

Outgoing International Mobility of Australian University Students 2007

Findings

Abstract

Australia as a destination for international students is well researched. Less is known about the numbers of students in Australian universities who undertake international study experiences during their courses, the characteristics of those students, their types of experiences, their fields of education, and their destinations.

This study, conducted for the Australian Universities International Directors' Forum, finds that nearly 6% of undergraduates in 37 participating Australian universities undertake an international study experience by the time they complete their degrees.

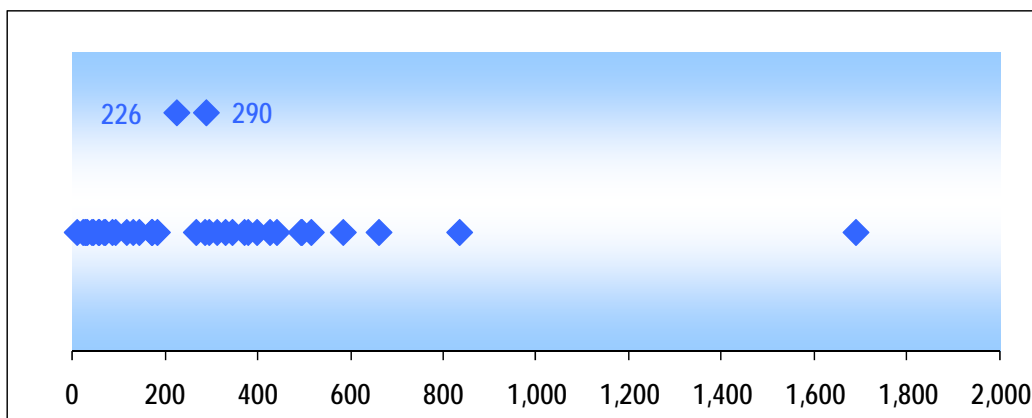
Most students go overseas on exchanges or other semester or longer programs, more than on short term programs or work placements. Of international study experiences in 2007, 58% were undertaken by women. Management and Commerce (20.3% of experiences) and Society and Culture (19.6%) were the most common fields of education. The most popular destinations were in Europe (39% of experiences), Asia (31%) and the Americas (25%).

Numbers of International Study Experiences

In 37 Australian universities in 2007, 10,718 students at all levels undertook international study experiences.

Across the 37 universities, the absolute number of international study experiences ranged from 11 to 1,691. The average was 290, the median 226, as in Chart 1 **Aggregate Numbers of International Study Experiences 2007**.

Chart 1
Aggregate Numbers of International Study Experiences 2007



Access to International Study Experiences

In these 37 universities, 10,718 students at all levels undertook international study experiences and there were 230,295 completions at all levels in 2007.

The number of international study experiences undertaken by students at all levels in 2007 was equivalent to 4.7% of completions at all levels in 2007, suggesting that 4.7% of completing students at all levels in Australian universities undertake international study experiences.

Table 1 **International Study Experiences 2007 by Type** shows these 10,718 international study experiences by type.

Table 1
International Study Experiences 2007 by Type

Type	Number of Experiences
Exchange	5,157
Other Semester or Year Programs	368
Short Term Programs	2,486
Placements or Practical Training	841
Research	1,567
Other	299
Total	10,718

Two cohorts account for 92% of international experiences

- 8,354 undergraduates undertook exchanges, other semester or year programs overseas, short term programs or placements or practical training
- 1,454 postgraduate research students undertook research experiences overseas.

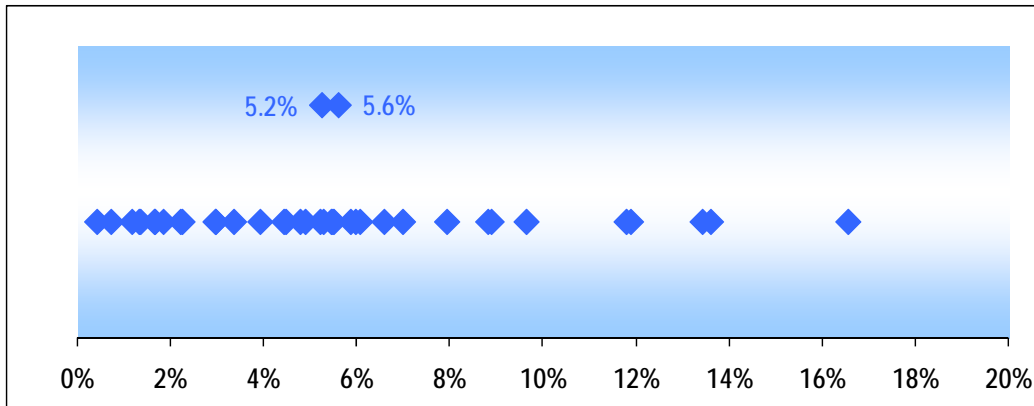
Access by Undergraduates to International Study Experiences

