

## Summary of the 2013 first half year higher education student statistics

### Student numbers

1. A total of 1 136 041 domestic and international students enrolled at higher education providers (HEPs) in the first half of 2013, an increase of 3.8 per cent from the first half of 2012.
2. There were 876 637 domestic students in the first half of 2013 (77.2 per cent of all students) an increase of 5.4 per cent from the first half of 2012. Overseas student enrolments decreased by 1.5 per cent over the same period to 259 404.
3. Postgraduate students increased by 4.4 per cent to 278 729 while undergraduate students increased by 3.5 per cent to 831 743.
4. More than half of all students enrolled were female (55.8 per cent).
5. Nearly three quarters of students (73.8 per cent) were studying full-time.
6. Over ninety per cent of students were enrolled at public universities (93.3 per cent). Public university enrolments increased 3.3 per cent in the first half of 2013 (1 060 316 students, up from 1 026 473 students in the first half of 2012), while private provider enrolments increased by 11.0 per cent (75 725 students at 93 providers in the first half of 2013, up from 68 199 students at 88 providers in the first half of 2012).

### Commencing student numbers

7. Commencements provide an early indicator of how the higher education system evolves over time.
8. The total number of commencing students increased by 3.9 per cent to 389 494 in the first half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. Domestic commencements accounted for 79.5 per cent of all commencements, an increase of 4.8 per cent from the first half of 2012, while overseas commencements increased by 0.4 per cent to 80 024 students over the same period.
9. Commencing students in Enabling courses<sup>1</sup> increased by 8.0 per cent between the first half of 2012 and the first half of 2013 (10 791 to 11 655), while commencements in Non-award courses<sup>2</sup> decreased by 5.4 per cent (9 589 to 9 067) over the same period. Commencements in postgraduate courses increased by 5.0 per cent to 105 088, while undergraduate commencements increased by 3.6 per cent to 263 684.
10. More than half of all commencing students were female (56.8 per cent).
11. Commencements in part-time study increased by 2.5 per cent in the first half of 2013 compared to the first half of 2012 (84 466 to 86 604).

### Indigenous student numbers

12. Students who self identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comprised 1.0 per cent of all enrolments in the first half of 2013 (up 9.9 per cent to 11 684 students) and 1.2 per cent of commencements (up 8.6 per cent to 4 741).
13. Increases in Indigenous student numbers were recorded across all broad fields of education where students were enrolled. The largest increase was in *Non-award courses*<sup>2</sup> (up 46.2 per cent to 38 students), while *Mixed Field Programs* increased by 24.5 per cent to 447 students.

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<sup>1</sup> A course of instruction that enables a person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award. Enabling courses do not include a course leading to a higher education award or any course that the Minister determines is not an enabling course under the HESA Act Schedule 1.

<sup>2</sup> A program of study which does not lead to an award and which comprises a unit or units of study which: is a unit or units of study from an award course or courses at the higher education provider; and is able to be counted as a credit towards some award course at the higher education provider by all students who complete the unit or units of study.

14. The main fields of education in which Indigenous students were enrolled were *Society and Culture* (3 746 students, or 32.1 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by *Health* (2 400 students or 20.5 per cent); and *Education* (2 040 students or 17.5 per cent).

### **National priority areas and courses of special interest**

15. Commencements in priority area courses in the first half of 2013 increased in courses leading to registration as a veterinary practitioner (up 38.7 per cent to 681 students); courses in clinical psychology (up 17.0 per cent to 846 students); courses leading to registration as a dental practitioner (up 16.0 per cent to 667 students); courses leading to registration as a medical practitioner (up 5.1 per cent to 3 597 students); and courses for initial registration as nurses (up 4.2 per cent to 16 589 students).
16. In the first half of 2013, there was a decrease in commencing students undertaking courses providing initial teacher training (down 1.2 per cent to 25 723 students).

### **Low socioeconomic status<sup>3 4</sup>**

17. Low SES commencing students in the first half of 2013 increased by 7.0 per cent compared to the same period in 2012 (from 48 694 or 16.7 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students to 52 080 or 16.9 per cent of all commencing domestic onshore students), while all low SES students increased by 7.5 per cent (from 128 820 to 138 470 students).

### **Regional and remote<sup>3 5</sup>**

18. Commencing students in regional areas in the first half of 2013 increased by 3.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2012 (from 58 703 to 60 856 students), while commencing students in remote areas increased by 0.1 per cent to 2 660 students.

### **Field of Education**

19. Increases in the number of commencing students were recorded across most broad fields of education in the first half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012, with *Mixed Field Programs* (up 14.5 per cent); *Engineering and Related Technologies* (up 9.2 per cent); *Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* (up 7.1 per cent); *Creative Arts* (up 6.8 per cent); *Health* (up 5.7 per cent); *Society and Culture* (up 3.7 per cent); *Management and Commerce* (up 3.6 per cent); *Information Technology* (up 3.0 per cent); *Natural and Physical Sciences* (up 2.8 per cent); and *Education* (up 0.8 per cent). Decreases were recorded for *Food, Hospitality and Personal Services* (down 70.9 per cent); *Non-award courses* (down 4.2 per cent); and *Architecture and Building* (down 0.4 per cent).
20. The largest increase in overseas student numbers was in *Mixed Field Programs* with commencements up 30.4 per cent to 382 students and all enrolments up 18.1 per cent to 502 students. *Management and Commerce* comprised around half of all overseas commencements (37 919 out of 80 024) as well as nearly half of all overseas enrolments (126 110 students out of 259 404).

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<sup>3</sup> Excludes overseas students and domestic students where permanent home address is overseas.

<sup>4</sup> Low SES postcode measure is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2011 SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for postal areas, where postal areas in the bottom 25% of the population aged 15-64 being classified as Low SES. This is the normal method that has been used by the Department over many years.

<sup>5</sup> Regional and remote categories are derived from 2011 ASGS classifications.