



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Education Learning and  
Development Module



**Diplomatic  
Academy.**



## THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Practitioner level



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# ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACE	adult and community education
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Agency
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AISC	Australian Industry and Skills Committee
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
CISC	COAG Industry and Skills Council
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DET	Department of Education (Australian Government)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government)
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australian Government)
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students
FTA	free trade agreement
GDP	gross domestic product
HECS-HELP	Higher Education Loans Program
IRC	Industry Reference Committee
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program-Literacy And Numeracy
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Educational Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
R&D	research and development
ROGS	Reports on Government Services
RTO	registered training organisation
SSO	skills service organisation
TAC	Training Accreditation Council (Western Australia)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency



TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States of America
VET	vocational education and training
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority





# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Practitioner level module is designed to ensure that Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) staff members who engage with and lead policy dialogue with international and domestic partners are informed about Australia's education and training system.

It is recommended that staff complete the Australian Education System: Foundation level module as background information to this Practitioner level module.

## The importance of Australian education to Australia's economy and skilled workforce

The contribution of international education to the Australian economy is significant. The most recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show that international education is valued at \$19.9 billion, making it Australia's third largest export. In addition, it is estimated that 130,000 of the international students in Australia in 2014-15 will contribute as skilled migrants in the Australian workforce on graduation, representing a 3 per cent increase in the proportion of Australia's current workforce with a tertiary education.

Australian education is a dynamic and growing service market. In 2016, Australia ranked as the third largest provider of education to international students after the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK).

Currently around five million tertiary students study outside their own country. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates this number will increase to eight million by 2025.

The ABS estimates international education to be worth a record \$21.8 billion in 2016 – up 17 per cent on 2015. The ABS estimates the sector contributes over 130,000 jobs to the Australian economy. Additionally, it is estimated that more than 130,000 students are studying an Australian qualification offshore, an area of the sector which is valued at more than \$400 million per annum.

The Australian Government's National Strategy for International Education 2025 (the National Strategy) released in 2016 and found at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/International-network/Australia/InternationalStrategy/Pages/National-Strategy.aspx>, recognises the importance of our largest services export to our future economic prosperity. It also highlights the importance of maintaining the quality of Australian education institutions and of the international student experience, particularly in relation to employability, to continue growth in the sector. The National Strategy also speaks to the vital soft-power importance of international education cultivated through two-way mobility programs for both students and researchers and the role of qualifications recognition in facilitating global workforce mobility.

The National Strategy is framed around three key policy pillars:

- strengthening the fundamentals of our education system to deliver a high quality, world class education and student experience
- making transformative partnerships both at home and abroad through mobility initiatives and alumni connections and
- competing globally by promoting our excellence in education services and growing the opportunities to expand our international education markets.



## Shared responsibility

Education and training is a shared responsibility of the Australian (Federal) Government and the individual State and Territory Governments. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, education in Australia is primarily the responsibility of the State and Territory Governments. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. There are eight Councils which support COAG. The Councils provide a forum for intergovernmental collaboration and decision-making and allow it to focus on key national priorities. The two Councils that relate to Australian education are the Education Council and the Industry and Skills Council.

## Robust, transparent accountability mechanisms across all sectors

Australian education has a range of robust and transparent accountability mechanisms across all educational sectors. National leadership is provided through statutory entities and State and Territory jurisdictions. Major regulatory bodies in education include the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA); the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Agency (ACECQA).

## A highly privatised system

Australia has a highly privatised education system in comparison with other countries. The proportion of private (non-government funded) investment in Australian schools is much greater than in other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (at almost 40 per cent for Australia compared to the OECD average of 16 per cent; 2016 data). In terms of student enrolment, in 2016 there were 3,798,226 students enrolled in Australia's schools. The proportion of students in government schools was 65.4 per cent, Catholic schools 20.2 percent and Independent schools 14.4 per cent. The majority of higher education enrolments in 2016 (93 per cent) were in public universities. However, according to the latest data, public funding makes up a relatively low share of primary to tertiary education funding. This is especially the case in higher education where private funding makes up 58 per cent of the overall expenditure, the fifth highest in the OECD. Annual university tuition fees are also the fifth highest in the OECD. Approximately 80 per cent of all domestic students undertaking Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees take out student loans to complete their studies through the Higher Education Loans Program (HECS-HELP).

Source: OECD 2016a, 'Australia', in Education at a Glance 2016, found at [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016/australia\\_eag-2016-41-en#.WM4SI0bMmg4#page1](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016/australia_eag-2016-41-en#.WM4SI0bMmg4#page1)

More information about the HECS-HELP scheme can be found at <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-payingmyfees>

In Australia, as with all countries, the model for financing the education and training system is an ideologically contested space. However, there is general agreement among policy-makers that public and private funding for Australian education and training should be focused upon improving and sustaining the outcomes achieved by students at all levels, so that Australia has the human resources to remain competitive domestically, within our region and globally.



## 2 THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM STRUCTURE

As the Australian Education System Foundation level module noted, formal education in Australia has four broad sub-sectors:

- 1 early childhood education
- 2 primary and secondary schooling
- 3 vocational education and training (VET)
- 4 higher education.

### Early childhood education

The role of early childhood education is to provide care and supervision of children, to prepare children for school, and to ensure that children are able to participate effectively in subsequent learning opportunities. Early childhood education programs are conducted in community programs, pre-schools and other child-care settings.

Through COAG, early childhood education and development has been established as a policy priority for over a decade in Australia. The Australian Government's early childhood reform agenda has included the development and implementation of the national Early Years Learning Framework (found at <https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework-0>) workforce reforms and the development of a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (found at <https://www.education.gov.au/national-quality-framework-early-childhood-education-and-care-1>). It has also established National Partnerships on Indigenous Early Childhood Development and on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (found at <https://www.education.gov.au/national-partnership-agreements>).

