

Summary of Students 2008 [first half year]: selected higher education statistics

- A total of 107 Higher Education Providers reported student enrolments for the first half of 2008; an increase from 100 in 2007. 2008 is the second year in which all accredited Private Providers are required to report on all of their students (not just those receiving FEE-HELP, which was previously the requirement). The number of accredited Private Providers continues to increase, from 61 in 2007 to 69 in the first half of 2008. Private Providers account for 5.3 per cent of 2008 first half year enrolments.

Student numbers

- The total number of student enrolments reached 925,511 in the first half of 2008, an increase of 2.8 per cent from the first half of 2007.
- There were 696,884 domestic students in the first half of 2008—comprising 75.3 per cent of all enrolments—an increase of 1.7 per cent from the first half of 2007. Overseas student enrolments increased by 6.1 per cent over the same period to 228,627 in the first half of 2008.
- More than half (55.6 per cent) of all student enrolments were for females.
- Nearly three-quarters (72.1 per cent) of students were studying full-time.
- The majority (94.7 per cent) of students were enrolled at public universities (Table A providers).

Commencing student numbers

- The total number of commencing student enrolments increased by 2.6 per cent to 312,626 in the first half of 2008.
- Three-quarters (75.5 per cent) of commencements were for domestic students (236,010). Domestic commencements increased by 1.1 per cent between the first half of 2007 and the first half of 2008 (consistent with a small increase in applications of 0.2 per cent in 2008), while overseas commencements increased by 7.4 per cent to 76,616 over the same period.
- More than half (57.0 per cent) of all commencing student enrolments were for females.

Indigenous student numbers

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students comprised less than one per cent (8,411) of all enrolments in the first half of 2008, and 1.1 per cent (3,459) of commencements. Enrolments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by 7.7 per cent for commencing students and 3.7 per cent for all students between the first half of 2007 and the first half of 2008.
- Indigenous Access and Enabling Scholarships (IAS and IES) were introduced in 2008 and may have had some effect on increasing Indigenous access and participation in that year. From 2008 up to 1000 IAS are available to eligible Indigenous students annually. 700 IES Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships and 210 IES Commonwealth Access Scholarships are available to Indigenous Australians undertaking eligible higher education enabling programs.

National Priority Areas and courses of special interest

- Commencing student enrolments in courses leading to provisional registration as a medical practitioner increased by 22.6 per cent from 2,880 in the first half of 2007 to 3,530 in the first half of 2008. Over the same period, commencements in courses leading to provisional registration as a dental practitioner increased by 29.6 per cent from 399 to 517, and commencements in courses leading to provisional registration as a veterinary practitioner increased by 23.3 per cent from 403 to 497.
- A modest increase was seen in commencing students undertaking courses for initial registration as nurses—up 2.2 per cent from 11,623 in the first half of 2007 to 11,880 in the first half of 2008.
- There was a decrease of 4.5 per cent in the number of commencing students undertaking courses providing initial teacher training—down from 23,135 in the first half of 2007 to 22,096 in the first half of 2008.
- Student enrolments in courses in clinical psychology (as defined by the Commonwealth Grants Scheme guidelines) were reported for the first time in 2008. There were 1,138 students enrolled in clinical psychology in the first half of 2008.

Field of Education

- Increases in commencing student enrolments were seen for most broad fields of education between the first half of 2007 and the first half of 2008—Architecture and Building (up 16.5 per cent), Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies (up 7.0 per cent), Management and Commerce (up 3.9 per cent), Health (up 3.8 per cent),

Information Technology (up 3.2 per cent), Creative Arts (up 1.2 per cent), Society and Culture (up 0.9 per cent), Engineering and Related Technologies (up 0.4 per cent).

- The increase in commencing student enrolments in Information Technology reverses the trend in declining enrolments seen in recent years. However, the increase was for overseas students only; commencements for overseas students increased 12.4 per cent while those for domestic students decreased 4.2 per cent (consistent with a decline in applications, offers and acceptances for information technology courses in 2008, which reflects trends in the domestic student market).
- Large percentage increases were also seen in commencements for Mixed Field Programmes (67.6 per cent) and Food, Hospitality and Personal Services (25.9 per cent).
- Decreases in commencements were seen in Education (down 6.6 per cent) and Natural and Physical Sciences (down 0.8 per cent). While the decrease in Education commencements was seen for both and overseas students (down 6.5 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively), commencements in Natural and Physical Sciences decreased for domestic students (down 1.6 per cent) but increased for overseas students (up 4.3 per cent). While applications for natural and physical sciences increased by 1.3 per cent in 2008, offers declined by 6.5 per cent and acceptances by 15.0 per cent.