



2025

Student Experience Survey

INTERNATIONAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2026

Acknowledgments

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We are also very grateful to the students who took the time to provide valuable feedback about their student experience. Institutions use SES data for benchmarking and continuous improvement initiatives. In addition, prospective students use SES data to assist in making informed decisions about future study.

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For more information about the 2025 SES, including how it was conducted, visit the QILT website: www.qilt.edu.au

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Executive summary

The Student Experience Survey (SES) is 1 of 4 surveys included in the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) suite. The SES provides a national framework for collecting data on key aspects of the higher education student experience. These key aspects are referred to in SES as the 5 focus areas and comprised of: Teaching Quality and Engagement, Skills Development, Learning Resources, Student Support and Services, and Peer Engagement. Additionally, the SES includes a single stand-alone item measuring Overall Educational Experience as well as items relating to the international student living experience.

All students enrolled in non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs) and students enrolled in a university in their first or final year of study in an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework higher education degree studying onshore are invited to take part in the SES. The 2025 SES International Report presents findings for international students who studied onshore and responded to the SES between August and September 2025 and compares international outcomes against domestic outcomes.

In 2025, more than 116,000 international students from 143 higher education institutions—including 43 universities—participated in the SES.

International student profile

In 2025, international students made up a substantial portion of survey respondents in the SES, comprising 1 in 5 undergraduates and more than half of postgraduate coursework students. Of these international students, around half came from a small number of countries, predominantly, Nepal, China (excludes SARs and Taiwan)

and India. International students were also primarily enrolled in a limited number of study areas: around half of undergraduate students were from the Business and management, Computing and information systems and Nursing study areas, while half of postgraduate coursework students were from Business and management, and Computing and information systems study areas.

Overall student experience has exceeded pre-COVID levels

In 2025, international student ratings of Overall Educational Experience have steadily increased across both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels, exceeding pre-pandemic ratings and reaching an all-time high (**Figure i**). This pattern is consistent across the 5 focus areas in SES, with ratings for all 5 focus areas reaching all-time highs for international students across both coursework levels.

International students rate the student experience more highly than domestic students

Across the focus areas of SES, international students were more likely to provide positive ratings compared to domestic students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels. The differences were most evident for Skills Development (**Figure ii**), Student Support and Services, and Peer Engagement, while they were modest for Teaching Quality and Engagement, and Learning Resources.

Figure i / Overall Educational Experience by course level, 2017–25 (% positive rating)

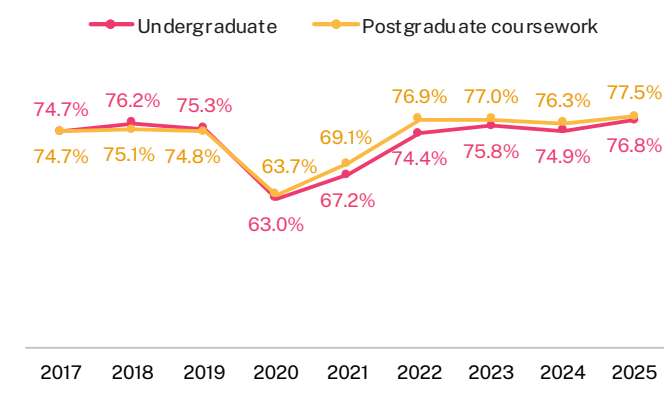
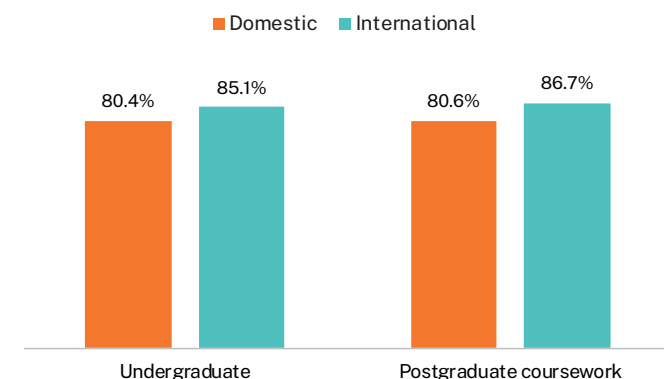


Figure ii / Skills Development by course level and citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)

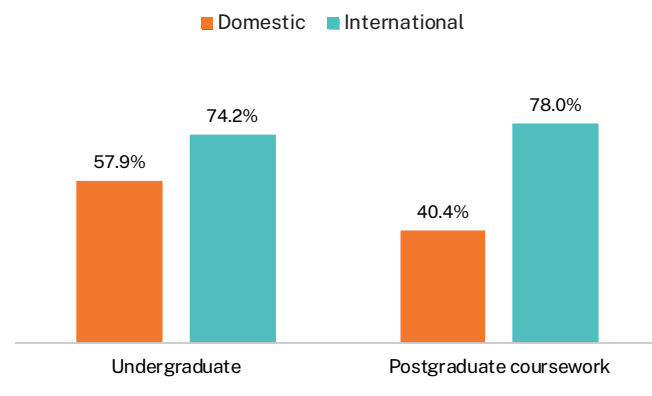


International students reported much higher ratings of Peer Engagement compared to domestic students

The largest difference between domestic and international students in focus area ratings was observed in Peer Engagement, which captures the frequency of interaction with peers inside and outside of formal study (Figure iii).

At the postgraduate coursework level, international students were almost twice as likely to provide a positive rating for Peer Engagement compared to domestic students. This difference may be partly attributed to differences in on-campus attendance. While international students were required to attend classes on-campus as part of visa requirements, 14.0 per cent of domestic undergraduates and 53.0 per cent of domestic postgraduate coursework students were enrolled in courses delivered completely online in 2025.

Figure iii / Peer Engagement by course level and citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



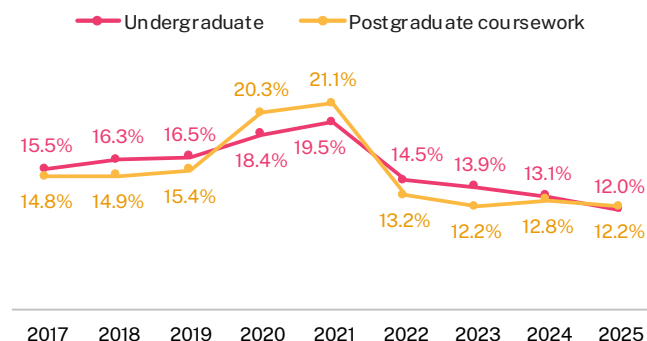
Positive results from the Tourism and Nursing study areas

As with previous years, ratings of student experience tend to vary by study area. In 2025, international students from study areas such as Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, and Nursing were the most likely to provide positive ratings for their Overall Educational Experience across both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels. On the other hand, students from study areas such as Architecture and built environment, and Computing and information systems were least likely to provide positive ratings for their Overall Educational Experience across both coursework levels.