Source: ACARA 2013, National Report on Schooling in Australia, found at <https://acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-2013>

Australia's education participation rates at age four have risen markedly since 2005 (from 53 per cent in 2005 to 89 percent in 2016), representing the fourth highest increase in the OECD.

Sources: OECD 2016d, Starting Strong IV. Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: Australia, found at <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/ECECDN-Australia.pdf>

ABS 2017d, Preschool education, Australia, 2016, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4240.0>

Note: More information about early childhood education and care can be found at the Early Childhood National Partnership Agreements website found at <https://www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education>

Responsibilities for child care and pre-school are shared between the Australian, State and Territory Governments, as follows:

- the Australian Government has policy responsibility for formal care (long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, and some occasional care)
- the Australian Government administers a fee subsidy (Child Care Benefit), an out-of-pocket subsidy (Child Care Tax Rebate) and provides some funding to Australian Government approved services for specific purposes
- the Australian Government oversees quality accreditation systems in early childhood education and care



- the Australian Government supports specialised pre-school for Indigenous Australians
- State and Territory Governments are responsible for the policy and funding of pre-schools. Pre-school education is delivered using a variety of funding and delivery models, including private provision
- State and Territory Governments are responsible for some occasional care centres. Some State and Territory Governments contribute financially to outside school hours care, long day care and other such services.

Source: Productivity Commission 2015, 'Overview B Child care, education and training, attachment tables and data quality information', in Report on government services 2015, volume B, section B.1, found at <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/childcare-education-and-training>

## Primary and secondary schooling

There were approximately 3,798,226 students enrolled in Australian schools in 2016 representing an increase of 47,253 (1.3. per cent) over the previous year.

Source: ABS 2017d, Schools Australia 2016, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0>

Primary and secondary schools in Australia are either government or privately funded. The Australian Government is responsible for:

- allocating funding to States and Territories to support service delivery and reform to meet nationally agreed outcomes
- ensuring that the funding arrangements for the non-government school sector and schools are consistent with, and support, the responsibilities of the States and Territories in regulation, educational quality, performance and reporting on educational outcomes
- leading Australia's international engagement on educational matters including international assessment programs.

State and Territory Governments are responsible for infrastructure and maintenance funding, the payment of teachers, principals and non-teaching staff and the administration and management of all resources within schools.

Source: COAG 2013, Council of Australian Governments meeting – communique Canberra, found at [https://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/communique/COAG\\_Communique\\_190413.pdf](https://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/communique/COAG_Communique_190413.pdf)

It is compulsory for children to have commenced school by the time they have turned six years of age. Children generally attend primary school until they are 11 or 12 years of age. Primary schools offer programs from Foundation (also referred to as kindergarten or reception) to Year 6 or 7 depending on the State or Territory.

Australian primary and secondary schools follow a national curriculum. Information about the Australian National Curriculum can be found at the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website found at <http://www.acara.edu.au/>. ACARA also has oversight of the National Assessment Program-Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN) which is conducted annually for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. More information about NAPLAN can be found at <http://www.nap.edu.au/>

Students who complete their secondary school program at Year 12 or equivalent are awarded a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (the actual qualification title of the Senior Secondary Certificate varies in different States and Territories). They then leave school to undertake vocational or higher education courses and/or start work. Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VET in Schools) programs are undertaken by school students as part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education that provide credit towards or complete nationally recognised VET qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by a registered training





organisation (RTO) or a school in partnership with an RTO. More information is included in the VET section of this module. The retention rate in Australia in 2016 (i.e. the number of school students who commenced Year 7/8 and completed Year 12, expressed as a percentage) was 80.9 per cent for male students and 87.8 per cent for female students.

Sources: ABS 2016c, Gender Indicators: Education Participation and Retention, found at <https://secure.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4125.0~Feb%202016~Main%20Features~Key%20Series%20and%20Indicators%20~4>

ABS 2017e, Schools, Australia, 2016, cat. no. 4221.0, ABS, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0>

You can read further information about Australian school structures in the ACARA National Report on Schooling in Australia found at <http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-2013>

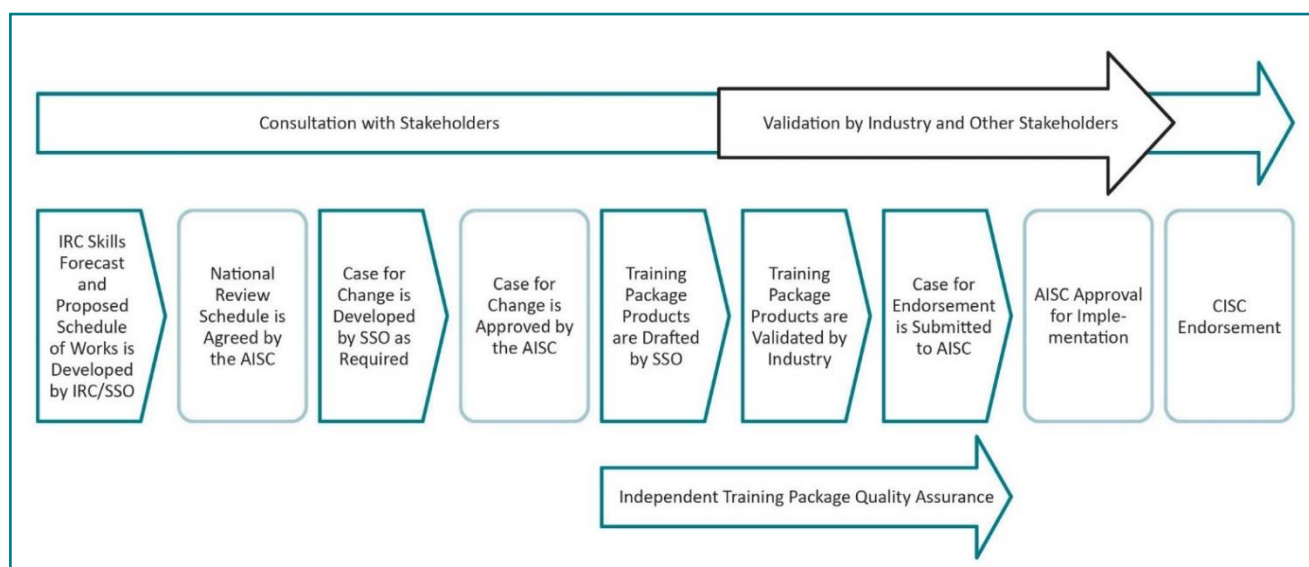
Australia has well-qualified teachers and makes a concerted effort to improve school teaching and leadership. The establishment of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in 2010 was designed to provide national leadership in this area. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were also developed in 2010 and set out the skills and knowledge teachers at different career stages are required to demonstrate. The Australian Professional Standard for School Principals and the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality (2009-13) have also contributed to an increased focus on teacher quality and school improvement. For more information see the AITSL website at <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/>

