AusAID’s Australia Awards

Scholarships Annual Surveys

Executive Summary of Trend Report (2008 to 2012)

July 2012

This report was compiled by ORIMA Research

# Background and methodology

AusAID has been undertaking a survey of its Australia Award scholarship recipients for at least ten years. Three surveys are conducted annually – an arrival survey for students arriving in semester one (‘AS1’) and semester two (‘AS2’), and an ongoing survey (‘OS’) for all students who had completed one semester of study. The surveys are conducted online based on a census design methodology.

This executive summary report covers the results of the student surveys conducted between 2009 and April 2012, with comparisons with the 2008 student surveys where possible.

A total of 13,158 students completed the student surveys between 2008 and April 2012 out of a population of 16,688, giving an overall response rate of 79% across all the student survey cycles. Table 1 details fieldwork timeframes, student populations and response rates for the arrival and ongoing surveys conducted between 2008 and April 2012.

Table : Details of arrival and ongoing surveys conducted since 2008

| Survey cycle | Fieldwork timeframe[[1]](#footnote-2) | Student population[[2]](#footnote-3) | Surveys completed | Response rate |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AS1 2012 | 15 March to 11 April 2012R3+ | 1,527 | 1,322 | 87% |
| OS 2011 | 28 October to 28 November 2011R2+ | 2,653 | 1,988 | 75% |
| AS2 2011 | 23 September to 17 October 2011R2+ | 613 | 572 | 93% |
| AS1 2011 | 21 March to 11 April 2011R3+ | 1,142 | 1,028 | 90% |
| OS 2010 | 15 September to 4 October 2010R3+ | 2,454 | 1,866 | 76% |
| AS2 2010 | 9 to 23 August 2010R1 | 436 | 398 | 91% |
| AS1 2010 | 15 March to 6 April 2010R2 | 926 | 828 | 89% |
| OS 2009 | 14 September to 5 October 2009R1+ | 2,450 | 1,673 | 68% |
| AS2 2009 | 24 August to 7 September 2009R1 | 266 | 220 | 83% |
| AS1 2009 | 22 May to 5 June 2009R2+ | 1,125 | 976 | 87% |
| OS 2008 | 21 July to 19 September 2008 | 2,182 | 1,466 | 67% |
| AS 2008 | April/May 2008 | 914 | 821 | 90% |
| Total |  | 16,688 | 13,158 | 79% |

# Student profiles

The student profile characteristics have largely remained steady across the student surveys. Table 2 outlines the key demographic trends across the arrival and ongoing surveys conducted between 2009 and April 2012.

Table : Trends in student profile characteristics

| Characteristic | Arrival survey trends | Ongoing survey trends |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | 50% male on average (steady) | 54% male on average (steady) |
| Age | Slightly older for semester one intakes (AS1 33% 30-35 (steady)) and younger for semester two intakes (AS2 38% 25-30 (steady)) | 32% 30-35 (steady) |
| Family composition | 66% not accompanied and 26% had no immediate family (steady) | 42% not accompanied and 27% had no immediate family (steady)Main reason for not accompanied was insufficient funds available to support family |
| Disabilities | 2% (steady) | 2% (steady) |
| Socialising with other students and Australians | N/A | 73% other international students (not from home country) and68% students from home country (steady) |
| Part-time work | N/A | 28% undertook part-time work, with 57% of these working 5-10 hours per week (steady) |
| Region of country of origin | 57% East Asia (higher in semester two (71%, steady) than semester one (56%, steady)) | 54% East Asia (steady) |
| Income group of country of origin | 78% lower middle income (decreasing from 83% in 2009 to 66% in 2012, higher in semester two (82%) than semester one (74%)) | 78% lower middle income (decreasing from 83% in 2009 to 77% in 2011) |
| State of institution | 24% Victoria (steady)21% Queensland (steady)19% New South Wales (steady) | 27% Victoria (steady)24% Queensland (steady)10% New South Wales (steady) |
| Region of institution | 89% capital city (steady) | 89% capital city (steady) |
| Type of study | N/A | 69% course work and 25% research (steady) |

# Overall program outcomes

The vast majority of students were consistently ‘very satisfied’ or ‘moderately satisfied’ with the AusAID scholarship overall across the arrival and ongoing survey cycles, with AS1 2012 recording the highest level of students ‘very satisfied’ at 79% (see Figure 1). Ongoing students were slightly less positive than new arrivals, with around 70% of ongoing students being ‘very satisfied’ (see Figure 2).

