

# Australia

## Demographics for Australia

Population:	20,090,437 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$611.7 billion
Currency (inc code):	Australian Dollar (AUD)
Language(s):	English, Chinese, Italian, others
Internet country code:	.au

## Introduction

Australian qualifications framework (AQF): Australia has a single, comprehensive system of national qualifications that forms the basis of the AQF. Overseeing this framework and issues about education at all levels in Australia is the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) comprising the Australian Minister with responsibility for Education and the Ministers of Education for each State and Territory.

### 1.1 Schools sector

Students undertake 12 or 13 years of formal schooling that may be preceded by one-two years in preparatory kindergarten or pre-school programs. They typically spend seven years in primary school (one year of in-school preparation followed by grades 1-6 or grades 1-7, without a preparatory year, depending on the State). Students who have completed one year prep followed by six grades of primary school undertake a further six years of high school.

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Descriptions of each level of qualification are based on material provided with kind permission of the AQF Advisory Board to MCEETYA, Australia.

Students in States where there is no in-school preparatory year undertake five years of high school study. Both groups complete their school-based education by finishing grade 12, typically at around age 17. All students who complete their schooling are eligible for a Senior Certificate of Education (SSCE).

Formal schooling within this sector is managed by each State/Territory, though the outcomes across the country are deemed to be equivalent. School students seeking entry into higher education programs at a college or university must complete their senior certificate to an appropriate standard and satisfy the requirements of university admissions.

### *1.2 Vocational education and training (VET) sector*

This sector comprises state government-run Technical and Further Education Colleges (known as TAFEs) and private institutions offering government-accredited programs. The focus of this sector is on skills-based competency training. They also provide a pathway for students seeking entry into university-level programs who may not have achieved the required entry score for direct entry. Interestingly, in recent times, growing numbers of university graduates have taken the opportunity to undertake VET programs to hone their skills in a particular area. Some universities in Australia have TAFE “arms”, providing more seamless articulation pathways between TAFE and university. These “dual sector” universities provide qualifications with contributions from both sectors, such as pre-university programs for Australian and international students, and vocational skills for university students.

### *1.3 Higher education sector*

This sector largely comprises universities. Universities in Australia are accountable to both the Australian Government and their State or Territory Government. All except the Australian National University are constituted under State or Territory legislation. While some States and Territories may choose to contribute to particular research projects, infrastructure or programs, recurrent operational funding contributing to domestic student tuition is sourced from the Australian Government.

The Australian Government determines the number of domestic undergraduate student places to be made available to each university and the disciplines in which those universities are to allocate these places. Students are required to make a contribution to their tuition to fill the notional gap between the government subsidy and the government-determined price of their student place.

Universities have recently been permitted by the Australian Government to charge these domestic students up to 25 percent premium on top of the government loan amount, and this amount is payable directly to the university concerned. Most Australian universities have elected to exercise this option.

Most postgraduate programs are offered on a full-fee paying basis. Universities are free to set fee levels for their postgraduate degree programs. Most Australian postgraduate research students are supported by the Australian Government.

Australian universities accept full-fee paying international students who pay full fees for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs, and for research degrees. Large numbers of international students participate in educational programs offered by universities in Australia, and off-shore. Historically, most international students have come from the Asian region, though representation from other parts of the world has grown in recent years. The presence of international students has contributed significantly to the internationalisation of Australian campuses and programs. The fees paid by these students, and by domestic students, have become an important source of revenue for many institutions.

Most universities operate on a two-semester basis, with first semester commencing between late February and early March and finishing in June, and with second semester typically commencing mid-July and finishing in November.

*1.3.1 Types of degrees.* The AQF also applies to the range of degree types offered by Australian universities (see [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au) for complete descriptions of each type of degree). Degree types include:

- Associate Degree (a newly approved qualification – 2004).
- Bachelor Degree (including Honours).
- Graduate Certificate.
- Graduate Diploma.
- Master’s Degree (coursework, research, professional).
- Doctoral Degree (research, professional).

## **Management education in Australia**

In the higher education sector, management education is conducted by schools or departments located within universities or, in a few cases, aligned with universities. Other providers of non-award management education include national groups, such as the Australian Institute of Management (AIM), consultancy companies and other registered training organisations.