Record lows for international students considering leaving

In line with the record high for student experience ratings, the proportion of international students who considered leaving their institution continued to fall in 2025 and is at an all-time low for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels (Figure iv). At both coursework levels, financial difficulties and stress levels were the most cited reasons international students considered leaving their institution.

Figure iv / Likelihood to consider leaving by course level, 2017-25 (%)



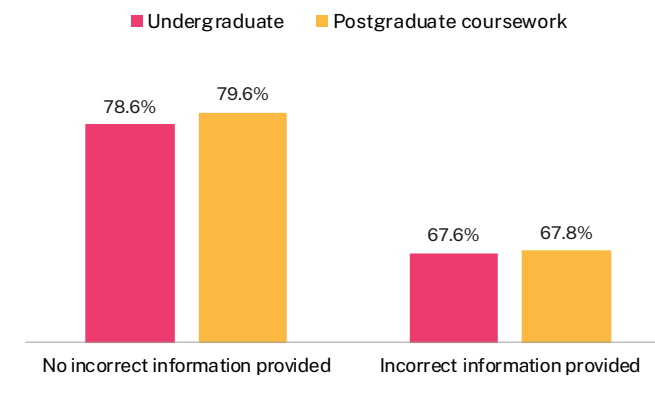
International living experience continues to be rated highly

International students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework level generally rate their overall living experience in Australia very highly, with around 9 out of 10 students providing a positive rating for their overall living and accommodation experience in Australia. These ratings have remained relatively stable since 2022.

Agents play a key role in the international experience

More than 4 in 5 international students used an agent to assist with their visa application, and more than 3 in 4 used an agent to assist with enrolment at their institution. However, 11.9 per cent of undergraduate students and 13.0 per cent of postgraduate coursework students reported receiving incorrect information from their agent, and these students were less likely to report a positive Overall Educational Experience (Figure v).

Figure v / Overall Educational Experience by course level and accuracy of information provided by agent, 2025 (% positive rating)



Source country

- **Education Experience:** Amongst the top 5 source countries, students from Nepal and India rated their Overall Educational Experience highest across both levels of study. They also rated Skills Development, Teaching Quality and Engagement, and Peer Engagement higher than the international average.
- **Peer Engagement:** There was notable variation in positive ratings of Peer Engagement across the top 5 source countries, ranging from 67.2 per cent of students from China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) to 83.0 percent from students from Nepal.
- **Accommodation:** Students from China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) were less likely to live with friends or relatives, and more likely to live in purpose-built student accommodation compared to the international average.
- **Reasons for study in Australia:** 96.1 per cent to 99.3 per cent of students from the top 5 source countries cited personal safety and security as the primary reason they chose to study in Australia. On the other hand, there was considerable variation in citing the possibility of migrating to Australia as an important factor ranging from 54.4 per cent (China, excluding SARs and Taiwan) to 79.2 per cent (Nepal).



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1. About the SES

The Student Experience Survey (SES) provides a national framework for collecting data on key aspects of the international and domestic higher education student experience. It focuses on measurable aspects linked to learning outcomes influenced by institutions.

Note that this report primarily captures measurable aspects of the student experience for international students.

1.1 Participation

The 2025 SES was conducted as a national online survey among 153 higher education institutions, including 43 universities and 110 non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs). Of these, 143 institutions had international students, comprising 43 universities and 100 NUHEIs. A total of 116,201 valid survey responses were collected across all study levels from international students, yielding a response rate of 42.6 per cent, which was an increase from the 37.5 per cent achieved in 2024.

1.2 Series history

Originally developed as the University Experience Survey (UES) in 2011, the SES was renamed in 2015 to include non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs). Initially focused on undergraduates, the survey expanded to include postgraduate coursework students in 2017.

From 2014 to 2019, the survey remained largely unchanged, with minor wording adjustments. In 2020, the international student module was added to measure broader aspects of their experience. In 2021, items on freedom of expression were included.

A 2022 review led to several changes in the 2023 SES, including renaming focus areas: Learner Engagement to Peer Engagement, and Student Support to Student Support and Services. The Teaching Quality focus area was renamed to Teaching Quality and Engagement, and the Sense of Belonging item became a stand-alone measure.

Scope

The scope of the Student Experience Survey (SES) has traditionally been limited to include domestic and international students studying onshore in Australia.

However, between 2020 and 2023, this scope was broadened due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. During this period, some international students holding Temporary Entry Visas were physically located offshore at the time of the survey, but included in the survey population.

In 2024, with the end of pandemic-related travel restrictions, the SES returned to its original scope, focusing once again on students living in Australia.

1.3 Further detail

Methodological information relating to the SES can be found in the [2025 SES Methodological Report](#). Additional technical details—such as the survey instrument, the construction of focus area ratings and confidence intervals, and the study area concordance—can be found on the QILT website: [qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-\(ses\)](http://qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-(ses))

This report is supported by a [Power BI workbook](#), which allows readers to further explore the data. Static [Excel tables](#) also provide additional data and detail that may be of interest.

Analysis of results for domestic students are explored in more detail in the [2025 SES National Report](#) available on the QILT website.

2025 participation



143
participating institutions



273,010
invitations sent



116,201
completed surveys



42.6%
response rate

1.4 About this report

The *SES International Report* complements the *SES National Report* by providing a focused analysis of international students' experiences.

Section 2 presents an overview of the 5 key focus areas of the SES and presents results for each of the focus areas since 2017, noting differences in the student experience between international and domestic students.

Section 3 explores additional dimensions of the international student experience, including sense of belonging and likelihood of considering leaving the institution.

Sections 4, 5 and 6 provide results for international students across the 5 key focus areas disaggregated by study areas, institutions and source countries.

Section 7 examines the holistic experience of international students: their general living and accommodation experience, their use of education agents, and their motivations for pursuing tertiary education in Australia.