There were 145,274 undergraduate completions in 2007 in the 37 universities that participated in this study.

The number of international study experiences undertaken by undergraduate students in 2007, 8,354, was equivalent to 5.8% of undergraduate completions in 2007, suggesting that 5.8% of completing undergraduates in Australian universities undertake international study experiences.

Chart 2 **Access to International Study Experiences 2007: Undergraduate** shows the range of the 37 university responses (from 0.4% to 16.6%), the figure for the average university (5.6%) and the median (5.2%).

Chart 2
Access to International Study Experiences 2007: Undergraduate



In a similar study of 2005 data in 2006¹, 33 universities reported 5,577 international study experiences by undergraduates in Australian universities and 117,315 undergraduate completions, suggesting that 4.8% of completing undergraduate students in Australian universities in 2005 undertook international study experiences.

Growth from 4.8% to 5.8% (more precisely, from 4.75% to 5.75%) is growth from 2005 to 2007 of 21.1% in the rate of access to international study experiences by completing undergraduates in Australian universities.

In US in 2005/06, 85.4% of the 223,534 study abroad students reported in **Open Doors 2007** appeared to be undergraduates. These 190,898 international study experiences by US undergraduates were equivalent to 13.1% of the estimated 1,461,000 undergraduate completions in US in 2005/06 from the National Centre for Education Statistics².

Among the international study experiences for undergraduates in Australian universities, the proportion of short term programs and placements or practical training increased from 32.6% in 2005 to 35.1% in 2007.

Access to International Research Experiences

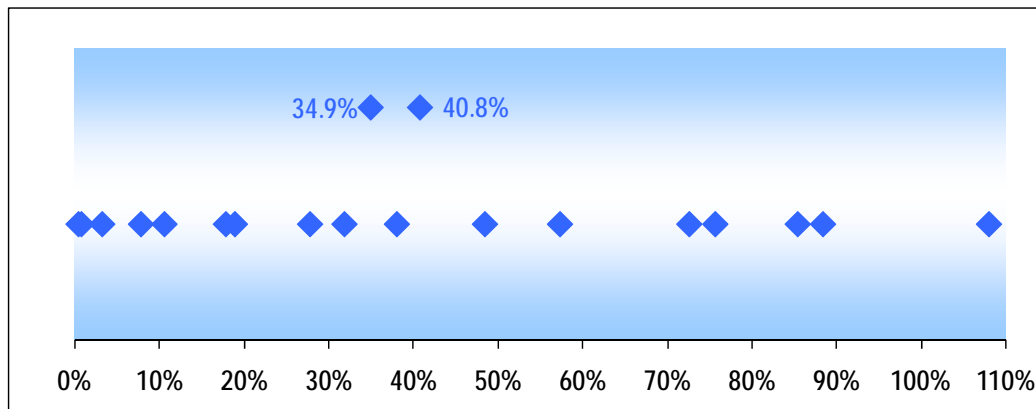
Seventeen universities reported 1,454 postgraduate research students undertaking international research experiences in 2007 and 3,936 postgraduate research completions in 2007. The number of international research experiences undertaken by postgraduate research students in 2007, 1,454, was equivalent to 36.9% of postgraduate completions in 2007, suggesting that 36.9% of completing postgraduate research students in Australian universities undertake international study experiences.

¹ Olsen A 2008 **International Mobility of Australian University Students: 2005** forthcoming in *Journal of Studies in International Education* and published OnlineFirst on 30 April 2008 viewed 4 September 2008 at <http://jsi.sagepub.com/pap.dtl>

² **Projections of Education Statistics to 2016** viewed 15 August 2008 at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2016/tables/table_28.asp?referrer=list

With only 17 universities participating in this section of the study, the 17 university responses ranged from 0.4% to 108.0%, with students at one university on average undertaking more than one international research experience during the research degree, as in Chart 3 **Access to International Research Experiences 2007**. The figure for the average university was 40.8% and the median was 34.9%.