## Vocational education and training (VET)

Australia has an innovative model of VET. In 2015, the COAG Industry and Skills Council (CISC) formed the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) to give industry an expanded role in policy direction and decision-making for the VET sector.

AISC consists of industry leaders and draws on advice from Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) which are made up of experienced industry representatives. Their advice ensures training packages meet the needs of employers and the modern economy. IRCs are supported by skills service organisations (SSOs). SSOs are independent professional service organisations who undertake review and development of training product work on behalf of AISC.

AISC ensures that training packages are developed to an agreed quality standard and are highly responsive to industry's existing and future skills needs. The training package development process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1 – Training package development process**

Source: Adapted from DET 2017f, Training package development and endorsement process policy, found at <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/training-package-development-and-endorsement-process-policy-0>

Further information about the AISC, IRCs and SSOs can be found at the AISC website at [www.aisc.net.au](http://www.aisc.net.au)

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's VET sector. ASQA regulates private and public courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.

## The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF is the agreed policy of Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system. One of the key objectives of the AQF is to facilitate pathways to, and through, formal qualifications.

The framework has 10 levels of qualification.

**Table 1 – AQF levels of qualification**

Level	Qualification Name
1	Certificate I
2	Certificate II
3	Certificate III
4	Certificate IV
5	Diploma
6	Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree
7	Bachelor Degree
8	Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
9	Masters Degree
10	Doctoral Degree



All AQF qualifications are quality assured through independent national regulation processes. In the higher education sector, AQF qualifications are accredited either by the TEQSA, or by a self-accrediting higher education provider such as a university. Qualifications accredited by TEQSA can be found on the National Register at <http://training.gov.au/>

In the VET sector, qualifications are accredited by either the ASQA, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Western Australian Training Accreditation Council (TAC) and are listed on the National Register at <http://training.gov.au/>

Note: You can learn more about the policies, objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements for the AQF at <http://www.aqf.edu.au>

## Higher education

Higher education requires intensive study over a number of years to achieve a recognised high-level qualification. Most higher education takes place within accredited universities or similar tertiary-level institutions. Australia has 43 registered universities. A list of these universities is available on the National Register found at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>

The Australian Government provides public funding to the higher education sector through the Higher Education Support Act, 2003 (regular updates to the Act can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00003>). The Government provides funding to universities to contribute to the costs associated with each domestic student enrolled.

In 2015, 1,410,133 domestic and international students were enrolled in Australian higher education programs. Approximately 25 per cent were international students.

Source: DET 2016g, Selected higher education statistics – 2015 student data, found at 2015 Student Summary, found at <https://www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2015-student-data>

Public universities are established or recognised under State and Territory legislation. TEQSA is the national independent regulator for the higher education sector. TEQSA registers and assesses the performance of higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards Framework, and undertakes both compliance and quality assessments of providers. TEQSA is responsible for the registration and re-registration of providers and the accreditation and re-accreditation of courses.

Source: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency website, found at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>

For further information, see the Higher Education modules.

A significant feature of the tertiary education landscape in Australia is the large proportion of international students. Australia is a key destination for students from around the world, hosting 8 per cent of the world's overseas students.

Source: ICEF 2016, ICEF Monitor: Australian education exports top AU\$19 billion in 2015, found at <http://monitor.icef.com/2016/02/australian-education-exports-top-aus19-billion-in-2015>

As previously noted, international students represent approximately 25 per cent of all students enrolled at Australian universities. In order for international students to receive a visa to study in Australia they must be offered admission to study a program at an institution on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

Most international students enrolled in Australia are from the Asia region (see Table 2 below). Significant differences occur, however, in the sub-sectors that these international students are enrolled in. For example, the majority of Chinese students undertaking an Australian education program are enrolled in higher education whilst Thai students are predominantly enrolled in VET.

**Table 2 – International student enrolment data 2016**

Nationality	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	NAT	Total
China	72,252	65,127	21,632	13,633	7,111	1,954	182	7,520	2	189,413
India	17,840	32,321	11,434	3,436	7,740	573	282	700	0	74,326
Korea, Republic of (South)	13,535	5,119	6,642	924	2,113	205	42	528	0	29,108
Vietnam	9,493	12,594	2,376	1,533	2,201	132	89	392	0	28,810
Thailand	18,059	6,581	2,456	267	922	83	64	187	0	28,619
Malaysia	5,199	12,443	3,110	1,768	3,632	707	24	345	2	27,230
Brazil	12,796	2,970	7,504	775	2,842	30	7	50	3	26,977
Nepal	13,300	3,612	1,978	704	944	204	369	91	0	21,202
Indonesia	10,796	5,352	955	353	1,286	23	144	280	0	19,189
Hong Kong	5,007	4,205	3,375	1,972	2,047	171	26	276	0	17,079
Other nationalities	77,862	59,701	44,892	7,932	22,720	1,632	1,017	3,598	3	219,357
Total	256,139	210,025	106,354	33,297	53,558	5,714	2,246	13,967	10	681,310

Source: DET 2016d, 'Table 7a: All sector year to date enrolments by top 10 nationalities by state/territory for October 2016', International Student Enrolment Data 2016: 2016 detailed monthly tables, October, page 3 of 8, found at [https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/INTERNATIONAL%20STUDENT%20DATA/2016/2016Oct\\_0712.pdf](https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/INTERNATIONAL%20STUDENT%20DATA/2016/2016Oct_0712.pdf)

**Note:** Table 2 covers international students enrolled in higher education, VET, English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), schools and non-award courses.

