

# **AUSTRALIA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP SURVEYS**

## **2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT**

This report was compiled by ORIMA Research

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## I. Background and methodology

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) undertakes a research program of the Australia Awards scholarship recipients on an annual basis. The annual process comprises two surveys of new starters (one for Semester One and one for Semester Two, known as the Arrival Surveys) and a survey of students who have completed at least one semester of study (known as the Ongoing Survey). The three surveys are conducted online by ORIMA Research using a census design methodology.

- ◆ The two **Arrival Surveys** are aimed at gathering information on the following topics:

- the application process for an Australia Award scholarship;
- pre-departure preparation;
- experience on arrival;
- initial thoughts on study programs, institution services and facilities; and
- satisfaction with the scholarship entitlements received.

The two Arrival Surveys conducted in 2014 were for semester one (conducted in May/June) and semester two (conducted in September).

- ◆ The **Ongoing Survey** is aimed at gathering information on:

- living and studying experiences;
- assessments of facilities and services at Australian academic institutions;
- entitlements and assistance provided by the program; and
- arrangements for returning home.

The 2014 Ongoing Survey was conducted in October/November.

This Executive Summary Report provides the results of the student surveys conducted in 2014, and provides comparisons with previous data back to 2009 for key measures.

- ◆ When reading comparison data with previous years, it is important to note that there was a change in the scales used in the surveys in 2013. A three point scale was used from 2009 to 2012 (e.g. very satisfied, moderately satisfied, not satisfied), and this was changed to a five-point scale from 2013 onwards (e.g. very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied).

## A. Response rates

The response rates for the Arrival Surveys and the Ongoing Survey have remained high and steady in comparison with previous years (back to 2009), with response rates of 83-94% amongst new arrivals and 68-76% amongst ongoing students. Table 1 provides details on the response numbers for the Scholarship Surveys conducted in 2014.

**Table 1: Details of surveys conducted in 2014**

Survey cycle	Student population	Survey responses	Response rate
Arrival Survey Semester One 2014	1,480	1,306	88%
Arrival Survey Semester Two 2014	539	505	94%
Ongoing Survey 2014	3,454	2,599	75%

## B. Demographic profile

The high-level profile of new arrival and ongoing students who responded to the Australia Awards Scholarships Surveys in 2014 is provided in Table 2.

**Table 2: Profile of students who responded to the Arrival and Ongoing Surveys in 2014**

Demographic profile	Proportion of new arrivals	Proportion of ongoing students
Male	49%	52%
Female	51%	48%
Aged 18-29	34%	24%
Aged 30-39	55%	59%
Aged 40 plus	11%	17%
Single	37%	34%
With family (spouse/partner and/or children)	63%	66%
Have a job to return to	N/A	72%
Looking for a job	N/A	24%
Plan to undertake further studies	N/A	2%
With a disability	2%	1.5%
In last semester of study	N/A	33%
Experienced discrimination	17%	25%

## II. Primary scholarship outcomes

This section outlines the primary outcome measures of the Australia Awards program for 2014 in relation to:

- ♦ overall satisfaction with the Australia Awards program; and
- ♦ the usefulness of knowledge and skills provided by courses/research for working on development issues in home countries.

### A. Overall satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the Australia Awards program has remained high and consistent over the years, ranging between 97% and 100% satisfied since 2009. This is even more impressive for ongoing students, considering that their satisfaction levels have been sustained well after the excitement of commencing their scholarship.

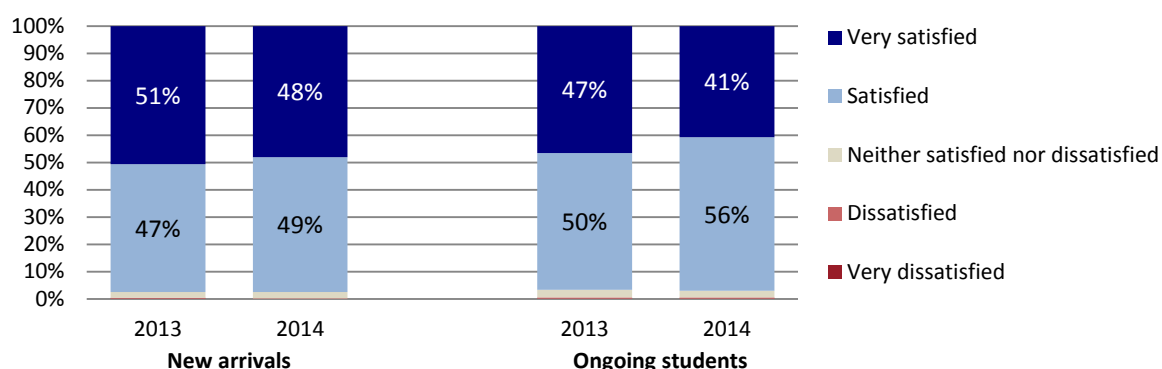
- ♦ Levels of dissatisfaction were consistent across all years at between 0% and 1%. The few students who were less than satisfied with the Australia Award scholarship overall in 2014 mainly mentioned that the entitlements were not enough to support the cost of living in Australia.

While satisfaction levels were very similar between 2013 and 2014 at the aggregate level, ongoing students were slightly less positive in 2014 (41% very satisfied), when compared with the 2013 results (47% very satisfied, see Figure 1).