### *2.1 Undergraduate management education*

Undergraduate business education leading to a Bachelor degree in business, commerce or management is provided by universities. Admission into these programs is often highly competitive. Generally, these programs involve 2.5 years of required business-related study, with scope for students to take 0.5 year of elective studies in any area. There is typically no general education

requirement for any Australian Bachelor degree. The most commonly offered degree titles are Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Commerce. Most programs require students to take at least one major area of study and this will often be recognised on the testamur in brackets; for example, Bachelor of Business (management). Common major areas of study include management, marketing, accountancy, economics, international business, public relations, banking and finance. Students may enter Bachelor level degree programs directly from school or via various pathway programs, including having successfully completed sub-degree programs at government registered vocational education institutions.

A growing number of management education undergraduate students seek to combine their Bachelor degree in business, management or commerce with study in another area. Most universities offer the option of combined or double degree study for particularly academically able students

Students who perform at a uniformly high standard in their major area of study at Bachelor level may be permitted to undertake a fourth year of study as part of a Bachelor Honours degree. In this fourth year, students typically undertake some specialist coursework, particularly focussing on research methods and must complete a dissertation of around 20,000-25,000 words. On successful completion of what is an intensive year's work, honours may be awarded at one of the following levels: First Class, Upper Second or Second Class Division A, Lower Second or Second Class Division B, or Third Class. This fourth year program is the primary pathway into doctoral studies, with a First or Upper Second typically required for entry into the PhD program.

## *2.2 Postgraduate management education*

Graduate business education includes Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas, Master's degrees and Doctoral degrees. These are often nested so that students may move seamlessly from Certificate to Diploma to Master's degree.

*2.2.1 Master's degree.* There are three types of Master's degree offered by business schools. The MBA (various forms: executive, international, professional, advanced, discipline specific, etc.), the specialised Master's degrees (e.g. Master of Business (professional accountancy) and the research Master's degree. Often, there will be a Graduate Certificate-Graduate Diploma pathway into the Master's degree, particularly the specialised Master's degree, though it is more common for students to progress to a Master's degree having successfully completed a program at Bachelor's level. Entry requirements into Master's degrees varies by degree and by institution. International students must typically meet English language requirements. Some Master's degrees (e.g. many MBAs) require several years of work experience; others may be undertaken directly after completing a Bachelor's level qualification. GMAT is used as a selection tool by some business schools. Master's programs vary in length. Many

programs require three semesters of study while a few programs are offered over two semesters with others offered over four semesters. Many students undertake MBA and other Master's programs on a part-time basis. Programs, particularly Executive MBA programs, may be undertaken in intensive mode, over weekends or in blocks over some period. Programs offered by Australian universities but located outside Australia are often approached in this way. Some Master's programs in management education are combined with other Master's programs (e.g. Master of Information Technology) to permit the students to graduate with a double Master's. Research Master's programs are typically undertaken by students who wish to upgrade to PhD studies, but who do not meet the normal PhD entry requirements. Some students will exit with the Master by Research qualification.

*2.2.2 Doctoral degrees.* Doctoral programs are a feature of most business schools. Some schools offer both PhD programs and DBA programs, though many offer only the PhD. Students enrolled in a PhD program may be seeking to pursue an academic career, though many graduates also pursue a career in business. Those seeking a closer link between research and practice and more applied outcomes may choose to undertake a DBA:

- *PhD.* Entry into the PhD program normally requires completion of a Bachelor degree with fourth year honours. To be eligible for direct entry to a PhD program, the honours program must be completed to a high standard. A successful candidate for direct entry into the PhD program will have achieved a First Class or Upper Second Class Honours result. Australian business school PhD programs may require some coursework, though many do not. There is often a candidacy period. By the conclusion of that period, the student must have made sufficient progress by, for example, completing the literature review and planning the remainder of the study, to the satisfaction of a formal review committee. The major piece of work undertaken to satisfy the requirements of this degree in Australia is a substantial thesis of approximately 75,000-100,000 words that adds to knowledge in a specific discipline or study area. This thesis will be examined within the school, typically by a committee, before the student is permitted to formally submit the thesis for external examination. Australian doctoral theses are typically examined by at least one examiner located in Australia and one examiner located elsewhere in the world. A third external examiner is often employed, particularly where the first two examiners fail to agree on a result. Australian PhD programs are technically three years in length full-time, though many candidates exceed this timeframe in completing their program. Students, particularly full-time students, are expected to play an active role in the academic life of the school or department, attend seminars and the like.