For information about the income generated from international students studying in Australia, see <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Research-Snapshots/Documents/Export%20Income%20FY2015-16.pdf>





## 3 HOW THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IS FINANCED

In recent years, debates about the funding model for education and training have been conducted in the Parliament of Australia, within COAG processes, and through an extensive review of Australian Government funding of school education, headed by David Gonski. The 'Gonski Review' resulted in the 2011 publication, Review of Funding for Schooling, found at <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/review-of-funding-for-schooling-final-report-dec-2011.pdf>

### The Australian Education Act 2013

In June 2013, the Parliament of Australia assented to the Australian Education Act 2013. The Act came into effect in January 2014, and provides the framework for Commonwealth funding to be provided to schools. The Act outlines arrangements for recurrent funding to both government and non-government schools; capital funding for non-government schools; and the conditions for special circumstances funding. The Act also sets out the expectations for funding accountability to the Commonwealth and to school communities.

The Act specifically provides the Federal Minister of Education with the authority to provide funding to non-government school representative bodies. These bodies may include associations of independent schools and Catholic Education Commissions.

### Australian Education Amendment Act 2017

In June 2017, the Parliament of Australia assented to the Australian Education Amendment Act 2017 (colloquially known as the Gonski 2.0 reforms). The amended Australian Education Act 2013 will deliver an additional \$23.4 billion in funding for Australian schools over the next 10 years.

The Act states that by 2023, Australian Commonwealth funding for government schools will rise from the current average of 17 per cent to 20 per cent and funding for non-government schools will grow from an average of 77 per cent to 80 per cent. The amounts are based on the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which comprises a per-student funding amount (base amount) and loadings to meet the additional needs of disadvantaged students and schools. It takes into account all Australian Government funding, State and Territory Government funding, and a notional contribution per student by non-government schools as measured by their 'capacity to contribute'.

Source: Australian Education Amendment Act 2017, found at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017A00078>

The Australian Government Department of Education website provides an overview of the current legislative and policy arrangements for financing education in Australia, found at <https://www.education.gov.au/funding-schools> and <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/38481>

The ABS provides a summary of education financing and funding in Australia, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5518.0.55.001>



## Financing education: government and non-government contributions

As defined by the ABS, 'government expenditure on education' refers to spending by the general government sector on all levels of education, including pre-school, primary, secondary, university, and Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Government expenditure on education excludes expenditure on courses provided by non-educational institutions, such as the vocational training programs of private businesses.

Between 2013-14 and 2015-16, national education expenditure in Australia rose from approximately \$81,540 million to approximately \$87,857 million (see Table 3 below). Public expenditure on education as a percentage of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP) is 4.7 per cent, compared with an average of 4.8 per cent for all OECD countries. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure is 13.8 per cent in Australia, compared to 11.3 per cent in the OECD. Australia's total (public and private) expenditure on primary to tertiary education as a percentage of GDP is 5.6 per cent, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 5.2 per cent. Around 30 per cent of public and private expenditure in education in Australia is via private sources, compared to an average of 16 per cent for all OECD countries.

Sources: OECD 2016c, OECD: Australia, in Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators, found at <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/education-at-a-glance-2016-indicators.htm>

## Expenditure on education

Table 3 shows expenditure on education from 2010-11 to 2015-16. Between 2010-16, Commonwealth funding for education fell while State and Territory contributions to the overall education budget increased. To put these figures in context, between 2007-10, the Building the Education Revolution initiative from 2007-10 saw an investment of \$16.2 billion in education infrastructure by the Australian Government as an economic stimulus response to the Global Financial Crisis.

Source: DEEWR 2009, Building the education revolution: National Coordinator's implementation report February – September 2009, found at <https://web.archive.org/web/20091027140357/http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Documents/NCIRReport.pdf>

As defined by the ABS, operating expenses on education are categorised into five main economic types: capital transfers, current transfers, depreciation, non-employee expenses and employee expenses. In 2015-16 over half of the total operating expenses related to employee expenses, with the remaining 48.5 per cent of expenditure mostly relating to non-employee and current transfer expenses.

Government contributions to operating expenses of primary and secondary education increased from \$40.2 billion to \$45.2 billion. Over the same period, corresponding Government contributions to tertiary education, whether university or VET, rose from approximately \$26.2 billion to \$31.6 billion.

Source: ABS 2017c, Government finance statistics, education, Australia, 2015-16, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5518.0.55.001>


**Table 3 – Government operating expenses on education**

	Government operating expenses on education, by level of government					
	2010-11 \$m	2011-12 \$m	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m
Commonwealth Government	33,794	28,728	29,334	30,049	31,375	32,312
State and Local Governments	49,958	51,017	52,695	54,507	56,191	58,352
Multi-jurisdictional*	19,977	21,302	22,942	23,629	25,609	26,678
Less: Intra- sector Transfers	28,052	25,188	25,466	26,644	28,604	29,485
<b>All levels of Government</b>	<b>75,677</b>	<b>75,859</b>	<b>79,506</b>	<b>81,540</b>	<b>84,571</b>	<b>87,857</b>
* The multi-jurisdictional sector contains units where jurisdiction is shared between two or more governments, or the classification of a unit to a jurisdiction is otherwise unclear. For education the only type of units falling into this category are public universities.						