Chart 3
Access to International Research Experiences 2007



In a similar study of 2005 data in 2006, 10 universities reported 367 international research experiences by postgraduate research students in Australian universities and 1,684 postgraduate research completions, suggesting that 21.8% of completing postgraduate research students in Australian universities in 2005 undertook international research experiences.

Growth from 21.8% to 36.9% is growth from 2005 to 2007 of 69.3% in the rate of access to international research experiences by completing postgraduate research students in Australian universities.

Analysis

For the 10,718 international study experiences in 2007, universities provided data on level of study, enrolment status (domestic or international), gender, duration and whether for credit.

Universities reported the level of study of 10,567 of these students, and 8,354 (79.1%) were undergraduates. International study experience is an undergraduate phenomenon.

In terms of enrolment status, most students undertaking international study experiences were Australian rather than international students. 16.3% of all students undertaking international study experiences in 2007 were international students, up from 13.0% in 2005.

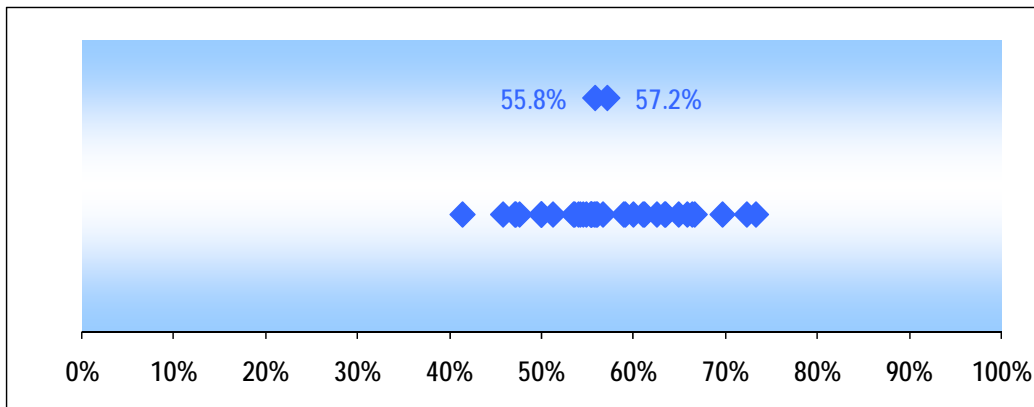
Women dominated all types of international study experiences. Overall, universities provided gender information on 10,120 students with international study experiences in 2007 and 57.5% were women, as in Table 2 **International Study Experiences 2007: % Female**.

Table 2
International Study Experiences 2007: % Female

Type	% Female
Exchange	57.0%
Other Semester or Year Programs	59.8%
Short Term Programs	60.3%
Placements or Practical Training	53.1%
Research	57.3%
Other	52.4%
Total	57.5%

Chart 4 International Study Experiences 2007: Gender: % Women shows the range of the 37 university responses (from 41.4% to 73.3%), the figure for the average university (57.2%) and the median (55.8%).

Chart 4
International Study Experiences 2007: Gender: % Women



Across all types of international study experiences, most international study experiences were for a semester (45.9%) or a year (13.3%), with 40.8% less than a semester. The proportion less than a semester has increased from 36.4% in 2005 to 40.8% in 2007.

Most international study experiences were for credit (96.1%), with 1.3% not for credit but recognised for purposes such as development of international skills, and 2.6% not for credit.

Funding

Universities reported that

- 60% of all international study experiences of all types were supported by university funds, up from 56% in 2005

- 4% were supported by funds from Australian Government programs, such as University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP)³ or the Australian Cheung Kong Student Exchange Program⁴, unchanged from 4% in 2005
- 5% were supported by a combination of university funds and funds from Australian Government programs, unchanged from 6% in 2005
- 13% were supported by OS HELP⁵, up from 7% in 2005
- 8% were supported by OS HELP plus funds from the university and/or from Australian Government programs, up from 5% in 2005
- 1% were supported by funds from an overseas government or foundation, unchanged from 2% in 2005
- 5% were supported by private funds or from foundations in Australia.

