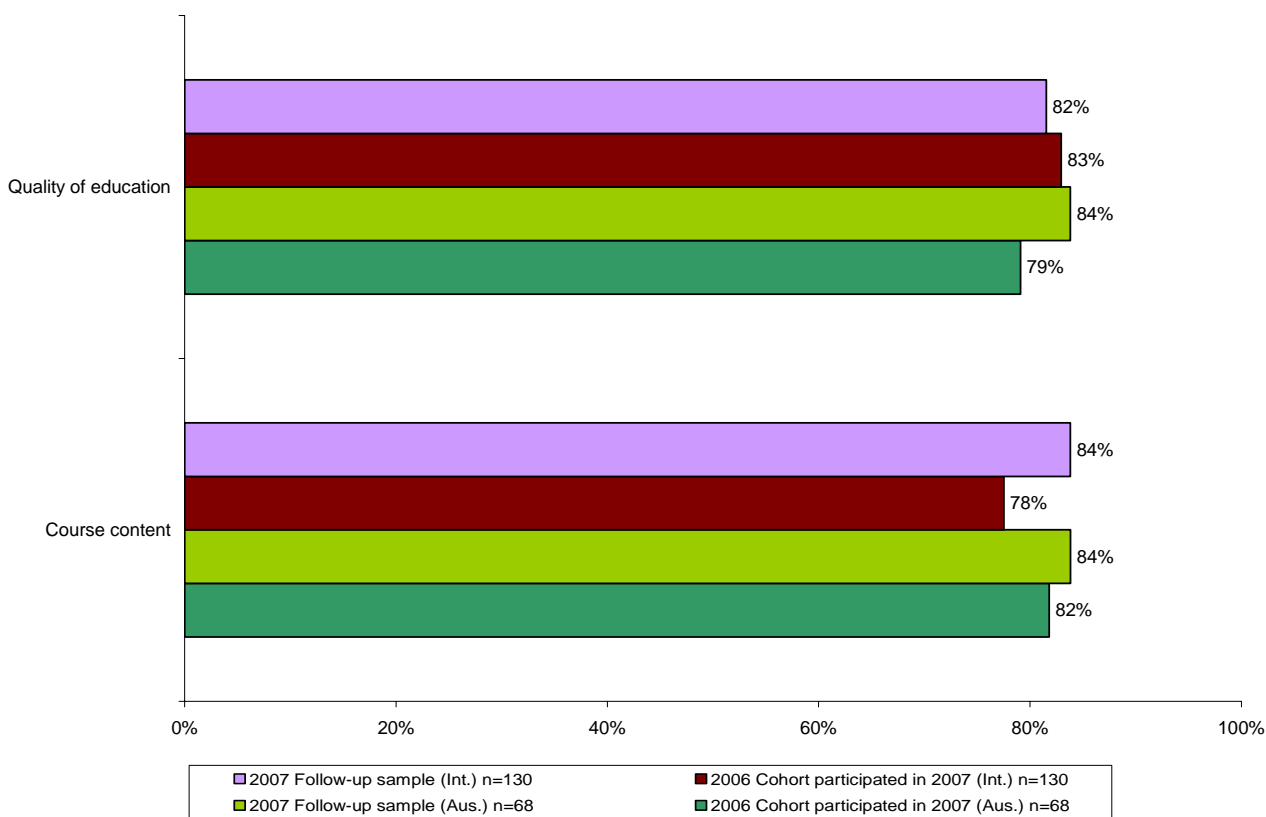
For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 15

As shown in Figure 5, a high proportion of international and Australian respondents were satisfied with studying in Australia and with their course experience. Fewer international respondents in 2007 (79%), than in 2006 (82%), indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall study experience; however, this drop was not statistically significant. Similarly, fewer Australian respondents (87%) than in 2006 (92%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall study experience; again, this was not statistically significant.

International respondents showed a significant drop in satisfaction with overall course experience from 86% in 2006 to 76% in 2007; whereas Australian respondents maintained the same level of satisfaction with no statistical change in proportions of satisfied respondents in 2006 (87%), compared to 2007 (88%).

As shown in Figure 6, overall, international and Australian respondents were highly satisfied with the quality of education they received. Results indicated satisfaction levels were maintained between 2006 and 2007 (there were no statistical differences during this period). In 2006, 79% of Australian respondents reported being satisfied with the quality of education, rising slightly, but not significantly to 84% in 2007. A similarly high proportion of international respondents (83%) were satisfied with the quality of education in 2006, falling slightly to 82% in 2007⁵. There were also no statistical differences in satisfaction with the quality of education between demographic measures such as age, gender or country of origin for international and Australian respondents.

⁵ This change was not statistically significant

Figure 6: Satisfaction with quality of education and course content (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20a/Q14 How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the university at which you are studying?

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 16

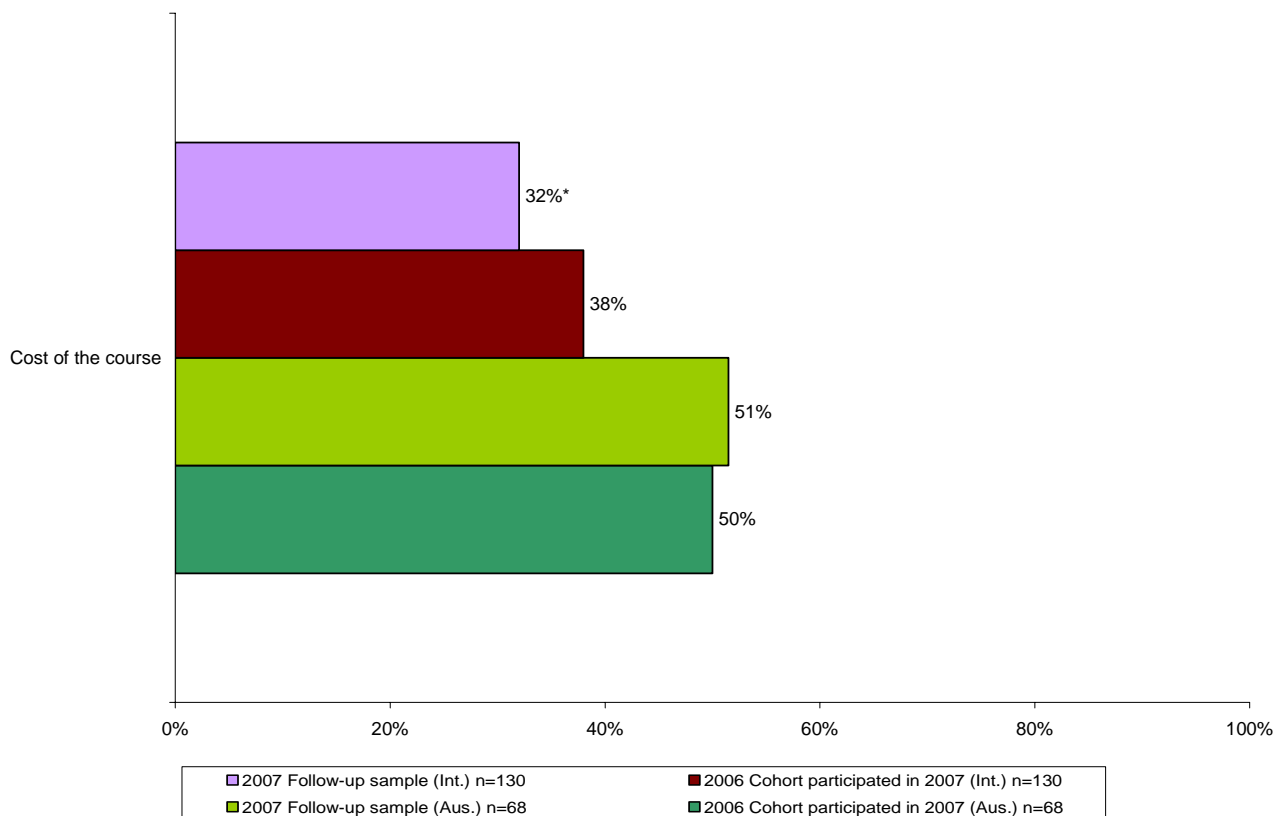
Satisfaction with course content was also consistent among respondents. There was a rise in international respondents' satisfaction with course content, from 78% in 2006 to 84% in 2007⁶. Australian respondents also showed a 2 point rise to 84% in 2007⁷. Although results showed fewer respondents from Asian countries were satisfied with their course content (79%) compared to other international respondents (88%), this was not a significant difference.

As shown in Figure 7, results from 2006 and 2007 revealed satisfaction with the cost of the course was low among both international and Australian respondents.

⁶ This change was not statistically significant

⁷ *ibid*

Figure 7: Satisfaction with cost of the course (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20a/Q14 How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the institution at which you are studying?

An asterisk (*) indicates differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international and Australian respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample.

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 17

Thirty-two per cent of international respondents in 2007 reported satisfaction with the cost of the course, significantly lower than reported in 2006 (38%), whereas Australian respondents' satisfaction level remained the same (50%) in both years. There was a significant difference between female international respondents and their Australian counterparts in satisfaction with the cost of their course (29% compared to 47% respectively).

The case study research revealed the cost of undertaking study in Australia was of concern. One respondent reported the cost of enrolling in higher education upon completion of his VET studies was a significant deterrent to undertaking further study; and as such, while he would like to attain a bachelor's degree, it was simply not possible for him or his family to cover the costs.

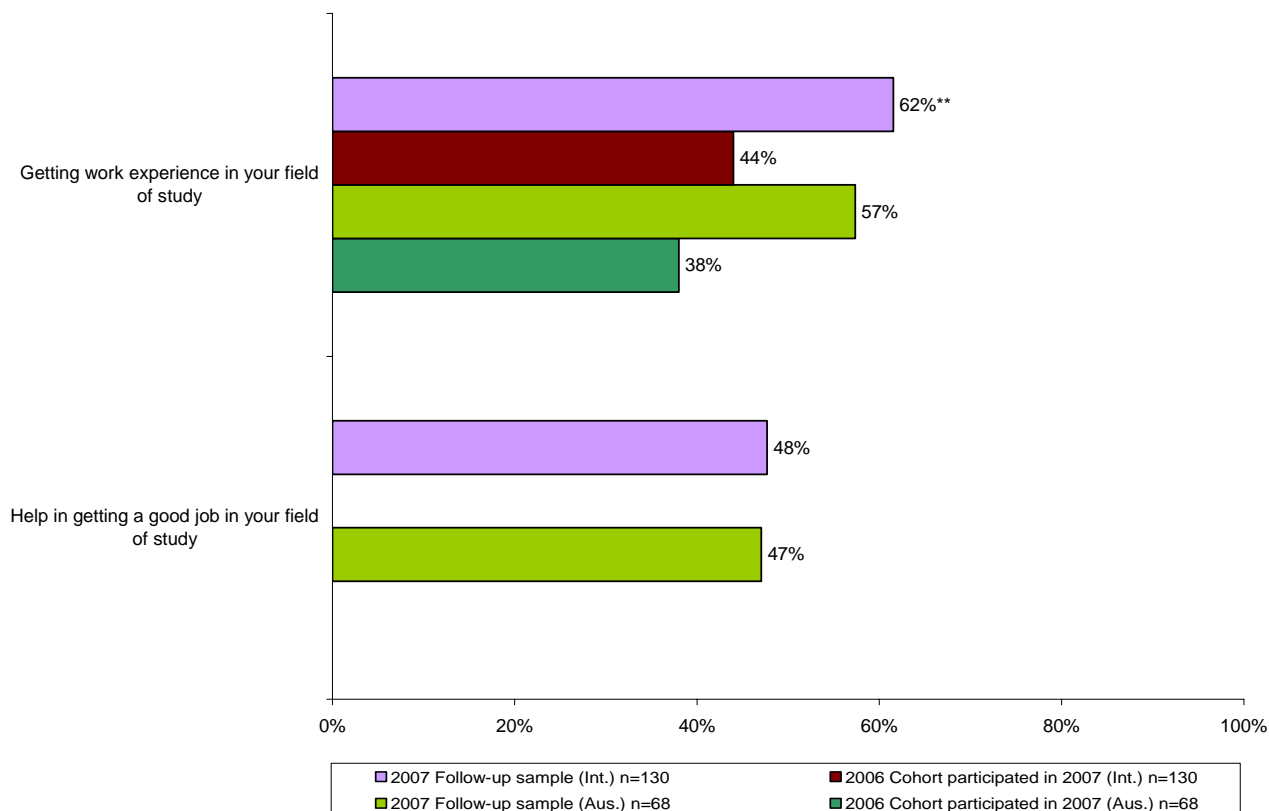
"I would consider going to university to get a bachelor degree, however it's just too expensive, it's \$20,000 for one year. That's one year's salary back home. Then you have costs for accommodation, meals, it goes on."

One of the respondents indicated the cost of public transport was a source of frustration:

“Not having a concession card is the biggest issue.....I feel the Australian Government takes a lot from us, but doesn’t give us much in return...If you tell them only one thing, it’s that international students want cheaper public transport.”

As shown in Figure 8, there was a significant improvement in the proportion of international and Australian respondents who were satisfied with getting work experience in their field of study.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with obtaining work experience in field of study and with help in getting a good job in field of study (Very satisfied/ satisfied)



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20a/Q14 How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the university at which you are studying?

Two asterisks (**) indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample and international respondents in the 2006 Respondents.

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 18

A greater percentage of Australian respondents were satisfied with getting the work experience in their field of study in 2007 (57%) than in 2006 (38%). The same was observed for international respondents with 62% satisfied with their ability to get work in their field of study in 2007,

compared to 44% in 2006. However, there was little variation between demographic profiles of respondents and satisfaction levels among various groups.

Nearly half of the respondents from both respondents indicated low satisfaction with regards to the help they received in getting a good job in their field of study, with only 47% of Australian respondents and 48% of international respondents reported being satisfied.

The qualitative research revealed lack of access to practical work experience was a big problem for international students. For example, unlike their Australian classmates, international students studying hairdressing were not eligible for apprenticeships. While practical experience was considered very important in developing the required skill set in the field, one student reported it was virtually impossible for international students outside of the apprenticeship scheme to secure part-time work in a salon:

“My Australian classmates were all employed as an apprentice for 2 days per week, and studied for 3 days a week. International students miss out on all that practical experience, as we only get the practical experience we do at school. Salons will only hire locals because locals are eligible for apprenticeships, and the salons will get money from the government for the apprenticeships, which they wouldn’t get if they hired international students.”