- *DBA*. The DBA is a relatively recent phenomenon with the first DBA offered in Australia in 1993. Entry to the DBA is largely based on past academic performance. The major difference between entry to a professional doctorate and to a PhD program is the requirement for a professional qualification and/or several years of professional experience at a senior level. DBAs typically involve a more structured program of coursework, seminars, presentations and projects. A typical path for a DBA student includes peer support, cross fertilisation of ideas, and integration of professional experience, in comparison with the more lone researcher path of a PhD student. The DBA dissertation (approximately 45,000-60,000 words) is usually shorter than the thesis component of a PhD. Students typically pay fees to study for a DBA.

### *2.3 Faculty*

As in the USA, in the past, full-time faculty were often drawn either from the business world or from disciplinary programs in psychology, economics and accountancy. In more recent times, more full-time faculty in business schools have undertaken PhD studies in areas directly related to management education and these PhD qualified staff are highly sought after. Many business schools hire significant numbers of sessional staff drawn from the business community to assist with tutorials and to ensure that students benefit from first-hand exposure to current business practice.

In Australia, faculty may be appointed at one of five levels: associate lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, or professor. Faculty may hold a tenured appointment at any one of these levels. Progression through these ranks requires meeting particular criteria. There is no expectation that all faculty who commence their career at, say, lecturer level, would necessarily progress to professorial level. Typically all faculty are expected to contribute to the core functions of the school – teaching, research and service – though some faculty may be appointed to more research oriented positions, while others may undertake a greater teaching or service contribution.

### *2.4 Students*

In 2004 there were 267,006 students in business programs in Australia. These students represent 28.3 percent of all higher degree students enrolled in Australian universities (Table I).

Women represent 49 percent of total business enrolments, and 14 percent of total higher education enrolments in Australia. Indigenous students represent 0.3 percent of all Australian business students (839 students). International students studying business in 2004 represented 40 percent of total business enrolments (105,696 students). Of the international students studying business, 53,571 were female and 52,125 male.

Level of course	Male	Female	Total
Doctorate by research	1,977	1,265	3,242
Doctorate by coursework	679	174	853
Master's by research	253	252	505
Master's by coursework	39,846	27,391	67,237
Bachelor honours	512	506	1,018
Bachelor pass	79,831	92,523	172,354

**Source:** DEST ([www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au))

**Table I.** Business student enrolments by level of course in 2004

### 2.5 Accreditation

Australian universities are self-accrediting institutions, governed by their own act of State or Territory Parliament. The Australian National University is the exception, being constituted under Australian legislation. This means that universities accredit their own degree programs within the structure provided by the AQF.

*AUQA.* Quality assurance of the Australian higher education sector is monitored by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) that conducts audits of each university on a five-yearly basis. Reports published each institution are publicly available at the AUQA web site ([www.auqa.edu.au](http://www.auqa.edu.au)).

*Professional accreditation.* Within Australia, programs may be accredited by various professional bodies. These accreditations ensure that graduates are eligible for membership of, or professional registration by, these bodies so that they can operate as professionals in a particular domain.

*International accreditation.* Increasingly, Australian business schools have looked off-shore for accreditation. Some Australian schools or programs have been accredited by the Association of MBAs (UK), EQUIS (EFMD) or AACSB International (US-based).

### 2.6 Numbers as at July 2005

- Estimated number of institutions with Bachelor level business degree programs: 39.
- Estimated number of institutions with Master's level business degree programs: 39.
- Estimated number of institutions with Doctoral level business degree programs: PhD = 39, DBA/professional Doctorate = 19.

**Professor Sandra Harding and Associate Professor Lyn Simpson**  
*Queensland University of Technology*