The 37 participating universities reported in aggregate \$16.6 million in funding for international study experiences in 2007, up from \$7.9 million in 2005 in a smaller number of 33 universities, including

- \$12.9 million in university funds, up from \$6.1 million in 2005 in a smaller number of universities
- \$3.5 million in funds from Australian Government programs, up from \$1.8 million in 2005 in a smaller number of universities
- \$144,000 from private funds or foundations in Australia.

Universities reported a further \$8.6 million in loan funds from OS HELP, up from \$3.1 million in 2005 in a smaller number of universities.

Fields of Education

Universities reported the field of education for 10,458 international study experiences in 2007. Management and Commerce (20.3%) and Society and Culture (19.6%) were the most commonly reported fields as shown in Table 3 **International Study Experiences 2007: Fields of Education** and Chart 5 **International Study Experiences 2007: Fields of Education**.

³ Australian University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) Student Exchange Program viewed 15 August 2008 at http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/student_exchanges_new/australian_umap.htm

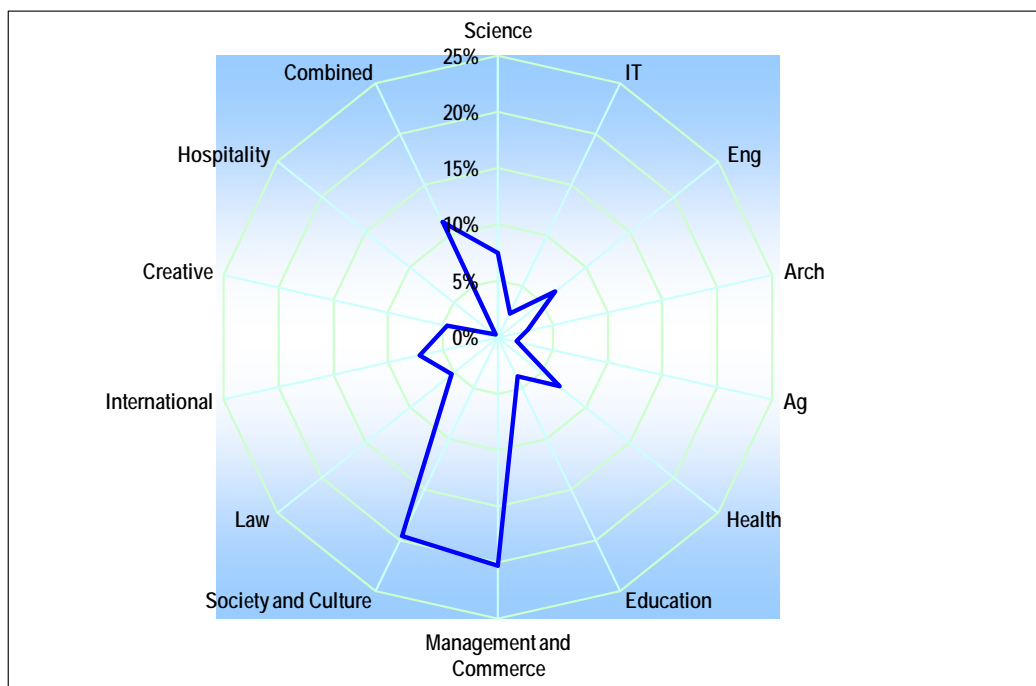
⁴ Endeavour Cheung Kong Student Exchange Program viewed 15 August 2008 at http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/student_exchanges_new/cheung_kong.htm

⁵ Higher Education Loan Programme – FEE-HELP & OS-HELP viewed 15 August 2008 at http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/fact_sheets/6.htm

Table 3
International Study Experiences 2007: Fields of Education

Field	Number of Experiences	% of All Experiences
Science	782	7.5%
IT	244	2.3%
Engineering	673	6.4%
Architecture/Building	274	2.6%
Agriculture/Environment	175	1.7%
Health	724	6.9%
Education	409	3.9%
Management and Commerce	2,123	20.3%
Society and Culture	2,054	19.6%
Law	557	5.3%
International	744	7.1%
Creative Arts	482	4.6%
Hospitality	32	0.3%
Combined	1,185	11.3%
Total	10,458	100%

Chart 5
International Study Experiences 2007: Fields of Education



Destination

Universities reported the destinations of 10,759 international study experiences with some universities reporting more than one destination for some international study experiences.

