

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12  
15 February 2012

---

**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** AGENCY NAME OR DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Retention and attrition rates for higher education

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Mason

**QUESTION No.:** AI-190

1. What are the latest figures available on attrition and retention rates for undergraduate students at Australian universities and other higher education providers?
2. Please provide the total and a breakdown of domestic undergraduate student enrolments, and completions, by course/discipline, by state and by institution – for each year since 2005 (inclusive).
3. Please provide the total and a breakdown of international undergraduate student enrolments, and completions, by course/discipline, by state and by institution – for each year since 2005 (inclusive).
4. Please provide the total and a breakdown of domestic postgraduate student enrolments, and completions, by level of study, by course/discipline, by state and by institution – for each year since 2005 (inclusive).
5. Please provide the total and a breakdown of international postgraduate student enrolments, and completions, by level of study, by course/discipline, by state and by institution – for each year since 2005 (inclusive).
6. How do the statistics on attrition rates take account of (or reflect) students who do not complete a degree at one institution, but nonetheless later enrol and continue their course of study at another higher education institution?

**ANSWER**

1. Latest available Attrition and Retention rate figures  
The latest available figures are for 2009, which look at 2009 students and whether they returned to study in 2010. Attrition rate for undergraduate students was 13.3 per cent at Table A providers and 24.9 per cent at non-Table A providers. Retention rate for undergraduate students was 83.7 per cent at Table A providers and 67.1 per cent at non-Table A providers. Details are at Attachment 1.
2. Domestic Undergraduate students, 2005-2010  
Details are at Attachment 2.
3. Overseas Undergraduate students, 2005-2010  
Details are at Attachment 3.
4. Domestic Postgraduate students, 2005-2010  
Details are at Attachment 4.

5. Overseas Postgraduate students, 2005-2010

Details are at Attachment 5.

6. Attrition rate for students who change to another institution

The attrition rate does not take into account students who enrol at another higher education provider.

The Department has done some work on evaluating the movement of students between providers and has developed a different attrition rate calculation which takes into account this study pattern for students. Using 2009 student figures, the normal attrition rate of 14.2 per cent is reduced to 11.8 per cent when cross-provider study is taken into account. Further details are at Attachment 6.