

UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

Enrolments, Commencements and Student Numbers

Overview

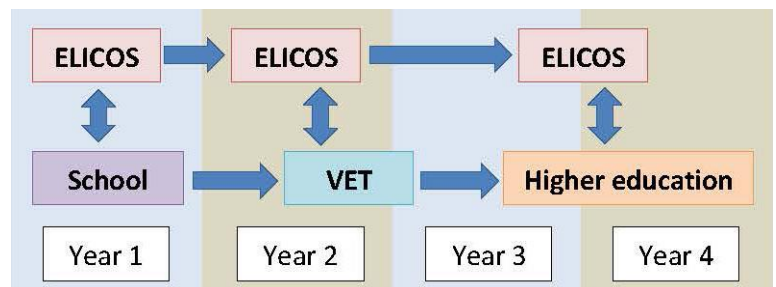
There is often confusion surrounding the number of international student commencements, international student enrolments, and international students studying in Australia.

The Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS) international student enrolment and commencement data are sometimes thought to be the same as international student numbers. However, these data do not directly correlate to the number of international students in Australia or the number of international student visas issued. This is because each student can commence studying and be enrolled in more than one course of study at the same time and consequently be represented in the PRISMS data several times.

Enrolments vs Commencements

The following hypothetical example illustrates the differences between student numbers, commencements and enrolments.

An international student comes to Australia to study, progressing through and between different education sectors during a four-year period.



In the first year, the student commences an English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) course and commences school, completing both within the first year. The student would be counted as a commencement and an enrolment in both sectors (ELICOS and schools).

In the second year, the student commences a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course and a second ELICOS course. Again, the student would be counted as a commencement and an enrolment in both sectors (VET and ELICOS).

In the third year, the student completes the VET course and commences studying a higher education course. Towards the end of the third year, the student commences a third ELICOS course while studying the higher education course. The student would count as a commencement in both the ELICOS and higher education sectors, and as an enrolment in the VET, ELICOS and higher education sectors.

In the fourth year, the student completes the third ELICOS course, and completes the higher education course. The student would be counted as an enrolment in each of these sectors, but not as a commencement, as the student did not commence these courses in the fourth year.

During the **four years**, this **single student** would be counted as a **commencement six times** and an **enrolment nine times**.

For more information, contact mip@austrade.gov.au