- ♦ Positively, satisfaction levels were similar amongst the 2014 ongoing students across a range of demographic characteristics, including age, gender, family composition and disability status. Overall satisfaction levels were also very similar between students who experienced discrimination and those who did not.
- ♦ While satisfaction levels were similar across the different fields of study, there were a small number of specific Australian educational Institutions (Institutions) where satisfaction was slightly lower (at around 85%).
- ♦ Satisfaction levels were above 90% for most countries, with slightly lower satisfaction being recorded amongst 2014 ongoing students from the Middle-East (80% satisfied), Peru (80%), Tuvalu (83%) and Chile (86%).

**Figure 1: Overall satisfaction with the Australia Award scholarship**

Base: All survey respondents



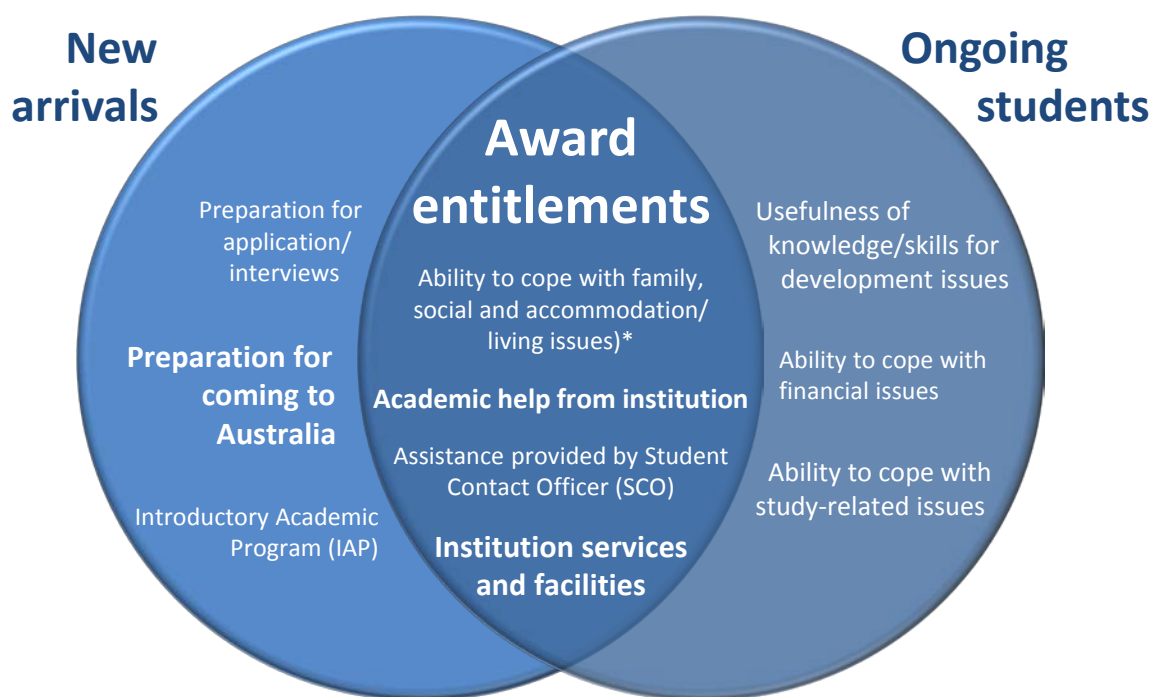
## Drivers of overall satisfaction

The research applied regression modeling techniques to identify the attributes that had a strong influence (correlation) on how satisfied students were with their Australia Awards in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Separate models were developed for the new arrivals cohort and the ongoing student cohort. Each model identified eight key ‘drivers’ of overall satisfaction. Five of the drivers were common to both new arrivals and ongoing students, as shown in Figure 2.

- ◆ Satisfaction with the entitlements and other assistance under the scholarship program was the most influential driver of overall satisfaction, having around twice as much impact as the other key drivers for both new arrivals and ongoing students.
  - Other significant drivers for new arrivals were satisfaction with their preparation for coming to Australia and with their Institution’s services and facilities.
  - Another significant driver for ongoing students was satisfaction with their Institution’s services and facilities.

A detailed description for each regression model is provided in Appendix A.

**Figure 2: Key Drivers of overall satisfaction for new arrivals and ongoing students**



\* Key drivers for new arrivals were in relation to establishment and settling processes (arranging childcare, finding food), whereas the drivers for ongoing students were in relation to more ongoing processes (e.g. keeping in touch with family). Drivers shared between both student groups were making friends, finding accommodation, balancing work and study and the climate.

<sup>1</sup> Similar to the 2013 models, these few attributes explain around 40% of the variance in overall satisfaction amongst both new arrivals and ongoing students.

