International students enrolled in tertiary education

*International students made up 15 percent of all tertiary education students in New Zealand in 2015, up from 13 percent in 2014.*

**Indicator Description**

International tertiary education enrolments as a proportion of total tertiary education enrolments in New Zealand.

**Why This Is Important**

A successful, sustainable approach to providing education for international students has benefits for individuals, institutions and wider society.

Both domestic and international students benefit from exposure to other cultures and perspectives, enabling them to develop skills to succeed in cross-cultural contexts. Export education initiatives can mean access to courses of study that might not otherwise be available. They can also offer opportunities to develop personal and institutional relationships of long-term value.

Institutions can use the income generated from export education activities to invest in their ongoing development, for example by improving facilities and increasing staffing. Teaching and learning programmes can be enhanced by the participation of international students. Staff benefit from international linkages, and from achieving greater competence in cross-cultural teaching.

The New Zealand economy stands to benefit substantially from planned and managed growth of the export education sector. It will help build the international relationships, skills and knowledge that are vital to New Zealand’s future viability in a global economy.

Although international students are usually required to pay the full cost of their tuition, Australian citizens living in New Zealand are treated as domestic students and pay domestic fees. International students studying towards a recognised doctoral qualification in New Zealand are funded in the same way as domestic doctoral students, and attract student achievement-component funding.
How We Are Going

International students made up 15 percent of all tertiary education students in New Zealand in 2015, up from 13 percent in 2014. International tertiary education enrolments as a proportion of total tertiary education enrolments have been increasing since an upward trend in international student numbers that started in 2009.

There were 61,400 international students in 2015 (up by 7,555, or 14 percent, on 2014). This number converted to 42,700 equivalent full-time student units and this number increased more strongly from 2014 to 2015 than the number of students, up by 17 percent.

In 2015, 80 percent of international students came from Asia. While the proportion of international students that came from Asia decreased from 82 percent in 2003 to 71 percent in 2008, since 2009 it has been increasing. These figures highlight the continuing dependence of the tertiary education sector on students from Asian countries.

The next largest groups of international students in 2015 came from Europe, North America and the Middle East. As a proportion of total international students, the number of students from Europe accounted for 6.2 percent, those from North America represented 4.8 percent and 3.3 percent came from Middle Eastern countries.

Since 2010, students from Central and South America had the highest growth in their numbers. However, their group remained small, proportionately, making up only 2.1 percent of all international students in 2015.

Figure 1: International students enrolled in tertiary education (1995-2015)
Where to Find Out More

To obtain a more complete understanding of participation in tertiary education, consider indicators:

- Participation rates in tertiary education
- Tertiary student retention
- Participation in industry training

Consider the statistics pages at:

- Tertiary Education Statistics

References