The lack of opportunities obtaining work experience while studying hairdressing, in turn, made it much harder for international respondents to compete in the job market upon graduation.

International and Australian 2007 respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of their Australian course compared to graduates who studied similar courses from the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore and China.

As shown in Figure 9, international and Australian respondents’ perceptions of the overall quality of the Australian course compared to similar courses offered in other countries were varied; Australia rated well in this analysis.

Overall, 38% of international respondents believed a similar course in their own country was worse in quality compared to Australia, whereas 34% believed the quality of education here to be similar to their home country. Eleven per cent believed the quality of their course in their home country to be better than Australia. This view was predominantly held by Europeans, and North and South American respondents. Eighteen per cent of international respondents did not know, or could not compare, the course quality in Australia to their home country.

Australian respondents were largely unsure of the quality of courses offered overseas that were similar to their own course. Depending on the country of comparison, generally, 75% to 80% of Australian respondents stated they were unsure of the comparative quality. The remainder generally believed the course quality to be similar to Australia, except in the case of Asian countries where the remaining 20% of Australian respondents believed the courses offered in those countries were of poorer quality compared to Australia.

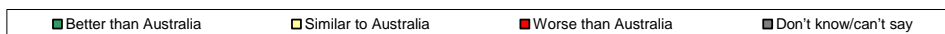
One-fourth of international respondents believed similar courses offered in the USA were of better quality than Australia. The UK was ranked second (22%) and Canada, third (13%). Asian

respondents (31%) believed the USA offered better course quality compared to Australia, than did European or North and South American respondents (19%). Roughly half of international respondents said they did not know the comparative quality of their course to Australia when it came to these top three countries. However, international respondents were more likely to report the quality of courses in Asian countries was worse than Australia, with the greater proportion (33%) believing that courses in China were of poorer quality than Australia, followed by Singapore, (22%).

Figure 9: Perceptions of overall quality of Australian course compared to similar courses overseas



Base (2007 Int.): n=130
Base (2007 Aus.): n=68



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q21 How do you rate the overall quality of your Australian course compared to graduates who studied similar courses from the following countries...?

An asterisk (*) indicates differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international and Australian respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample.

Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Some of the best aspects of studying in Australia, recorded in open ended responses, related to course content, structure and relevance. Some of the best aspects included a good place to live; a beautiful country; meeting new people and making new friends; experiencing a different culture; multiculturalism and cultural diversity; quality and standard of education; the opportunity to improve English language skills by immersion; and the friendliness of Australians. There was a strong mention of culture and aspects of English language immersion, along with the aesthetics of

Australian natural environment and Australian people. This was also interspersed with the more ‘functional’ aspects such as high education standards and course structure.

The reasons international respondents enjoyed studying in Australia go beyond the ‘educational products’ on offer such as courses and institutions. They were also influenced by the Australian people, culture and natural environment—things that were ‘Australian’. These views were held fairly uniformly among international respondents from different countries with little gender or age variations. Older international respondents (26 yrs+), however, placed more emphasis on course structure, Australia being a good place to live, a beautiful country and experiencing a new or different culture.

Having fairly uniform views across gender and age both international and Australian respondents, felt the aspects of studying in Australia that needed the most improvement, recorded in open-ended responses, were: course fees, teacher or lecturer quality; staff commitment; course structure and content, and relevance and delivery of the course.

For Australian respondents areas in need of improvement were: having updated facilities; financial assistance particular to the cost of rent and food; understanding the difficulties of juggling work and study; class sizes; and the lack of government funding of education.

International respondents mentioned cross cultural integration of international students, proficiency in English, hands on experience / less emphasis on theory and assistance in gaining work experience relevant to studies, as other areas in need of improvement.

There were some differences between Asian, European and North and South American respondents with regard to identifying areas in need of improvement. Asian respondents placed more emphasis on issues including course fees; costs and tuition fees; teacher or lecturer quality; staff commitment; assistance to gain work experience relevant to studies; access to student services; and improved student support.

3.2 Usefulness of skills developed during studies

In 2006, international and Australian respondents were asked to indicate various skills that were important for them to develop during their course and in 2007 they were then asked to indicate how useful these skills were to them. All skills rated very highly with at least 75% or more respondents mentioning them as important to develop or of most use to them now. There was little statistical difference between demographic profiles for these preferences.

As shown in Table 13, in 2006, international respondents cited their top two important skills to develop were effective communication in a variety of contexts (94%) and, gaining knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area (93%). Of lesser importance was gaining an international perspective (83%)—though this was still highly rated as an important skill.

Also in 2006, the skills Australian respondents considered the most important to develop were: obtaining knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area (97%); and having a command of effective communication in a variety of contexts (97%). A smaller proportion of

Australian respondents (65%) recorded international perspective was an important skill for them to obtain.

In 2007, the majority of international respondents noted effective communication in a variety of contexts (94%); knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline (93%); and creative thinking (93%) were the most useful skills to have. Australian respondents rated as the most useful to them were having knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline (94%); knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area (93%); and effective communication in a variety of contexts (91%). Gaining an international perspective was less important (75%).

Table 13: Usefulness of various skills developed during Australian studies

Skills developed during course (usefulness in 2007 vs. importance in 2006)	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	N=130	n=129	n=68	n=68
Effective communication in a variety of contexts	94%	94%	91%	97%
Knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline	93% (a, b)	85%	94%	91%
Creative thinking	93%	88%	87%	88%
Ability to work collaboratively	92%	90%	90%	94%
Effective problem-solving	89%	88%	85%	91%
Ability to work independently	89%	89%	87%	91%
English language competency	88%	-	82%	-
Capacity for life-long learning	87%	88%	87%	82%
Social and ethical responsibility	86%	89%	88%	82%
Knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area	86%	93%	93%	97%
Analytical thinking	85%	88%	85%	88%
Characteristics of self-reliance and leadership	85%	89%	87%	87%
An international perspective	85%	83%	75%	65%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q13 How useful to you now are the following skills you may have developed during your course in Australia?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q21/Q17 How important to you are developing the following skills during your course in Australia?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); and c and d shown as (c, d)

Percentages reflect very useful/useful categories in 2007 and very important/important categories in 2006.

Both international and Australian respondents felt the following skills were currently of greatest use to them: effective communication in a variety of contexts; knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area; ability to work collaboratively; and knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline. There was little statistical variation between skill preferences or in the demographic profiles of respondents with respect to these preferences.

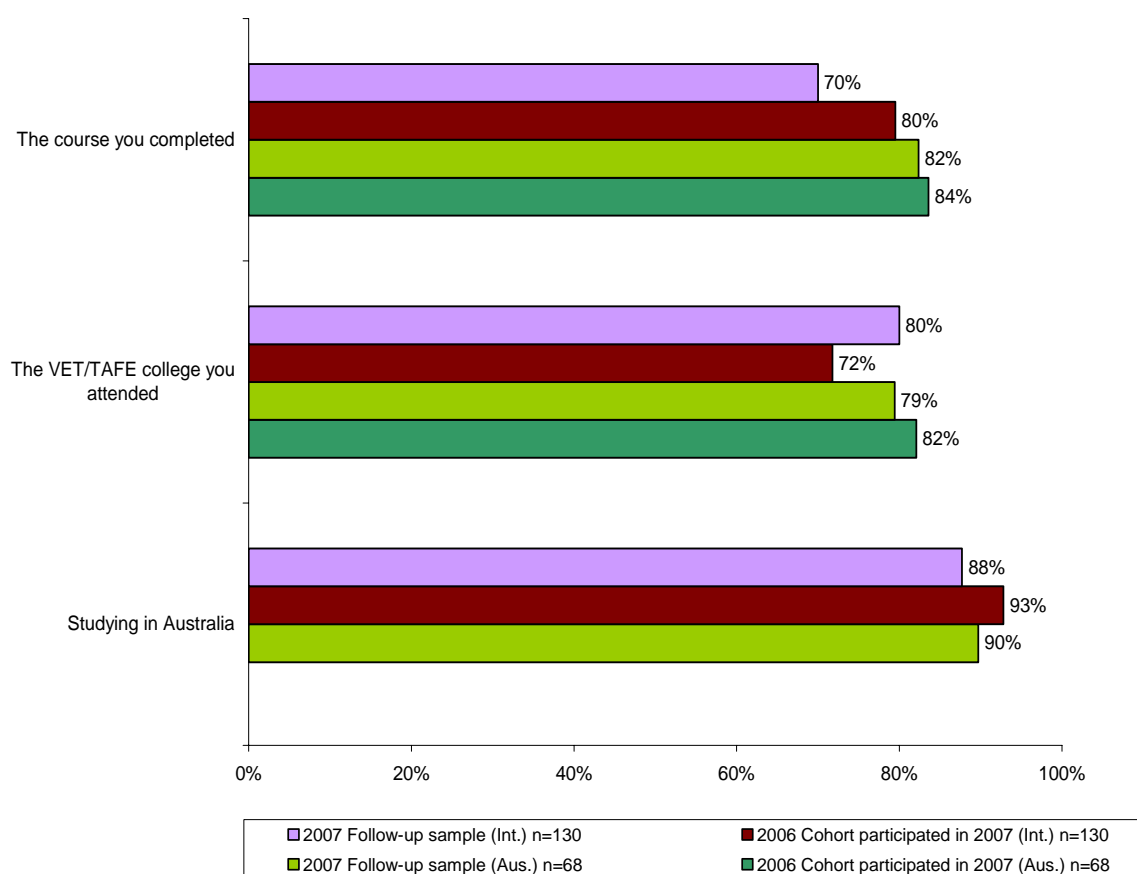
In 2006, international respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of English language skills when they started their course. The majority of them (73%) indicated their English language skills were up to the level required to undertake their studies. In 2007, international respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of written and spoken English language skills. The majority of international respondents indicated their English language skills were up to the level required to continue their studies or seek suitable employment (79% for written, and 83% for spoken English skills). These findings indicated international respondents generally believed they have sufficient knowledge of English by the time they complete their course, and show an increase in their own perceived competency after they complete it.

There was negligible difference between gender, age and home country for self reported competency in written or spoken English in 2007.

3.3 Willingness to recommend study in Australia

As shown in Figure 10, high proportions of international (88%) and Australian respondents (90%) indicated they would recommend studying in Australia to family and friends. Seventy per cent of international respondents were willing to recommend the course they completed, lower than the 80% in 2006, but not significant. This compares to 82% of Australian respondents who said they were willing to recommend their course versus 84% in 2006.

Figure 10: Willingness to recommend study in Australia



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q16a Would you recommend to others the following...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q23/Q19 Would you recommend the following to friends or family?

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 19

Eighty per cent of international respondents indicated they would recommend the VET college they attended to family and friends, compared to 72% in 2006, but not significant. This compared with 79% (82% in 2006) of Australian respondents who would recommend their VET college.

There were no significant differences between gender and age of 2007 follow-up international respondent respondents on their willingness to recommend study in Australia, the VET college they attended or the course they completed.

Overall, a high proportion of international and Australian respondents were satisfied with studying in Australia. High proportions of all respondents indicated they would recommend studying in Australia to family and friends.

Overall, satisfaction with the quality of education was consistently high for both Australian and international respondents who generally believed course quality in Australia was better than the equivalent course in their home country or in other countries. However, the USA was perceived to have the best course quality of all countries—a view held by most Asian respondents.

All 2007 respondents were least satisfied with course costs, but there was an increase in those satisfied with their ability to get work experience in their field of study; however, less so in receiving help in getting a job in their area of interest.

International respondents reported the skills that were of most use were effective communication in a variety of contexts; knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline; and creative thinking.

The main reasons international respondents enjoyed studying in Australia went beyond the 'educational products' on offer. They were influenced by the Australian people, culture and natural environment—all things 'Australian'.

4. Living in Australia

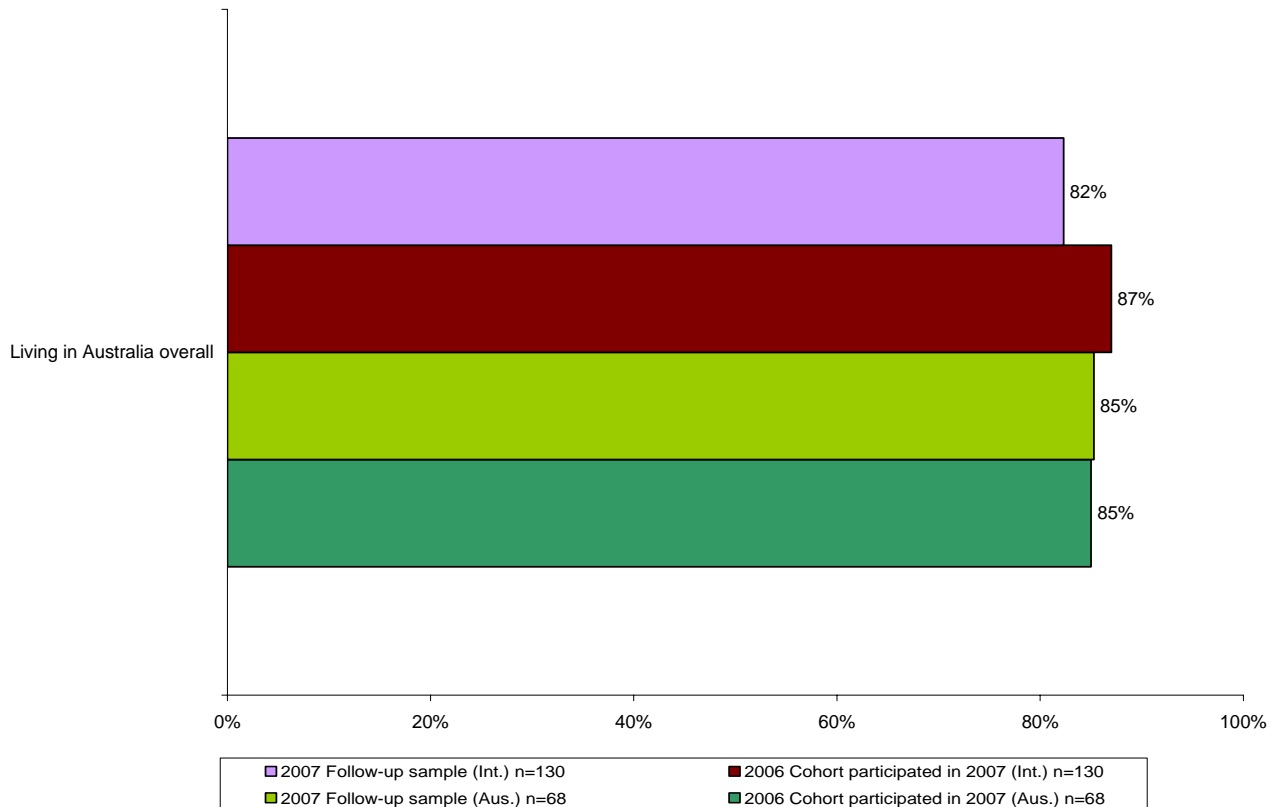
Key findings

- In 2006, more than 80% of both international and Australian respondents were satisfied with living in Australia overall, and again on reflection in 2007. By 2007, more than three-quarters of both groups (76% of the international and 79% of Australian respondents) were satisfied or very satisfied with their life situation.
- The majority of respondents had concerns about the cost of the course and the cost of living in Australia. Fewer than half were satisfied with the cost of living—46% of the international and 44% of Australian respondents were satisfied in 2007.
- In 2007, significantly more (67%) international respondents reported satisfaction with their opportunities to make close friends with Australians than Australian indicating making close friends with international students (44%).
- More than three-quarters (77%) of international respondents felt they were treated with respect and courtesy by Australians.
- The majority of both international and Australian respondents would recommend living in Australia (87% international; 93% Australian) and the city they lived in (85% international; 87% Australian) to others.