1.5 Changes to the international student experience since 2019

The COVID-19 pandemic brought major disruptions to higher education in Australia, particularly for international students. Institutions rapidly shifted to online learning and adapted their teaching, resources, and student support in response to evolving restrictions. International students faced additional challenges, including travel bans, financial hardship and the isolation of studying online—whether in Australia or overseas.

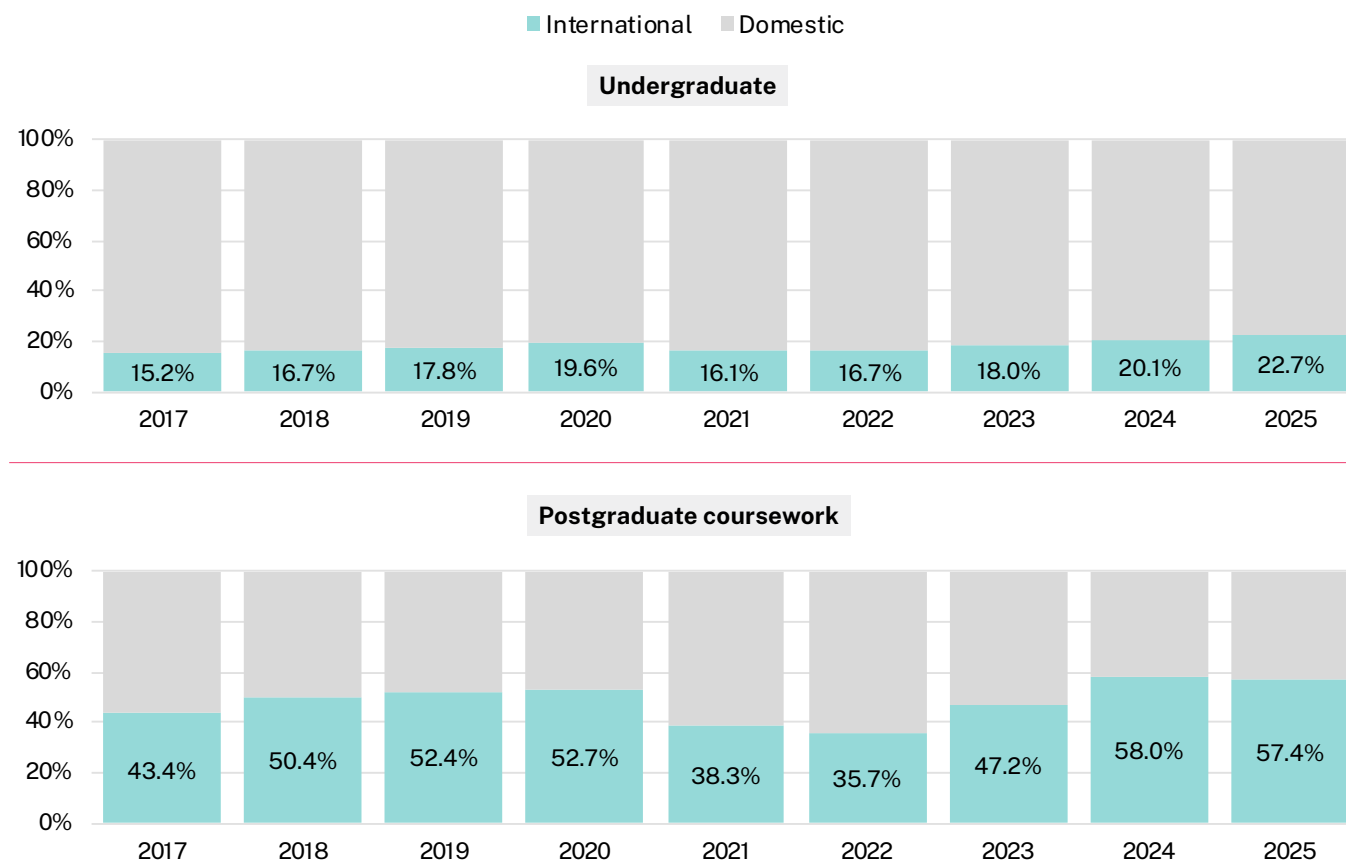
In the post-pandemic period, many institutional courses have retained hybrid delivery modes, combining online and on-campus classes, while others have maintained traditional all on-campus learning. While hybrid delivery modes often offer students the opportunity to vary their on-campus participation, in general, international students are more likely to report participating in their classes all on-campus compared to domestic students.

See **Appendix 1** for further information on international and domestic student study mode and class participation differences.

In addition, the proportion of international to domestic student respondents has shifted over time, reflecting changes in the underlying student population (**Figure 1**). The proportion of postgraduate coursework international respondents rose significantly from a 6-year low of 35.7 per cent in 2022 to 58.0 per cent in 2024—the highest

level recorded since 2017—and remained high in 2025 (57.4 per cent). The proportion of international students at the undergraduate level has historically been much smaller but has also been increasing year-on-year since 2021. In 2025, international students accounted for 22.7 per cent of the undergraduate responding population; 2.6 percentage points higher than in 2024 and the highest since 2017.

Figure 1 / Proportion of responses to the SES from international students by course level, 2017–25



2. The international student educational experience

The SES measures 5 key focus areas of the student experience, each comprising related survey items that capture students' perceptions of their study environment:

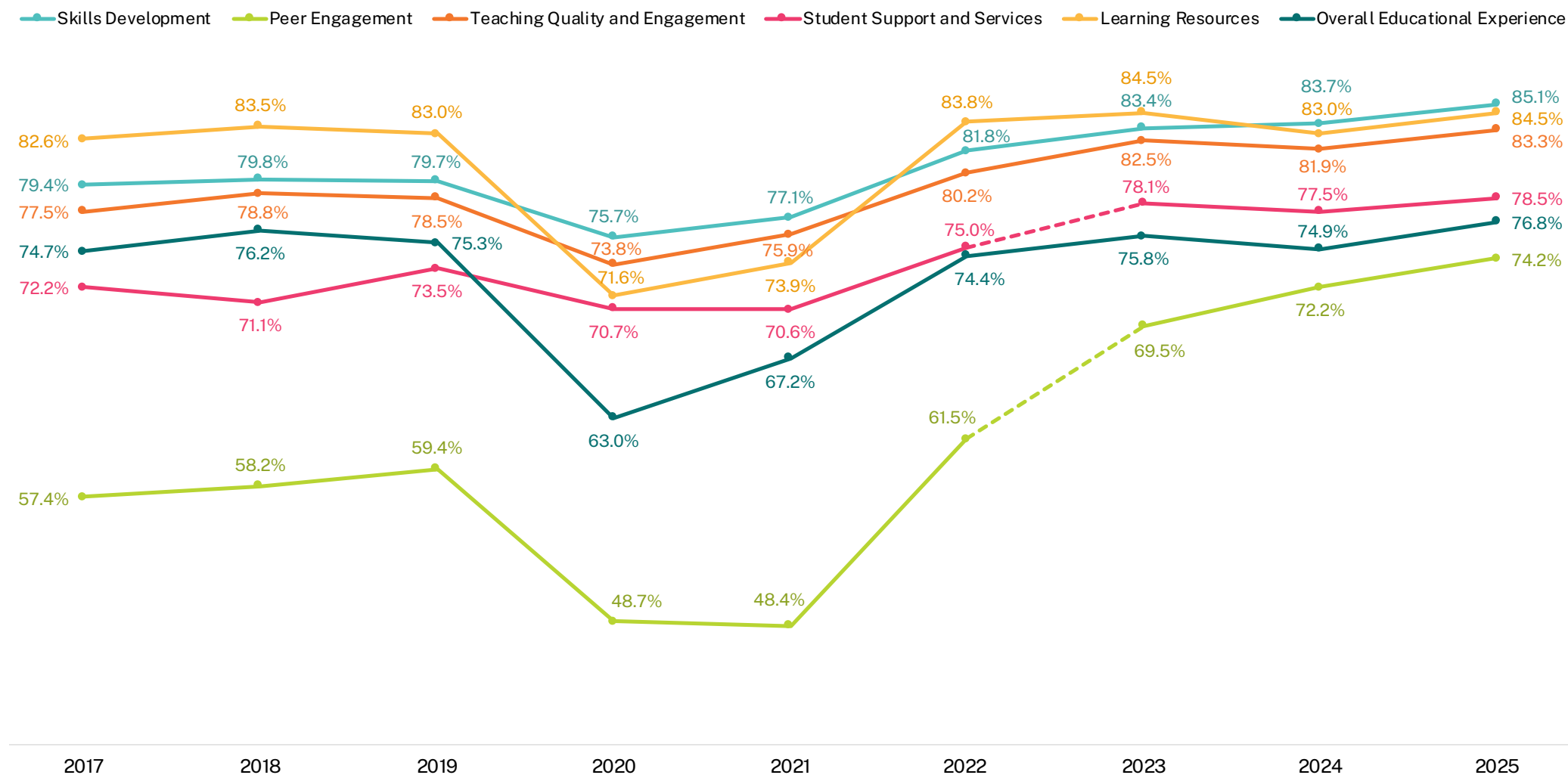
- **Teaching Quality and Engagement:** Evaluates the quality, relevance and organisation of teaching, as well as how effectively academic staff engage students and provide constructive feedback.
- **Skills Development:** Assesses the extent to which students have developed a broad set of capabilities, including foundational, collaborative and adaptive skills.
- **Learning Resources:** Evaluates learning resources such as teaching spaces, equipment, library services and learning materials.
- **Student Support and Services:** Measures the helpfulness of institutional supports and services, including academic, administrative, wellbeing, financial and career development services.
- **Peer Engagement:** Examines how frequently students interact and collaborate with their peers, both within and outside formal study settings.

The SES also includes a stand-alone measure of **Overall Educational Experience**, which provides a view of students' perceptions of the overall quality of their studies. Although reported separately, Overall Educational Experience is closely linked to students' perceptions of Teaching Quality and Engagement, Skills Development, and broader elements of their learning environment, such as their sense of belonging.

Responses to items within each focus area are classified as positive or negative, and ratings represent the proportion of students who responded positively to the items within that focus area. Further information on the construction of the focus area calculations is available on the [QILT website](#).

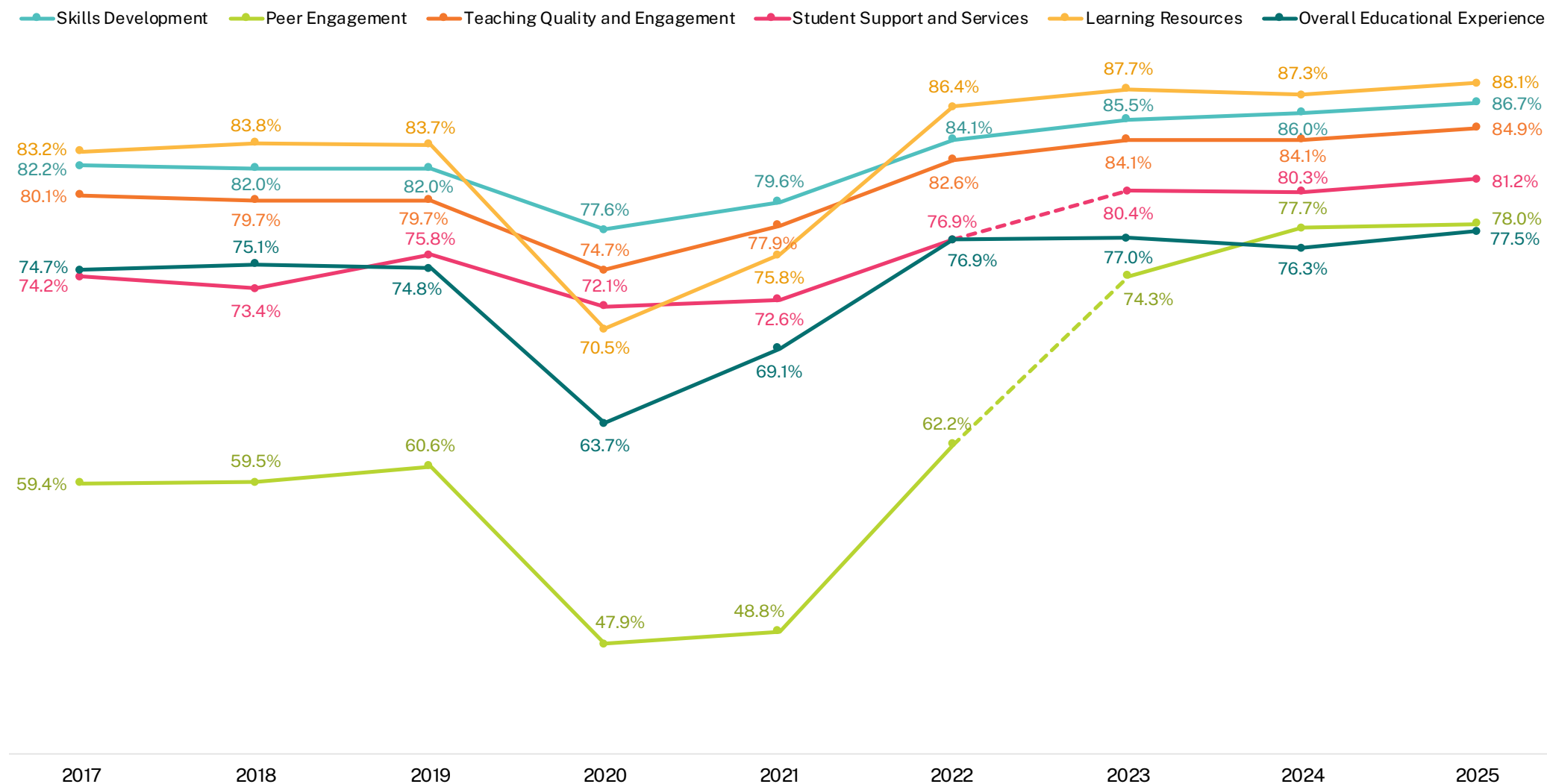
International student ratings at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels remained relatively steady across most focus areas from 2017 to 2019 (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**). Ratings across all aspects of the educational experience declined markedly in 2020, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, international student ratings were quick to recover with all focus area ratings and ratings of Overall Educational Experience not only recovering by 2022, but surpassing the levels seen prior to 2020.