###### Figure : Overall satisfaction with the AusAID scholarship (new arrivals)

Base: All respondents

|  |
| --- |
| AS1 2009 (n=911) - 68% 'Very satisfied', 32% 'Moderately satisfied' AS2 2009 (n=210) - 76% 'Very satisfied', 23% 'Moderately satisfied', 1% 'Not satisfied' AS1 2010 (n=788) - 72% 'Very satisfied', 27% 'Moderately satisfied', 1% 'Not satisfied' AS2 2010 (n=390) - 75% 'Very satisfied', 25% 'Moderately satisfied' AS1 2011 (n=998) - 73% 'Very satisfied', 27% 'Moderately satisfied' AS2 2011 (n=541) - 74% 'Very satisfied', 26% 'Moderately satisfied' AS1 2012 (n=1256) - 79% 'Very satisfied', 21% 'Moderately satisfied' |

###### Figure : Overall satisfaction with the AusAID scholarship (ongoing students)

Base: All respondents

|  |
| --- |
| OS 2009 (n=1606) - 72% 'Very satisfied', 27% 'Moderately satisfied', 1% 'Not satisfied' OS 2010 (n=1820) - 70% 'Very satisfied', 29% 'Moderately satisfied', 1% 'Not satisfied' OS 2011 (n=1916) - 71% 'Very satisfied', 28% 'Moderately satisfied', 1% 'Not satisfied' |

Levels of dissatisfaction have remained almost negligible at 1% and unchanged over the past four years for both new arrivals and ongoing students. Reasons provided by the minority of students who were not satisfied overall with the AusAID scholarship included:

financial challenges, particularly in managing the cost of living (and often requesting that allowances be increased); and

requests for more support in relation to family issues, including child care and the payment of reunion airfares.

Satisfaction with the **entitlements and other assistance provided by AusAID** has remained steady between 2009 and 2011, with just under half of ongoing students ‘very satisfied’ and around 45% ‘moderately satisfied’. The reasons provided by the minority of students (around 5%) for being ‘not satisfied’ with the entitlements / other assistance provided by AusAID included:

difficulties with cost of living and accommodation – particularly in relation to funding not being tailored to location factors (e.g. higher living costs in large cities);

insufficient funding to cover family expenses (especially for students with dependent children);

general insufficient funding for miscellaneous expenses;

insufficient provisions for health-related expenses; and

the non-payment of reunion airfares (from unaccompanied students who were in Australia for less than two years, who are not eligible to receive this entitlement).

Around two-thirds of ongoing students reported that they were ‘not likely’ to have **studied in Australia without a scholarship**, with around 13% of ongoing students reporting that they would ‘very likely’ have studied in Australia.

The vast majority of students found their course or field of research provided them with **useful knowledge and skills for working on development issues in their home country**. Encouragingly, there has been a favorable trend in the proportion of students who found their course/research to be ‘very useful’, rising steadily from 71% to 75%.

Most students took the opportunity to provide general comments (both positive and negative) about their AusAID scholarship.

The positive comments provided by students were mostly in relation to:

the program and the opportunities it provides;

the support provided by dedicated staff in their academic institution;

benefits of the Introductory Academic Program; and

the level of assistance provided by AusAID.

Comments on the challenges students faced included:

financial challenges, particularly in managing the cost of living;

challenges faced in finding appropriate accommodation;

time pressures and other difficulties faced in arranging visas, travelling to Australia, settling in and immediately commencing the IAP;

challenges faced in understanding English (Australian accent for some);

challenges faced in dealing with the pressures of studying;

challenges faced in finding and performing part-time work whilst studying; and

the high cost of health care.

# Obtaining an AusAID scholarship

Employers/workplaces in home countries were consistently the main source for new arrivals in gaining **initial awareness** of AusAID scholarships, with friends/colleagues who have studied in Australia being the second-most common source.

The most common reason for students **taking up an AusAID scholarship** and for **choice of course** was to contribute to their country's development. The two most dominant reasons influencing student **choice of institution** have remained steady, being the availability of the course they wanted to do and the international reputation of the institution.