## Priorities for improving/maintaining overall satisfaction

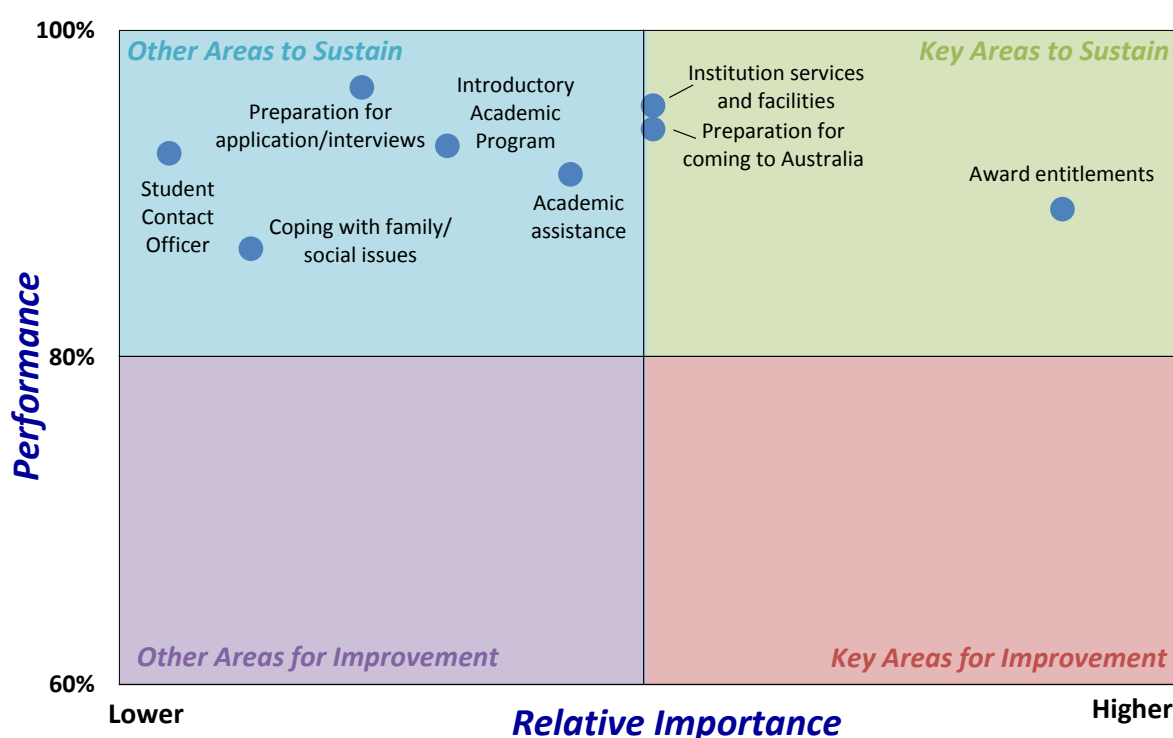
As noted previously, overall satisfaction with the Australia Awards Program has remained high and steady since 2009. As such, it is not surprising to find that the attributes identified as “key drivers” were all rated very favorably at the aggregate level (i.e. apart from one driver—ability to cope with financial issues for ongoing students—all other key drivers rated above the 80% performance threshold). However, “a “drill-down” of the findings reveals opportunities for improvement amongst small student cohorts, as identified below.

Therefore, the focus of improvement strategies should be on maintaining the service delivery standards, information and support levels as they are currently provided in the Australia Awards Program, and improving in areas identified by specific student cohorts as requiring attention.

### 2014 new arrivals

The drivers of overall satisfaction amongst new arrivals remained steady with the 2013 results. As shown in Figure 3, the three most important drivers were: satisfaction with award entitlements; institution services and facilities; and preparation for coming to Australia. Performance across these top three measures was above 86% in 2014.

**Figure 3: Drivers of overall satisfaction amongst new arrivals**



While the majority of new arrivals were very positive in relation to the key drivers above, there were some small cohorts where the sentiment was slightly lower, which may require further attention.

- ◆ Only 64% of students from middle-eastern countries were satisfied with their **Award entitlements**, compared to around 80% or more amongst other countries.
- ◆ Around 90% or more of students from most countries were satisfied with their **preparation for coming to Australia**, with satisfaction being slightly lower amongst students from Mauritius (83% satisfied), Panama (83%) and Jamaica (83%).

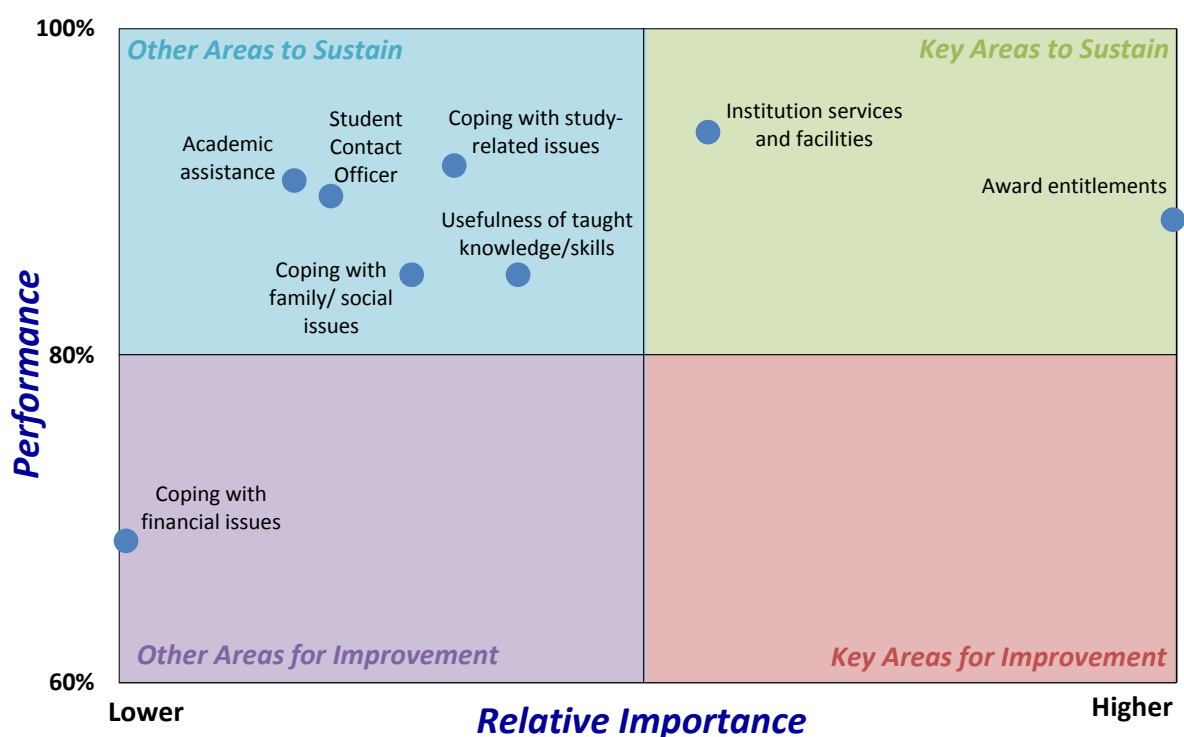
- ◆ Satisfaction with **Institution services and facilities** was high (around 90% or higher) amongst most Institutions, although a small number of Institutions catering for low numbers of Australia Awards students (i.e. less than 20) received lower scores (between 60% and 80%).