The top ten country destinations are in Table 4 **International Study Experiences 2007: Country Destinations**.

Table 4
International Study Experiences 2007: Country Destinations

Destination	Number of Experiences	% of All Experiences
US	1,649	15.3%
China	1,083	10.1%
UK	867	8.1%
Canada	718	6.7%
Germany	528	4.9%
France	514	4.8%
Japan	504	4.7%
Italy	483	4.5%
Sweden	360	3.3%
Malaysia	330	3.1%

As in Table 5 **International Study Experiences 2007: Destinations by Region** and Chart 6 **International Study Experiences 2007: Destinations**,

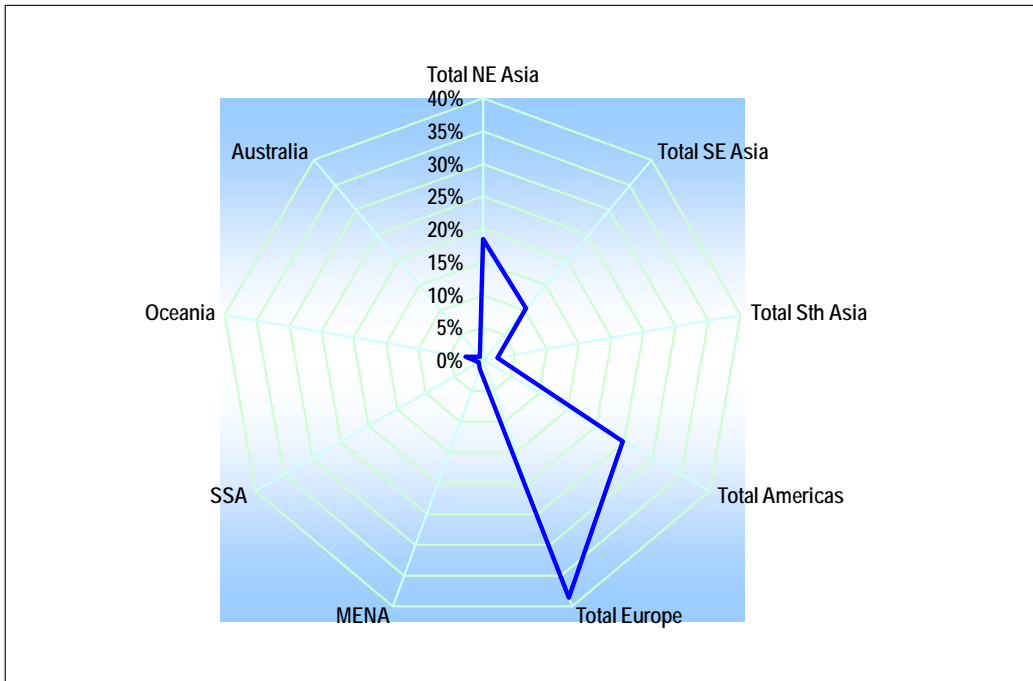
- 38.6% went to Europe including 8.1% to UK, 4.9% to Germany, 4.8% to France and 4.5% to Italy
- 24.7% went to the Americas, including 15.3% to US and 6.7% to Canada
- 31.1% went to Asia, including 10.1% to China, 4.7% to Japan and 3.1% to Malaysia.

Australia as a destination for international student mobility to Australia from Australian university campuses outside Australia made up 0.7% of international study experiences.

Table 5
International Study Experiences 2007: Destinations by Region

Destination	Number of Experiences	% of All Experiences
Europe	4,150	38.6%
Americas	2,660	24.7%
North East Asia	1,991	18.5%
South East Asia	1,112	10.3%
South Asia	240	2.2%
Middle East/North Africa	158	1.5%
Sub Saharan Africa	83	0.8%
Oceania	286	2.7%
Australia	79	0.7%
Total	10,759	100%

Chart 6
International Study Experiences 2007: Destinations



About the Author

This study was carried out for the Australian Universities International Directors' Forum by Alan Olsen, Director of Strategy Policy and Research in Education Limited www.spre.com.hk. Alan is a graduate of The University of Sydney and University of Technology, Sydney.

Jenny Spain, a graduate of The Australian National University, and Rebecca Wright, a graduate of Queensland University of Technology, provided research assistance on this study.