The majority of new arrivals **obtained their scholarship application form** through the AusAID website, increasing from 40% in AS1 2009 to 62% in AS1 2012. The majority of new arrivals **submitted their application form** by paper copy to the AusAID scholarship program.

Around a quarter of new arrivals reported that they had **applied for another scholarship program**, with student interest mostly being in relation to the Endeavour Scholarship, the Fullbright Scholarship and the British Chevening Scholarship.

The most common resource used by new arrivals in **preparing applications and interviews** was the AusAID website, increasing steadily from 59% in AS1 2009 to 70% in AS1 2012. Encouragingly, the majority of students using the AusAID website reported that it was ‘very useful’ and this has remained steady at over 70%.

Around 80% of new arrivals encountered **issues in relation to the scholarship application and selection processes**. These issues were generally in relation to:

institutional issues, such as finding information about institutions, preparing applications and getting accepted;

issues with obtaining employer approvals and references; and

issues related to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) / Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Less than half of students who encountered issues in relation to the scholarship application and selection processes reported that any of these issues had a ‘major effect’ on them.

# Preparing to come to Australia

Nearly all students (99% on average) **sought information about a range of matters prior to coming to Australia**. The **resources used by students in preparing to come to Australia** included AusAID resources, institution resources and personal networks. A majority of students used materials provided by AusAID when preparing to come to Australia, with most of these students consistently finding them to be ‘very useful’.

Around 80% of students reported that they **encountered issues when getting ready to come to Australia**. The most common issue (experienced by around half of students) was the time gap between finishing work and leaving for Australia, however only around two-thirds of these students reported that it had a ‘major effect’ on them. The issue that had the greatest effect on students was in relation to obtaining an AusAID student visa (between 40% and 60% reporting that it had a ‘major effect’ on them); however this issue was encountered by only around one in five students.

# AusAID pre-departure briefing and guidebook / DVD

Nearly all students (more than 90%) reported that they **attended an AusAID pre-departure briefing**.

The vast majority of students (more than 90%) reported that the topics on their **AusAID obligations** included in the survey were covered in their AusAID pre‑departure briefing, with the majority (between 70% and 90%) reporting that the information covered was ‘very useful’.

The vast majority of students (more than 90%) reported that the topics on **preparation** included in the survey (i.e. ‘arrival in Australia’, ‘settling in and cultural adjustment’ and bringing family to Australia’) were covered in their AusAID pre‑departure briefing, with slightly less (between 50% and 80%) reporting that the information covered was ‘very useful’.

Student reports on the topics covered in in the survey relating to **day-to-day living** were more variable. While the majority of students reported that the topics on accommodation and living in Australia were covered in their AusAID pre-departure briefing (between 80% and 90%), less reported that the topics on academic programs and part-time employment were covered (between 60% and 75%). Between 40% and 60% of students reported the topics on **accommodation** and **part-time employment in Australia** were ‘very useful’.

Nearly all students (more than 90%) reported that they received a copy of the **AusAID pre‑departure guidebook/DVD**.

The majority of students (between 70% and 80%) reported that they read or viewed the topics covered in the survey on their **AusAID obligations**, with between 70% and 80% of these students reporting that the information covered was ‘very useful’.

The majority of students (between 80% and 90%) reported that they read or viewed the **preparation** topics on arrival and settling in / cultural adjustment, with between 60% and 80% of these students reporting that the information covered was ‘very useful’. Fewer students (around 70%) read or viewed the topics on bringing family to Australia, with this topic only relevant to those with immediate family
(i.e. a partner/spouse and/or children).

In relation to **day-to-day living**, the majority of students (between 80% and 90%) read/viewed the topics on accommodation and living in Australia, while around two‑thirds read/viewed the topics on academic programs and part-time employment. As with the pre‑departure briefing, between 50% and 60% of students reported the topics on accommodation and part-time employment in Australia were ‘very useful’.

A minority of students (around one in ten on average) reported that the content on accommodation was ‘not useful’, with the main reason being the need for more detailed and specific information. Specifically, students wanted to know how to find accommodation, typical costs and more detail on specific cities/regions.

# Australian academic institution services and facilities

Nearly all students (more than 90%) reported that they **participated in an Introductory Academic Program (IAP)**.

