

Overseas Students

Fig. 4-6: Student Visas Granted Offshore by Educational Sector 2000-01

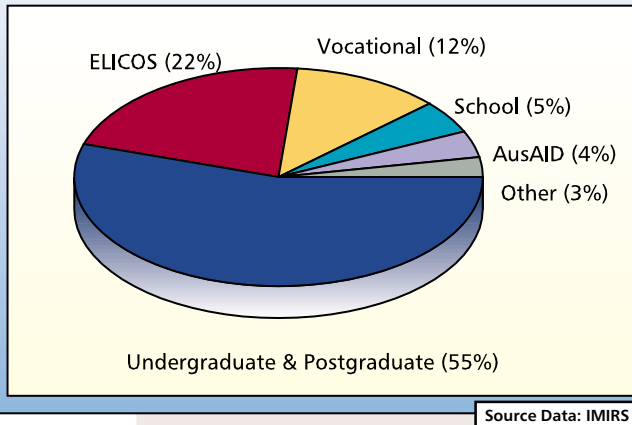


Fig. 4-7: Student Visas Granted Offshore by Major Source Countries 2000-01

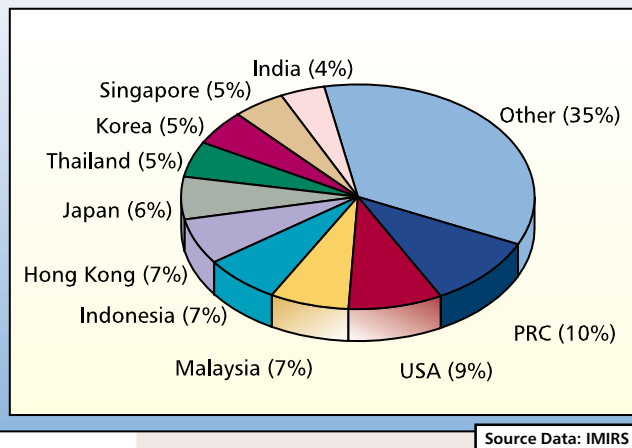
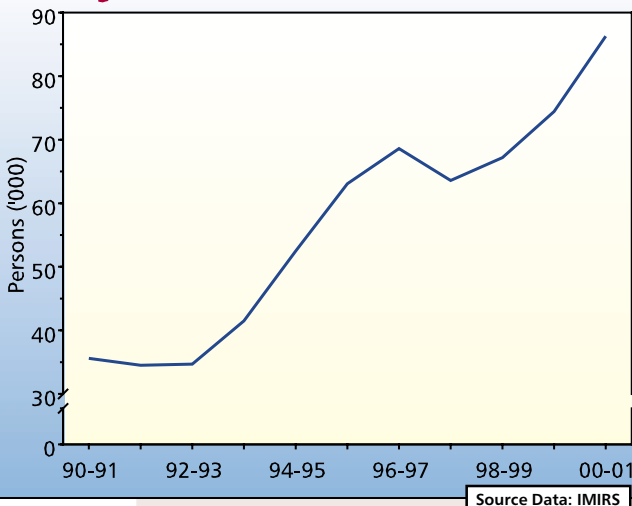


Fig. 4-8: Student Visas Granted Offshore



The Overseas Student Program enables people who are not Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents to study in Australia (generally as full-fee paying students) in full-time accredited and registered courses. Student visa arrangements are aimed at streamlining entry procedures for genuine students whilst maintaining the integrity of Australia's immigration programs.

The broad objectives of the program are to increase export revenue by promoting Australia's education services overseas, to develop trade and commercial links and to promote goodwill and understanding of Australia.

The Student Visa Program increases export revenue by promoting Australia's education and training systems overseas. During 2000 overseas students generated revenue estimated at \$3.7 billion, making it a significant export industry for Australia.

A record number of 146,577 visas, (excluding student visa grants with permission to work or change of education provider), were granted to overseas students in 2000-01. This was a 23 per cent increase over the 1999-2000 figure of 119,103. Of these, 86,277 visas were granted offshore, an increase of 15.9 per cent on the previous year's figure.

Recent Developments

On 1 July 2001, a number of reforms were introduced following extensive consultations with representatives of the international education industry in Australia. The changes have been designed to streamline the processing of applicants, to ensure greater transparency in the requirements for a student visa and to provide consistency in decisions about visa grants.