4.1. Satisfaction with living in Australia

As shown in Figure 11, the level of satisfaction with living in Australia was high for 2006 and 2007 respondents. Eighty-two per cent of international and 85% of Australian respondents were satisfied with living in Australia in 2007.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with living in Australia overall (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)



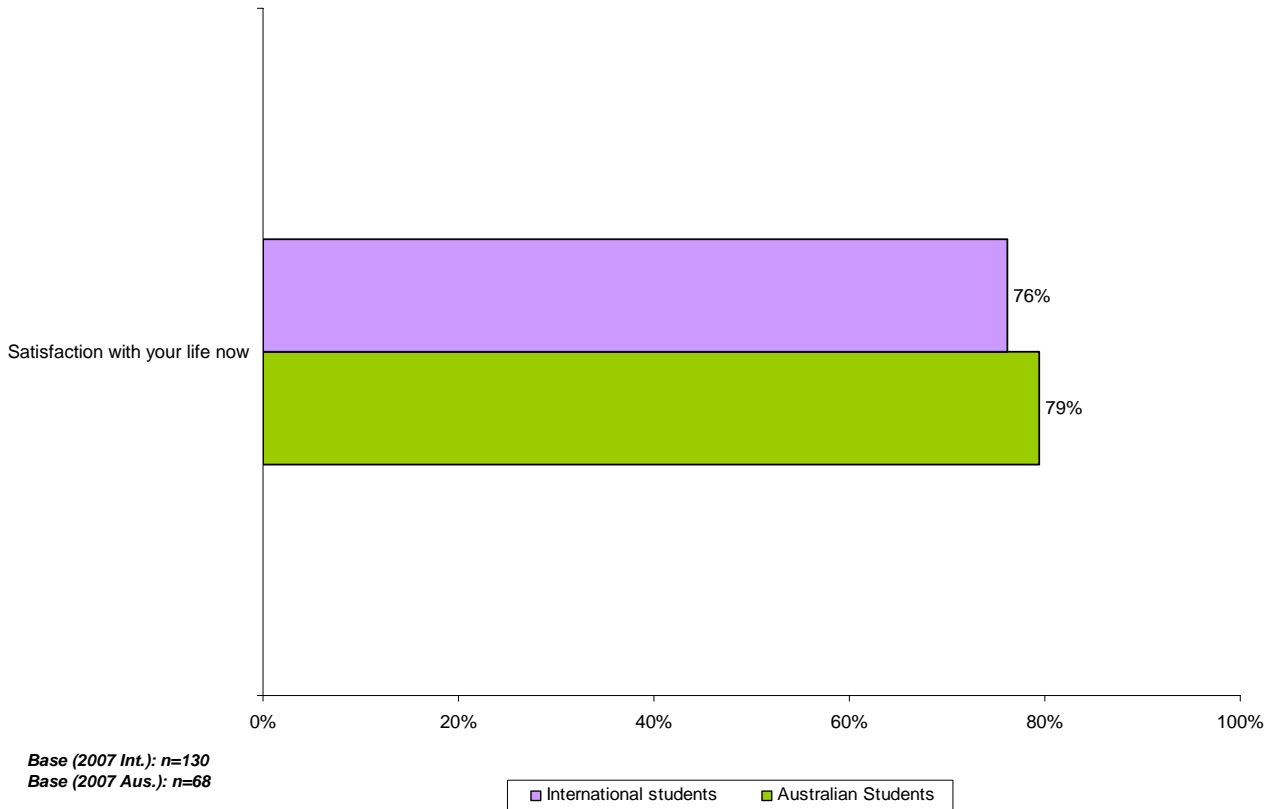
(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q32b/Q28b Overall, how satisfied are you with living in Australia?

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 20

International and Australian respondents were asked to think back about their course, their time living and studying in Australia, and to express their satisfaction with their life now. As shown in Figure 12, respondents were quite satisfied with their life now. Australian respondents (79%) were slightly more satisfied in this area than their international counterparts (76%).

Figure 12: Satisfaction with their life now (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)

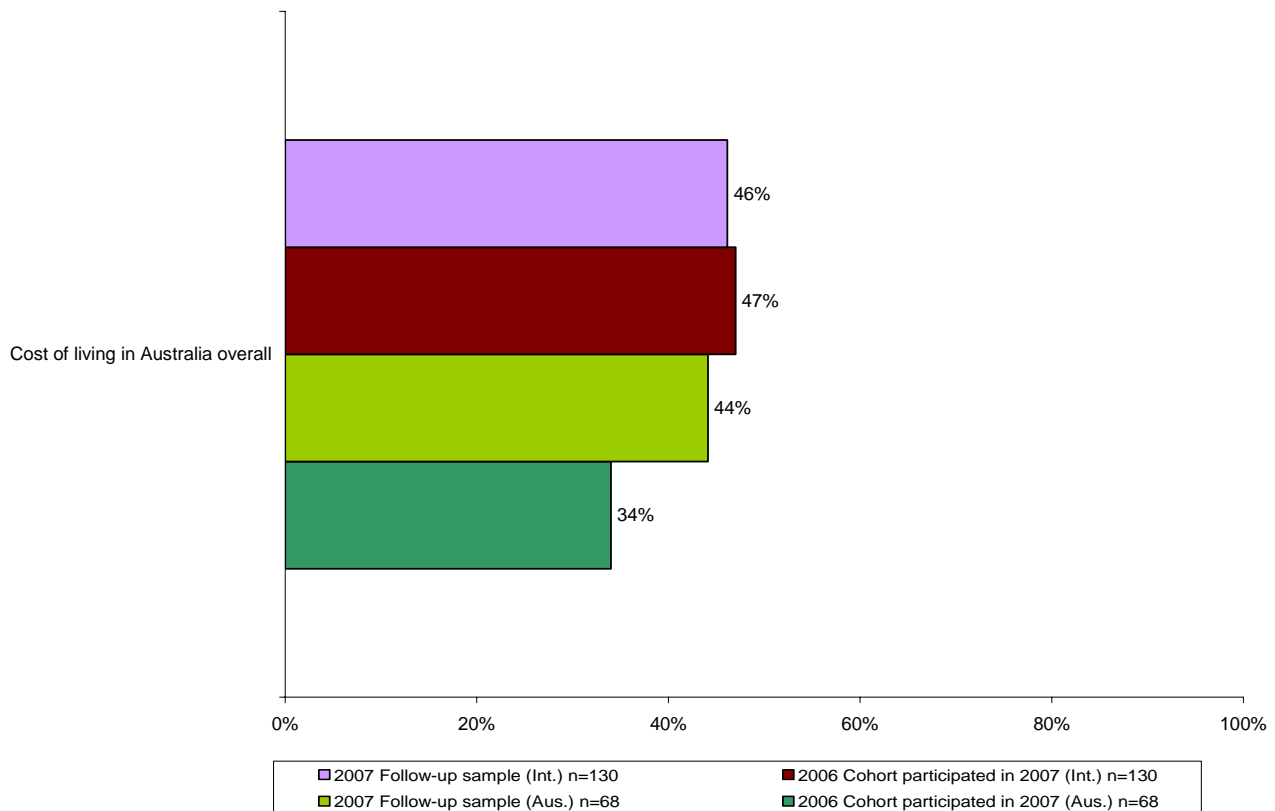


(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 21

As shown in Figure 13, international and Australian respondents were less satisfied with the cost of living in Australia, with similar levels of satisfaction reported by both groups in 2006 and 2007 (international: 47% in 2006 and 46% in 2007; and Australian: 34% in 2006 and 44% in 2007). Twenty-eight per cent of international and 21% of Australian respondents were dissatisfied with the cost of living in 2007 (see Appendix B, Table 22). However, while the level of satisfaction for international respondents remained constant between 2006 and 2007; for Australian respondents, the level of satisfaction increased, although not significantly.

Figure 13: Satisfaction with cost of living in Australia overall (Very satisfied/ Satisfied)



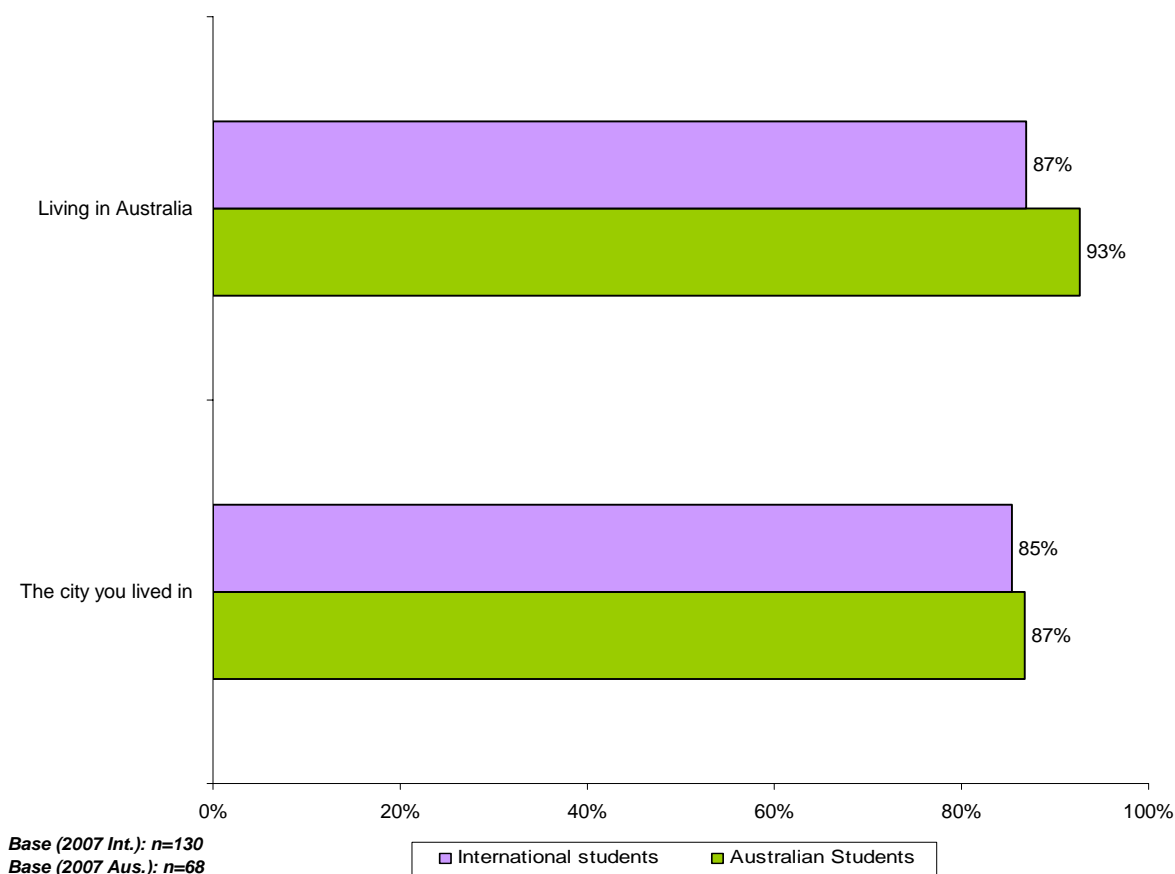
(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q32a/Q28a How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of living in Australia?

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 22.

4.2. Willingness to recommend living in Australia

As shown in Figure 14, international and Australian respondents in both 2006 and 2007 were highly likely to recommend living in Australia and the city they lived in to family and friends. Fewer international (87%), than Australian respondents (93%), were willing to recommend living in Australia. A similar proportion of international (85%) and Australian respondents (87%) were willing to recommend the city they lived in to family and friends.

Figure 14: Willingness to recommend living in Australia and the city in which lived

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q16a Would you recommend to others the following...?