The vast majority of students (between 80% and 100%) reported that the topics in relation to **learning tips** were covered in their IAP. Although the majority of these students (between 80% and 90%) found these topics to be ‘very useful’, slightly less (around 70%) found the topics on time management and different teaching and learning styles to be ‘very useful’.

Student reports on the topics covered in relation to **campus orientation and support services** were more variable. While the majority of students reported that an introduction/orientation to the university/college campus was conducted and the topics on support services, health services and culture shock were covered in their IAP, less than two-thirds reported that Australian history was covered and less than half reported that information on religious services and prayer rooms was covered in their IAP. While between 70% and 80% of students reported that campus orientation and support services topics were ‘very useful’ less than two thirds of students reported the other support services to be ‘very useful’.

Most students reported that the **household and living** topics were covered in their IAP, with between 50% and 60% of these reporting that they were ‘very useful’.

Nearly all students (around 98%) were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘moderately satisfied’ with their IAP, and these satisfaction levels have remained steady across all arrival survey cycles.

Nearly all new arrivals (97% on average) reported that one or more types of **academic help** were **available** to them at their institution.

Most new arrivals (between 60% and 90%) reported that academic help in relation to **core study skills** was available at their university/college, apart from help with mathematics/statistics where around one-third reported that this form of academic help was available. The majority of new arrivals (between 60% and 80%) reported that access to help in relation to core study skills was ‘very easy’ and the ease of access had been gradually improving over time.

New arrivals reported that academic help in relation to **general study skills** was more variable in terms of availability, with around one-third reporting help with other prerequisite knowledge was available, two-thirds reporting assistance with time management was available and eight in ten reporting help with other study skills was available at their institution. Between 60% and 80% of new arrivals reported that access to this help was ‘very easy’ and the ease of access has been gradually improving over time.

In general, similar proportions of ongoing students to new arrivals reported that academic help in relation to core and general study skills was available at their institution. However, a lower proportion of ongoing students reported that the academic help was ‘very easy’ to access when compared with new arrivals.

Around 80% of new arrivals reported that they had **used some form of academic help** available at their university or college. Although around two-thirds of new arrivals used help with referencing, less than half used the other types of academic help available to them. Over two-thirds of new arrivals that had used any of the types of academic help available to them reported that it was ‘very useful’.

Around 90% of ongoing students reported that they had accessed at least one of the forms of academic help available to them, slightly higher when compared with new arrivals. Around two-thirds or more of ongoing students reported that the forms of academic help were ‘very useful’.

Nearly all new arrivals and ongoing students (99%) reported that a range of **services and facilities** were **available** to them at their university or college (other than through an IAP).

The vast majority of students (between 70% and 100%) reported that the **academic** and **personal support services** were available to them at their university/college, with most of these students (between 60% and 90%) reporting that they were ‘very easy’ to access.

The reported availability of **other support services** was more variable. Most students reported that a health service (around 85%) and help with finding accommodation (around 70%) was available to them at their institution. However, less than half of all students reported financial advice, legal advice and childcare facilities were available. While between 40% and 70% of new arrivals found other support services ‘very easy’ to access, less than half found the accessibility of childcare facilities to be ‘very easy’.

The vast majority of new arrivals (99% on average) reported that they had **used** one or more **services and/or facilities** that were available to them at their university or college. Usage of the range of services and facilities available to new arrivals at the university/college was quite variable and obviously dependent on individual needs.

In relation to **personal support services**, most new arrivals (around 80%) and ongoing students (around 85%) had accessed the services of the student contact officer / AusAID liaison officer, with just over half accessing the international student support service. However, only around one in ten new arrivals reported that they had accessed a counseling service. The majority of new arrivals (between 70% and 90%) reported that the personal support services they had accessed was ’very useful’.

For **academic support services**, the majority of new arrivals used the library (around 90%) and computer facilities (around 80%), with around half of new arrivals and around 60% of ongoing students accessing academic skills services and help with computer skills. While between 80% and 95% of students using the library and computer facilities reported that they were ‘very useful’, less ongoing students (between 60% and 70%) found academic skills services and help with computer skills to be ‘very useful’ than new arrivals (between 70% and 80%).

For **other support services**, more ongoing students (around 60%) used a health service than new arrivals (around one-third), whereas around the same proportion of new arrivals and ongoing students used help with finding accommodation (around one-third). Around three-quarters of students found the health service they had accessed to be ‘very useful’, however a higher proportion of new arrivals (between 50% and 60%) found help with finding accommodation to be ‘very useful’ than ongoing students (between 40% and 50%). Less than 10% of students used childcare facilities, financial advice and legal advice.