Positively, satisfaction levels for these three measures were similar across the range of other student demographic characteristics, including age, gender, family composition and disability status.

### 2014 ongoing students

The drivers of overall satisfaction amongst ongoing students also remained steady with the 2013 results. As shown in Figure 4, 88% of students were satisfied with their Award entitlements, which was by far the most important driver of overall satisfaction in 2014. As with 2013, student ability to cope with financial issues remained an area for focus.

**Figure 4: Drivers of overall satisfaction amongst ongoing students**



Again, the positive sentiment was high amongst most ongoing students, and there were some small cohorts where the sentiment was slightly lower, possibly requiring further attention.

- ◆ While ability to **cope with financial issues** was a lower performing driver of overall satisfaction amongst ongoing students, students from the following cohorts were more positive in their coping abilities: from the Africa region<sup>2</sup>; Uruguay (100%); Venezuela (100%); and Guatemala (92%).
  - Students who were less positive with their coping abilities were: from middle-eastern (40% satisfied) and Pacific Island (54%) countries; Tuvalu (0%); India (33%); Burundi (43%); Sri Lanka (49%); Jamaica (50%); Gambia (57%); and Costa Rica (57%).

<sup>2</sup> Students for the following African countries were more positive in their ability to cope with financial issues: South Africa (100%), Swaziland (91%), Cameroon (90%); Botswana (89%) and Mauritius (88%).



New arrivals aged less than 25 were the most satisfied with their ability to cope with financial issues (82% satisfied) however, over the longer-term, students within this age group were the least satisfied with their coping ability (63%). Students with child dependent(s) were also less satisfied with their coping ability (at 63% amongst both new arrivals and ongoing students).

Students with a disability were more likely to be able to cope with financial issues, when compared with those with no disability. There was no significant difference in coping ability by gender.

- ◆ Around 80% or more of students from most countries were satisfied with their **Award entitlements**, with very high satisfaction being amongst students from: the Africa region (with 100% satisfaction from Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, the Seychelles and South Africa); and the Americas (with 100% satisfaction from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Guyana).
  - Students who were less satisfied with their Award entitlements were: from middle-eastern countries (67% satisfied); India (64%); and Chile (71%).
- ◆ Satisfaction with **Institution services and facilities** was around 90% or better for most Institutions, with a small number of Institutions catering for low numbers of Australia Awards students (i.e. less than 20) recording lower levels, between 50% and 70%.

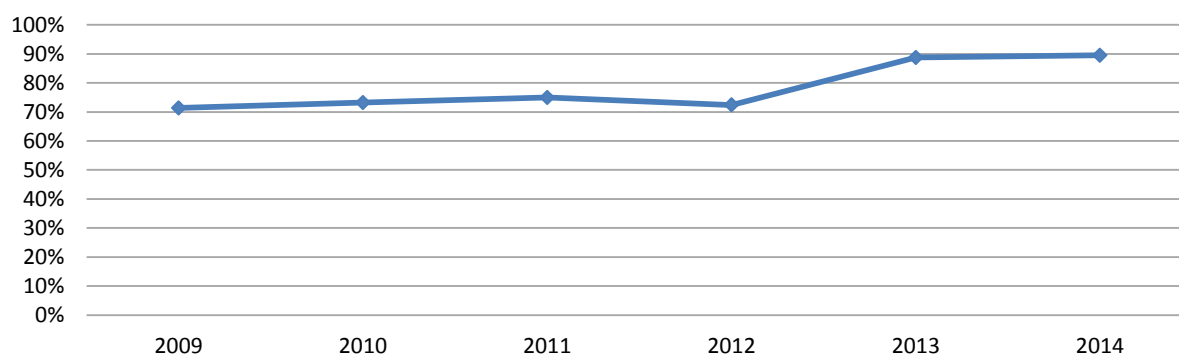
There were no significant differences in satisfaction with Award entitlements and Institution services and facilities across the range of other student demographic characteristics, including age, gender, family composition and disability status.

## B. Usefulness of knowledge/skills gained from course

Consistent with 2013, 89% of ongoing students found their course/research provided them with **useful knowledge and skills for working on development issues in their home country** (i.e. rated their newly acquired knowledge/skills as being very useful or essential, see Figure 5). The difference between the 2009–12 results and the 2013–14 results is most likely to be a genuine improvement, considering the change in question scales between these two periods enabled students to provide a more nuanced response.

**Figure 5: Usefulness of knowledge and skills in course for development issues**

Base: All ongoing survey respondents (% very useful or essential)



- ◆ More than 86% of students across the range of study fields found the knowledge and skills they attained as being very useful as a knowledge and/or skill base for working on development issues in their home country.

