

International Students in Australian Universities 2023

The Australian Department of Education in September 2024 released data on international student numbers in Australian higher education institutions in 2023. This analysis edits that data to include only the 42 Australian universities¹.

International Students 2023

In the 42 Australian universities, there were 453,796 international students, onshore and offshore, in 2023, up 15.2% from 393,988 a year earlier in 2022, and back up to the pre-pandemic 453,833 in 2019. These 453,796 international students in 2023 made up 31.0% of the 1,462,037 students in Australian universities, from 27.4% a year earlier and back up to the figure 30.6% in pre-pandemic 2019.

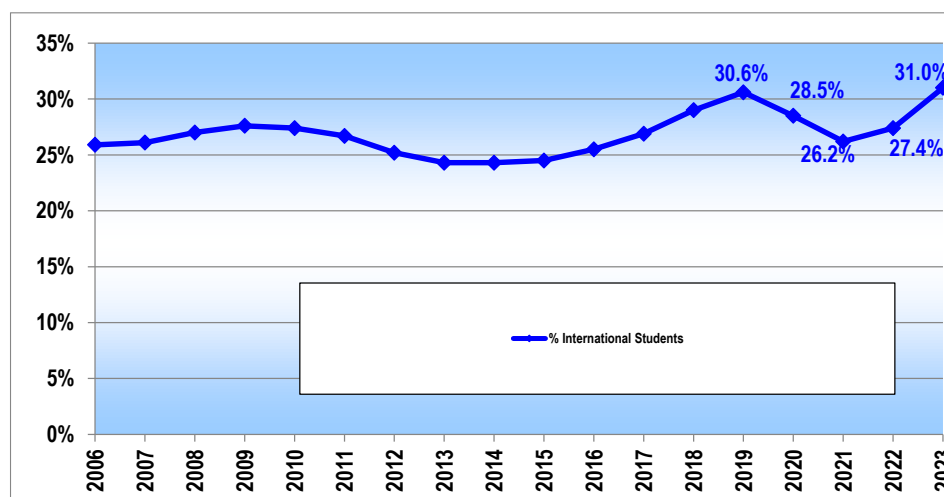
Included in the growth of 15.2% in the number of international students is growth of 35.7% in the number of commencing international students, from 162,588 in 2022 to 220,638 in 2023.

Table 1
Change in Student Numbers 2022 to 2023

	2022	2023	Change %
Commencements			
Domestic	369,105	363,892	-1.4%
International	162,588	220,638	+35.7%
Total	531,781	584,842	+10.0%
Enrolments			
Domestic	1,036,446	1,007,342	-2.8%
International	393,988	453,796	+15.2%
Total	1,435,626	1,462,037	+1.8%

In the previous perfect storm, a decade ago, the proportion of international students in Australian universities dropped from 27.7% in 2009 to 24.3% in 2013, then grew to 29.0% in 2018 and 30.6% in 2019. In the second perfect storm, the proportion dropped from 30.6% in 2019 to 28.5% in 2020, 26.2% in 2021 and 27.4% in 2022, then rose to 31.0% in 2023, as in Chart 1.

Chart 1
International Students in Australian Universities: Onshore and Offshore

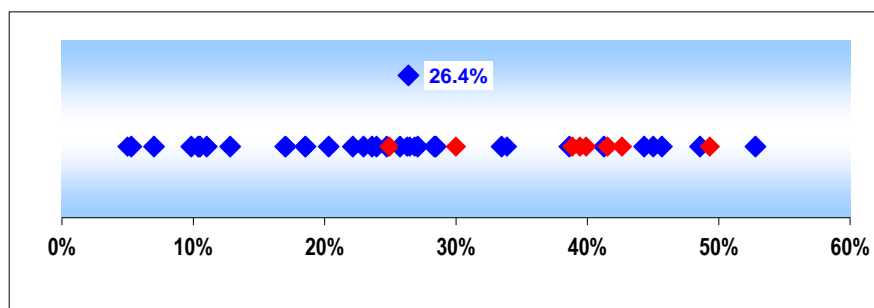


¹ The 42 universities in Australia include Australia's 37 public universities plus Avondale University, University of Divinity, Bond University, The University of Notre Dame Australia and Torrens University Australia Limited.