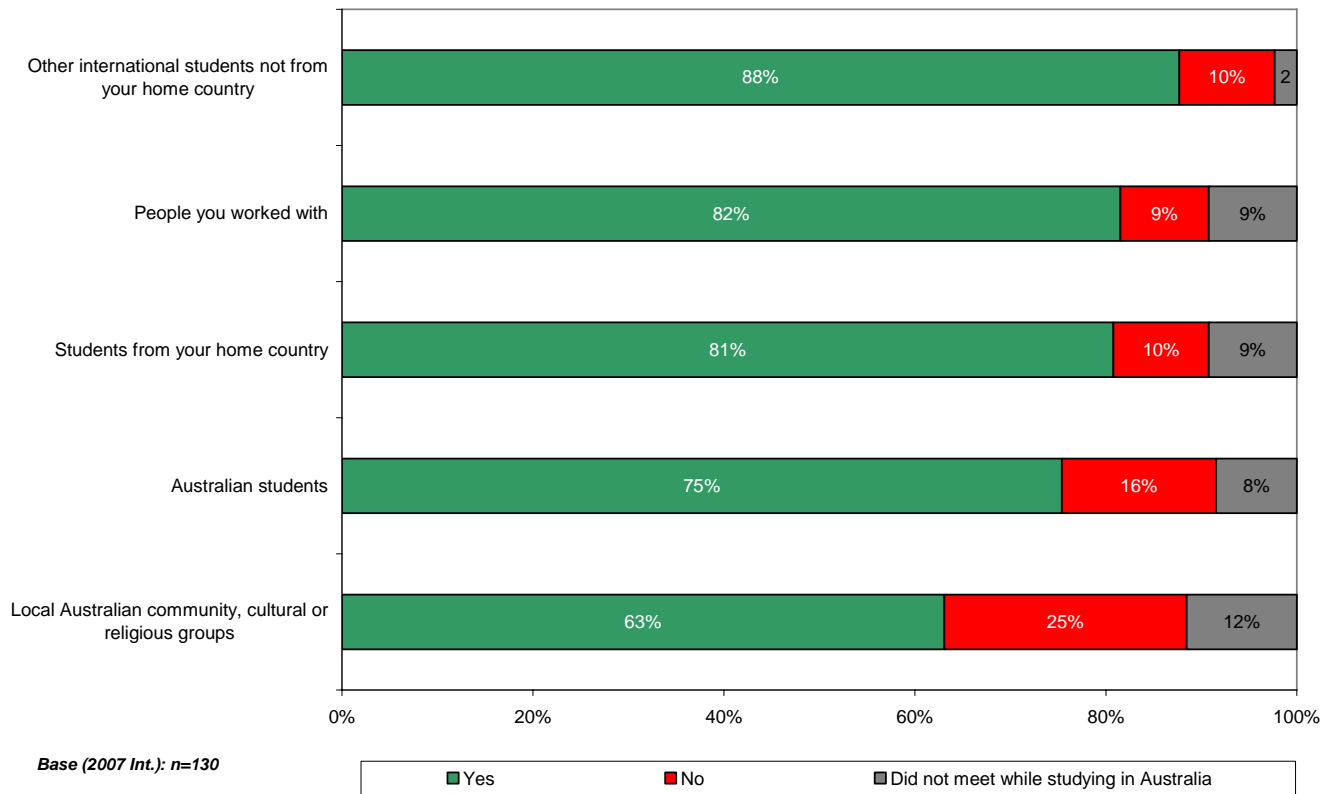
For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 23

4.3. Life in Australia

4.3.1. Making friends

International respondents were asked to indicate if they still kept in touch with various people they met while studying in Australia.

As shown in Figure 15, high proportions of international respondents indicated they kept in touch with people they met while studying in Australia. The majority (88%) of international respondents kept in contact with other international students who were not from their home country. Also, a high proportion (82%) of international respondents kept in touch with people they worked with. Fewer international respondents kept in contact with members of the local Australian community in which they had lived, including cultural or religious groups (63%). Seventy-five per cent of international respondents reported they kept in touch with Australian students.

Figure 15: Keeping in touch with close friends while studying in Australia

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q19 Do you keep in touch with members of the following groups of people whom you met while studying in Australia...?

Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The qualitative research revealed the social networks and friends made while studying in Australia were some of the best parts of the VET experience. The sense of community experienced in VET was highly valued. For international students in particular, friends were an important source of support network, especially when other institution-based support services may be lacking:

“I really loved the time we spent together—a group of us would study together at the café after class”.

“When I had problems, I went to my friends for help.”

Making friends with locals, either through study or part-time work, was also seen as an effective way to better understand the Australian culture, as well as to practise their English skills:

“I don’t feel my English is very good, but I’m always practicing. The more people I meet, the more chances I have to practice.”

International and Australian respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with various aspects of making friends during their studies in Australia. As shown in Figure 16, 82% of international respondents were satisfied with learning about Australian culture, while significantly

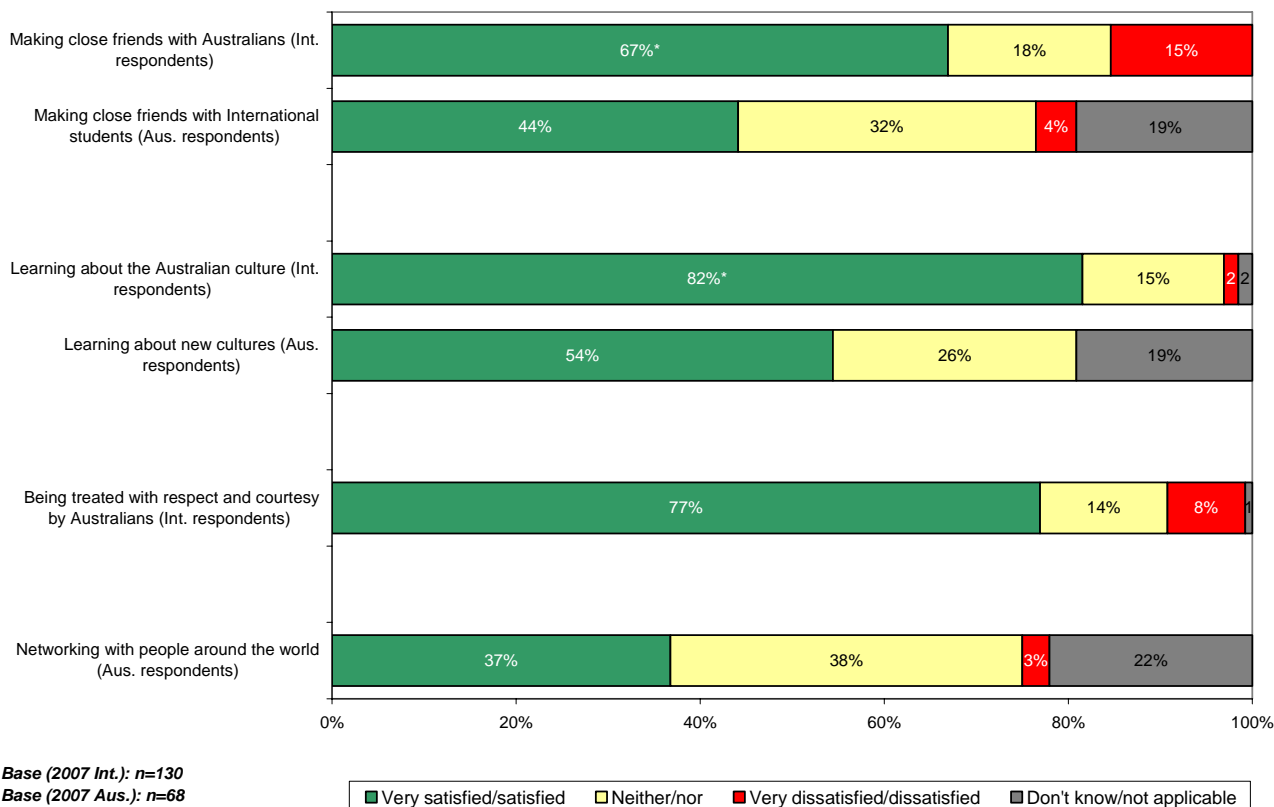
fewer (54%) Australian respondents were satisfied with learning about new cultures. A high proportion (77%) of international respondents was satisfied with the respect and courtesy shown by Australians. Around two-thirds (67%) of international respondents noted they were satisfied with making close friends with Australians, compared with fewer (44%) Australian respondents who indicated they were satisfied with making close friends with international students.

A relatively low proportion (37%) of Australian respondents noted they were satisfied with networking with people around the world.

International respondents were generally satisfied with the way they were treated by Australians and were keen to learn about the Australian culture.

Fifteen per cent of international respondents indicated they were members of an international student alumni group.

Figure 16: International respondents making friends with Australians



(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

An asterisk (*) indicates differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international and Australian respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample

Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In summary, the majority of international and Australian respondents reported satisfaction with living in Australia. More than three-quarters of international, and significantly more Australian respondents, reported feelings of satisfaction with their life 12 months after completing their course.

Dissatisfaction levels about the cost of living were high among both international and Australian respondents, although high proportions of both groups were willing to recommend living in Australia and the city they lived in to family and friends.

There was strong evidence that VET was responsible for strengthening international networks, although more could be done to help Australian students engage more with their international peers. High proportions of international respondents indicated they kept in touch with people they met while studying in Australia. The majority of them kept in contact with other international students who were not from their home country. In addition, most kept in touch with students from their own country they had met in Australia. Three quarters of international respondents reported they kept in touch with Australian students they met while studying here, and four-fifths with people they worked with in Australia.

Although international respondents were generally more comfortable keeping in touch with other international students, the majority still kept in touch with Australian nationals.

International respondents were satisfied with the way they were treated by Australians, but would also like the opportunity to make close friends with them. Their keenness to learn about the Australian culture indicated good signs for social integration among international students.

Generally, international and Australian respondents were willing to recommend living in Australia and the city they lived in to family and friends, noting that fewer international than Australian respondents expressed such willingness.

5. Future career plans and aspirations

Key findings

- The top three goals to achieve in the next 5 years for international and Australian respondents were:
 - having a satisfying and rewarding career
 - getting a full-time job, and
 - having a secure job.
- Seventy-eight per cent of international and 90% of Australian respondents intended to live in Australia in twelve months time.
- Seventy-eight per cent of the international VET respondents planned to apply (48%) or had already applied (30%) for permanent resident status in Australia. Only 22% were not planning to apply for permanent resident status.

Sixty-two per cent of international, and 65% of Australian respondents, indicated they intended to continue doing what they were currently doing, whether studying, working or doing something else in the next 12 months.

Of those respondents who indicated they do not intend to continue what they were doing, 64% of international and 67% of Australian respondents indicated they intended to work, while 30% of international and 47% of Australian respondents would look for a different job. Twenty-seven per cent of both international and Australian respondents intended to undertake further study.

Seventy-eight per cent of international and 90% of Australian respondents indicated they intended to live in Australia in 12 months time. Only 4% of international and 3% of Australian respondents intended to live in another country in 12 months time. Ten per cent of international respondents intended to live in their home country in 12 months time.

As shown in Figure 17, the top 4 goals the international and Australian respondents indicated will be important for them to achieve in the next 5 years were having a satisfying and rewarding career (88% of international and significantly more Australian respondents—96%); getting a full-time job (87% of international and 79% of Australian respondents); having a secure job (86% of international and 82% of Australian respondents); and earning a lot of money (82% of international and 75% of Australian VET graduates). Two of the least important goals were giving up work to have a family (24% of international and 18% of Australian respondents), and working in a different country (32% of international and 21% of Australian respondents).

Each of the four respondents who were interviewed sought to undertake further studies, either at the higher education or vocational education and training levels. One respondent has not chosen to pursue university study due to the costs involved, although he was in the process of applying for work. The remaining students sought to undertake further studies to better their career chances in the long term.

“By the time I finish my university degree, I would have been studying continuously for nine years part-time. When I think about it, it’s an overwhelming thought, but it will be worthwhile in the end...my study will help me to one day achieve my dream to be an HR manager in a large firm.”

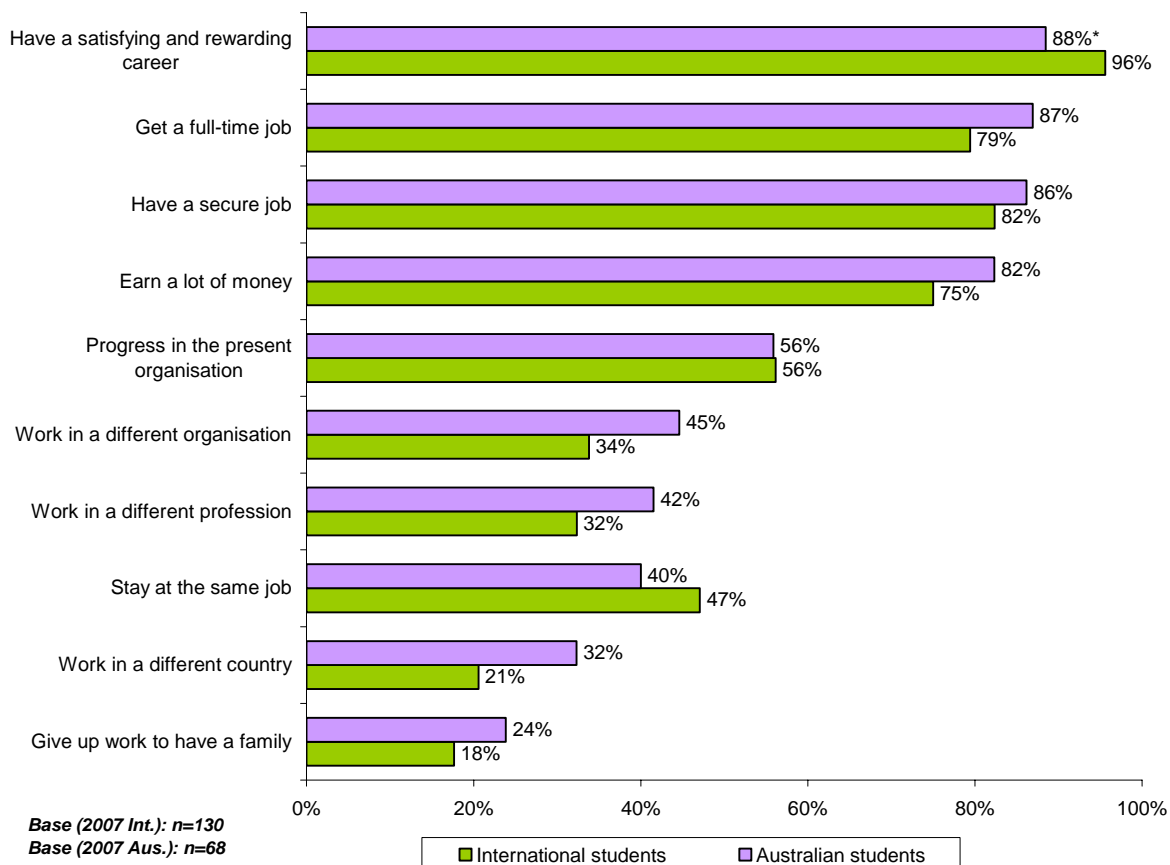
“With a university degree, I’ll hopefully be able to find a job where I can get a position involving making decisions, having authority. Where I can see how we could do things differently and improve the business.”

“I love hairdressing, but I couldn’t do it forever— it’s hard on my body. Ideally, I’d like to get a business degree at university so I can get into the business and management side of the industry.”

However, one international respondent was finding it particularly difficult to find out what degree options were available now, without an agent.