- There was one exception to this strong positive view, which was evident amongst students in the Creative Arts study field. Only 53% of these students found their study to be very useful.
- ◆ 89% of Institutions (with five or more respondents) achieved or exceeded the 80% performance level benchmark for this measure. Although most of the Institutions that did not meet this benchmark catered for low numbers of Australia Awards students (i.e. those classified as “small” Institutions), overall results were similar across the three Institution size groups of small (20 or fewer Australia Award scholars), medium (20-99) and large (100 or more), ranging between 88% and 90% across these three groups.
- ◆ Students from 84% of countries (with five or more respondents) found their newly attained knowledge and skills to be very useful. Perceptions of “usefulness” were below the target benchmark of 80% amongst students from: India (64% very useful); Mexico (67%); Peru (70%); Burundi (71%); Jamaica (75%); Panama (75%); and Botswana (78%).
- ◆ Younger students (aged less than 25) were slightly less likely (83%) to find their newly gained knowledge and skills to be useful for working on development issues within their home country. This was also true for students with a disability, with 84% finding their newly acquired knowledge and skills to be useful, compared to 90% of those with no disability.

## C. Focus on discrimination, women and disability

This section provides information on the experiences of students who have experienced discrimination, female student experiences and experiences of students who have a disability.

### Discrimination

Instances of reporting **discrimination** has been decreasing since 2012, with 17% of new arrivals and 25% of ongoing students experiencing discrimination (down from 24% amongst new arrivals and 34% amongst ongoing students in 2012).

- ◆ As with previous years, most cases of discrimination were based on race (around two-thirds) and ethnicity (around one-third); with much lower instances of religion-based discrimination (around 15%).
- ◆ In most cases (around 70%), the discrimination incidents occurred off-campus.
- ◆ Most students (75% of new arrivals and 67% of ongoing students) reported that the discrimination happened once or twice. However, around 5% of students reported that they had experienced discrimination at least once a week during their time in Australia.
- ◆ While around 33% of students reported that the discrimination did not affect them, more than 60% reported that it affected them a little and 4-6% reported that it affected them a lot.

There were a number of surprising correlations between victims of discrimination and the following factors:

- ◆ Victims of discrimination found it more difficult to find information about coming to Australia;
- ◆ They experienced more severe financial issues (and have a lower ability to cope with these);
- ◆ They found it more difficult to access Institution services/facilities (including academic help), and found these to be less useful; and
- ◆ They were less satisfied with their scholarship entitlements.

This may reflect deeper vulnerabilities that may make them more susceptible to indicating experiencing instances of discrimination.

## Gender

The proportion of female students has remained broadly consistent over time (48% of respondents in 2014).

Satisfaction with the overall scholarship experience was the same between females and males (at 97%). Female students were marginally more likely to report experiencing discrimination (27%), compared to their male counterparts (22%).

- ◆ Reports of gender-based discrimination were similar between females (5%) and males (2%).
- ◆ There was no significant difference in the frequency and the source of the discrimination between females and males.
- ◆ Female respondents who had experienced discrimination were marginally more likely to be affected by the experience (8% reporting it *affected them a lot* and 65% reporting it *affected them a little*, compared to 5% and 58% of males respectively).

On returning to their home countries, females were significantly more likely to expect gender, age and/or disability barriers to using their new qualifications (44%, compared to 25% of males) and in using their new leadership skills (23%, compared to 15% of males).

## Disability

The proportion of students with a disability has remained steady since 2009, at around 2% of respondents.

Generally, the studying and living experience of students with a disability was similar to those without a disability. The two areas where students with a disability were more likely to encounter a problem were in relation to using computers and mobility to and around their campus. Despite the higher incidence of these issues, very few students with a disability reported that it affected them a lot.

- ◆ In contrast, the proportion of students with a disability who found the cost of books, computers and other study-related materials to have caused them an issue financially was lower (61%) when compared to those with no disability (75%).

Students with a disability were more likely to report experiencing discrimination (39%, compared to 24% of those without a disability).

- ◆ The two most common types of discrimination experienced by students with a disability were discrimination based on race and in relation to their disability (both at 47%).
- ◆ A higher proportion of students with a disability reported that the discrimination source was a teacher and/or other staff member at their Institution (27%, compared to 15% of students with no disability). A higher proportion also reported the discrimination to their Institution (40%, compared to 9% of students with no disability).
- ◆ The impact of the discrimination was similar, with 7% of students with a disability reporting that the discrimination affected them a lot (compared to 6% of those with no disability).

The level of access to Institution services/facilities and academic help was similar for students with a disability and those without a disability. Also, a higher proportion of students with a disability found these services/facilities to be useful.

A higher proportion of students with a disability were satisfied with the fieldwork entitlement and the reunion airfare, when compared to students without a disability. However, they were less satisfied with the Establishment Allowance (86%, compared to 95% of students without a disability).

Students with a disability were more likely to expect a number of barriers in using their new qualifications when they return home, particularly in relation to gender/age/disability (86%, compared to 33% of students with no disability) and cultural barriers (86%, compared to 55%). Around one-third of students expecting these barriers anticipated that these would be major barriers for them.

### III. 2014 student experiences at a glance

This section outlines the overall experiences that students had in 2014 regarding their Australia Award. The student experiences outlined in this section are in relation to:

- ◆ applying for an Australia Award;
- ◆ preparing to come to Australia;
- ◆ studying and living in Australia;
- ◆ Australian educational institution services and facilities;
- ◆ scholarship entitlements and other assistance; and
- ◆ arrangements for returning home.

#### A. Applying for an Australia Award

The two most common sources from which students first became **aware of the Australia Awards program** were through their friends/colleagues who have studied in Australia (30%) and employers/workplaces (25%).

