

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia closes in on Canada as top study destination

International students are returning to Australia, with the country bouncing back to become the world's second-most attractive study destination.

The *Emerging Futures* research, conducted by global education specialists IDP Education in August 2022, revealed Australia was the top destination of choice for one in four international students.

The data paints a positive picture for the future of Australia's international education industry but also highlights the challenges students face around feeling isolated and financial pressures when they arrive on shore.

The survey, which collates the views of more than 11,000 prospective students, applicants and current students, demonstrated Australia's popularity as a first-choice study destination has climbed five percentage points since March 2022. Canada remains the top destination, with 27 per cent of respondents selecting this as their first choice.

Andrew Wharton, Client Director, IDP Connect, said the new findings come at an important time for Australia's international education providers.

"We all felt the absence in our communities when border closures restricted the travel of international students to our shores, and it is encouraging to see the perceptions of Australia improve now our borders are open," Mr Wharton said.

"As we welcome students back, the opportunity for the Australian sector is to listen to what students want, which is clear career pathways and job opportunities during their studies, and to make sure their expectations are met when they arrive," he said.

In more good news for destination Australia, the research highlights a significant increase in positive sentiment around safety.

Sixty-two per cent of respondents stated that Australia was their first-choice destination because it was a "safe country for international students", an increase of 12 percentage points from March 2022.

Australia is particularly popular among students from Thailand, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, and Vietnam, but trails other destinations when it comes to students from China and India, the two largest markets.

For the first time, the research also looked at the experience of newly-enrolled students, comparing prospective student expectations with the reality of studying overseas.

For students who have not yet commenced their studies, their greatest concerns included balancing part-time work and study, not having enough money and adapting to a new culture and way of learning.

Overall, current students were positive about their study experiences in Australia, with 92 per cent saying that the academic support they had received from their institution had met or exceeded their expectations, and 87 per cent saying the lifestyle had met or exceeded their expectations. However, 22 per cent stated that their expectations for financial support had not been met.

The research also identified a correlation between poor mental health and students working either fewer than 10 hours per fortnight or more than 40 hours per fortnight, as well as those living alone or off campus. Mental health issues were also impacting students' ability to succeed academically, with nearly three-quarters stating that it had impacted their ability to study.



Simon Emmett, CEO, IDP Connect, said the findings demonstrate the rebound of the competitive sector and new challenges facing students.

“With open borders and attractive post-study work policies, destinations are going head-to-head to attract international students. However, at the same time, many countries are facing socioeconomic instability, and students are navigating new emerging challenges,” Mr Emmett said.

“For the first time, we can see clear differences in the prospective student mindset compared to currently enrolled students. Our research series has shown students are incredibly determined and ambitious, but the new findings demonstrate that the onshore experience can be tough.

“Notably, the findings highlight the pressures students face when juggling studies and part-time work, as well as feelings of isolation. To help address this, IDP is committed to working with the sector to prioritise support for students so they can thrive in their studies and feel connected to communities,” he said.

For more information about the Emerging Futures research, [click here](#).

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About IDP Education’s *Emerging Futures* Research

IDP’s *Emerging Futures* research on the perceptions of more than 11,000 prospective international students builds on the findings of the *Crossroads* and *New Horizons* research series, and aims to equip the international education sector, institutions and policy makers with informed insights to offer exceptional global education experiences aligned to student priorities.

About IDP Education

IDP is a leader in global education services. As an Australian listed company, IDP operates in more than 50 countries and its websites attract 100 million visits a year.

IDP specialises in combining human expertise with a leading digital platform to help people get accepted into their ideal course, take an English language test or learn English in their schools.

IDP’s teams work side by side with their customers every day, at every step from course search through to starting their dream course or career.

IDP’s data insights are relied upon by organisations around the world to help ensure policies are informed by the diverse needs, challenges and motivations of students.

Most of all, IDP are proud of its people. It is their trusted people and processes that help their customers turn their study or English goals into a launchpad for their career.