“I don’t know where to go. I ring up the university, and all they can tell me is to go to the open day. But that’s not for months! There has to be another way, but I don’t know. I don’t know how the university system works here.”

Figure 17: Importance of achieving various outcomes in next five years (Extremely important/ Important)



Q15b (Int./Aus.) Still thinking about the future, please indicate how important the following will be for you to achieve in the next five years...

An asterisk (*) indicates differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between international and Australian respondents in the 2007 Follow-up sample.

For detailed category breakdown please see Appendix B, Table 24

International respondents in 2006 and 2007 were asked to indicate their intention to apply for permanent resident status (PR) in Australia. As shown in Table 14, significantly fewer international respondents in 2007 (48%) were planning to apply for permanent resident status than in 2006 (71%). This may be due to the fact that in 2006, only 2% of international respondents indicated they already applied for permanent resident status, while 30% did so in 2007. The proportion of international respondents who were not planning to apply in 2006 (28%) was quite similar to those in 2007 (22%).

Table 14: Permanent resident status intention

Planning to apply for permanent resident status in Australia	International respondents	
	a	b
	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=130
Yes, you are planning to apply	48% (a, b)	71%
Yes, you have already applied	30%	2%
No, you are not planning to apply	22%	28%

(2007) (Int.) Q17a Are you planning to apply or have you already applied for permanent residency (PR) in Australia?

(2006) (Int.) Q35a Are you planning to apply or have you already applied for a permanent residency (PR) in Australia?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b).

Totals for each bar may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Over three-quarters of international respondents indicated they intended to live in Australia in 12 months time, while 10% would live in their home country, and a smaller proportion would live in another country. In comparison, almost all Australian respondents intended to live in Australia in 12 months time, with less than 10% indicating another country.

The proportion of international respondents who were planning to apply for permanent resident status in Australia in 2006 was significantly higher than the 2007 feedback. The 30% of international respondents who already applied for permanent resident status in 2006 may account for the lower proportions of respondents planning to apply in 2007. The proportion of international respondents who were not planning to apply for permanent resident status was similar in 2006 and 2007.

6. Summary of key findings

The 2006 benchmark survey found most international respondents were satisfied with the experience of living in Australia and with the education they received. The survey found the majority of international respondents would recommend studying in Australia, the VET institution they attended, the city they lived in, and living in Australia overall.

Among the majority (69%) of international respondents who continued with full-time or part-time studies since completing their VET course in 2006, almost all were undertaking courses in Australia (95%). Similarly, among the majority (67%) who were now working in full-time or part-time employment, or had accepted a full-time job offer, almost all (84%) found their job in Australia. Seventy-eight per cent of international respondents intended to live in Australia in 12 months time and the same proportion is planning to apply, or has applied for permanent resident status.

6.1. Objectives and overview

The ISS project involved two main phases: a 2006 benchmark study and a 2007 Follow-up study. Phase One involved surveying four education sectors, higher education, VET, secondary schools and ELICOS. Phase Two involved a 2007 Follow-up Survey and qualitative case studies with respondents of higher education and VET graduates who participated in the 2006 study. A control group of Australian students was included in both the 2006 benchmark and 2007 Follow-up Surveys.

The aim of the 2007 Follow-up Survey was to examine employment and/or further education outcomes after course completion; and in retrospect, examine respondents' level of satisfaction with overall studying and living in Australia.

The 2007 Follow-up Survey collected information from 198 graduates of VET courses completed during 2006, 130 international citizens and 68 Australian nationals, responded to the online or hard-copy self-completion survey sent in August/September 2007. This represented an overall response rate of 13% (11% for international and 23% for Australian respondents). Each respondent had previously participated in the 2006 benchmark survey of final year students at VET institutions across Australia. This 'repeated measures' design, in which feedback was obtained approximately twelve months apart from the same respondents, was employed to measure whether students' attitudes to, and satisfaction with Australian education changed significantly over time, and to ascertain the extent to which their future career plans or education aspirations were being achieved following the completion of their initial course.

This report also includes feedback from four case studies with graduates from Australian VET institutions, two Chinese and two Australian citizens. Ideally, it would have been desirable to interview more former students as part of the case studies, the list of VET respondents who were working in 2007 provided limiting opportunity.

6.2. Overall education and employment outcomes

As of 1 August 2007, 17% of international respondents were working full-time or had accepted a full-time job offer; 4% were not employed but seeking full-time or part-time work; 64% were studying full-time; 12% were involved in part-time study or work (or both); and the remaining 3% reported some other activity. In total, in 2007, 50% of international respondents were working in part-time positions, 42% in combination with study, and 5% were studying part-time.

In the 2006 benchmark survey, 37% of the final year international respondents reported intending to find a job following course completion—by 1 August, 2007, 17% had achieved full-time employment, with a further 12% working part-time (and not studying full-time). In 2006, 46% of international respondents planned to enrol in further studies following course completion, and by 1 August 2007, 64% were undertaking full-time study, with another 5% studying part-time.

In contrast, 49% of Australian respondents were working full-time or had accepted a full-time job offer by 1 August 2007; 10% were not employed but seeking full-time or part-time work; 25% were studying full-time; 8% were involved in part-time study or work (or both); and the remaining 6% reported some other activity. In total, 20% of the Australian respondents were working in part-time positions, 16% in combination with study, and 11% were studying part-time.

In the 2006 benchmark survey, 52% of Australian respondents reported intending to find a job following course completion—by 1 August 2007, 49% had achieved this aspiration full-time, with a further 5% working part-time (and not studying full-time). In 2006, 30% of the Australian respondents planned to enrol in further studies following course completion, and by 1 August 2007, 25% were undertaking full-time study, with another 11% studying part-time.

Among those international respondents from 2006 who were working part-time or full-time on 1 August 2007, or who had accepted a full-time job offer (67% of the total respondent group), the majority (84%) found their job in Australia. All the Australian 2006 respondents (69% of the total respondent group), were working in Australia. The 2007 survey also found 95% of the international respondents who continued in further studies (69% of the total respondent group) did so in Australia, as did the same proportion of Australian respondents who continued their studies (36% of the total respondent group).

In summary, a slightly higher proportion of Australian respondents were both working and studying than was their reported aspiration in the 2006 benchmark survey. More international respondents were enrolled in further studies than they planned as final year students and slightly fewer were in employment as they had planned as students. Significantly fewer international than Australian respondents were seeking full-time or part-time work on 1 August 2007, even though it was less likely that their employment aspirations had been met.

6.3. Characteristics of respondents enrolling in further studies

Fifty-six per cent of the international respondents who enrolled in further studies following course completion in 2006 (69% of the 2007 respondents) did so at a university in Australia linked to their VET institute (22%) or at a different university in Australia (34%), while another 26% enrolled at the same VET institution in Australia, or at a different VET institution in Australia (10%). Three

per cent of these international respondents from 2006 enrolled in a university course in another country overseas; none reported enrolling in an institution in their home country. Three per cent reported enrolling in other (not specified) institutions.

Forty-five per cent of Australian respondents from 2006 who continued their studies (36% of the 2007 respondents) were doing so at a university in Australia linked to their VET institution (30%), while 15% enrolled at a different university in Australia not linked to their original VET institution. Twenty-five per cent continued their studies at the same VET college in Australia that they had attended in 2006; 15% were enrolled at a different VET college in Australia; 5% were studying at another Australian private or public institution; 5% were studying at an overseas university; and 5% were enrolled in other (not specified) institutions.

The survey suggested 95% of the international respondents who continued in further studies did so in Australia, as did the same proportion of Australian VET respondents who continued their studies.

At the completion of their course in 2006, 46% of international respondents planned to enrol in further studies. Of these, 38% planned to enrol in a course at the same VET institution in Australia (27%), or at the university linked to the institution (11%)—26% re-enrolled in a course at the same Australian VET institution and 22% did so at a linked university. Almost half of those continuing with their studies did so at the same VET institution at which they completed their earlier course, or the university to which the college was linked. A further 53% aspired to study at a different institution in Australia, which they generally did through a different university in Australia (34%), a different VET institution in Australia (10%) or another education provider in Australia (3%). Nine per cent of international respondents aspired to continue their studies in their home country or elsewhere overseas, but only 3% actually did so. Australia generally satisfied the further education aspirations of respondents who were seeking to continue their studies—91% planned to continue their education here and 95% actually enrolled in a new Australian course.

Similarly, among 30% of Australian respondents who planned to enrol in further studies following their 2006 course, 95% aspired to continue their studies at an Australian institution and 95% actually enrolled in a new Australian course. Five per cent aspired to continue studying overseas, and this proportion was actually enrolled in an overseas university in 2007. Among those continuing their studies in Australia, 58% planned to continue studying at the same Australian VET institution, or the university linked to the institution, and 55% actually enrolled there in 2007; 37% of Australian respondents who planned to enrol at a different institution in Australia and 40% actually did so in 2007.

The Australian education system largely met the further education needs of both Australian and international students.

The majority (86%) of international respondents who completed a course in 2006 and enrolled in further studies in 2007 believed their Australian qualification has adequately prepared them for the course they were currently studying, slightly higher than the finding reported by Australian respondents (70%).

6.4. Characteristics of respondents in employment

Among those international respondents from 2006 who were working part-time or full-time on 1 August 2007, or who had accepted a full-time job offer (67% of the 2007 respondents), the majority (84%) found their job in Australia, while all the Australian 2006 respondents (69% of the 2007 respondents) were working in Australia.

One-third (34%) of international respondents who looked for and found a job indicated they first found out about the job through family and friends, while 20% found out through an online job board or an advertisement on the internet. Significantly fewer Australian respondents found out about their job through family and friends (13%) and slightly fewer did so through online job boards or internet advertising (17%).

Eighteen per cent of international respondents who found a job used strategies such as approaching an employer directly (13%) or through work contacts and networks (5%). The corresponding proportion was 27% for Australian respondents; 15% approached an employer directly and 12% used work contacts or networks. Four per cent of international and 12% of Australian respondents used an employment agency. Advertisements in the print media were a common source of initial information about the job for both Australian (12%) and international respondents (10%).

Almost all respondents made use of their institution's careers service as a source of information when they actively sought employment following completion of their Australian studies.

Thirty-one per cent of international respondents who found a job indicated it was very difficult or somewhat difficult to find this job, more than reported by Australian respondents (15%).

The main difficulties faced by international respondents in finding a job were lack of work experience, English language barriers, visa conditions not allowing more than 20 hours work per week and lack of permanent resident status.

Just under half (47%) of international respondents who actively sought employment thought employers highly valued the course they studied in Australia. This perception was shared by 54% of the Australian respondents. One-quarter of the international group (26%) felt employers only somewhat valued the course they studied in Australia, 18% felt employers attributed little value to their Australian education, and 8% did not know. The corresponding estimates for the Australian respondents were 37% (employers somewhat value) and 9% (little value). These findings indicated a number of international respondents have the perception from employers that the course they completed was of low value.

By 1 August 2007, the majority of international respondents who were employed had found a job in the non-government sector, including not-for-profit organisations (79%), while 11% found employment in the government sector. Comparatively, slightly fewer Australian respondents found a job in the non-government sector (62%), while 19% were employed in the government sector. These employment outcomes were very much in line with the aspirations reported by final year respondents before their course completion (though slightly more Australian respondents gained employment in the government sector than was previously planned, as did slightly fewer international respondents).

6.5. Hours worked and satisfaction of employed respondents

Employed international respondents found work in a variety of areas: one-third (32%) found a job in the hospitality industry (accommodation, cafes and restaurants), 13% in health and community services, 12% in retail trade, 12% in property services, 7% in manufacturing, and 22% in other areas such as personal services, utilities and education.

The average number of hours per week for employed international respondents working in their main paid job was 24 hours, compared with 35 hours for employed Australian respondents. Sixty per cent of the international respondents reported working 20 hours or fewer in their main paid job each week, compared to 16% of employed Australian respondents. Fifteen per cent of the international group, and 35% of the Australian group, reported working 39 hours or more in the average week.

The main paid job held on 1 August 2007 was more likely to meet the employment expectations of Australian respondents (61%) when they finished their course than those of their international counterparts (50%). Conversely, international respondents were more likely to feel their main job did not meet the expectations they had when they finished studying (29% compared with 14% for the Australian employed respondents). However, the international group was only slightly less satisfied than the Australian respondents with the industry and profession in which they were now working—although at least three-quarters of both groups report being satisfied or very satisfied (international—75% satisfied; 11% dissatisfied; Australian—79% satisfied; 7% dissatisfied; though both based on small sample sizes).

International and Australian respondents who were working or studying full-time were asked about the ease of balancing their study and work commitments with their family and social life. More than one-third of both groups found this balance easy or very easy (34% for the international and 41% for the Australian respondents). That balance was somewhat, or very difficult for around third (31%) of international, and 27% of the Australian respondents. A further one-third of both groups found the study or work/life balance to be neither difficult nor easy (34% for the international group compared with 31% for their Australian counterparts).

6.6. Satisfaction of respondents with study in Australia

Around 80% of international respondents were satisfied with their overall study experience and overall course experience in Australia, although satisfaction with the latter had significantly declined (from 86% to 76%) between 2006 and 2007. Australian respondents reported slightly higher satisfaction levels on these measures. The quality of education and course content were also rated as satisfactory by approximately 80% of respondents in both the international and Australian respondents.

Low level of satisfaction with the cost of Australian courses was generally an issue of concern. In 2007, international respondents were significantly less satisfied (32%) than Australians (51%). The proportion of international respondents satisfied with the cost of the course had fallen 6 points from

38% in 2006 to 32% in 2007, while the proportion of satisfied Australian respondents hardly changed over the same period⁸.

There was a significant improvement in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with getting work experience in their field of study between 2006 and 2007. More Australian respondents were satisfied with this aspect in 2007 (57%) compared with 2006 (38%), and significantly more international respondents (62%) were satisfied with their ability to get work in their field of study in 2007 compared to 44% in 2006. International respondents indicated they would value more practical work experience in their curricula.

Around half of the international (48%) and Australian respondents (47%) were satisfied with the help they received in getting a good job in their field of study.

Issues of cost, practical work experience, and assistance in finding relevant employment were important to international respondents. Further, many rated the quality of courses in the USA and UK as better than those offered in Australia. Australian post-secondary education needs to remain competitive, relevant and recognised as helping students to attain their employment and education aspirations.