The most common reason for **applying for a scholarship** (84%) and for student **choice of course** (86%) was to *contribute to their country's development*, with most students **choosing their institution** based on the institution's international reputation (81%) and the availability of courses (76%). The top three reasons for applying for an Australia Award and choosing course and institution are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Top three reasons for applying for an Australia Award and choosing course and institution**

Reasons for applying for an Australia Award	Sources for finding out about Australia Awards	Reasons for choosing course	Reasons for choosing Institution
The education I receive will help me contribute to my country's development (84%)	Friends or colleagues who have studied in Australia (30%)	It is appropriate for my country's development needs (86%)	It has a good international reputation (81%)
The education I receive will help me do my job better (42%)	My employer or workplace (25%)	It is the most appropriate course for my future career plans (71%)	It offered the course I wanted to do (76%)
Good research facilities and educational resources are available in Australia (39%)	Australia Awards website (17%)	It matches my personal area of interest (56%)	I met the entry requirements (25%)

Most students **obtained a copy of the application form** through the Australia Awards website (72%, up from 48% in 2011). This trend of increasing online usage is also evident in how students have **submitted their scholarship form** – 51% of students submitted their form using the Online Australia Scholarships Information System, up from 24% in 2012 and 40% in 2013.

One-quarter of students had **applied for another scholarship program** within the past two years, with student interest mostly being in relation to a government scholarship from their home country (25%, with 41% of these being successful), the Fulbright Scholarship (16%, with 10% of these being successful), and Japanese scholarships (also 16%, with 7% of these being successful).

The most common resource used by students in **preparing for applications and interviews** was the Australia Awards website (96%), followed by Institution websites Institutions (87%) and advice from staff of the Australia Awards program (85%). Of the students that used the Australia Awards website, 83% found it to be very useful, which was the highest rating across all resources.

The most common **issues encountered by students in their scholarship application and selection process** in 2014 were:

- ◆ preparing for tests in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) / Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (62%);
  - 17% of students that encountered this issue reported that it caused a major or severe problem for them, which was the highest proportion amongst the issues encountered.
- ◆ having limited time to prepare the application (60%); and
- ◆ finding useful information about courses and educational institutions in Australia (58%).

## B. Preparing to come to Australia

Most students (94%) were satisfied with their preparation for coming to Australia.

- ◆ All students **sought information about a range of matters prior to coming to Australia**, particularly in relation to: conditions of the Australia Award; campus location; specific course information; cost of living in Australia; information about the city they would live in; visa requirements; and accommodation (all 97-99%). Nearly all students (97%) used information provided by the Australia Awards program when preparing to come to Australia, with 87% of these finding this information to be very useful.
- ◆ Attendance at the **Australia Awards Pre-Departure Briefing** remained high in 2014 (96%), as did the proportion of students who reported they had received a copy of the **Australia Awards Pre-Departure Guidebook/DVD** (91%, although this was slightly down from 95% in 2013). Most students found the Pre-Departure Briefing to be very useful (90%) and 87% found the Guidebook/DVD to be very useful.
  - Most students (92%) agreed that the information in the Pre-Departure Briefing and Guidebook/DVD reflected the experience that they encountered when they first started living and studying in Australia.
- ◆ In-country bridging training was also provided in Pakistan, which 61% of students from Pakistan attended (almost double the 2013 attendance of 33%). Just over two-thirds (68%) of these students were satisfied with the course, with a small number of students finding the course content as not being useful.

The most common **issues encountered when coming to Australia** were in relation to making arrangements for their families (66%, with 15% of these students reporting this as causing a major or severe problem), and the time gap between finishing work and leaving for Australia (64%, with 12% reporting this as a major or severe problem).

## C. Studying and living in Australia

Students typically experience a range of issues during their time living and studying in Australia. Students were asked whether they had encountered particular financial, academic and other issues and, if they had, the degree to which each issue caused a problem for them.

Most new arrival students (71%) were satisfied with their ability to cope with **financial issues**, broadly consistent with 69% of ongoing students. The two most common financial issues encountered by students across all surveys were finding part-time employment (82%) and finding affordable accommodation (81%). These two issues also had the largest impact on students, with the cost of caring for dependents also being highly troublesome, as depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4: Financial issues causing a major problem for new arrivals and ongoing students**

New arrivals	Ongoing students
Finding part-time employment (32%)	Finding part-time employment (31%)
Finding affordable accommodation (23%)	Finding affordable accommodation (23%)
The cost of caring for dependents, including childcare and school fees (19%)	The cost of caring for dependents, including childcare and school fees (19%)

% = Proportion of students who faced the issue and reported that it had a major or severe impact on them

- ◆ The most common solution used by students to manage their finances was to adopt a low-cost lifestyle (80%), followed by obtaining part-time or casual employment (39%) and using savings (30%).

**Study-related issues** had less of an impact on students than financial issues, affecting 11% or less of new arrivals and 6% or less of ongoing students who encountered them, as depicted in Table 5. Students were also generally better placed to cope with academic issues, with 80% satisfaction amongst new arrivals and 92% for ongoing students.

**Table 5: Study-related issues causing a major problem for new arrivals and ongoing students**

New arrivals	Ongoing students
Understanding or using English (11%)	Prerequisite knowledge necessary to my current studies (6%)
Managing my time to attend classes, studying and undertaking assignments (11%)	Participating in class discussions/making comments in class (5%)
General study skills (11%)	Managing my time to attend classes, studying and undertaking assignments (5%)

% = Proportion of students who faced the issue and reported that it had a major or severe impact on them

- ◆ New arrivals who identified as having a disability reported a higher than average impact for the following three issues: participating in class discussions/making comments in class (16%, compared to 9% of those with no disability); managing time to attend classes, studying and assignments (19%, compared to 10% of those with no disability); and finding their way across campus (10%, compared to 1% of those with no disability).