	Government operating expenses on education, by purpose, all levels of government					
	2010-11 \$m	2011-12 \$m	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m
Primary and secondary education	40,166	38,736	40,645	41,785	43,270	45,236
Tertiary education	26,195	27,446	29,015	29,326	30,626	31,643
Pre-school and education not definable by level	3,325	4,216	4,454	4,786	5,091	5,337
Transportation of students	1,381	1,401	1,354	1,547	1,575	1,535
Education n.e.c	4,610	4,060	4,036	4,097	4,010	4,106
<b>Total by purpose</b>	<b>75,677</b>	<b>75,859</b>	<b>79,506</b>	<b>81,540</b>	<b>84,571</b>	<b>87,857</b>

continued...



	Government operating expenses on education, by economic transaction, all levels of government					
	2010-11 \$m	2011-12 \$m	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m
Employee expenses	37,233	39,131	41,009	41,848	43,306	45,235
Non-employee expenses	16,305	17,544	18,131	18,679	19,350	19,855
Depreciation of fixed assets	2,892	3,233	3,523	3,668	3,815	3,988
Current transfer expenses	16,992	15,592	16,395	16,867	17,847	18,501
Capital transfer expenses	2,255	359	447	478	242	279
Total by economic transactions	75,677	75,859	79,506	81,540	84,571	87,857

Source: ABS 2017c, Government finance statistics, education, Australia, 2015-16, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5518.0.55.001>

Further information about the background to current financing arrangements of Australian education and training can be found in the Australian Education Amendment Act 2017 at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017A00078>

## An activity for you

Which of the data presented in Table 3 above are also collected, collated and reported on in your country program or a country known to you?

How readily could comparisons be drawn between the situation in Australia and in your country program or a country known to you?

Consider your country program or a country known to you and answer the following questions.

- 1: From the data presented in Table 3, what is happening to the relative expenditures on the various education sub-sectors in Australia? i.e. how has the expenditure pie changed in the pre-school, primary and tertiary sectors over the 2010-16 period?
- 2: Which of the data presented above is also collected, collated and reported on in your country program or a country known to you?
- 3: What comparisons can you draw between the expenditure on the various sub-sectors in Australia and in your country program or a country known to you? How might similarities and differences be explained to your international partners and colleagues?

**What's the answer?**

**Answer to Question 1:** The sector that has had the greatest percentage increase in expenditure from 2010-16 was the 'Pre-school and education not definable by level' sector (60.5 per cent) followed by tertiary education (20.8 per cent) and then primary and secondary education (12.6 per cent).

**Note:** Questions 2 and 3 require the reader to research their answers to these questions - there are no fixed answers.







## Education funding: household contributions

The ABS provides a succinct summary of education funding in Australia, and the manner in which government and household contributions interact

(<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5518.0.55.001>)

Funds to support educational facilities and the delivery of education services originate from a variety of sources, predominantly grants from the Australian and State and Territory Governments. Funding is also derived from sales of goods and services including fees and charges for tuition and materials, which vary considerably within the education sector. Other sources of funds may include items such as donations or returns from investments.

- Primary and secondary school tuition is free in government schools in all States and Territories. Fees may be charged for the hire or purchase of personal educational equipment such as textbooks or art supplies, and schools may also seek voluntary contributions from parents. Most non-government schools charge fees which can vary considerably based on educational philosophy and level of government funding. Additional fees may be charged for textbooks, subject materials and extra- curricular activities.
- VET providers charge students fees for the administration of courses, for tuition, materials or for student amenities. These fees vary according to the type of course and its duration, and the institution providing the course. For some courses, students pay all their fees without receiving any government subsidies.
- Higher education institutions may receive direct grants from government, but also receive revenue from students who are required to contribute to the cost of their education through: HECS-HELP; up-front fees; international student fees; and indirectly via scholarship schemes. Many on-campus facilities and services are funded through additional fees, either directly or through a general services fee.
- Adult and community education (ACE) courses are usually provided on a fee-paying basis, including when delivered through institutions that may also offer formal VET, schooling or higher education programs. The extent of the fees for ACE may vary considerably due to the diversity of courses and providers available in the sector.

Source: ABS 2012, Year book Australia, 2012, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/1301.0>

## Trade in educational services

### International students

International education is Australia's third largest export, valued at \$19.9 billion in 2015-16. As Table 2 above shows, the majority of international student enrolments from the top 10 nationalities are from the Asia/India sub-continent region.

Significant differences occur, however, in sub-sectoral preferences. For example, in 2016, 64 per cent of Chinese students undertaking an Australian education program are enrolled in higher education and only 6 per cent in VET. In the case of Thai students, 50 per cent are enrolled in VET and 8 per cent enrolled in higher education programs, while 59 per cent of Malaysian students are enrolled in higher education, and 27 per cent in VET.

DET c.2017c, International education online, found at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>



## Recent trends

According to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET), in 2015-16, international education activity contributed approximately \$19.9 billion in export income to the Australian economy. This is a 9.4 per cent increase from the earnings recorded in the financial year 2014-15.

Education related travel services were Australia's largest services export (\$47.8 billion), ahead of other personal travel services (\$16.5 billion) and professional and management consulting services (\$5.2 billion). Education is Australia's third largest export earner (after iron ore and coal).

Higher education remained the largest sector contributing to education exports, with \$13.7 billion, representing 68.9 per cent of education export earnings. VET contributed a further \$3.3 billion, or 16.5 per cent, of earnings. Export income from ELICOS was \$1,013 million (5.1 per cent), schools, \$793 million (4 per cent) and non-award, \$728 million (3.7 per cent).

Source: DET 2016b, Export income to Australia from international education activity in 2015-16, Research Snapshot, found at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Research-Snapshots/Documents/Export%20Income%20FY2015-16.pdf>

### An activity for you

**Consider your country program or a country known to you and answer the following questions.**

- 1: What opportunities and/or obstacles are there for students to participate in Australian education programs and institutions?
- 2: What support (e.g. scholarships, Education Counsellor network and study exchanges) is available to them to participate?