Figure 2 / International undergraduate student experience, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



Note that the dotted lines between 2022 and 2023 indicate the change in underlying items of the Peer Engagement and Student Support and Services focus areas. When comparing year-on-year changes, it is recommended that modifications to underlying questionnaire items be taken into consideration. For more information about these changes, refer to the 2023 SES National Report.

Figure 3 / International postgraduate coursework student experience, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



Note that the dotted lines between 2022 and 2023 indicate the change in underlying items of the Peer Engagement and Student Support and Services focus areas. When comparing year-on-year changes, it is recommended that modifications to underlying questionnaire items be taken into consideration. For more information about these changes, refer to the 2023 SES National Report.

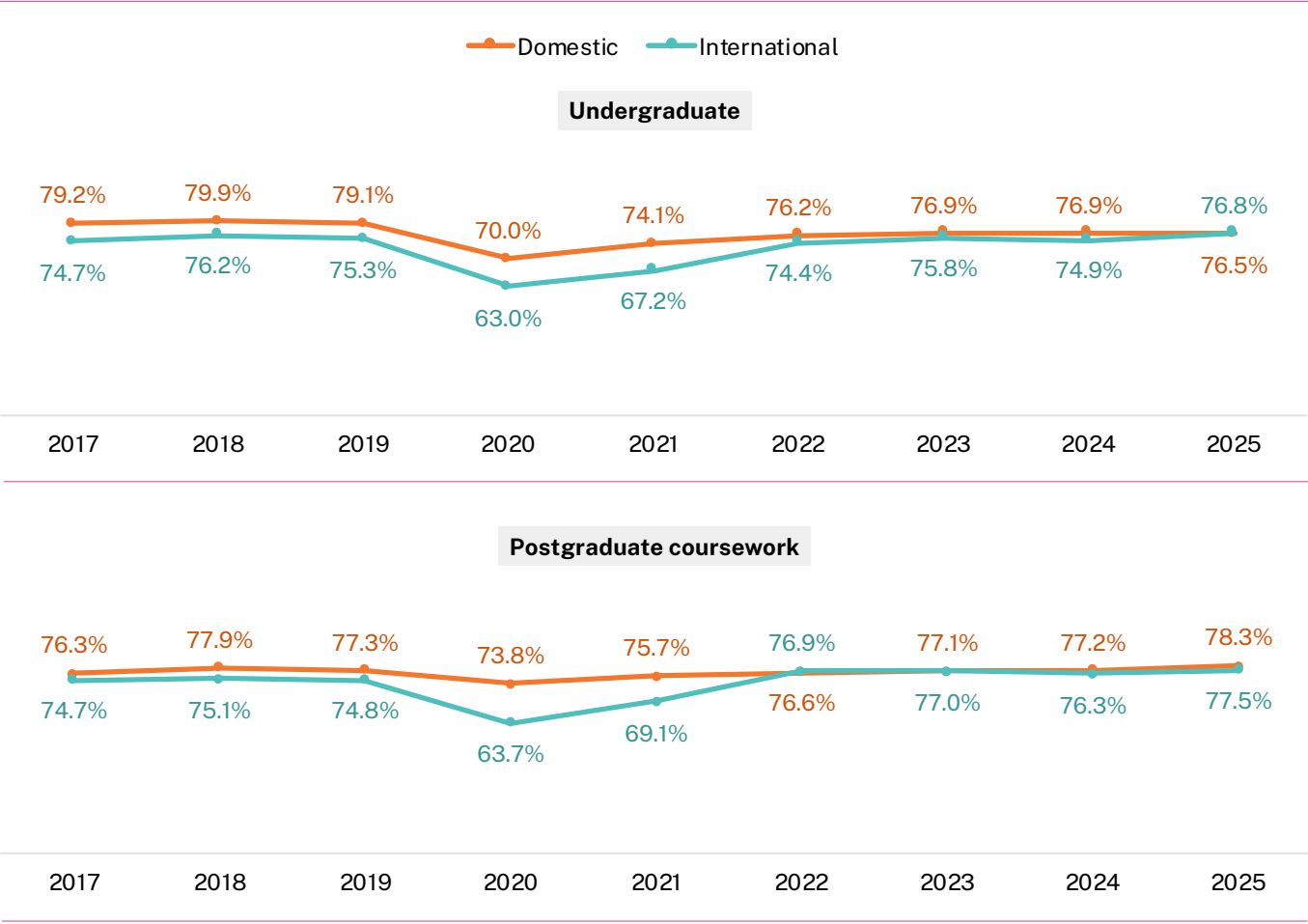
2.1 Overall Educational Experience

Overall Educational Experience provides a broad, high-level rating of the quality of students’ educational experience during the year. It reflects students’ holistic impressions of their studies and may draw on a range of academic and non-academic aspects of their course.