However, there were no differences from the average for ongoing students who identified as having a disability. This suggests that as students with a disability settle into their course, they become better equipped to address these issues.

Ability to cope with **family, social and accommodation/living issues** whilst living in Australia was also high (87% of new arrivals and 85% of ongoing students). The most common issues faced by students were:

- ◆ finding accommodation of acceptable type or quality;
  - This issue affected around 75% of students across both surveys and caused a major problem for around 20% of these.
- ◆ weather/climate; and
  - This issue affect over two-thirds of students, but only caused a major problem for around 10% of these.
- ◆ around half of students with children found arranging childcare to be an issue, with 16% of new arrivals and 18% of ongoing students reporting that this resulted in a major or severe problem.

The three most troublesome family, social, accommodation and living issues encountered by both new arrivals and ongoing students are detailed in Table 6.

**Table 6: Other issues causing a major problem for new arrivals and ongoing students**

New arrivals	Ongoing students
Finding accommodation of acceptable type or quality (19%)	Finding accommodation of acceptable type or quality (18%)
Bringing your spouse/partner or children to Australia (14%)	Arranging child care (11%)
Arranging child care (10%)	Bringing your spouse/partner or children to Australia (10%)

% = Proportion of students who faced the issue and reported that it had a major or severe impact on them

## D. Australian academic institution services and facilities

Nearly all new arrivals (94%) participated in an **Introductory Academic Program (IAP)**, of which 93% were satisfied with the program. The three most useful topics covered in IAPs were:

- ◆ introduction and orientation to the educational institution's campus (93% found this to be very useful);
- ◆ plagiarism and referencing (93%); and
- ◆ study skills and general academic skills (such as critical analysis, research skills and academic writing, 90%).

Similar to previous years, 95% of new arrivals and 94% of ongoing students were satisfied with the **services and facilities** provided at their institution. The three most useful services and facilities to students were:

- ◆ the library (95%);
- ◆ computer facilities (92%); and
- ◆ the Student Contact Officer (91%).



Most students (91%) were satisfied with the **academic help** available at their institution. More than 70% of students found the assistance to be very useful, with the three most useful being:

- ◆ help with referencing (91% for both new arrivals and ongoing students);
- ◆ help with other study skills (87-88%); and
- ◆ help with the English language and help with computers (84-85%).

Around one-third of students reported that they had **sought personal help or study assistance outside their institution and the Australia Awards program**. Most students (around two-thirds) sought assistance from friends and/or classmates. The most common types of assistance sought were in relation to English skills (46%), and other study skills (such as note taking, research and analytical skills and writing skills, 43%).

Similar to 2013, 92% of new arrivals and 89% of ongoing students were satisfied with the **assistance provided by their Student Contact Officer**.

Consistent with the results for 2013, a high proportion of students (91%) agreed that they chose the right institution and 89% rated the quality of their institution as high. Similarly, 93% agreed that they chose the right course/research topic, 88% rated the quality of their course or research supervision as high, and 72% of students reported that the theoretical and practical knowledge provided by their course or research was well balanced.

## E. Scholarship entitlements and other assistance

Most students (88-89%) reported that they were satisfied with the **entitlements and other assistance** they received from the Australia Awards program. Student satisfaction with the Establishment allowance (a special on-arrival payment to help students settle in Australia) was the highest with between 94% and 95% satisfied. Student satisfaction with the other types of entitlements/assistance remained high at around 80%, apart from the fieldwork entitlement where satisfaction was lower at 66%.

- ◆ Students from Papua New Guinea (PNG) had access to a **Scholarships PNG Case Manager** in 2014. Nearly all PNG students (99%) had face-to-face contact with their Case Manager at least once in 2014. A high proportion of students (87%) were satisfied with the support provided, up from 81% in 2013.

However, there were a number of areas for improvement identified in the findings:

- **Communication of activities** seemed to be an issue, whereby 21% of students reported that they had not heard about any activities organised by their Case Manager in 2014, up from 5% in 2013.
- **Support for family issues** was also an issue whereby student ratings in the usefulness of support dropped from 73% in 2013 to 59% in 2014.

## F. Returning home

Of the 838 students who reported that they were close to completing their studies within the next four months:

- ◆ 72% had work arrangements in place (either returning to the same organisation they left or moving to a different organisation);
  - Of the students that had work arrangements in place, 42% reported that their employer had a Reintegration/Re-entry Plan in place, with 29% reporting that there was not a Plan in place at the time of the Ongoing Survey. A further 29% of students were not sure whether or not a Plan was in Place.
- ◆ 24% were looking for a job or were intending to look for a job on return to their home country;
- ◆ 2% planned to undertake further studies; and
- ◆ 2% had another type of arrangement in place.

Students were asked to identify what **barriers they expected when returning home**, and the extent to which these barriers may have an impact on them. The three most common barriers expected were:

- ◆ their employer may not be able to make full use of their new qualifications (74%);
- ◆ home countries may not have the required infrastructure, systems or funding to support implementation of the new qualifications (73%); and
- ◆ their employer may be reluctant to fully utilise their new qualifications (70%).

These three barriers were also expected to have the biggest impact on students, with 14-18% expecting them to be a major or severe barrier. Lack of work opportunities / career development was also identified by students as potentially having a major or severe impact on them.

- ◆ Those studying Creative Arts, Architecture/Building and Agriculture expected a higher number of barriers when returning home. However, the extent of these expected barriers was around the same level or lower when compared with other fields of study.

Those completing Health-related studies expected a more severe impact from the barriers when returning home, compared with those in other fields of study.

