

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 6 October 2021

On-campus study, migration routes and employment will drive student choice as Australia prepares for an international education and skills rebound

New research from IDP Connect has revealed that demand for on campus study overseas has remained strong throughout the pandemic, with students considering migration incentives and employment opportunities when choosing where, what and how to study - which will be critical in combatting Australia's pandemic-driven skills shortage in a range of key sectors.

The "New Horizons" research, released by IDP Connect at this year's Australian International Education Conference (AIEC), found that 79 per cent of students are only considering overseas on-campus options. Meanwhile, 18 per cent of students surveyed were comfortable commencing their studies online provided there was a pathway for on-campus learning, while only 10 per cent of respondents would consider a complete online-only study option.

New Horizons also investigated how student motivations and decision-making factors may be used as future levers to drive greater adoption of new ways of study across the international education sector. Migration incentives and post-study work rights were also found to be strong drivers that could be used to influence which courses and in which countries students chose to study.

The research found that the main motivational driver for students was their future career opportunities, while the factors that drove their decision of where and what to study, were financially driven. Students' considerations included the ability to work part-time while studying, the affordability of tuition fees, and the cost of living.

The study also asked students about their willingness to study for an international qualification in their home country. In a result that reflects the ongoing effects of border closures and lockdowns, 66 per cent of students who had previously only considered overseas study said the opportunity to study at a highly-ranked institution increased the likelihood that they would consider home-country study.

Migration incentives and post-study work rights were also found to be strong drivers, with 65 per cent of students selecting access to post-study work rights in the country of their institution would make them more likely to consider studying in their home country, and 63 per cent said the ability to use their qualification as a pathway to migration made the study option more attractive.

Simon Emmett, CEO at IDP Connect, said that countries that were able to offer students clear outcomes for their investment in their education and a pathway to on-campus study would benefit most from the demand for overseas study.

"These latest results reinforce students' desire to gain an overseas qualification and the rich cultural and educational benefits that come with doing so. However, students want to be clear about the value and the outcomes they will gain. The countries and institutions that can offer and communicate clear pathways to employment or migration will be most popular as the world continues to re-open from the pandemic," Mr Emmett said.

"These pathways to employment are also an important opportunity for Australia, as they can act as a solution to the nation's critical skills shortage in key sectors, particularly in technology and technical roles. If Australia can offer prioritise employment pathways that address gaps in particular skills and industries, the international education sector can deliver a win-win-win for students, institutions and the nation."

The research also demonstrated the ongoing popularity of Canada as a study destination, with more than one-third of students (39 per cent) reporting that Canada was their first choice, followed by the USA and UK (both on 17 per cent) and Australia on 16 per cent. Australia remained under consideration as a potential destination for 46 per cent of students, but it was still behind the UK (48 per cent) and Canada (69 per cent).

“With the majority (71 per cent) of respondents intending to commence study in 2022, there is a need for Australia to act quickly and provide a plan to get international students back for on-campus learning as it prepares for a rebound,” Mr Emmett said.

The findings are consistent with IDP Connect’s earlier Crossroads research series, and highlight a continued commitment to traditional modes of study. As students reignite their study ambitions, those study destinations and institutions that are able to offer on-campus options could benefit and accelerate their rebound from the pandemic.

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About New Horizons

IDP Connect's New Horizons research builds upon the findings of the Crossroads research series and aims to arm the higher education sector, institutions and policy makers with the data and insight needed to drive the post-pandemic rebound in international and overseas student recruitment.

The research was undertaken with **3650** respondents from **55** countries between 27 August – 10 September 2021 and consisted of a 10-minute online survey.

About IDP Connect

IDP Connect is the strategic partner of choice for institutions seeking access to engaged student communities. As part of IDP Education, the world leader in student recruitment, IDP Connect uses its global expertise, data-driven insights and trusted human connections to match universities, schools and colleges with the right students from around the world.

Powered by the world’s most expansive omnichannel platform, we bring institutions to life, from academic offerings to campus experiences and beyond. Through our unmatched physical office network, websites, apps, and virtual counselling solutions, students from all corners of the world form our connected community, along with our expert team of trusted education advisors, and our partner institutions.

IDP Connect’s IQ services offer a helicopter view of the global higher education landscape, using the world’s largest combined data set of student demand. From initial online search, through to application, offer and enrolments, we are able to track global student demand through the full funnel and in real-time, helping institutions to address the key challenges faced by higher education.