



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

# Enhancing career and employment prospects for Indonesian students

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Australia is the most popular study destination for Indonesian students. In 2019, there were more than 22,700 Indonesians enrolled to study in Australia. The [Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(IA-CEPA\)](#) will improve opportunities for Australian institutions to partner with Indonesian counterparts and bring their high-quality training and education programs to students in the country.

Melbourne Polytechnic is one of several Australian institutions that is delivering training in conjunction with Indonesian partners. One of Victoria's largest providers of vocational education and training, its training model blends practical learning and traditional theory with increased pathways to higher education.

Indonesia was a market that Melbourne Polytechnic was eager to enter, thanks to its booming economy and large, young population. The institute also wanted to tap into students' enthusiasm for vocational study. More than 9,600 Indonesian students enrolled in vocational education in Australia in 2019.

'We have been following the trajectory of Indonesian economic growth and the demand for international education,' says Celia Yeo, Melbourne Polytechnic's Senior International Development Advisor.

'Australia has a well-established reputation for quality and practical value and we saw an opportunity to help Indonesia acquire the skills to build its economy further.'

Under [IA-CEPA](#), Australian vocational education and training providers can establish majority-owned training institutions in Indonesia. The skills package also includes a work and holiday visa outcome, reciprocal skills exchange program and workplace skills training program that will help build people-to-people links and increase the Indonesia literacy of Australian business.

## **Improving career prospects**

Melbourne Polytechnic entered the Indonesian market in 2018. Its first partner was Enter Audio House (EAH), an audio engineering training institute in Bandung, West Java.

Under the partnership agreement, EAH delivers the Certificate in Advanced Audio Engineering program, which is marketed as a Melbourne Polytechnic accredited course. The certificate is designed for industry professionals who want to upgrade their qualifications to Australian standards.

Students who complete the Certificate in Advanced Audio Engineering have the option of progressing to the Diploma of Music Industry (Sound Production). The online program is taught by Melbourne Polytechnic staff in Australia.

The certificate and diploma programs also provide a pathway to a Melbourne Polytechnic bachelor degree, which is recognised for work in Australia or internationally in the future.

'We've had excellent feedback from students about the course content,' says Yeo. 'The course allows them to formalise their practical skills into an internationally recognised qualification, improving their prospects of getting international work.'

Yeo credits trainers in both countries for the success of the program.

'It has been very easy as we had an engaged faculty who were passionate about making this project work,' she says. 'But without the dedication of the audio engineering experts on both sides, we would have struggled to develop a strong teaching framework for such a technical course, and joint agreement on how to manage the program properly.'



Image: An online session with Melbourne Polytechnic's Program Lead, Jesse Roberts, in Melbourne, and students in a classroom in Bandung.

### **Benefits for Australian students**

Australian students are also benefiting from the partnership. EAH has strong industry connections in Indonesia, providing great opportunities for Australian TAFE students to have experiences unique to the local market.

In September 2019, Melbourne Polytechnic and EAH organised a music production study tour for 10 students, who volunteered at Soundrenaline, a major music festival in Bali.

The study tour provided an immersive learning experience of the music, audio and events industry in Bali. Students were also taken on a tour through other major music venues and met with music industry experts.

'It was an extraordinary experience for the Australian students who would not have had the opportunity in Australia to see such a large-scale production in action,' says Yeo.

### **Be flexible without compromising standards**

During initial discussions with Indonesian institutions, Melbourne Polytechnic consulted Austrade to confirm its proposed partnerships were appropriate, both legally and culturally.

'While education partnerships were encouraged, there were few regulations to reference to ensure we were compliant with local laws,' says Yeo. 'The support from federal and state government representatives throughout the development of the partnership, until the present day, is one of the reasons we have been successful.'

There were also issues with naming conventions but the two partners worked together to develop a product that was customised to Indonesian industry needs.

'While it's important to be flexible in areas you can control, you must be firm when it comes to Australian Qualifications Framework to ensure standards are not compromised,' says Yeo. 'Be transparent and do not overpromise, particularly when there are issues beyond your control such as changes to training packages.'

### **Future plans**

Melbourne Polytechnic is keen to explore the possibility of establishing majority-owned training institutions in Indonesia.

'We are open to working with local Indonesian universities to set up a jointly managed and owned campus in Indonesia,' says Yeo. 'We are also taking the opportunities provided by the trade agreement to develop our existing joint program partnerships further, with the recognition that trade and education ties between the two countries will continue to develop.'

'The warm reception and interest our staff have received from all over Indonesia has certainly been encouragement to pursue discussions and cement our commitment to establish mutually beneficial long-term partnerships.'

## **About Austrade**

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