## How Australian education funding compares with other countries

Table 4 provides a summary of the allocations of funding to the various education sectors that Australia makes and their respective comparisons with other OECD countries. On virtually every indicator, Australia is above the OECD average. In terms of the private share of education expenditure, however, Australia's private contributions are close to double the OECD average.

**Table 4 – Education funding allocations: Australian, OECD, and partner countries**

	Indicator	Australia	OECD Average	Australia Rank
<b>Financial Investment in Education Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD)</b>	Pre- primary education	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Primary education	8,289	8,477	17 of 35 countries
	Secondary education	10,932	9,985	13 of 37 countries
	Tertiary education	18,337	15,772	4 of 37 countries
<b>Total public and private expenditure on education</b>	As a percentage of GDP	5.6%	5.2%	13 of 37 countries
<b>Total public expenditure on education</b>	As a percentage of total public expenditure	14.2%	13%	10 of 32 countries
<b>Share of private expenditure on educational institutions</b>	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	15.9%	8.8%	5 of 32 countries
	Tertiary education	54.6%	30%	6 of 31 countries
	All levels of education	26.8%	16%	6 of 30 countries

Source: Adapted from OECD 2016b, Education at a glance 2016: OECD Indicators, found at <http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>

## An activity for you

**Consider your country program or a country known to you and answer the following question.**

What broad impressions do these financial investments in education indicators leave you with, about the comparative status of education funding in Australia?





## 4 HOW AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION COMPARES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

### A range of performance indicators measure Australian students

International comparisons on a range of performance indicators measure Australian students against their peers in other countries. These comparisons are judged through comparisons of government funding (as outlined earlier) and by students' performance on international assessments. This section provides an overview of completion and achievement within the Australian education and training system.

#### Outputs of Australian education

The ABS Australian Year Book, 2012 (the most recent data) provides a succinct summary of criteria used to compare the Australian education system with its OECD counterparts.

For example, in Australia:

- people aged 25-34 years had a much higher school completion rate (82 per cent) than did those aged 55-64 years (55 per cent), consistent with the OECD average
- the proportion of people with higher education qualifications was above the OECD average in all age groups.

A variety of other comparative statistics are available at the ABS website, found at <http://www.abs.gov.au>

### Performance of Australian students in international tests

In December 2012, the results of Australia's first participation in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) were released. The study revealed that many Australian Year 4 students have substantial literacy problems and that 21 out of 50 nations had significantly outperformed Australia. At the same time, the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) were released with mixed results for Australia. With the exception of an improvement in Year 4 mathematics performances between 1995 and 2011, Australian students' performances in mathematics and science have stagnated over the past 16 years.

Source: Dean, J & Reynolds, L 2012, 2012 - The Year That Was, Australian College of Educators, Melbourne

The most recent TIMSS data (2015) show that average achievement levels in secondary schools continue to slide in comparison with performances in many other countries. The gap between Australia and Singapore, for example, the world's highest performing country in Year 8 mathematics, widened between 1995 and 2015. Only 7 per cent of Australian students now perform at the advanced level in mathematics, compared with 54 per cent of students in Singapore. Australia has also been overtaken by a number of countries that it once outperformed, including the US and England. Australia now performs below 12 other nations, including the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Slovenia.

Source: ACER 2017b, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), found at <https://www.acer.org/timss>

As noted in the Foundation level module, Australia has positive and negative indicators in relation to equity and student performance. Australia has a lower than average proportion of students at the lower end of performance measures although these results have not improved since 2000. Rural and Indigenous students have lower school performance and completion rates than their urban and non-Indigenous counterparts.





In 2008, COAG established six key Closing the Gap targets to reduce the inequities between Indigenous and other Australians. Three of the targets focus on education. The most recent Closing the Gap report (2017) found at <http://closingthegap.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/ctg-report-2017.pdf> shows that some of these targets are still not on track. The original target to ensure access for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities to early childhood education, for example, expired unmet in 2013.

## The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey that tests the skills and knowledge of 15 year old students. PISA is designed to assess at the end of compulsory education to what extent students can apply their knowledge to real-life situations, to give an indication of the degree to which young people are equipped for full participation in society.

Source: OECD c.2017, *Programme for International Student Assessment*, found at <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

The 2015 PISA results show that Australia's results are above the OECD average for every category. While 2015 performance in science was better than the results achieved in 2012, students in 2015 did less well in maths and reading compared to 2012 participants. Australia's rankings in the OECD declined from 19th to 22nd in mathematics, and from 14th to 15th in reading.

Singapore was the highest ranked jurisdiction on all three scales. Japan, Estonia and China were also highly ranked on multiple scales.

## PISA and its effects on the Australian political debate

In summary, international assessment measures show that Australia is slipping further behind internationally in school students' maths and reading skills. The decline is stronger for boys than girls and significant performance differences exist between States and Territories.

PISA results attract strong political attention domestically and internationally because they refer to a large component of the total school curriculum (i.e. maths, reading and science performance) and provide both international and State and Territory comparisons. Differences in student performance at these various levels are regularly cited by politicians, academics, unions and education professionals. They are variously used to argue about, inter alia, current teaching practices and resource allocations to education. Poor results often result in heightened debate about how best to respond to student performance, including interventions associated with class sizes, teacher quality improvement, education funding, school leadership and school autonomy.



## 5 AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION TOOLS AND DATA SOURCES

The following pages provide sources for some key Australian education tools and data sources that you could consider, adapt and apply in your country program context.

### The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The ABS coordinates the collection of national statistics on early childhood education and schooling, and the development of national surveys on education and training.

You can learn more about ABS education and training statistics at this website:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Education>

### The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)

The ACER is a not-for-profit, independent education research and development organisation with both a domestic and international focus. The mission of ACER is ‘....to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the lifespan’.

ACER focuses on three key activities:

- 1 collection, analysis, interpretation and use of valid and reliable data and the evaluation of policies and practices to shape strategic decision-making
- 2 monitoring student achievement at system, national and international levels
- 3 evidence-based school improvement and professional learning services.