Nearly all students (99%) were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘moderately satisfied’ **overall** with the **services and facilities** available at their university or college, remaining steady. Although the proportion of ongoing students ‘very satisfied’ was lower than that of new arrivals (around 60% compared with just over two-thirds of new arrivals), this proportion has increased slightly between 2009 and 2011. Reasons provided by the minority of students (1%) for their ratings of ‘not satisfied’ included:

difficulties in accessing or non-existence of particular services and/or facilities;

some services and/or facilities were expensive to access (e.g. health service / sports facilities, computer and printing facilities); and

issues with the library facilities not keeping up with demand, in relation to the number and diversity of books.

The majority of ongoing students (93%) reported that they still felt they had **chosen the right course or research topic for them**. Reasons provided by the minority of ongoing students who felt that they had not selected the right course or research topic for them included:

the course did not reflect their real interests, was not compatible with their existing qualifications, or did not match their abilities;

students felt they had been restricted to a particular course they could choose (e.g. by availability or other requirements);

the course was not what they were expecting or they had received insufficient or incorrect information to enable them to select the right course;

the course type, level or duration was not according to their preference;

the course or research topic that they had originally selected ended up being altered;

the course was not fully suitable for their work or the needs in their home country;

the course was similar to studies they had already completed in their home country; and

they found it difficult to cope with course requirements.

The majority of ongoing students (91%) reported that they still felt they had **chosen the right university or college for them**, remaining consistent over the survey cycles. Reasons provided by the minority of ongoing students who felt they had not selected the right university or college included:

limited or poor facilities, poor staff availability, quality and/or expertise;

desired courses/subjects were available or offered to a higher quality by other institutions;

problems related to campus location (e.g. the cost of living, accommodation difficulties, weather);

desired type of course or fieldwork / practical opportunities were not adequately offered by their institution;

the learning experience did not meet student expectations — students felt they had received insufficient or incorrect information when selecting this institution, or felt they had no choice in their selection of institution;

difficulties experienced in coping with university requirements or workloads; and

unforeseen changes affecting their studies, such as supervisor leaving or the course subjects being changed after commencing their studies.

Nearly all ongoing students (99%) consistently rated the **overall quality of their university or college** as either ‘high’ or ‘medium’. Reasons provided by the minority of students who rated the overall quality of their university or college as ‘low’ included:

poor facilities;

course content and delivery were not meeting expectations;

lack of support; and

limited choice of elective courses.

Nearly all ongoing students (98%) consistently rated the **quality of their course or research supervision** as either ‘high’ or ‘medium’. Reasons provided by the minority of students who rated the quality of their course or research supervision as ‘low’ included:

course content and delivery were not meeting expectations;

lack of support; and

class sizes being too large.

Nearly all ongoing students (95%) reported the **theoretical and practical knowledge** provided by their course/research was ‘very well balanced’ or ‘moderately well balanced’. Reasons provided by students for providing a rating of ‘not satisfied’ included:

discrepancies between the expected and actual balance of theoretical and practical knowledge provided by the course or research (i.e. too much theory or too much practical application);

a lack of practical work experience amongst academic staff, leading to difficulties in knowing how the gained knowledge could be applied in practice;

the course included examples that were Australian-specific (e.g. taxation law); and

a lack of opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge as part of their study (e.g. via internships).

# Studying and living in Australia

Around 85% of students reported that they encountered one or more **issues in relation to their studies** whilst in Australia.

Of the **study skills** issues encountered by new arrivals, the most commonly faced issue was in relation to general study skills (faced by around half of new arrivals and around 30% of ongoing students). Other more commonly faced study skills issues were in relation to managing time and understanding or using English, encountered by between 30% and 40% of new arrivals and between 20% and 30% of ongoing students. Between 20% and 40% of students who encountered issues in relation to general study skills reported that these issues had a ‘major effect’ on them.

While **interacting with others**, most new arrivals encountered issues in participating in class discussions (faced by around one-third of new arrivals and just under 30% of ongoing students). Around 20% of students had issues in working with classmates not from their home country and around 10% had issues approaching teachers and other staff. Between 10% and 30% of students that faced issues interacting with others reported that it had a ‘major effect’ on them.