In 2020, student ratings of Overall Educational Experience dropped sharply, as higher education institutions had to make teaching, learning and student support changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After partially recovering to pre-pandemic levels in 2022, ratings remained relatively steady until 2024. In 2025, international undergraduate Overall Educational Experience ratings increased to 76.8 per cent positive bringing it broadly in line with domestic ratings for the first time since 2017.

At the postgraduate coursework level, international student ratings of Overall Educational Experience have surpassed pre-pandemic levels since 2022 and have remained relatively stable through to 2025. Notably, the gap between domestic and international student ratings observed in the pre-pandemic era has narrowed substantially in the post-pandemic period, and in 2025, there was only a 0.8 percentage points difference.

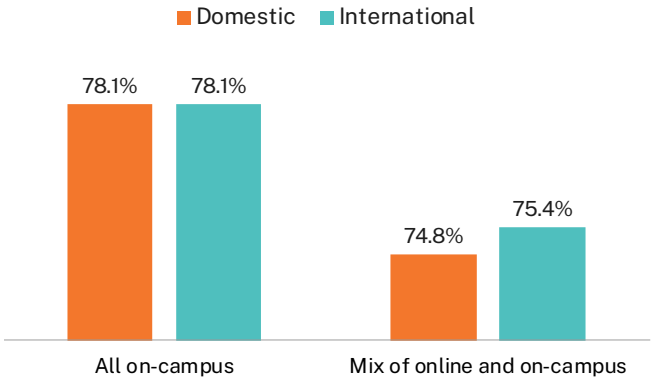
Figure 4 / Overall Educational Experience by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



The trends across domestic and international students for Overall Educational Experience over the years are potentially attributable to changes to modes of study. Domestic students, at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels have not gone back to on-campus learning to the same extent as international students have done (see **Appendix 1**).

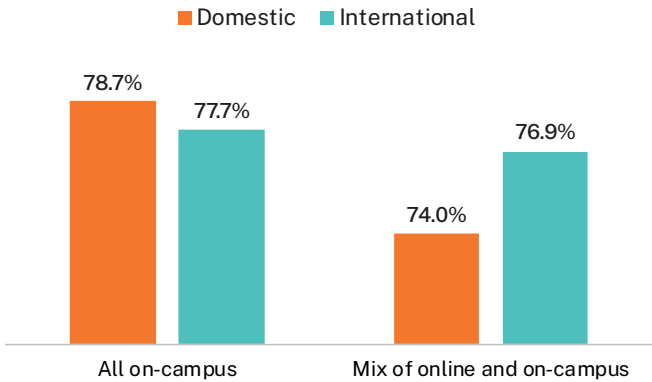
Across both international and domestic students, undergraduates who participate in their course all on-campus are more likely to report positive ratings for Overall Educational Experience compared to those who participate in a mix of online and on-campus studies (**Figure 5**). The combination of greater on-campus participation among international students, together with the higher percent of positive ratings associated with fully on-campus study, helps explain why international students' ratings have increased relative to domestic students in the post-pandemic period.

Figure 5 / **Undergraduate Overall Educational Experience by citizenship status and class participation, enrolled internal/multi-mode, 2025 (% positive rating)**



At the postgraduate coursework level, the relationship between study mode and ratings for Overall Educational Experience are more nuanced (**Figure 6**). Notably, the difference in percent positive ratings between international postgraduate coursework students who participate in on-campus and a mix of online and on-campus, is smaller (0.8 percentage points) than the difference observed for undergraduates (2.7 percentage points). This finding may reflect the older age profile of international postgraduate coursework students. Older international students may better value the flexibility of online learning options available in the post-pandemic environment, particularly as they are unable to enrol in fully external courses. This in part can explain why international postgraduate coursework ratings of Overall Educational Experience have increased in the post-pandemic era, while domestic students have not seen a comparable increase.

Figure 6 / **Postgraduate coursework Overall Educational Experience by citizenship status and class participation, enrolled internal/multi-mode, 2025 (% positive rating)**