Just over three-quarters of the **Leadership Development Program** students (78%) agreed that the program was meeting their expectations, representing a small decrease from 84% in 2013. The top three reasons why the program was not meeting these expectations were:

- ◆ the program should be ongoing (50%);
- ◆ the program didn't cover everything that they felt they needed (50%); and
- ◆ delivery of the program was below expectations (50%).

While only 21% of students were already a member of the **Australia Awards Alumni Network** for their home country, 72% reported that they intend to join.

## Appendix A: Drivers of overall satisfaction with the Australia Award

This appendix provides the two regression models that were developed to explain overall satisfaction with the Australia Award:

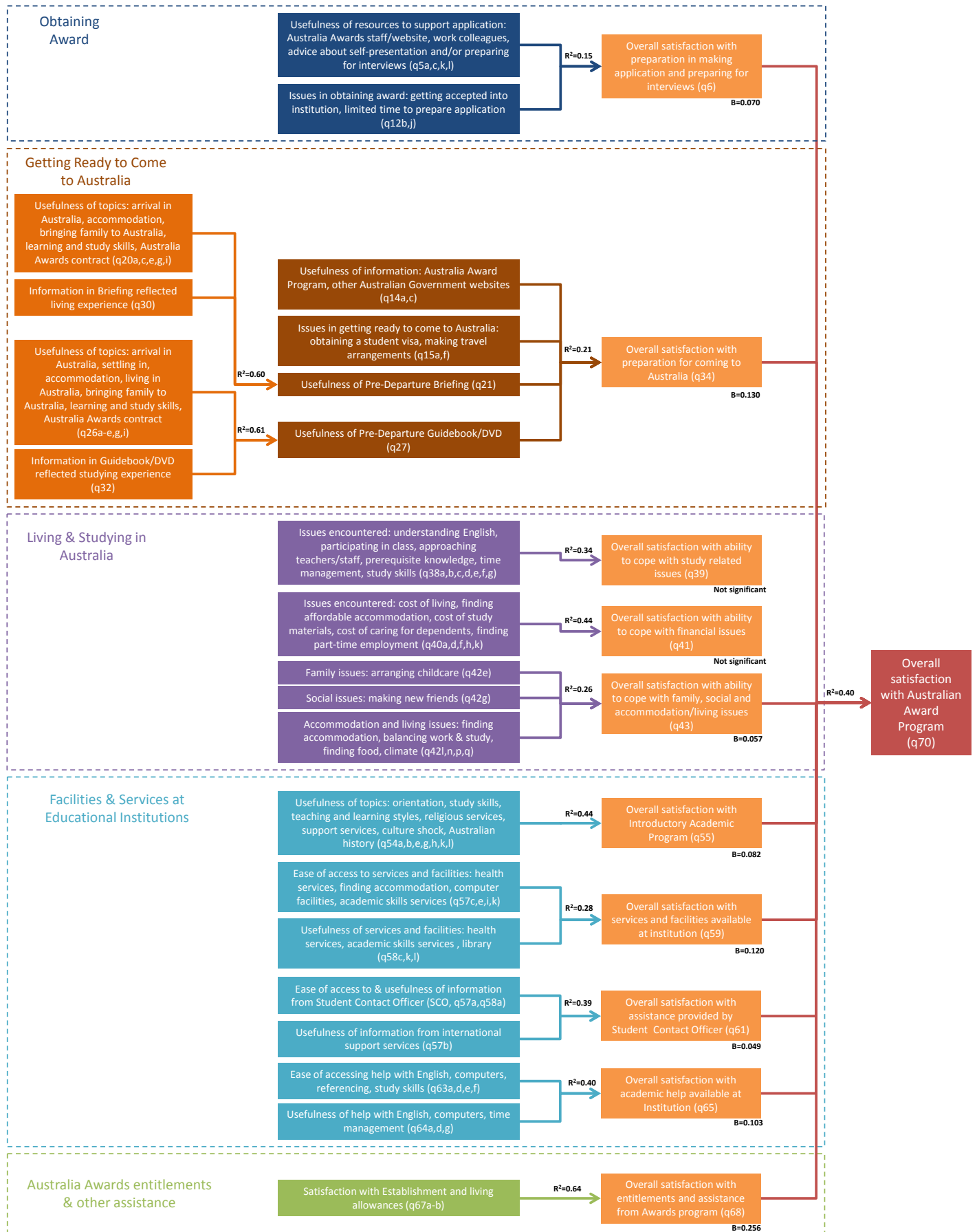
- ◆ the first model maps the drivers of overall satisfaction amongst new arrivals; and
- ◆ the second model maps the drivers of overall satisfaction amongst ongoing students.

Each of the new arrivals and ongoing student models map out the relationships between various attributes that were found to be statistically significant in explaining the movement in overall satisfaction. There were eight attributes that directly impacted overall satisfaction in the new arrivals model and eight attributes in the ongoing student model. Some of these attributes were also found to be explained in part by some lower-level attributes, which are shown in each of the two models.

Each model provides an “ $R^2$ ” score, which represents the strength of the relationship (correlation) between connecting attributes. The eight attributes for new arrivals explain 40% ( $R^2 = 0.40$ ) of the variation with overall satisfaction and the ongoing student attributes explain 44% ( $R^2 = 0.42$ ). While these represent moderately solid models, there is scope to continue to build on these models through further refinements to the content of the questionnaires.

The Beta coefficients (“B”) are provided in each main model, which reflects the magnitude of the relative impact that a measure has on overall satisfaction. Larger Beta coefficients will have more impact on overall satisfaction, and therefore might represent the areas for prioritisation.

## Drivers of overall satisfaction for new arrivals



## Drivers of overall satisfaction for ongoing students