A greater proportion of new arrivals (around 10%) faced issues in **navigating to, from and around their campus**, compared with around 2% of ongoing students. These navigation issues had a ‘major effect’ on around 10% of students (apart from the AS2 2009 survey, where around one-third reported that the issue in finding their way to and from the campus had a ‘major effect’ on them).

A greater proportion of new arrivals (between 50% and 60%) of new arrivals had **issues in relation to finding accommodation of acceptable type and quality**, compared with around 40% of ongoing students. Between 40% and 50% of these students reported that this accommodation issue had a ‘major effect’ on them, and this effect has been declining.

Around 90% of students reported that they encountered one or more **financial issues**.

The most common issue encountered by students was in relation to **finding affordable accommodation**, which was faced by between 50% and 60% of new arrivals and around 50% of ongoing students. Although the proportion of new arrivals (between 40% and 60%) reporting that this issue had a ‘major effect’ on them was higher than ongoing students (around 45%), this effect has been steadily declining for new arrivals.

The **cost of living** was also a common issue faced by between 50% and 60% of new arrivals and ongoing students. Although a greater proportion of ongoing students (between 45% and 50%) encountering this issue reported that it had a ‘major effect’ on them than new arrivals (between 30% and 50%), these proportions have been steadily decreasing.

The **cost of caring for dependents** was an issue for fewer students (around 20%). However, a high proportion of these students (between 50% and 70%) reported that this issue had a ‘major effect’ on them.

Around 90% of students reported that they encountered one or more **‘other’ issues** whilst in Australia.

**Spouse/dependent-related issues** continued to have the highest effect on up to one‑quarter of students who encountered these issues, with around half of these students reporting that these issues generally had a ‘major effect’ on them.

While the most frequently encountered issue was in relation to the **weather/climate** in their city/town, it was only encountered by around 40% of new arrivals and one‑quarter of ongoing students. Furthermore, less than one-third of students encountering this issue reported that it had a ‘major effect’ on them.

Around 20% of ongoing students reported that they had **sought personal help or study assistance** from a person or organisation not associated with either AusAID or their university or college, and this has remained steady between 2009 and 2011.

Persons/organisations that students sought assistance from included: friends; classmates/course mates/university students; housemates/neighbours; religious organisations (e.g. churches); colleagues/workmates; and organisations or clubs.

Much of the assistance sought was in relation to English skills (e.g. proofreading) or specific study/academic skills (e.g. computers, statistics or course-related content).

Between 15% and 25% of new arrivals reported that they had experienced **racism and/or discrimination** during their time in Australia, compared with around a third of ongoing students.

The majority of students (between 60% and 75%) who had experienced racism and/or discrimination during their time in Australia reported that it only happened once or twice.

Students that had experienced racism/discrimination mainly reported that it was based on race — between 60% and 70% for new arrivals and around half for ongoing students.

Most occurrences of racism/discrimination were experienced in the general community — between 70% and 90% for new arrivals and between 70% and 80% for ongoing students.

Only a minority of students (around 10%) reported that the racism/discrimination they encountered affected them a lot, with around half reporting that it affected them a little and around a third reporting that it did not affect them at all.

# Entitlements and other assistance provided by the AusAID scholarship program

For **entitlements available to all students**, nearly all ongoing students (around 95%) reported that they had used the establishment allowance and the scholarship living allowance, with around 80% also reporting that they had used the overseas student health cover. Between 70% and 80% of students ‘very satisfied’ with the establishment allowance and this proportion was increasing, while around half of students who had used the overseas student health cover were ‘very satisfied’ with this assistance. However, satisfaction with the scholarship living allowance was lower at around 40% ‘very satisfied’.

For **entitlements only available to Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) students**, around a third of ADS students used tutorial assistance funded by AusAID, with less using the reunion airfare (although increasing from 12% in OS 2009 to 24% in OS 2011) and the fieldwork entitlement (around 10%). Satisfaction with the reunion airfare was the highest (increasing from around 70% to 80%), with around two-thirds being ‘very satisfied’ with the tutorial assistance and around half being ‘very satisfied’ with the fieldwork entitlement.

