Australia has one of the best higher education systems in the world.
This handy data snapshot gives a sense of the profound economic, social and cultural contributions of Australia’s world class universities.

Catriona Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Universities Australia
Australia’s universities contributed $41b to the economy and supported almost 260,000 jobs.

For every $1 invested in research, $5 is returned to the economy.

For every one per cent increase in university R&D spending, Australia’s productivity rises by 0.13 per cent points.
Friends and relatives visiting international students generated $369m to the economy in 2018.

The university-qualified workforce has meant the Australian economy was $161b larger and Australia’s GDP 8.5 per cent higher.

For every $1 invested in teaching, $3 in tax revenue is generated for government.
In 2019, international education was Australia’s **largest services export** and **third largest export**, generating export revenues of **$41b.**
Export contributions of international education sector, by states, 2020

Source: ABS, International trade: Supplementary Information, Calendar Year, 2020
The value of international education exports ($ billion)

Source: ABS, International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia, March 2022
All enrolled students 2020: 1,622,867
Commonwealth funded student places in 2020: 639,566

Our member universities educated almost 1.5 million Australian and international students in 2020 and directly employed almost 130,000 full-time equivalent staff.
Domestic students: 1,133,519

- Bachelor: 1,007,203
- Other undergraduate: 71,045
- Postgraduate coursework: 430,041
- Postgraduate research: 66,556
- Enabling: 32,579
- Non-award: 15,470

Commencing students: 641,377
Continuing students: 964,470

Source: DESE 2022, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2020 Student Data, Student Enrolments Pivot Table
39 outstanding universities are members of Universities Australia.
Australia has 42 local universities, four university colleges and one overseas university. All 39 of Australia’s comprehensive universities are Universities Australia members.

University size by number of enrolled students (2020)

Number of unis | Number of enrolments
--- | ---
1 | <10,000
7 | 10,001-20,000
9 | 20,001-30,000
6 | 30,001-40,000
8 | 40,001-50,000
2 | 50,001-60,000
6 | >60,000

Average Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding per EFTSL: $11,390
Australia has a diverse mix of more than 1.6 millions students in our world class higher education system - almost 1.5 million of them enrolled at UA member universities.
Domestic student proportions by category 2020

- Studying Bachelor degree: 68.4%
- 24 years old and younger: 59.3%
- Female: 59.5%
- Studying full-time: 63.8%
- Studying on-campus: 53.9%
- Commonwealth supported student (ETFSL): 83.2%

Source: DESE, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2020 Student Data
Commonwealth Supported and international student places, by field of education, 2020

Commonwealth supported student places: 639,566

Overseas students places: 364,186

Source: DESE 2022, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2020 Student Data, Student Load Pivot Table
Natural and physical sciences
Information technology
Engineering and related technologies
Architecture and building
Agriculture, environmental and related studies
Health
Education
Management and commerce
Society and culture
Creative arts
Food hospitality and personal services
Mixed field programs
Australian universities make it possible to study part-time around work and family responsibilities.
Total student numbers (headcount) and equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL)

Source: DESE 2022, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2020
Student Data, Student Enrolment and Student Load Pivot Tables
Growth in domestic undergraduate enrolments by equity group

* Definition changed from postcode measures (2006 SEIFA) to postcode measures (2016 SEIFA)
** Definition changed from 2006 MCEETYA to 2016 ASGS

- **169% increase in students with a disability**
  - 2008: 24,311
  - 2020: 65,444

- **135% increase in Indigenous students**
  - 2008: 7,038
  - 2020: 16,559

- **63% increase in students from low SES**
  - 2008: 90,467
  - 2020: 147,802

- **43% increase in regional and remote students**
  - 2008: 110,124
  - 2020: 157,171
Since 2008, the number of undergraduate students from the poorest quarter of Australian households has increased by more than 63%.

Source: DESE 2022, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2020 Student Data
Number of award course completions for all students, by course level

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
Number of award course completions for all students, by citizenship category

- Domestic students
- Overseas students
43.5% of 25-34 year olds in Australia now have a Bachelor degree or higher.
Proportion of persons aged 25-34 with a Bachelor degree or higher

Source: ABS 2021, Education and Work, May 2021
Proportion of persons aged 25-34 with a Bachelor degree or higher, by remoteness areas

- Major cities: 48.6%
- Inner regional: 26.8%
- Outer regional, remote and very remote: 20.5%
People from major cities are twice as likely to hold a university degree than those from regional or remote areas.

International students by country of permanent home residence

Source: DESE, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2008 and 2020 Student Data
Sources of university research income (in 2020 CPI constant dollars)
Research block grant funding

- Australian Government competitive grants
- Australian Government - other public sector
- Australian Government - CRC
- State and local government
- International funding
- Industry and other funding

Source: DESE 2021, HERDC Research Income Data 1994 to 2020 and Research Block Grants Allocations 2001 to 2022
2020 Total Operating Revenue ($34.7 billion)

- Australian Government grants (35.0%)
- HELP payment (17.5%)
- Upfront student contributions (1.3%)
- International student fees (26.6%)
- Other fees and charges (4.2%)
- State and local governments (2.2%)
- Investment income (2.7%)
- Consultancy and contract research (4.7%)
- Other Income (5.8%)*

* Other income includes royalties, trademarks and licences and the share of net result of associates and joint ventures accounted for using the equity method.
2020 total operating expenditure ($33.4 billion)

- Academic staff expenses (29.6%)
- Non-academic staff expenses (26.9%)
- Payroll tax (2.7%)
- Depreciation and amortisation (7.9%)
- Repairs and maintenance (2.3%)
- Finance cost (0.9%)
- Other expenses* (29.5%)

* Other expenses includes impairment of assets, investment losses and deferred superannuation expenses

Full-time equivalent staff by current duties classification, including casual staff

Source: UA analysis based on DESE Staff data: Visual Analytics
Number of full-time equivalent academic staff, by function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching only function</td>
<td>9,125</td>
<td>18,639</td>
<td>16,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research only function</td>
<td>14,571</td>
<td>17,976</td>
<td>17,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and research</td>
<td>26,657</td>
<td>28,340</td>
<td>26,704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: DESE, Visual analytics - Staff time series
The student data reported in this publication includes all higher education providers reporting their student data to Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) through the Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI). In 2020, 91 per cent of these higher education students studied at the 39 Universities Australia member universities.