Tertiary education enrolments by international students

*International student numbers decline*

The number of international students decreased from 2016 to 2017. Before this, international student numbers had been increasing, a trend that started in 2009.

International students as a proportion of all tertiary students has increased in recent years. The increase has been the result of rising numbers of international students, coupled to falling numbers of domestic students.

**Indicator Description**

This indicator looks at international students as a proportion of all tertiary students in formal study and how many international students are enrolled in formal tertiary study each year.

**International student numbers drop from 2016 to 2017**

The number of international students in formal tertiary study fell from 2016 to 2017. Before this, the numbers had been increasing, a trend that started in 2009.

There were 61,300 international students in formal tertiary study in 2017 (down by 2.1 percent from 2016). This number converted to 43,100 equivalent full-time students (down by 2.0 percent from 2016).

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1 Data refers to the study of qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework of more than one week's duration. This type of tertiary study is described as formal study. Data excludes private training establishments who do not receive some government-funding and/or were approved for student loans or allowances.
International students make up a growing population of all students

International students as a proportion of all students in tertiary study has increased in recent years. The percentage almost doubled from 2007 to 2017, up from 8.3 percent to 15 percent. The increase is the result of rising numbers of international students, coupled to falling numbers of domestic students.

Fewer enrolments in level 1 to 7 diplomas and certificates has been the main driver of the decline in the number of domestic students.

**Figure 1: Number of international students in formal tertiary study and international students as a proportion of all students in formal tertiary study**

The decrease in the number of international students from 2016 with 2017 was the result of fewer students enrolling in level 5 to 7 diplomas and certificates. These enrolments declined by 3,170, or 18 percent. From 2016 to 2017, there were increases in enrolments by international students at every other qualification level:

- level 1 to 3 certificates – up 7.1 percent
- level 4 certificates – up 1.8 percent
- bachelors degrees and higher – up 4.0 percent.

In 2017, 83 percent of international students were from Asia. This included 22,200 students from China and 13,800 from India.
Where to Find Out More

- For more detailed tertiary education statistics covering international students see: [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education) To find data for international students go to the ‘finder’ spreadsheet sitting at the front in each workbook and select ‘international’ in the second column of the finder spreadsheet.
- For information on the outcomes of international graduates who studied in New Zealand see Park, Z (2017) *Moving places: Destinations and earnings of international graduates*, Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- See also the website of [Education New Zealand](http://www.education.govt.nz) for information on international students.