



**Global Student Mobility 2025:  
Forecasts of Demand for Fields of  
Study**

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## **Global Student Mobility 2025: Forecasts of Demand for Fields of Study**

### **Introduction**

This strand of the GSM project examined the key drivers of driving the growth in demand for particular courses in Australia and the future composition of demand for courses by field, level, mode and duration of study.

Specifically, the Project examines:

**Labour Market Trends and International Education:** The research facilitates an understanding of why some levels of study, fields of study, modes of study and duration of studies have experienced such dramatic growth.

**Historical Trends in Fields of Study:** The project provides an analysis of historical trends of fields of study in the five major English-speaking destination countries (MESDCs) including an analysis of the growth/decline by field and level of study in a number of these countries.

**Demand for Specific Australian Fields of Study:** An objective of the work was to analyse trends in particular fields of study, over time, in Australia in this case in Business, Information Technology and Health courses.

**Historical Trends of Chinese and Indian Students in International Education:** Given the importance of key markets as China and India, the historical trends in Chinese and Indian students going to study overseas are examined.

**Forecast of Demand for Australian Fields, Level, Mode and Duration of Study:** This forecasts demand in order to make an initial assessment of which fields, level, mode and duration of courses will increase or decline to 2025

### **Main Findings**

- Forecast of the composition of the demand indicates that strong demand for international higher education courses in Management and Commerce and Information Technology in Australia is likely to continue.
- In all the forecast scenarios, these two fields will represent, at least, 65% of the total demand
- The Engineering and Related Technologies field will be the third most demanded field in all the four scenarios

**Base Scenario**

Under this scenario, an analysis of the results by field of study indicates that:

- Management and Commerce and Information Technology will continue to be the most demanded field of study into 2025. 69% of the total demand will be for these two fields of study.
- Management and Commerce will be the most demanded field, with 243,232 in 2025. Information Technology will be the second most demanded course, with 212,834 in 2025.
- Engineering and Related Technologies courses will be the third most demanded field, with 57,922.
- Management and Commerce and Information Technology, as well as Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies will be the fields with annual growth rates higher than the total market (53%, 65% and 54% vs. 53%).

**Table 1**  
Composition of Demand by Field of Study  
Base Scenario

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Growth (%)
Management and Commerce	44,545	70,162	110,024	168,699	243,232	53.3
Information Technology	28,930	53,500	91,614	150,923	212,834	65.3
Engineering and Related Technologies	11,218	17,950	27,758	41,824	57,922	51.1
Society and culture	9,959	13,871	19,903	28,297	39,004	41.1
Health	6,065	8,717	12,566	17,963	24,262	41.8
Natural and Physical Sciences	5,224	7,539	10,864	15,568	21,128	42.2
Creative Arts	6,300	8,366	11,318	15,397	20,145	34.1
Non-award courses	4,890	5,990	8,014	10,651	14,027	30.8
Architecture and Building	2,959	4,250	6,056	8,469	11,511	40.6
Education	2,041	2,812	4,016	5,676	7,795	40.2
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	1,110	1,796	2,828	4,390	6,187	54.2
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	20	26	33	40	49	24.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,262</b>	<b>194,978</b>	<b>304,993</b>	<b>467,897</b>	<b>658,095</b>	<b>52.6</b>

**Growth Scenario**

Under this scenario, an analysis of the results by field of study indicates that:

- Management and Commerce and Information Technology will continue to be the most demanded courses, with an expected demand of 302,705 and 305,277 in 2025

## Global Student Mobility 2025: Fields of Study

- Information Technology will be the field of study with highest growth (76%)
- Engineering and Related Technologies courses will be the third most demanded field, with 75,068 in 2025.
- Annual growth rates in the demand for Information Technology and Agriculture... will be much higher than for Management and Commerce (76% and 63% vs. 60%)

**Table 1**  
Composition of Demand by Field of Study  
Growth Scenario

Field of Study	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Growth (%)
Management and Commerce	47,506	78,091	128,960	206,761	302,705	59.6
Information Technology	32,716	66,402	123,547	215,587	305,277	75.8
Engineering and Related Technologies	11,937	20,372	33,587	53,515	75,068	59.1
Society and culture	10,383	14,857	22,247	32,957	46,541	46.2
Creative Arts	6,527	8,932	12,633	18,036	24,171	39.4
Health	6,282	9,472	14,414	21,669	29,921	48.4
Natural and Physical Sciences	5,429	8,234	12,511	18,853	26,134	48.8
Non-award courses	4,818	6,114	8,891	12,681	17,655	39.5
Architecture and Building	3,065	4,547	6,708	9,726	13,485	45.1
Education	2,107	3,003	4,526	6,755	9,687	47.1
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	1,180	2,060	3,449	5,650	8,092	62.6
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	21	27	35	42	52	25.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>131,971</b>	<b>222,112</b>	<b>371,507</b>	<b>602,232</b>	<b>858,789</b>	<b>60.7</b>

## Key Conclusions

- The shift towards 'new' / 'knowledge-based' economies indicates that the trend in international education in Business/Commerce courses, as well as for Information Technology courses will continue. International students understand the private rates of return or the employment possibilities in their own countries and overseas when they choose those courses. This is also true of Engineering and Computer Sciences.
- Supply of international education will also have to adapt to the demand for diverse and flexible modes of delivery in the broader sense of that word: flexible intakes, shorter courses, tailored and more specific specialisations.
- Due to the trend towards lifelong learning courses will have to meet the needs of a generation of new 'mature' students. For this market, the focus will not be on private rates of return as they are for younger students, but on the 'pleasure of studying' and feeling active and part of the community.
- Due to the increasing number of aged persons in the community, societies will require increasing numbers of health-related professionals. Consequently, a wide range of health, social sciences, and natural and physical sciences professionals will be needed.
- International migration will continue and it will increase in the future, encouraged by higher private rate returns, global conditions and a globalised labour market. Immigration regulations

are an expression of this and little by little are expressing then increased competition by countries to attract skilled labour, reduce labour shortages and promote the shift towards knowledge economies.

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