For **entitlements only available to Australian Leadership Awards Scholarship (ALAS) students**, between 50% and 70% accessed the mobilisation allowance (decreasing) and the study enrichment allowance (increasing). Satisfaction with ALAS entitlements and other assistance has remained steady, with around two-thirds being ‘very satisfied’ with the mobilisation allowance and around half ‘very satisfied’ with the study enrichment allowance.

Prior to 2011, ALAS students received a higher contribution to living expenses (CLE) than ADS students. From 2011, there was a significant increase to the CLE amount, with both ADS and ALAS students receiving the same increased rate. Student satisfaction has increased in 2011 with the scholarship entitlements provided to all students and to ADS students, whereas student satisfaction with ALAS entitlements has remained steady.

As with new arrivals, nearly all ongoing students (97%) were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘moderately satisfied’ with the assistance provided by their student contact officer / AusAID liaison officer. However, less ongoing students were ‘very satisfied’ (around two‑thirds, compared with around three-quarters of new arrivals).

Reasons provided by the minority of new arrivals and ongoing students who were not satisfied overall with the assistance provided by their student contact officer / AusAID liaison officer included:

difficulties in access — lack of availability, difficulties in contacting, delays in responding to queries and/or changes in arrangements without timely advice;

lack of professional expertise;

lack of support/understanding/helpfulness; and

unprofessional behaviour.

Some students also reported that they were unaware of the existence of a student contact officer / AusAID liaison officer at their institution, there was no officer at their institution, or the officer had left and had not yet been replaced.

# Returning home

Around one-third of ongoing students reported that they would be completing their studies and returning home within the next four months.

Of the ongoing students returning home within the next four months, the majority reported that they were returning to the same organisation and the same (or similar) job, with this proportion increasing from 49% in 2008 to 57% in OS 2011.

Around one in five ongoing students did not yet have any arrangements in place, with the majority of these indicating that they were either in the process of looking for a job or intended looking for a job in their home country on their return.

A minority of students (2%) reported that they planned to undertake further studies.

Around 40% of ongoing students with work arrangements already in place reported that their employer did not have a reintegration plan in place.

Of the ongoing students whose employers had a reintegration plan in place, the majority (around two-thirds) reported that it was last updated before they left their home country to take up their scholarship, and this figure remained steady.

Around 30% of ongoing students returning home shortly expected that they would encounter **barriers in using their new qualifications** on their return home. Reasons provided for why ongoing students were expecting to encounter barriers in using their new qualifications on their return home included:

their new knowledge may not be applicable in home countries (as it largely related to the Australian context) and new ideas may be resisted in home countries;

lack of available positions in home countries suitable for candidates with new knowledge, workplace scepticism and limited career development opportunities in chosen fields;

the degree/course may not be recognised in home countries — students may have to work in areas different from their field of expertise — or the qualifications may be insufficient (i.e. students may require an honours or master’s degree, rather than a bachelor degree);

home countries may not have the requisite infrastructure, systems or funding to support new skills; and

some students also cited cultural barriers, acceptance by work colleagues and adapting back to life in their home countries as expected issues.

Around 85% of ALAS students returning home within four months in 2010 reported that the **leadership development program** met their expectations, with this figure increasing to 94% in 2011. Reasons provided by the minority of students who reported the leadership development program was not meeting their expectations included:

the program should be ongoing;

the program was more theoretical than practical;

students did not understand the concept of the program; and

delivery was below expectations.

The proportion of ALAS students returning home within four months that expected **barriers in using their new leadership skills** on their return home decreased from around 40% in 2010 to around 30% in 2011. Reasons provided for why students were expecting to encounter barriers in using their new leadership skills on their return home included:

cultural barriers or a conservative mentality in home countries;

bureaucracy, political barriers, corruption and lack of freedom;

gender or age barriers; and

lack of opportunity to utilise new degrees in careers in home countries.

Around 15% of ongoing students were already a member of the AusAID alumni network for their home country at the time of completing the survey, and around three‑quarters intended to join the AusAID network. Around half of students intended to join the alumni network of their particular university or college.

Between 10% and 15% of students reported that they were unaware of any relevant alumni networks to join.

1. The number of targeted reminder email rounds (1 to 3) is indicated by the R1, R2 or R3 symbols. A ‘plus’ symbol (+) is shown where the fieldwork period was extended beyond the original due date. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Note that these population figures exclude students who were not able to be contacted (i.e. their emails bounced). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)