



Gender distribution of International Students commencing in 2011

This research snapshot provides an overview of the gender distribution of international students commencing study in Australia in the first half of 2011¹. Across all commencements, 52% are male. However, the proportion of males and females varies depending on nationality, sector and broad field of education.

Nationality

In the top ten source countries, more than half of commencing students are females led by Thailand (63%) and the United States of America (US) (62%), and including over 50% from Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and China. In contrast, 47% of commencing students from Indonesia and Brazil and 36% from India and Nepal are females.

Sector

Figure 1, shows that females are under represented in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), Schools and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sectors, and over represented in the Other² sector (which includes Study Abroad commencements from the US). Half of all higher education (HE) commencements are females. Of these, 49% commenced undergraduate and 51% commenced graduate courses in 2010. In comparison, 48% of undergraduate and only 41% of graduate level international students studying in the US in 2009/10 were females³.

Broad Field of Education

While half of all HE commencements are females, the gender distribution varies widely by broad field of education. Table 1, shows that females in the HE sector are over represented in fields such as Education; Health; Creative Arts; and Food, Hospitality and personal Services but are significantly under represented in fields such as Engineering; and Information Technology.

The gender distribution in the VET sector also varies widely by broad field of education. Females in the VET sector are over represented in fields such as Health; Society and Culture; and Natural and Physical Sciences but are significantly under represented in fields such as Engineering; and Architecture and Building.

While around half of all female VET and HE students study Management and Commerce, two-thirds of female Indian VET (68%) students and 71% of female HE students from Vietnam are studying in this field.

Three quarters (72%) of female US VET students study Society and Culture. The majority of female Philippine HE students (60%) study Health, most commonly in the field of Nursing (57%).

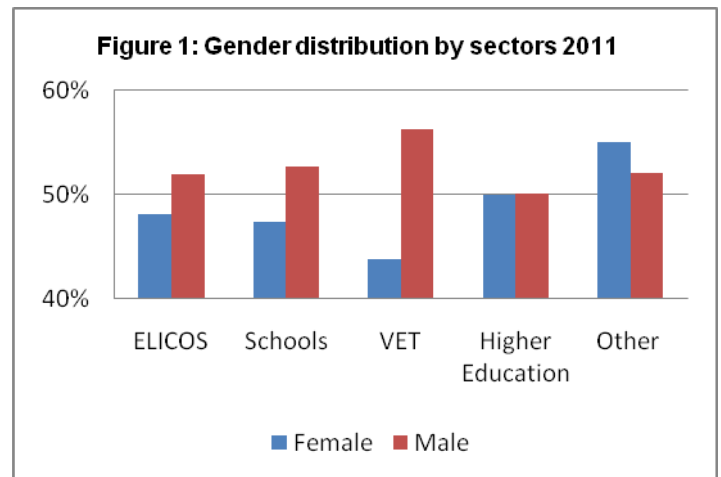


Table 1: Female proportion by broad field of education

Broad Field of Education (sorted by volume of commencements- HE and VET)	VET	HE
Management and Commerce	43%	51%
Society and Culture	64%	60%
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	54%	61%
Engineering and Related Technologies	6%	18%
Information Technology	27%	19%
Health	74%	69%
Creative Arts	50%	63%
Natural and Physical Sciences	62%	53%
Architecture and Building	12%	43%
Education	51%	79%
Mixed Field Programmes	44%	49%
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	39%	55%
Grand Total	44%	50%

Broad fields of education where female proportion is 50% or above are shaded in blue

1. Year-to-date June 2011 data is used for this analysis. This represents just over half of annual commencements.

2. Other includes Foundation, Bridging and Enabling courses plus other courses that do not lead to a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

3. The data on gender distribution in the US is from the "Open Doors 2010", by the Institute of International Education and can be accessed from <http://www.iie.org/>.

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