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research website, found at <http://www.acer.org>

### The National Centre for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER)

The NCVER is a not-for-profit company owned by the Commonwealth and State and Territory ministers responsible for VET. It is a professional and independent body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, evaluating and communicating research and statistics about VET nationally.

NCVER's areas of activity are:

- undertaking a strategic program of education and training research, including the management of national competitive grants programs and the analytical program of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), and the collection and analysis of national VET statistics and survey data
- collecting and publishing research findings on VET and higher education from across the world through the VOCEDplus research database
- disseminating the results of research and data analysis
- building links with similar international organisations to foster comparative analysis and collaborate on issues of mutual interest
- undertaking commercial consultancies.

Source: NCVER 2017, NCVER: National Centre for Vocational Education Research: About us, found at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/about/about-ncver/about-us>



## International Education Group

The International Education Group is part of DET. It works with the education sector, other government agencies and ministries to ensure Australia is recognised as a regional and world leader in education and a partner of choice for international collaboration. It provides leadership and coordination across government, delivering programs and policies, to support mobility and the global exchange of knowledge. The International Education Group seeks to advance cooperation with international stakeholders, enhance government to government relations, and provide strategic and policy intelligence on developments in the education and research sectors through:

- the development of bilateral agreements, including Memoranda of Understanding
- the securing of free trade agreements (FTAs) that create opportunities for Australian education exporters to expand into new markets
- the fostering of relationships with international organisations to play a leading role in global and regional multilateral trade.

The International Education Group also manages the Australia Awards Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships; manages programs to assist Australian students and staff to study or work overseas, and international students to study in Australia; and manages qualifications recognition policy to support student and labour market mobility, including professional recognition.

Sources: DET n.d., About International Education Group, found at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/about-aei/pages/default.aspx>

DET 2017d, International student data, found at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Pages/default.aspx>

## Tools and data sources

Knowing where to look for information and data is important in order to remain up to date with emerging trends and issues.

On the following pages are four tables that provide the locations and an annotation of key websites that are useful for sourcing data in the sub-sectors of early childhood education; primary and secondary education; vocational education and training; and higher education.

While the most recent version of data sets has been included, it is important when accessing these sites to ensure they remain the most recent version of the data in the series.

**Table 5.1 – Early childhood education**

Tool/Data Title	Purpose	Source
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Childhood Education and Care, Australia	The annual national Preschool Census is a national collection of preschool enrolments with a focus on Indigenous children. The most recent edition is June 2014.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4402.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4402.0</a>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, The National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection	<p>The Early Childhood Education and Care Collection has been established to provide nationally comparable statistics on early childhood education and care (ECEC).</p> <p>The National ECEC Collection is a data development activity under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.</p> <p>It was last updated in 2013.</p>	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4240.0.55.001Chapter12013">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4240.0.55.001Chapter12013</a>
MyChild	The MyChild website is the Australian Government's online child care portal. It provides information about the child care services available around the country, as well as fees and Government assistance available.	Australian Government <a href="http://www.mychild.gov.au">www.mychild.gov.au</a>
Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, Report on Government Services, Children's Services chapter	This Productivity Commission report provides data on the effectiveness and efficiency of Australian government services, including Children's Services. The most recent edition is 2017.	Australian Government Productivity Commission <a href="http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs">http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs</a>




**Table 5.2 – Primary and secondary schooling**

Tool/Data Title	Purpose	Source
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Training Surveys	The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducts a series of national surveys on education and training providing statistics on early childhood education and care, educational participation and attainment, and adult literacy skills. The information is used by Commonwealth and State and Territory governments for performance assessments and policy making and by organisations involved in educational research and analysis	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/web/education+and+training+statistics+national+centre++education+and+training+surveys">http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/web/education+and+training+statistics+national+centre++education+and+training+surveys</a>
<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education Statistics and Resources</p> <p>Education and Training Newsletter: Updates on Surveys and Collections</p> <p>Education and Training Releases</p> <p>Other Organisations</p> <p>A Directory of Education and Training Statistics (cat. No. 1136.0). This is a 2009 publication</p>	The Australian Bureau of Statistics has a number of useful resources and data sources available regarding Australian schools including surveys, survey results, newsletters, related organisations, tools and directories.	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4211.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4211.0</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/web/education+and+training+statistics+national+centre++education+and+training+releases">http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/web/education+and+training+statistics+national+centre++education+and+training+releases</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/1136.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/1136.0</a></p>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia, (editions available from 1960 to 2012)	This website provides annual reports on student numbers, schools and other education institutions. Data is available from 1960 to 2012, thereby providing an historical overview of the development of the Australian education system.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0</a>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia	Provides statistical data about Australian schools. The most recent edition is 2012.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1301.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1301.0</a>

continued...



Tool/Data Title	Purpose	Source
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Education, Learning and Skills	This article contains several subsections and statistics relating to Indigenous education: early learning, staying in school, continuing education, engaging in work and study and educational achievement. This work was published in 2012.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Education,%20learning%20and%20skills~249">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Education,%20learning%20and%20skills~249</a>
Australian Council for Educational Research, National School Improvement Tool, 2012	Based on international research, this tool assists schools to review and reflect on their efforts to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning.	Australian Council for Educational Research <a href="https://www.acer.org/files/NSIT.pdf">https://www.acer.org/files/NSIT.pdf</a>
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Annual National Report on Schooling	Outcomes information is provided as the accountability document for education funding.	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority <a href="http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports">http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports</a>
My School	This website provides statistical, financial and contextual information about any school in Australia. It is updated annually.	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority <a href="http://www.myschool.edu.au/">http://www.myschool.edu.au/</a>
National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)	ACARA oversees the annual national assessments: available are the results and copies of the tests used.	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority <a href="http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports">http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports</a>
Productivity Commission Reports on Government Services (ROGS)	Descriptive information and performance indicators are available for school education. ROGS is produced by the Productivity Commission.	Australian Government Productivity Commission <a href="http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs">http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs</a>