The reasons international respondents enjoyed studying in Australia go beyond the 'educational products' on offer, courses and institutions. They were also influenced by the Australian people, culture and natural environment—things that were 'Australian'. These views were held fairly uniformly among respondents from different countries with few gender or age variations. However, older international respondents (26 yrs+) placed slightly more emphasis on course structure, Australia being a good place to live, a beautiful country and experiencing a new and different culture. Overall, 82% of international respondents were satisfied with learning about the Australian culture (significantly higher than the proportion of the Australian respondents (54%) who was satisfied with learning about new cultures).

Both international and Australian respondents regarded a range of general cognitive, analytical, inter-personal and communications skills as important to develop during their education in Australia, and were subsequently finding the skills they developed to be useful. For the international respondents, the 13 general skills investigated ranged in importance and usefulness ratings from 'effective communication' (94% important, 94% useful) to gaining an 'international perspective' (83% important, 85% useful). There was much more being gained from Australian education than the knowledge acquired of the particular profession or discipline under study.

However, English language competency remains an issue for some international respondents. In 2006, international respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of English language skills when they started their course. The majority (73%) in 2006 indicated their English language skills were up to the level required to undertake their studies. In 2007, international respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of written and spoken English language skills after they completed their course in Australia. Again, the majority of international respondents in 2007 indicated their English language skills were up to the level required to continue their studies or seek

⁸ *ibid*

suitable employment (79% for written, and 83% for spoken English skills). These findings indicated international respondents generally perceive that they have sufficient knowledge of English by the time they complete their course and show a slight increase in their own perceived competency after they complete it.

High proportions of international (88%) and Australian respondents (90%) indicated in 2007 they would recommend studying in Australia to family and friends. In addition, 70% of international respondents in 2007 were willing to recommend the course they completed, lower than the 80% in 2006, but not statistically significant. This compares to 82% of Australian respondents in 2007 who said they were willing to recommend their course, versus 84% in 2006.

Eighty per cent of international respondents in 2007 indicated they would recommend the VET institution they attended to family and friends. This was 8% higher than in 2006 (72%); however, not statistically significant. Australian respondents recorded a slight decrease in 2007 of 3% to 79% saying they would recommend their VET institution to family and friends.

6.7. Satisfaction of respondents with life in Australia

More than four-fifths of both international and Australian respondents were satisfied with living in Australia in both 2006 and 2007. In 2007, more than three-quarters of both sets of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their life situation.

Consistent with their concerns about the cost of the course, there was also general concern regarding the cost of living. Fewer than half of the international (46%) and Australian respondents (44%) were satisfied with the cost of living in Australia.

The vast majority of both international and Australian respondents, however, would recommend living in Australia (87% international; 93% Australian) and the city they lived in (85% international; 87% Australian) to others.

International respondents were asked whether they kept in touch with members of various groups of people whom they met while studying in Australia. The strengthening of international networks through education was apparent. More than three-quarters reported keeping in touch with other international students not from their home country (88%); with people they worked with (82%); with respondents from their home country (81%); and with Australian students (75%). Sixty-three per cent reported keeping in touch with local Australian community, cultural or religious groups. Thirty-seven per cent of Australian respondents were satisfied with their opportunities for networking with people from around the world.

In 2007, 67% of international respondents reported satisfaction with the opportunities to make close friends with Australians. More than three-quarters (77%) of international respondents felt they were treated with respect and courtesy by Australians. The majority of respondents would welcome increased opportunities to get to know each other better with a view to building closer friendships, and better understanding each others' cultures.

6.8. Future plans of respondents

Seventy-eight per cent of international and 90% of Australian respondents intended to live in Australia in 12 months time. Among those international respondents from 2006 who were working part-time or full-time on 1 August 2007, or who had accepted a full-time job offer (67% of the 2007 respondents), the majority (84%) found their job in Australia, while all the Australian 2006 respondents were working in Australia.

This survey suggested 95% of the international respondents who continued in further studies did so in Australia, as did the same proportion of Australian respondents who continued their studies.

The top four goals important for international and Australian respondents to achieve in the next five years were:

- having a satisfying and rewarding career (88% of international and 96% Australian respondents)
- getting a full-time job (87% of international and 79% of Australian respondents)
- having a secure job (86% of international and 82% of Australian respondents)
- earning a lot of money (82% of international and 75% of Australian respondents).

Seventy-eight per cent of international respondents were planning to apply (48%) or have already applied (30%) for permanent resident status in Australia. Only 22% were not planning to apply for permanent resident status. Clearly, most of the international group believed they can achieve their medium-term career goals in Australia, and were satisfied with both the education they received and with living in Australia overall. The majority will recommend studying in Australia to others, the VET institution they attended, the course they completed, the city they lived in, and living in Australia generally.



Appendix A—2007 follow-up questionnaire



Australian Government

Australian Education International



Follow-up Survey of VET and University Graduates

INTERNATIONAL AND AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

who completed a course of study in Australia during the period between August 2006 to July 2007.

2007



This questionnaire is to be completed by international and Australian students and can be completed only once.

Australian Education International (AEI) is an arm of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) with responsibility for attracting students from around the world to study in Australia and ensuring that international students have a successful and enjoyable study experience.

AEI is researching the experiences and views of international and Australian students who completed a course of study in Australia during the period of August 2006 to July 2007.

Thank you for participating in the first part of this survey in 2006.

This follow-up questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Alternatively, you can complete this questionnaire online at www.studentsurvey.com.au

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2007 Follow-up Survey of International and Australian VET and University Graduates

- *If you cannot give an exact answer to any question, please provide your best estimate.*
- *For questions with boxes, please tick the appropriate box.*
- *There is space at the end of the survey to write any comments you may have about your studies or experiences at your VET college or university in Australia.*

Dear Student,

Thank you for participating in the 2006 survey and for agreeing to participate in this important follow-up survey in 2007.

This research will provide valuable information to industry and Government on the experience of international and Australian students in Australian education institutions.

I hope your studies in Australia have been enjoyable and rewarding and I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Fiona Buffinton
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Education International

Department of Education, Science and Training

August 2007

About this survey

The aim of the follow-up survey is to ask you about your progress in relation to employment or future study following your graduation from the course you completed in Australia.

The information from this survey will be used by Australian Education International (AEI) and will be published in a report.

The information we gather from you and other graduates will give us a better understanding of the overall educational experience of international and Australian students.

AEI has contracted Ipsos Australia to conduct the survey. Please return your completed questionnaire by:
Monday, 8th October 2007.

Privacy

You do not need to give your name or any other information which can identify you on the survey form (and we will not release any data which will allow individuals to be identified).

We will make sure that your responses are treated in strict confidence and you can be assured that the content of individual responses will not be divulged.

However, if you wish to enter the draw for cash prizes (see below), you will need to complete the optional section at the end of this survey and fill in your contact details.

Any personal information collected will not be disclosed to any third party.

Cash prizes

34 cash prizes will be offered to randomly selected, eligible respondents (with contact details) in 2007.

The prize winners in 2007 will be contacted by Ipsos by both letter and email by December 2007. The prizes will be delivered to the mail addresses provided. All eligible students submitting a completed questionnaire with contact details before the nominated closing date – **Monday, 8th October 2007** – will be included in the prize draw.

Need further information?

If you have any questions about this survey, or completing this questionnaire, please call Preslav Bondjakov, Project Manager at Ipsos Australia on 1800 791 000 or email preslav.bondjakov@ipsos.com.au

Q5a What is the full title of the course (e.g. Bachelor of Science, Diploma of Education)? *(Write in the box below)*

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Q5b What are/will be your major fields of study (e.g. information technology, civil engineering, drama, pure maths, French, hotel management)? *(Write in the box(es) below)*

		Office Use only		
i				
ii				

Q5c What is the level of the course? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Diploma or advanced diploma 1
- Associate Degree 2
- Pass bachelor degree 3
- Honours bachelor degree 4
- Graduate entry bachelor degree 5
- Graduate certificate 6
- Graduate/Post graduate Diploma 7
- Postgraduate qualifying/preliminary 8
- Masters Degree 9
- Doctorate 10
- Other course 11

Q5d How are you/will you be attending this course? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Wholly or mainly full-time 1
- Wholly or mainly part-time 2

Q5e Is the study for the course mainly: *(Please tick one box only)*

- Wholly or mainly internal (on-campus) 1
- Wholly or mainly external 2

Q5f What is the name of the institution you are, or will be attending? *(Write in the box below)*

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Q5g What month and year are you likely to **complete** this course?

Month										Year			

Q5h Did you receive any credit or advanced standing for this course as a result of the studies you completed in Australia? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 99

Q5i Do you think that your Australian qualification has adequately prepared you for the course you are currently studying/about to study? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 99

STUDENTS STILL LOOKING FOR A JOB (QUESTION 4a, Code 2)
ANSWER QUESTION 6a and QUESTION 6b;

THOSE WHO HAVE FOUND A JOB (QUESTION 4a, Code 3) **GO TO INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE QUESTION 6c;**

ALL OTHERS GO TO INSTRUCTION BEFORE QUESTION 7a

Q6a Where are you planning to find your next job in your field of study? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Not planning to find a job in this field 1
- Australia 2
- Another country overseas 3
(Please specify in box below)
-
- (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY)** Your home country 4

Q6b Once you find a job, where are you likely to work? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Your own business 1
- Contract work 2
- Family business 3
- Other private company 4
- Public sector/Government 5
- Don't know 99

STUDENTS STILL LOOKING FOR A JOB (QUESTION 4a, Code 2) **OR**
STUDENTS WHO HAVE FOUND A JOB (QUESTION 4a, Code 3)
TO ANSWER QUESTIONS 6c to 6g

ALL OTHERS GO TO INSTRUCTION BEFORE QUESTION 7a.

Q6c If you actively sought employment since you graduated, please indicate below which of the following strategies or sources of information you used: *(Please tick all that apply)*

- Australian university, VET/TAFE college careers service 1
- Other Australian university, VET/TAFE college source (e.g. lecturer, faculty) 2
- Careers service outside Australia 3
- Other institution careers service outside Australia 4
- Other institution source (i.e. lecturer, faculty) outside Australia 5
- Careers fair or information session in Australia 6
- Careers fair or information session outside Australia 7
- Advertisements in the newspaper or other print media 8
- Advertisements on the internet/online job boards 9
- Posted resumes on the internet 10
- Family/friends 11
- Approached employer directly 12
- Employment agency 13
- Work contacts/networks 14
- Did not actively seek employment since graduation 15
- Other *(Please specify below)* 16

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Q6d How difficult has it been for you to find work? *(Please tick one box only)*

- Very easy 1
- Easy 2
- Neither difficult nor easy 3
- Somewhat difficult 4
- Very difficult 5

Q6e Please write in the main difficulties or barriers you have faced in finding work if any... (Write in the box below)

Q6f In your experience, do you think employers value the course you studied in an Australian institution? (Please tick one box only)

- Very highly 1 ► GO TO Q7a
- Quite highly 2 ► GO TO Q7a
- Somewhat 3 ► GO TO Q7a
- Not very much 4 ► GO TO Q6g
- Not at all 5 ► GO TO Q6g
- Don't know/can't say 6 ► GO TO Q7a

Q6g Answer Q6g if in Q6f you answered *not very much* or *not at all*: Why do you say that? (Please write in the box below)

2. What you were doing on 1 August 2007

ANSWER QUESTION 7a ONLY IF NOT PLANNING TO FIND A JOB IN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY (QUESTION 6a, CODE 1)

ALL OTHERS GO TO **QUESTION 7b**

Q7a What are the main reasons that you are NOT planning to find your next job in your field of study? (Please write in the box below)

Q7b As at 1 August 2007, which one of the following best describes your position with regard to study, paid work (including self-employment) or something else? (Please tick one box only)

- Studying full-time only 1
- Studying part-time only 2
- Studying full-time and working part-time 3
- Studying part-time and working full-time 4
- Studying part-time and working part-time 5
- Working full-time or had accepted full-time job offer 6
- Working full-time but seeking another job 7
- Working part-time but seeking full-time work 8
- Working part-time but NOT seeking full-time work 9
- Not working but seeking full-time work only 10
- Not working but seeking part-time work only 11
- Not working but seeking any work (full-time or part-time) 12
- Not working or studying 13
- Extended time off (i.e. travelling) 14
- Other (Please specify below) 15

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COMPLETE QUESTION 7c ONLY IF YOU ARE STUDYING OR WORKING FULL-TIME (I.E. CODES 1,3,4,6,7 IN QUESTION 7b),

OTHERWISE GO TO INSTRUCTION BEFORE QUESTION 8a

Q7c Now that you are working full-time or studying full-time, how easy do you find it to balance your study or work commitments with your family and social life? (Please tick one box only)

- Very easy 1
- Easy 2
- Neither difficult nor easy 3
- Somewhat difficult 4
- Very difficult 5

COMPLETE QUESTION 8a to QUESTION 8j ONLY IF YOU HAD A PAID JOB OR WERE SELF-EMPLOYED ON 1 AUGUST 2007 OR IF YOU HAD ACCEPTED AN OFFER OF A JOB,

IF YOU HOLD MORE THAN ONE JOB, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BASED ON THE JOB IN WHICH YOU CURRENTLY WORK MOST HOURS

OTHERWISE GO TO QUESTION 11

Q8a Are you working in Australia? (Please tick one box only)

- Yes 1
- No 2

IF NO WRITE COUNTRY BELOW

If Australia, postcode (Write in the box below)

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If overseas, country: (Write country in the box below)

Office Use only

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Q8b Is your employer in: (Please tick one box only)

- Government, Federal 1
- Government, State, Provincial 2
- Government, Local 3
- Self-employed 4
- Other Private Sector 5
- Not for profit organisation 6
- Other, not known 7

Q8c Please write in the type of business carried out by this company or organisation (Write in the box below)

Office Use only

Q8d Please write in the date you started or will start this job: (Please write in the box below)

Month										Year			

Q8e In this job, what is your occupation? Please give full job title or designation. (Write in the box below)

Office Use only

Q8f Please indicate how you **first** found out about this job:
(Please tick single most applicable response only)

Australian university, VET/TAFE college careers service	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other university, VET/TAFE college source (e.g. lecturer, faculty)	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Careers service outside Australia	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other institution careers service outside Australia	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other institution source (i.e. lecturer, faculty) outside Australia	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Careers fair or information session in Australia	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Careers fair or information session outside Australia	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertisement in the newspaper or other print media	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertisement on the internet/online job board	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family/friends	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approached employer directly	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approached by employer directly	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment agency	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work contacts/networks	14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify below)	15	<input type="checkbox"/>