A major change on 1 July 2001 was the replacement of the single visa class with seven new subclasses which relate to the principal course of study. New criteria ensure the integrity of the student visa program by using objective measures of risk to determine visa requirements. The reforms will support future growth in the number of genuine students coming to Australia and the quality of Australia's student visa program.

The student visa restructure, which replaces the gazetted/non-gazetted country system and special entry arrangements for students from the People's Republic of China, is one of a package of measures undertaken by the Australian Government to reform Australia's education export industry.

Other recent initiatives include:

New Legislation - In December 2000 the Federal Parliament passed new legislation affecting overseas students and education

providers. The new provisions are aimed at improving the regulation of the education/training export industry and at strengthening the Overseas Student Program. They give effect to some of the recommendations made following an internal Government Review of the Overseas Student Program.

Pre-Qualified Institution (PQI) - The 2001 PQI program is a cooperative arrangement between DIMIA and selected Australian educational providers. It is designed to assist processing arrangements for selected students in the emerging markets of the People's Republic of China, Viet Nam, India and Pakistan.

Electronic confirmation of enrolment (ECOE) - The ECOE system enables the government to maintain information which tracks students' progress from enrolment to course completion, with appropriate links between visa application, visa grant, arrival in Australia, commencement of the course, course completion or other outcome, and departure from Australia.

Student Internet Processing - Since July 1999, overseas students in Australia have been able to apply for permission to work over the Internet. From August 2001, DIMIA plans to expand the facility so that certain students outside Australia can apply for a student visa over the Internet without needing to visit an Australia diplomatic office overseas. Initially, a trial will be undertaken with higher education students from Norway and Sweden as well as US Study Abroad students, as these students are very low risk in terms of bona fides and health. If the trial is successful, the range of countries may be expanded.

On-campus Processing - A travelling unit enabling electronic visa processing for students was introduced by DIMIA in March 2001. The mobile facility allows immigration officials to visit university campuses to accept and process student visa applications. The majority are finalised "on the spot".

Applications for Student Visas

The demand by overseas students to study in Australia remains very strong. The number of off-shore applications received for the 2000-01 program year was 111,473, which represents a growth of 23 per cent on the previous year. Beijing was the top post in terms of the number of student visa applications received with 19,003. New Delhi was ranked second with 8,102, Hong Kong was third with 6,461, Jakarta was fourth with 6,170 and Kuala Lumpur received 5,862 visa applications.

The growth in student visa applications at some DIMIA posts has been significant. For example, last program year Beijing experienced a 64 per cent increase in the number of student visa applications lodged, Brasilia a 47 per cent increase, Seoul up 44 per cent, Santiago de Chile up 38 per cent and Vienna, a 35 per cent increase.

Of the 86,277 visas granted offshore, 55 per cent (47,668) were granted to students to undertake undergraduate and postgraduate education in Australia, 22 per cent (18,709) were granted to students attending English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), almost 12 per cent (10,047) to