**Table 5.3 – Vocational education and training (VET)**

Tool/Data Title	Purpose	Source
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Training Experience Survey	Provides information on individuals' access to, and experiences in, education, training and learning as well as information on the links between education, training and employment. The most recent edition is 2009.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6278.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6278.0</a>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and training statistics at a glance	Information about enrolments and study patterns in Australia.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6227.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6227.0</a>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia: Education and Training - Vocational Education and Training (VET)	The Education and Training Chapter of the Year Book includes a section on VET. The most recent edition is 2014.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1301.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1301.0</a>
MySkills	This website allows users to search the national database for information about VET courses and locations of providers; and provides information about VET student and organisational statistics.	Australian Government, MySkills website <a href="http://www.myskills.gov.au">http://www.myskills.gov.au</a>
Council of Australian Government's Reform Council 2016 Report on Performance	This 2016 report to COAG provides information on governments' progress against the agreed skills and workforce development objectives.	Council of Australian Governments: Report on Performance 2016 <a href="https://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/report_coag_2016.docx">https://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/report_coag_2016.docx</a>
Annual National Reports of the Australian Vocational Education and Training System	These reports include an overview of the national VET system, an analysis of the system's performance and key statistics, and a summary of Australian, State and Territory government developments.	Department of Industry <a href="https://www.education.gov.au/annual-national-reports-australian-vocational-education-and-training-vet-system">https://www.education.gov.au/annual-national-reports-australian-vocational-education-and-training-vet-system</a>
VOCEDPlus	This is a database of Australian tertiary education research.	National Centre for Vocational Education Research <a href="http://www.voced.edu.au/">http://www.voced.edu.au/</a>
Training.gov.au	Training.gov.au is the official national register of VET in Australia and is the authoritative source of information on training packages, qualifications, accredited courses, units of competency, skill sets and registered training organisations (RTOs).	A joint venture of the Australian and State and Territory Governments, established in 2013. <a href="http://training.gov.au/">http://training.gov.au/</a>

**Table 5.4 – Higher education**

Tool/Data Title	Purpose	Source
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Research and Experimental Development, Higher Education Organisations, Australia	Presents statistics on Research and Experimental Development (R&D) undertaken by Australian higher education institutions. Latest release 2014.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8111.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8111.0</a>
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia 2012: Education and Training: Higher Education	The Education and Training Chapter in the Year Book includes a section on Higher Education.	Australian Bureau of Statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Higher%20education~107">http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Higher%20education~107</a>
Australian Education International, Monthly and Annual Summaries of Student Enrolment Data	This resource provides detailed information about international students in Australian education institutions.	Australian Education International <a href="https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx">https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Study in Australia	The Study in Australia website provides information for international students wishing to study in Australia.	Study in Australia <a href="http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au">www.studyinaustralia.gov.au</a>
The Department of Education, Higher Education Reports	The Higher Education Reports provide annual information on the sub-sector's programs, funding and statistics.	Higher Education Reports <a href="https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics">https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics</a>



## 6 TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



### Assessment questions

Answer the following questions by ticking 'True' or 'False'. Once you have selected your answers to all the questions, turn the page to 'The correct answers are...' to check the accuracy of your answers.

#### Question 1

Australia's total expenditure on primary to tertiary education as a percentage of GDP is higher than the OECD average.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 2

'Employee expenses' are the highest of all government expenditure on education in Australia.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 3

Most non-government schools charge fees. Fees can vary considerably, based on educational philosophy and level of government funding.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 4

Companies and individuals do not need to contribute to the cost of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 5

The participation of international students in Australian education and training only generates a small income to the Australian economy.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 6

Among OECD and partner countries, Australia rates highest on the measure of annual expenditure per student in the tertiary (higher education and VET) sector.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False

#### Question 7

Australia's performance in international tests is improving.

Is this statement true or false?

☐ True ☐ False



## The correct answers are...



### Question 1

Australia's total expenditure on primary to tertiary education as a percentage of GDP is higher than the OECD average.

**This statement is true.** Australia's total (public and private) expenditure on primary to tertiary education as a percentage of GDP is 5.6 per cent, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 5.2 per cent.

Source: OECD 2016b

### Question 2

'Employee expenses' are the highest of all government expenditure on education in Australia.

**This statement is true.** In 202015-16, employee expenses – including for example teachers', principals' and administrators' salaries, training and development, workers compensation and superannuation costs – were 51.5 per cent of all government expenditure on education.

### Question 3

Most non-government schools charge fees. Fees can vary considerably, based on educational philosophy and level of government funding.

**This statement is true.**

### Question 4

Companies and individuals do not need to contribute to the cost of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia.

**This statement is false.** VET is mainly funded by the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments. However, employers and other organisations, as well as individuals, also pay for the cost of training through course fees.

### Question 5

The participation of international students in Australian education and training only generates a small income to the Australian economy.

**This statement is false.** International education is one of Australia's biggest net income earners. In 2015-16, international education activity contributed approximately \$19.9 billion in export income to the Australian economy. Education and training represent Australia's largest services export, and is the third largest export earner overall.





### Question 6

Among OECD and partner countries, Australia rates highest on the measure of annual expenditure per student in the tertiary (higher education and VET) sector.

**This statement is false.** It ranked fourth of 37 OECD and partner countries for expenditure per student in the tertiary sector.

Source: OECD 2016b

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### Question 7

Australia's performance in international tests is improving.

**This statement is false.** The 2015 PISA results also show that while Australia's results are above the OECD average for every category and performance in science has improved, students in 2015 did less well in maths and reading compared to 2012 participants. Australia's rankings in the OECD have declined from 19th to 22nd in mathematics, and from 14th to 15th in reading, since 2012.

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## REFERENCES AND LINKS

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