▼

Q8g How many hours do you/will you work in your main paid job in an average week? (Write in the boxes below)

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Q8h In this job which one of the following best describes your employment? (Please tick one box only)

Permanent (likely to be more than 12 months)	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term/temporary (likely to be less than 12 months)	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual job	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify below)	4	<input type="checkbox"/>

▼

Q8i What is/will be your gross (pre-tax) annual salary in \$AUD (estimate will be sufficient) (Write in boxes below)

\$

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 ,

--	--	--

 .00

Q8j If your job is full-time, is this your first full time job of any sort (other than vacation jobs)? (Please tick one box only)

Yes	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

ONLY ANSWER QUESTION 9 IF
YOU ARE ALREADY WORKING IN THIS JOB
(QUESTION 4a CODE 3),

OTHERWISE GO TO QUESTION 10

Q9a To what extent does this job meet the employment expectations you had when you finished your course in Australia? (Please tick one box only)

Completely	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	▶	GO TO Q9c
Mostly	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	▶	GO TO Q9c
Somewhat	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	▶	GO TO Q9b
A little	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	▶	GO TO Q9b
Not at all	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	▶	GO TO Q9b

Q9b What are the main reasons that you are not working in a position that allows you to fulfil the expectations you had when you finished your Australian course?
(Please write in the box below)

Q9c How satisfied are you with the industry and profession in which you are now working? (Please tick one box only)

Very satisfied	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satisfied	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissatisfied	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very dissatisfied	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 How difficult was it for you to find this job?
(Please tick one box only)

Very difficult	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat difficult	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither difficult nor easy	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very easy	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11 Of the two statements written below, please tick the statement that most applies to you... (Please tick one box only)

I would prefer a job that gives me good job security but which may have only average income	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would prefer a job that gives me above average income but which may deliver little job security	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12 Do you believe that the course you completed in Australia has adequately prepared you for the work force?
(Please tick one box only)

Yes	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	99	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13 How useful to you **now** are the following skills you may have developed during your **course** in Australia?
(Tick only one box per row)

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know/ not developed in Australia
Effective communication in a variety of contexts	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to work independently	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to work collaboratively	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Creative thinking	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Analytical thinking	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective problem-solving	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity for life-long learning	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular discipline	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge and skills pertinent to a particular professional area	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Social and ethical responsibility	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
An international perspective	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Characteristics of self-reliance and leadership	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
English language competency	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

3. Future Plans

Q14a Whether you are studying, working or doing something else at the moment, is this what you intend to do for at least the next 12 months? *(Please tick one box only)*

Yes ¹ GO TO Q15a
 No ² GO TO Q14b
 Don't know ⁹⁹ GO TO Q15a

Q14b Answer Q14b if in Q14a you answered No: What do you intend to do next? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Study ¹
 Work ²
 Look for a different job ³
 Other *(Please specify below)* ¹⁷

Where do you intend to be living in 12 months time?
Q15a *(Please tick one box only)*

In Australia ¹
 In home country ²
 In another country ³
 Don't know ⁹⁹

Q15b Still thinking about the future, please indicate how important the following will be for you to achieve in the next five years...
(Please tick only one box in each row)

	Extremely important	Important	Neither	Not important	Not at all important	Don't know / NA
Get a full-time job	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Stay at the same job	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Progress in the present organisation	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Have a satisfying and rewarding career	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Work in a different profession	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Work in a different organisation	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Work in a different country	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Earn a lot of money	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Have a secure job	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>
Give up work to have a family	¹ <input type="checkbox"/>	² <input type="checkbox"/>	³ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁵ <input type="checkbox"/>	⁹⁹ <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Final Questions

Q16a Would you recommend to others the following...?
(Please tick one box in each row only)

Yes No Not sure

i) Studying in Australia ¹ ² ³

If NO, please write below the reason(s) why not

ii) The university or VET/TAFE college you attended ¹ ² ³

If NO, please write below the reason(s) why not

Q16 continued...

Would you recommend to others the following...?
(Please tick one box in each row only)

Yes No Not sure

iii) The course you completed ¹ ² ³

If NO, please write below the reason(s) why not

iv) The city you lived in ¹ ² ³

If NO, please write below the reason(s) why not

v) Living in Australia ¹ ² ³

If NO, please write below the reason(s) why not

QUESTIONS 17 TO 19 FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY

AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 20

Q17a Are you planning to apply or have you already applied for permanent residency (PR) in Australia?
(Please tick one box only)

Yes, you are planning to apply ¹ **▶** GO TO Q17b
 Yes, you have already applied ² **▶** GO TO Q18a
 No, you are not planning to apply ³ **▶** GO TO Q18a

Q17b When are you planning to apply for permanent residency (PR) in Australia? *(Please tick one box only)*

Within the next 12 months ¹
 In the next 1 to 2 years ²
 In the next 2 to 3 years ³
 In the next 4 to 5 years ⁴
 In the next 6 years or more ⁵

When you completed your course in Australia, your **written English** skills were: *(Please tick one box only)*

Up to the level required to continue your studies or seek suitable employment ¹
 In need of improvement through further training ²

When you completed your course in Australia, your **spoken English** skills were: *(Please tick one box only)*

Up to the level required to continue your studies or seek suitable employment ¹
 In need of improvement through further training ²

Q19 Do you keep in touch with members of the following groups of people whom you met while studying in Australia...?
(Please tick one box only for each group of people)

Yes No Did not meet while studying in Australia

Australian students ¹ ² ³
 Students from your home country ¹ ² ³
 Other international students not from your home country ¹ ² ³
 Local Australian community, cultural or religious groups ¹ ² ³
 People you worked with ¹ ² ³

Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...? (Please tick only one box in each row)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know / N/A
Quality of education	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Course content	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of the course	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Overall course experience	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Overall study experience	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Getting work experience in your field of study	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Help in getting a good job in your field of study	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of living in Australia overall	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Living in Australia overall	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Satisfaction with your life now	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY:

Making close friends with Australians	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Being treated with respect and courtesy by Australians	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Learning about the Australian culture	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS ONLY:

Making close friends with International students	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Networking with people around the world	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Learning about new cultures	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q21 How do you rate the overall quality of your Australian course compared to graduates who studied similar courses from the following countries...? (Please tick only one box in each row)

	Better than Australia	Similar to Australia	Worse than Australia	Don't know/ can't say
UK	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
USA	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Canada	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
NZ	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Singapore	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
China	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY:

Your home country	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	99 <input type="checkbox"/>
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Q22 What were the best aspects of studying in Australia? (Write in the box below)

Q23 What aspects of studying in Australia are most in need of improvement? (Write in the box below)

QUESTION 24a FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY, AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 24c

Q24a Are you a member of the International Student Alumni? (Please tick one box only)

Yes	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
No	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

Q24b Would you be agreeable to someone from Australian Education International contacting you in the future to assist in the promotion of study in Australia? (e.g. through the student alumni; local fairs or exhibitions; or giving talks to prospective students) (Please tick one box only)

Yes	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
No	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS IN Q26 AT THE END OF THIS SURVEY BOOKLET. YOU WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THE CASH PRIZE DRAW

Q24c Would you be agreeable to participate if sometime in the future Australian Education International (AEI) conducts a further follow up survey? (Please tick one box only)

Yes	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
No	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS IN Q26 AT THE END OF THIS SURVEY BOOKLET. YOU WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THE CASH PRIZE DRAW

Your Comments...

Q25 If you would like, please write in the box below any other comments about your studies or experiences in Australia, including suggestions for what could be improved.

Thank you for completing this survey

We can assure you that your personal details will not be identified.

Please complete the following page if you would like to enter the cash prize draw, or if you would be interested in finding out about the international student alumni, or participating in a future survey similar to this (as indicated in the survey).



Optional Section

Q26 I submit my personal details and agree: (Tick box)

To be included in the cash prize draw for this survey

Your name (first name and surname)	<input type="text"/>
Present mailing address (if living in Australia)	<input type="text"/>
Permanent address in Australia (if different from above)	<input type="text"/>
Residential home address overseas	<input type="text"/>
Please specify other addresses where we can contact you (if different from above)	<input type="text"/>
Main email address	<input type="text"/>

If you have more than one email address, please specify your other email addresses in the boxes below:

Other email address 1	<input type="text"/>
Other email address 2	<input type="text"/>
Other email address 3	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number in Australia	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number overseas	<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone number in Australia	<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone number overseas	<input type="text"/>

What to do now

Please submit your completed survey by no later than **Monday, 8th October 2007**.

In this section we ask you to provide your contact details. **Please note that this is optional and you should only complete it if you wish to be included in the cash prize draw for 2007 or to be part of an international student alumni or to participate in future follow-up surveys (as indicated above).**

An important part of this survey is the follow-up with students after they have completed their course of study to find out their employment and future study outcomes. Therefore it is important for us to receive as many completed questionnaires as possible.

Please complete your name and contact details to be eligible for the cash draws in 2007 once you have completed and returned your questionnaire.

Your Privacy

Your personal details will be treated in strict confidence and will only be used by Australian Education International and Ipsos for the purpose of the cash prize draw, or for the international student alumni or for future survey participation, should you have given approval for these above.

Names and contact details provided by you **will be kept in a secure password protected file** and will not be shared with any government or educational institution.

No responses will be linked with individual respondents. **All of your personal details will be deleted once we complete the cash prize draw for 2007.**



Appendix B—Detailed data tables

Table 15: Satisfaction with overall study and course experience

Overall study experience	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=129	n=68	n=67
Very satisfied/satisfied	79% (a, d)	82%	87%	92%
Neither/nor	15%	12%	6%	4%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	5%	4%	4%	3%
Overall course experience	n=130	n=128	n=68	n=68
Very satisfied/satisfied	76% (a, b); (a, c)	86%	88%	87%
Neither/nor	18%	10%	3%	6%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	5%	4%	6%	7%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20b/Q16 Overall, how satisfied are you with your study experience in Australia?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q22/Q18 Overall, how satisfied are you with the course you are currently completing?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 16: Satisfaction with quality of education and course content

Quality of education	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=129	n=68	n=67
Very satisfied/satisfied	82%	83%	84%	79%
Neither/nor	14%	12%	10%	10%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	5%	5%	3%	10%
Don't know/not applicable	0%	0%	3%	0%
Course content	n=130	n=129	n=68	n=66
Very satisfied/satisfied	84%	78%	84%	82%
Neither/nor	12%	18%	4%	6%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	5%	5%	9%	12%
Don't know/not applicable	0%	0%	3%	0%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20a/Q14 How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the university at which you are studying?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 17: Satisfaction with cost of the course

Cost of the course	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=129	n=68	n=68
Very satisfied/satisfied	32% (a, c)	38%	51%	50%
Neither/nor	21%	24%	19%	31%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	47% (a, c); (a, d)	37% (b, d)	25%	18%
Don't know/not applicable	0%	1%	4%	1%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q20a/Q14 How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the university at which you are studying?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 18: Satisfaction with obtaining work experience in field of study and getting a good job in field of study

Getting work experience in field of study	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=130	n=68	n=68
Very satisfied/satisfied	62% (a, b)	44%	57%	38%
Neither/nor	22%	21%	13%	25%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	11% (a, b)	25%	16%	23%
Don't know/not applicable	6%	9%	13%	13%
Help in getting a good job in your field of study	n=130	-	n=68	-
Very satisfied/satisfied	48%	-	47%	-
Neither/nor	23%	-	19%	-
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	18%	-	24%	-
Don't know/not applicable	12%	-	10%	-

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q32a/Q28a How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of living in Australia?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 19: Willingness to recommend study in Australia

Would recommend the course you completed	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=122	n=68	n=67
Yes	70%	80%	82%	84%
No	12%	13%	9%	10%
Not sure	18% (a, b)	7%	9%	6%
Would recommend the VET institution you attended	n=130	n=124	n=68	n=67
Yes	80%	72%	79%	82%
No	12%	15%	10%	12%
Not sure	8%	13%	10%	6%
Would recommend studying in Australia	n=130	n=125	n=68	
Yes	88%	93%	90%	-
No	2%	2%	0%	-
Not sure	10%	5%	10%	-

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q16a Would you recommend to others the following...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q23/Q19 Would you recommend the following to friends or family?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 20: Satisfaction with living in Australia overall

Living in Australia overall	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=130	n=68	n=68
Very satisfied/satisfied	82%	87%	85%	85%
Neither/nor	10%	9%	10%	9%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	7%	3%	0%	4%
Don't know/not applicable	1%	0%	4%	1%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q32b/Q28b Overall, how satisfied are you with living in Australia?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 21: Satisfaction with their life now

Satisfaction with your life now	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b		
	2007	2007		
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample		
	n=130	n=68		
Very satisfied/satisfied	76%	79%		
Neither/nor	14%	15%		
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	10%	3%		
Don't know/not applicable	0%	3%		

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 22: Satisfaction with cost of living in Australia overall

Cost of living in Australia overall	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b	c	d
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007	Follow-up sample	Respondents participated in 2007
	n=130	n=130	n=68	n=67
Very satisfied/satisfied	46%	47%	44%	34%
Neither/nor	25%	28%	29%	18%
Very dissatisfied/dissatisfied	28%	23%	21%	32%
Don't know/not applicable	1%	2%	6%	15%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q20 Thinking back about your course and time living and studying in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following aspects...?

(2006) (Int./Aus.) Q32a/Q28a How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of living in Australia?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b); a and c shown as (a, c); a and d shown as (a, d); b and d shown as (b, d); c and d shown as (c, d).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 23: Willingness to recommend living in Australia and the city in which lived

Living in Australia	International respondents		Australian respondents	
	a	b		
	2007	2007		
	Follow-up sample	Follow-up sample		
	n=130	n=68		
Yes	87%	93%		
No	2%	0%		
Not sure	12%	7%		
The city you lived in	n=130	n=68		
Yes	85%	87%		
No	5%	4%		
Not sure	10%	9%		

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q16a Would you recommend to others the following...?

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown as (a, b).