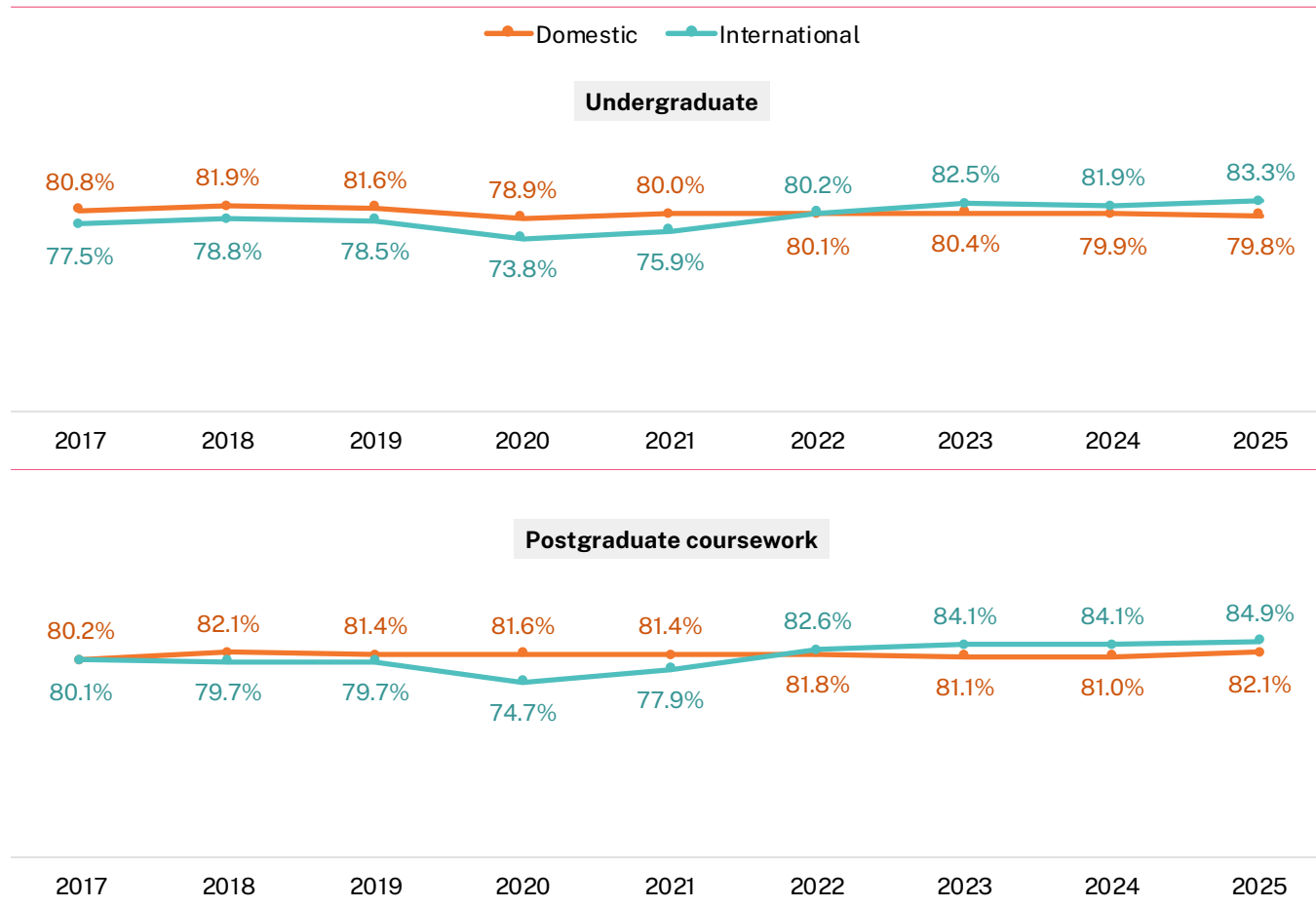
2.2 Teaching Quality and Engagement

The Teaching Quality and Engagement focus area captures students' perceptions of the quality of the teaching they experienced during the year. It reflects students' overarching evaluations of teaching in their course as well as their impressions of specific teaching practices and course organisation. Together, these measures provide a broad view of teaching quality, drawing on both students' overall judgements and their reported exposure to key teaching and learning practices.

-  **Course well-structured and focused**
-  **Course relevant to education as a whole**
-  **Teachers engaged you actively in learning**
-  **Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning**
-  **Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment**
-  **Teachers stimulated you intellectually**
-  **Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn**

For both international undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, ratings of Teaching Quality and Engagement have increased beyond pre-pandemic levels since 2023 and were at an all-time high in 2025. As can be seen in **Figure 7**, between 2017 and 2019 in the pre-pandemic period, international undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students consistently rated Teaching Quality and Engagement lower than their domestic counterparts. However, since 2022 more international students have rated their Teaching Quality and Engagement higher than domestic students across both cohorts (a difference of 3.5 percentage points for undergraduates and 2.8 percentage points for postgraduate coursework students).

Figure 7 / Teaching Quality and Engagement by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



(continued)



Teachers seemed helpful and approachable



Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn



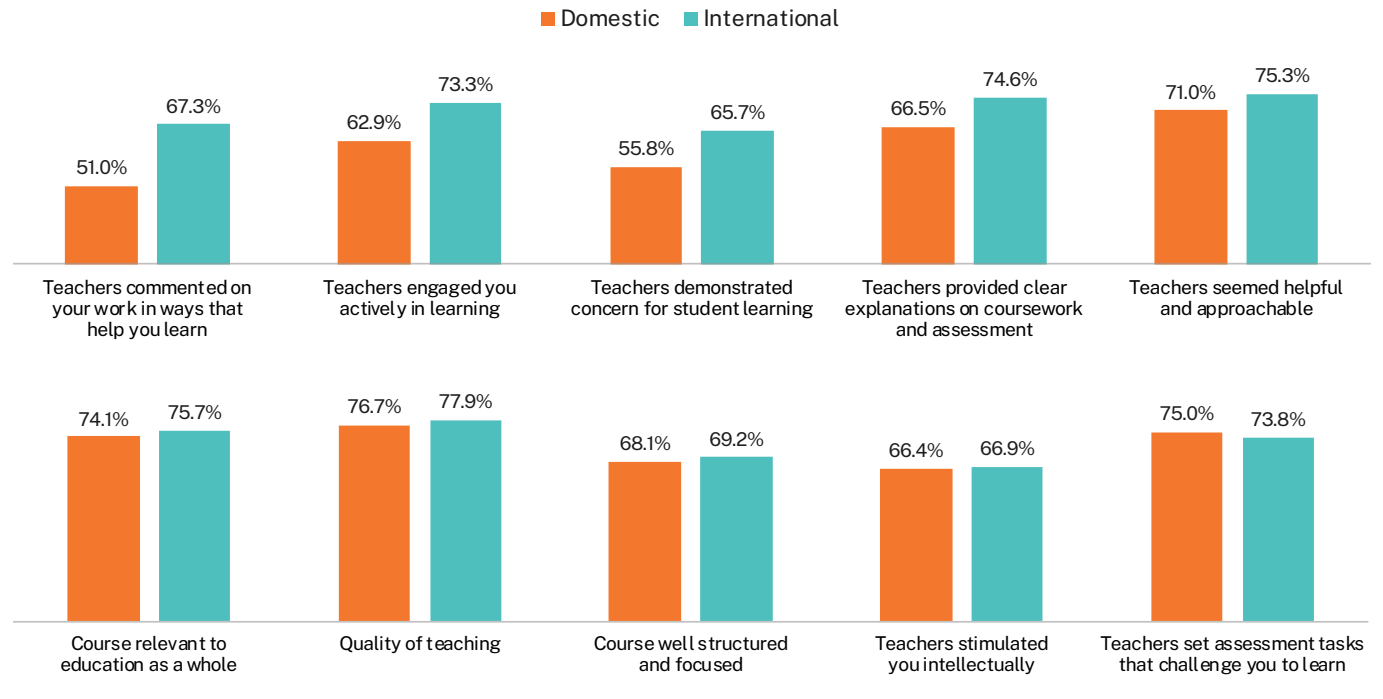
Overall quality of teaching



Overall quality of entire educational experience

Figure 8 shows the undergraduate¹ domestic and international students percent positive rating for the various items associated with the Teaching Quality and Engagement focus area², sorted by the largest differences between international and domestic students.