The boom figure in 2023, 453,796 international students making up 31.0% of the 1,462,037 students in Australia's 42 universities, comes ahead of the third perfect storm in 2024.

Across the 42 universities in 2023, the proportion of international students ranged from 5.0% to 52.8%, with the mean 27.6% and the median figure 26.4%, as in the chart. Group of 8 universities are in red.

Chart 2
Proportions of International Students in Australian Universities: Onshore and Offshore



In the above chart, the university with the highest proportion of international students is Murdoch University, where 12,706 international students made up 52.8% of 24,069 students in total. Next is The University of Sydney, where 37,529 international students made up 49.3% of 76,105 students in total.

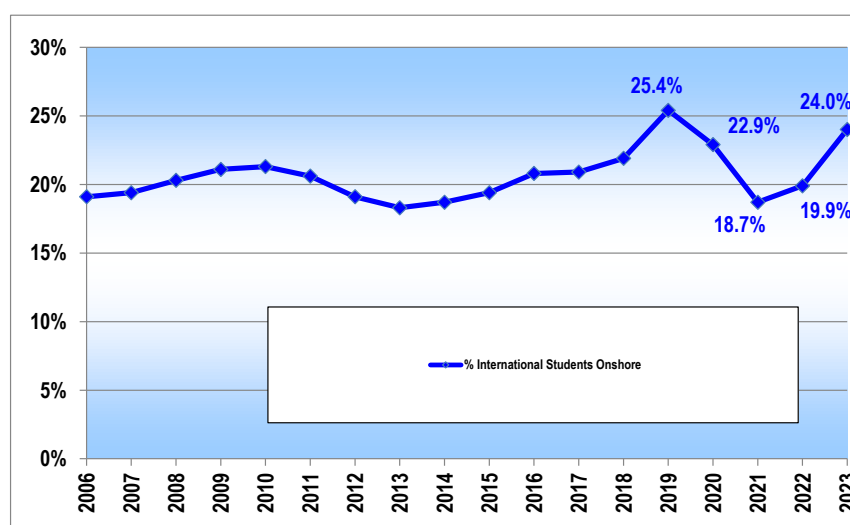
Onshore Students 2023

In respect of international students studying at Australian universities, the Department of Education differentiates between those students studying in Australia on temporary entry permits such as student visas, and other international students studying from overseas, including at offshore campuses of Australian universities. This distinction may become increasingly important.

Of the 453,796 international students in the 42 Australian universities in 2022, there were 351,609 students onshore in Australia, with temporary entry permits such as student visas. The figure 351,609 students onshore in 2023 is up 23.3% from 285,108 in 2022, but not quite back to the figure 376,427 students onshore in pre-pandemic 2019.

These 351,609 international students onshore in Australia made up 24.0% of the 1,462,037 students in Australian universities in 2023, from 19.9% a year earlier and from 25.4% in pre-pandemic 2019.

Chart 3
International Students in Australian Universities: Onshore Only



In the previous perfect storm, a decade ago, the proportion of international students in Australian universities, onshore in Australia, dropped from 21.3% in 2010 to 18.3% in 2013, then grew to 21.9% in 2018 and 25.4% in 2019, before the second perfect storm saw a drop to 22.9% in 2020, 18.7% in 2021, 19.9% in 2022, then 24.0% in 2023, as in the chart.

It is important to note that that this release covers **2023**, ahead of the **2024** perfect storm.

The Department of Education Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2023 Student Data, released in September 2024, are at <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2023-student-data>

The **2023 Student Data** publication includes a note:

*An error was identified in the data for the University of Sydney after the data had been finalised. The data presented in this report incorrectly overstate the number of **Other students who reside outside of Australia** and understate the number of students who are Temporary entry permit and resides in Australia.*

This error will not impact the data in this paper in Chart 1 or Chart 2, but may have a marginal impact on the data in Chart 3.

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