Totals for each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 24: Importance of achieving various outcomes in next five years

Importance of achieving various outcomes in next five years (2007 follow-up sample)	Extremely Important/ Important	Neither/ nor	Not important/ Not at all important	Don't know / NA
Have a satisfying and rewarding career				
International respondents	88%	5%	6%	0%
Australian respondents	96%	1%	0%	3%
Get a full-time job				
International respondents	87%	3%	8%	2%
Australian respondents	79%	7%	9%	4%
Have a secure job				
International respondents	86%	8%	6%	0%
Australian respondents	82%	9%	6%	3%
Earn a lot of money				
International respondents	82%	9%	8%	0%
Australian respondents	75%	16%	7%	1%
Progress in the present organisation				
International respondents	56%	19%	20%	5%
Australian respondents	56%	12%	24%	9%
Work in a different organisation				
International respondents	45%	26%	25%	4%
Australian respondents	34%	35%	21%	10%
Work in a different profession				
International respondents	42%	21%	28%	9%
Australian respondents	32%	31%	28%	9%
Stay at the same job				
International respondents	40%	27%	30%	3%
Australian respondents	47%	21%	24%	9%
Work in a different country				
International respondents	32%	30%	33%	5%
Australian respondents	21%	32%	37%	10%
Give up work to have a family				
International respondents	24%	28%	40%	8%
Australian respondents	18%	29%	43%	10%

(2007) (Int./Aus.) Q15b Still thinking about the future, please indicate how important the following will be for you to achieve in the next five years...

Letters in data cells indicate differences at the 95% level of statistical significance between columns: a and b shown (a, b).

Totals for each column will not add to 100% due to multiple response.

A horizontal bar with a light purple square on the left and a dark purple rectangle on the right. The text 'Appendix C—Case study summaries' is centered in the dark purple section.

Appendix C—Case study summaries

A solid dark purple horizontal bar containing white text.

Aliases have been used throughout these summaries

China

Case study 1: “Yu”

VET—hairdressing

Yu, in her late 20s, has been living in Australia for 3½ years. The course in hairdressing was designed to be completed in two years; however, Yu worked hard and completed it in 18 months. Upon completion of the hairdressing course, Yu returned home to China for a short period before returning to Australia to search for full-time work and apply for permanent resident status.

Prior to coming to Australia to study hairdressing, Yu worked as a make up artist and beauty therapist in Shanghai. She loved working in the beauty industry, and wanted to come to Australia to further her experience in the industry and to improve her skills. She chose Australia as a study destination because getting into hairdressing courses here was easy. Yu also sought the experience of living in an overseas country to broaden her horizons.

Upon first deciding to come to Australia, Yu relied heavily on agents:

“I shopped around. I was looking for a good agent, that didn’t oversell. The one I ended up choosing was more expensive than many others, however I really wanted to make the right decision and have an agent that was reliable and honest.”

When she arrived in Australia, Yu lived in a shared house with another international student from China. She had not met her housemate prior to arriving here, but had arranged accommodation before leaving Shanghai. Yu did not have friends or family in Australia when she first arrived; however, she met her now husband (also Chinese) working at a Chinese restaurant where they were both employed part-time while studying.

Reflecting upon her study experience in Australia, Yu was reasonably happy overall, although she identified a range of concerns. First, the teachers changed frequently. This was very frustrating for Yu, as each teacher had a different style and at times the teaching was inconsistent.

In addition, Yu felt like the teachers did not like international students because they saw international students as doing the course just to help them get permanent resident status.

“I think teachers are disapproving of international students. I understand why. I am concerned that many [international students] come here from overseas to study hairdressing just to help them get PR, but they don’t really want to pursue hairdressing as a career. I do, and I feel I suffer for it.”

Because there were not many international students at her institution, there were virtually no support services for international students, and thus no place for them to go if they had troubles or concerns, especially with settling in. When she had any problems with regards to her studies, Yu went to friends for help. She noted, however, that the student union put on ‘cultural days’ where

students of different cultures share their culture with other students (e.g. through lunch, wearing traditional costumes, participating in activities).

With the limit for international students of 20 hours work per week while studying, it was very hard for Yu to get a part-time job in the industry where she could apply her practical skills. She thought it was highly problematic that international students were not eligible for a hairdressing apprenticeship, as it restricted her opportunity to obtain practical experience, which is essential in her profession.

“My Australian classmates were all employed as an apprentice for 2 days per week, and studied for 3 days a week. International students miss out on all that practical experience, as we only get the practical experience we do at school. Salons will only hire locals because locals are eligible for apprenticeships, and the salons will get money from the government for the apprenticeships, which they wouldn’t get if they hired international students.”

When she finished her course, Yu found it quite hard to find a hairdressing job in Australia. She eventually found a job with a low-cost hairdressing chain in the inner city.

“It’s non-stop work, and my boss is really strict. Even though they employ 3-4 Asian girls, they are concerned about our levels of English. Although a positive aspect about my job is that my boss is really trusting of me.”

Yu enjoyed working in hairdressing, although she was not sure if she would remain working as a hairdresser permanently. This was mainly because she found the work very physically demanding. Ideally, Yu would like to continue work in the beauty industry and was pursuing options for completing a business degree, which she hoped would enable her to move more into the business and management side of the industry.

Case study 2: “Jason”

VET—business and hospitality

Jason came to Australia from Shanghai almost 4 years ago. He completed two courses since arriving here: a Diploma in Commerce, then after completing that, he enrolled in an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality, which he finished approximately one year ago. He described his TAFE institution as catering very much for international students, with its popularity increasing and standards of entry subsequently rising over the past decade.

Jason’s parents were very influential in setting up his study experience in Australia. When he was in Year 10 or Year 11 his parents started to arrange things. They preferred Canada at first, because his uncle was living there; however, they were concerned about a number of issues there.

“At the time they were looking into it, an overseas student from China was killed. It made them really concerned.”

Jason also noted that it was very difficult to have a Canadian visa approved. Friends of his parents suggested Australia as a potential study destination.

Jason came to Australia with very weak skills in English. For this reason, he found adjusting to the Australian culture and settling into his study quite a challenge. Meeting people, through working as well as through socialising, was important to Jason to help him improve his language skills.

“I don’t feel my English is very good, but I’m always practising. The more people I meet, the more chances I have to practice.”

The biggest concern Jason had about studying in Australia was the inability of international students to access a concession card for public transport.

“Not having a concession card is the biggest issue.....I feel the Australian Government takes a lot from us, but doesn’t give us much in return.”

The cost of tuition fees was also a concern for Jason, and a deterrent to undertaking further study:

“I would consider going to university to get a bachelor degree, however it’s just too expensive. At [University] for example it’s \$20,000 for one year. That’s one year’s salary back home. Then you have costs for accommodation, meals, it goes on.”

During his time in Australia, Jason has been very active in helping other international students make the most of their time in Australia. He established a charitable organisation which helps international students adjust to Australian culture. He wanted to help others, since he experienced difficulty when he first arrived.

“I saw a need to help international students who first come here. Things like setting up bank accounts, mobile phone accounts, etc aren’t easy when you don’t know much English.”

Jason’s organisation runs seminars for new international students addressing the adjustment process and understanding the Australian culture and way of life. He was still involved with student organisations at various universities in addressing future international student support needs.

Since completing his studies, Jason has worked at a well-regarded restaurant and is now working in a sales role for a national financial company. He very much enjoyed his current role in sales:

“It allows me to meet a range of people in the community.”

Jason remained optimistic, with many ideas for his future. He has a strong sense of community and social welfare. At the time of interview, he was waiting to hear about whether or not his application to the police force had been accepted.

“When you look around, how many Chinese police officers do you see? Not many. That’s why I want to get involved. I can see how I can help the community. I can help people who can’t speak English...I will wait and see what happens.”

If his application to the police force was unsuccessful, Jason was planning to establish his own business in Australia, in the food and beverage industry. He saw himself as very fortunate, as his parents in China were very supportive of this idea. They run a restaurant in China and Jason believed they were happy to see their son move into a similar direction. They were also willing to support Jason financially with business set-up costs.

Australia

Case study 3: “Kellie”

VET - legal studies

Kellie, in her late 20s, lived in a large Australian city in a shared house with a group of international students from various backgrounds. She completed an Advanced Diploma of Business in Legal Practice in 2006, which she undertook on a part-time basis while working full-time as a legal secretary in a well-known law firm. Upon completion of her VET qualification, she subsequently enrolled in a Bachelor of Business Management, of which she has completed her first year. She remains working full-time as she continues her studies.

Kellie initially decided to enrol in VET study because of a recommendation by a work colleague. While she worked as a legal secretary, this was not the career of choice for her. To progress up the career ladder in her firm, educational qualifications are required and encouraged. Her workplace has been very supportive of her throughout her studies, and upon completion of her VET diploma, her manager suggested she enrol in a bachelor’s degree, as this would help with future promotions within the firm.

Overall, while Kellie loved her VET experience, she found aspects of it frustrating. She found adjusting to the life of a full-time worker and part-time student very difficult, particularly the effects on her social life. Balancing pressures and priorities of family, partner, work and study responsibilities was a big challenge.

“I’ve had to learn to say no to people when I need to study. It’s been hard not seeing my friends and family when they want to see me.”

However, the VET experience was also enlightening for Kellie. She felt she understood more about the real world upon completing her course.

“When I watch the news now, and the finance segment comes on, I have some sort of idea of what they’re on about.”

One of the best parts about Kellie’s VET experience was the strong social networks she developed with her fellow students in her course. They studied together, working through and helping each other with difficult assignments and exams. Kellie noted there was an absence of formal support services for VET students, particularly a student union, so students played a strong role in supporting each other.

The course gave Kellie increased confidence, and the ability to complete tasks in her job beyond what was expected in her role. Since completing the course, she finds her job more enjoyable and feels more respected by her colleagues.

There were aspects of dissatisfaction with Kellie’s study experience. She did not like her course co-ordinator (mainly due to his personality). In addition, Kellie felt the teaching staff did not have enough practical experience within the legal professions to ensure high quality teaching.

“Those of us who were working were constantly correcting our teachers.”

Many teachers, Kellie noted, had fallen into teaching after only one year of practical experience, which did not leave her impressed. While other teachers had more extensive practical experience, Kellie felt their experience was out dated, as it had been a while since many worked in the legal profession.

“Sessional teachers in particular left a lot to be desired, however full-timers were ok.”

Kellie provided a great deal of insight with respect to the differences between her VET and university experiences. She strongly preferred her VET experiences to her university experiences to date. She felt VET students formed more of a community, whereas the feeling of community was absent amongst her university peers. She also preferred the more practical approach inherent in VET education.

“My VET course was much more hands on and relevant to what I actually do at work. At university, you’re taught things that you would not necessarily use on the job, and you study more generic knowledge and academic theories. It doesn’t engage me as much.”

Academically, university was much harder for Kellie, although she really wanted to do well and was highly motivated. However, because of the lack of direct relevance to her job, Kellie found it difficult to be enthused about her study.

Kellie has another four years of part-time studies until she completes her university course. By the time she finishes, she would have been a part time student for nine years. While this was an overwhelming prospect for her, Kellie believed it will be worthwhile in the end. She dreamed of becoming a human resources manager in a large firm—and she felt that by completing her university degree, it would certainly help her to achieve this.

Case study 4: “Melina”

VET - business administration

Melina, now in her early 30s, lived in the inner suburbs of a large Australian city with her ageing mother. Originally from Iran, she grew up in the Netherlands then moved to Australia in her 20s.

Melina completed her Diploma in Business Administration at the end of 2006, first completing her Certificates III and IV, then her Diploma. Prior to coming to Australia, she also studied building and business administration in the Netherlands. While she studied much of the same content in business administration in the Netherlands, she enrolled in her course in Australia because she wanted to study more of the same things in English and update her skills.

Overall, Melina really enjoyed her VET experience. She learned a lot, her English improved and she felt a real sense of achievement.

“I was constantly achieving goals.”

However, there were also down sides to Melina’s VET experience. Firstly, she thought her study costs were very expensive:

“I was always paying for unexpected things, such as photocopying. There were all these additional costs, which they don’t tell you about upfront, but which build up to be quite a lot of money. The textbooks also change too quickly, so they don’t consider students who want to purchase second-hand books. So this adds even more costs.”

Melina also found the study to be quite stressful. She observed that students and teachers were both constantly stressed. The scheduling of assignments for her course did not appear to be logically thought through, with many things due at the same time.

“I felt overloaded. They expect a lot from you in a really short period of time. I felt like the teachers didn’t communicate well with each other. They should make an effort to spread out assignments, to have less pressure on student workloads.”

One of the best parts of her study experience was the social networks—the friends she developed during the course.

“I really loved the time we spent together—a group of us would study together at the café after class”.

She also thought the facilities at her TAFE institute were excellent. While she was studying, Melina worked part-time at a café. She found she achieved an effective balance of work and study.

Upon completing her course, Melina found it a little difficult to find a full-time job. Ideally, she would have preferred to have obtained a job involving marketing; however, she commented that the industry was too competitive and the jobs were too hard to find. She applied for a range of jobs

in the business field for which she was unsuccessful, although within a few months she had been accepted into a training program for a prominent accounting firm, where she was one of three candidates accepted.

Her role involved processing payroll in hospitals, and required her to work long hours, which Melina did not enjoy. Her job was not what she expected; she was offsite in the hospitals most of the time, and not really in the office at all.

“It was like they took me to their big shiny offices in the city and I thought that this would be where I was working, however I was sent to a hospital office, which wasn’t a very nice environment at all. It was very different to what I expected.”

Melina did not stay long in the job. She stayed for approximately six months, and left for an administrative role in an IT company, where she remains working. She commented being much happier in her current job—it offers her much more opportunities for training and she was well supported with two “coaches” who act as mentors.

“My new employers are serious about my development. There is also potential to move into marketing roles in future. It’s much better.”

Melina felt the work she does in her current role was partially relevant to what she studied at TAFE. Aspects of her job that were explored in her course include setting up and running meetings, problem solving, using MS Office and touch-typing. But other skills learned in her course were not being applied in her current role, as they involved specialised fields. While she enjoyed her job, it was hard for Melina to say how long she thought she would stay; while it was a good workplace, she was worried she would get bored in her role.

In future, Melina would like to study further and enrol in a bachelor’s degree in the business field. She felt this would provide her with even more opportunities and skills.

“With a university degree, I’ll hopefully be able to find a job where I can get a position involving making decisions, having authority. Where I can see how we could do things differently and improve the business.”

If she had to do things all over again, Melina would not go to TAFE; she would go straight to university, primarily for the greater job opportunities it offers on completion and she would not have to go to school to study another course. She would certainly go back to the institution she studied at to pursue further study, as overall, she was satisfied with her time there. It’s a well respected institution, she noted.