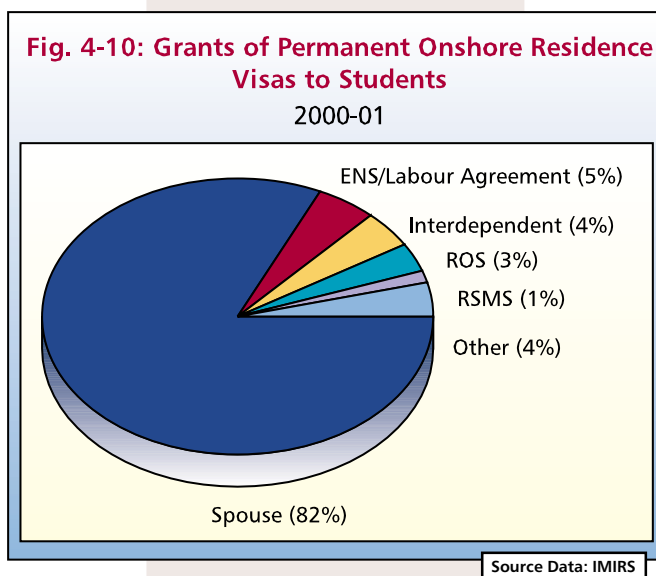
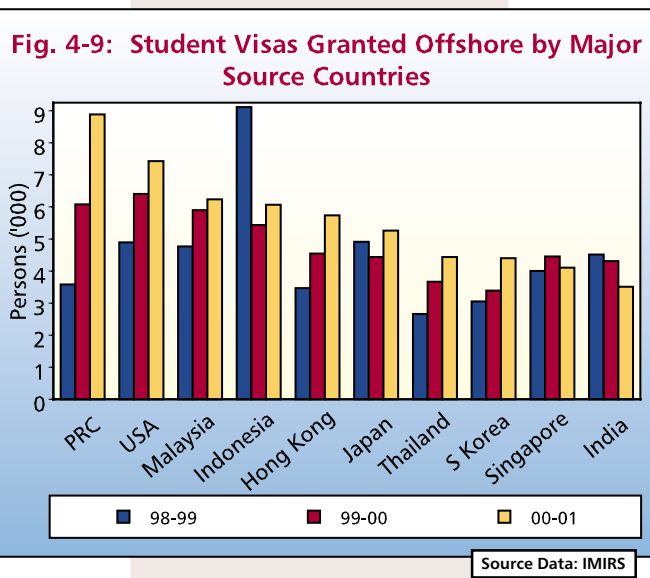
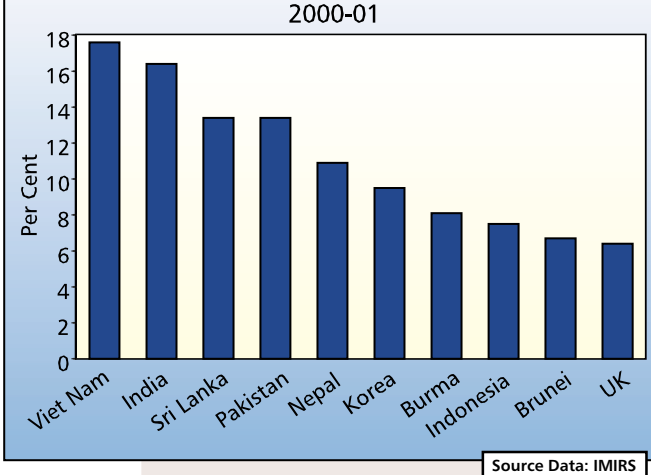


Fig. 4-11: Student Visa Cancellations Onshore as a Percentage of Student Visas Granted Offshore 2000-01



vocational education and training students, and 7.2 per cent (6,192) to the school sector. 3.8 per cent (3,273) were granted under the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) program.

Between 1999–2000 and 2000–01, visas granted offshore to students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses increased by 40 per cent, visas for ELICOS students increased by nearly 18 per cent, vocational education and training visas increased by 7.7 per cent and visas for students enrolled in the school sector increased by 2.1 per cent. Visas for AusAID students decreased by 4.3 per cent.

The major source countries for offshore student visa grants in 2000–01 were the PRC with 8,886 student visas granted (an increase of 46 per cent over 1999–2000), the United States with 7,426 visas granted (up 16 per cent), Malaysia with 6,236 visas granted (up 6 per cent), Indonesia with 6,070 visas granted (up 12 per cent) and Hong Kong with 5,740 visas granted (up 26 per cent).

See page 55 for details of the stock of students in Australia as at 30 June 2001.

Applications for Permanent Residence

Overseas students who gain their qualifications in Australia are preferred by Australian employers over those with overseas qualifications. In recognition of this fact, applicants with Australian qualifications who apply for permanent residence within six months of completion of their studies are exempted from the skilled work experience requirement. From 1 July 2001, successful tertiary qualified overseas students are able to apply for and be granted general skilled migration visas onshore.

Changes to the policy have been very successful, with applications in the points tested migration categories exceeding expectations mainly due to overseas students with Australian IT qualifications. A quarter of applicants have an IT occupation and, of these, around 50 per cent have an Australian qualification. Under the old policies less than 10 per cent of principal applicants were IT professionals with only around 20 per cent having Australian qualifications.

Student Visas Cancelled

3,838 student visas were cancelled onshore in 2000–01 for reasons such as breaches of visa conditions relating to attendance and satisfactory academic performance. This is an increase of 37 per cent compared with the previous year and represents 4.4 per cent of student visas granted offshore during 2000–01. Of the main (top forty) source countries in terms of student visas granted offshore, Viet Nam had the highest cancellation rate (17.6 per cent), followed by India (16.4 per cent), Sri Lanka (13.4 per cent) and Pakistan (13.4 per cent). In contrast, Denmark, the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada and Switzerland had student visa cancellation rates of less than one per cent.

