



Briefing Note: 2021 tertiary education enrolment data

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc:			
Date:	20 April 2022	Priority:	Medium
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

Note the 2021 enrolment trends seen in government-funded tertiary providers.

Summary

- There was a significant increase in the number of domestic students enrolled in tertiary education in 2021, while international enrolments declined significantly in both 2020 and 2021. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of domestic students increased by 9 percent and the number of international students decreased by 23 percent.
- The Ministry will publish 2021 data on tertiary education enrolments on the Education Counts website on 5 May 2022.

Proactive Release

agree that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once the data tables have been published.

Agree / Disagree.



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21/04/2022



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

[18/5/2022](#)

Proactively Released

Background

1. The Ministry publishes annual statistical tables on tertiary education on the Education Counts website. The tables relating to the number of students enrolled in government-funded tertiary education organisations have been updated for 2021 data and will be released on the Education Counts website on 5 May 2022. The statistics on enrolments cover a range of characteristics including age, gender, ethnic group, and level and type of study for both domestic and international students.

High level findings

2. The full-year 2021 data showed that the total number of students at tertiary education providers increased from 388,090 in 2020 to 397,785 in 2021. This represents an increase of 4.7 percent. It comprises a gain of 9 percent in the number of domestic students offset by a decline of 23 percent in the number of international students.

Domestic students

3. The data showed that:
 - a. the number of domestic students increased by 9 percent between 2020 and 2021 (student numbers were 329,175 in 2020 and 358,780 in 2021). This is the first significant increase in domestic student numbers in over a decade, and follows the small increase seen in 2020.
 - b. in terms of study-related characteristics, between 2020 and 2021:
 - i. there was an increase in students at all levels of study between with generally high percentage increases in non-degree qualifications, although there were also relatively high percentage increases at masters and doctoral levels (see appendix table 1)
 - ii. there was a much higher rate of increase for part-time students than full-time students, especially at non-degree level
 - iii. the highest percentage increase was in Te Pūkenga and wānanga at 12 percent and 13 percent respectively, with increases at universities slightly below the average at 7 percent (see appendix table 2).
 - c. in terms of demographic characteristics, the data showed that between 2020 and 2021:
 - i. those aged over 25 years showed higher rates of increase (see appendix table 3)
 - ii. women had a higher rate of increase than men
 - iii. Māori students had the lowest rate of increase, while Asian students had the highest (see appendix table 4).
 - d. in terms of broad fields of study:
 - i. the highest percentage increases were seen in architecture and building studies, and information technology, at 26 percent and 19 percent respectively
 - ii. studies in food, hospitality and personal services saw a decline in enrolments of 0.9 percent, the only field to show a decline in enrolments.

International students

4. The numbers of international students include only those enrolled at government-funded tertiary providers. They exclude providers such as privately run English Language Schools.
5. The full-year 2021 data showed that international students decreased by 23 percent between 2020 and 2021 (student numbers were 50,920 in 2020 and 39,005 in 2021), following a decrease of 16 percent between 2019 and 2020. Although the number of international students decreased overall, the proportion of international students studying offshore has increased from 4 percent in 2019 and 12 percent in 2020, up to 24 percent in 2021.

Equivalent full-time students

6. Changes in study load, measured in equivalent full-time students, broadly followed a similar pattern to the changes seen in student headcount enrolment numbers.

Publication of the data

7. The data tables will be published on the Ministry's Education Counts website on 5 May 2022. We will work with your office on related communications messages.

Appendix

Table 1. Full-year domestic student enrolments by NZQF level and type of study

Level/type of study	2020	2021	% Change
Certificates Level 1	10,780	13,220	23%
Certificates Level 2	19,395	22,100	14%
Certificates Level 3	51,945	58,095	12%
Certificates Level 4	53,070	57,690	9%
Certificates/Diplomas Levels 5-7	41,710	50,080	20%
Bachelors degrees Level 7	124,500	129,755	4%
Graduate certs/dips Level 7	9,200	9,565	4%
Honours/Postgrad certs/dips Level 8	23,350	28,700	9%
Masters degrees Level 9	15,660	17,970	15%
Doctoral degrees Level 10	5,265	5,630	15%
Total	329,175	358,780	9%

Table 2. Full-year domestic student enrolments by subsector

Subsector	2020	2021	% Change
Universities	146,925	156,865	7%
Te Pūkenga	112,920	126,505	12%
Wānanga	30,090	34,075	13%
Private training establishments	48,125	51,950	8%
Total	329,175	358,780	9%

Table 3. Full-year domestic student enrolments by age group

Age group	2020	2021	% Change
Under 18 years	10,860	11,470	6%
18-19 years	43,870	46,060	5%
20-24 years	105,140	110,380	5%
25-39 years	100,465	113,420	13%
40 years and over	68,840	77,445	13%
Total	329,175	358,780	9%

Table 4. Full-year domestic student enrolments by ethnic group

Ethnic group	2020	2021	% Change
European	206,730	224,835	9%
Māori	69,735	75,230	8%
Pacific Peoples	32,520	35,740	10%
Asian	53,405	61,180	15%
Total	329,175	358,780	9%

Notes.

1. The data relates to students enrolled at any time during the year with a government-funded tertiary education provider in formal qualifications of greater than 0.03 EFTS (more than one week's full-time duration).
2. The data excludes all non-formal learning and on-job industry training.
3. The sum of the individual categories may not match a total because students are counted in each category they occur in, but only once in the total.
4. Also, data in these tables, including totals, have been rounded to the nearest 5 to protect the privacy of individuals, so the sum of the categories may not add to the total.