Working Holiday Makers

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) Program provides for the temporary entry and stay of young people wanting to combine holidaying in Australia with the opportunity to supplement travel funds through incidental employment, and thus experience closer contact with the local community.

The program has been found to be of value to Australia because it:

- generates economic benefits;
- is an important component of the tourism industry;
- enhances the cultural and social development of young people; and
- promotes mutual understanding between Australia and other nations.

Australia has reciprocal WHM arrangements with Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malta, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China) (HKSAR). The Government is also negotiating WHM arrangements with additional countries.

More than 27,000 young Australians travelled overseas under WHM arrangements in 2000. In addition, many thousands of young Australians, on the basis of ancestry provisions, travel overseas each year to holiday and work. In 2000–01 there were 76,576 visas granted to young people from overseas to undertake a working holiday in Australia.

Criteria for visas

Working holiday visa applicants need to be aged between 18 and 30 years, without dependent children, and from countries with which Australia has a reciprocal WHM arrangement. WHMs are permitted a stay of 12 months from the date of initial entry to Australia, regardless of whether or not they spend the whole period in Australia. They are allowed to study or train or work with a single employer, for up to three months.

Program Numbers

The number of Working Holiday visas granted has increased in recent years, from around 35,000 in 1994–95 to over 76,500 in 2000–01.

Citizens of the United Kingdom were granted most Working Holiday visas in 2000–01 (39,558 persons). This was followed by Ireland (11,426 persons), Japan (9,200 persons), Canada (5,498 persons), the Netherlands (5,111 persons), Germany (3,744 persons) and Korea (1,823 persons).

Fig. 4-12: Working Holiday Makers by Country of Citizenship 2000-01

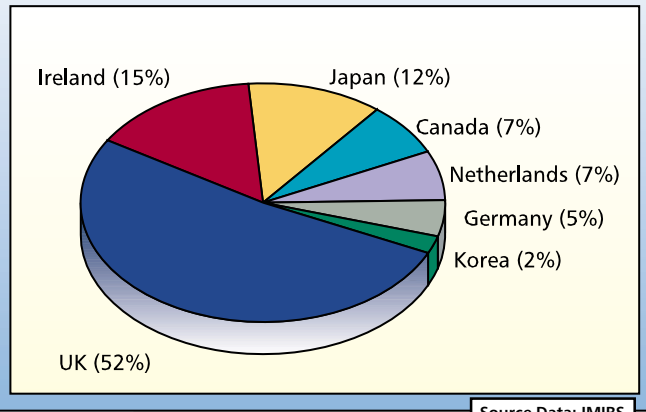
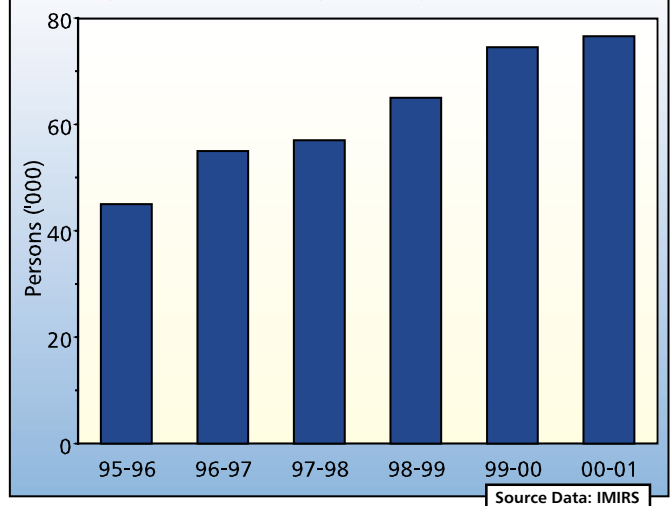


Fig. 4-13: Working Holiday Maker Grants



Work Conditions

The WHM program benefits industries that rely heavily on casual labour at peak times, particularly the hospitality, horticultural and rural industries.

WHMs are permitted to work on a temporary or casual basis provided that the period of employment with any one employer does not exceed three months. Although permitted to stay in Australia for up to 12 months, WHMs should not work for the full period of their stay but rather use incidental employment to supplement their travel funds. The wages and conditions of WHMs should be consistent with Australian standards. The Government has commissioned research which will provide a profile of WHMs and will examine the impact of the WHM program on Australia's labour market.