Figure 8 / Undergraduate Teaching Quality and Engagement by citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



The largest differences in percent positive ratings between international and domestic students were in items associated with teachers being supportive and communicative. These included ‘teachers seemed helpful and approachable’ and ‘teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn’ ranging from a difference of 4.3 percentage points to 16.3 percentage points. In contrast, smaller differences are observed in items relating to general course content and assessment such as ‘teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn’ and ‘course relevant to education as a whole’ ranging from a difference of 0.5 to 1.6 percentage points. The higher positive ratings for the Teaching Quality and Engagement focus area for international students may be partially attributed to their higher on-campus participation.

¹ Results for postgraduate coursework students are similar. Refer to worksheet TEACH_PGC_ALL_17-YY_E942 in the 2025 SES International Report Tables and 2025 SES National Report Tables (domestic) available on the QILT website.

² The percent positive rating for overall educational experience is omitted as it has already been discussed in Section 2.1.

2.3 Skills Development

The Skills Development focus area captures students' perceptions of the extent to which their course helped them develop key academic, professional and transferable skills during the year. It reflects students' views on how their studies contributed to building capabilities that support disciplinary knowledge, communication, independent learning, problem solving and preparation for future work. Together, these measures provide an indication of the skills students felt they gained through their course.

-  **Critical thinking skills**
-  **Ability to solve complex problems**
-  **Ability to work with others**
-  **Confidence to learn independently**
-  **Written communication skills**
-  **Spoken communication skills**
-  **Knowledge of field(s) studying**
-  **Development of work-related knowledge and skills**

International students' ratings of their Skills Development — at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels — follow similar trends to Teaching Quality and Engagement. Prior to 2022, domestic undergraduate students consistently reported higher ratings for Skills Development compared to international students (**Figure 9**). Since 2022 however, there has been a paradigm shift: ratings for Skills Development by international students have risen since the pandemic and have continued to trend upwards, with an all-time high for both international undergraduate (85.1 per cent) and international postgraduate coursework students (86.7 per cent) in 2025.

Figure 9 / Skills Development by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)

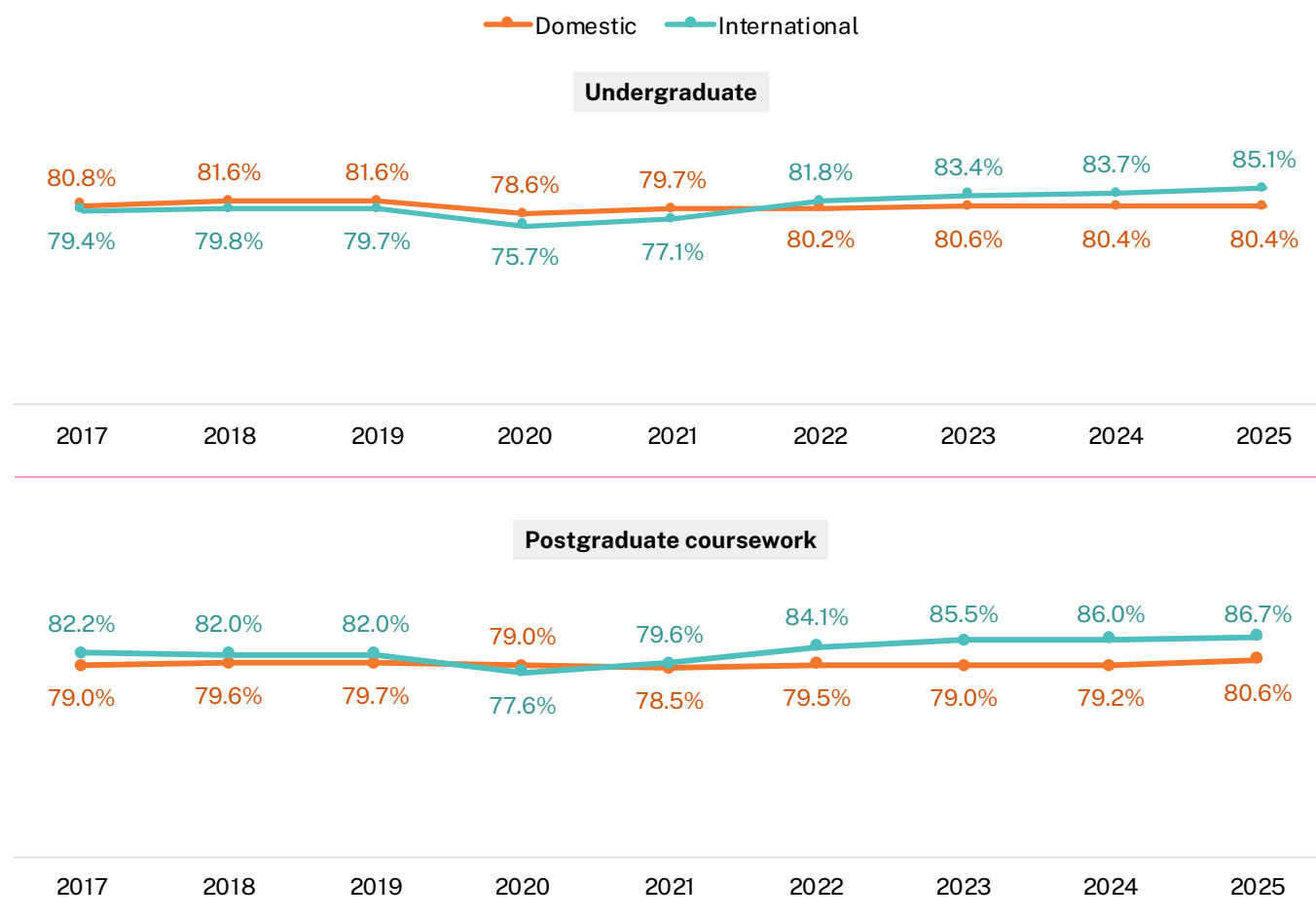


Figure 10 shows undergraduate³ domestic and international students percent positive rating for the various items associated with the Skills Development focus area, sorted by the largest difference between international and domestic students.

International students perceive greater skills development generally compared to domestic students. When looking at the item level, the two items with the highest difference between percent positive rating for international and domestic students were ‘spoken communication skills’ (16.0 percentage points) and ‘ability to work effectively with others’ (12.4 percentage points).

Development of these skills may be supported through on-campus participation, suggesting that differences in positive ratings in Skills Development between international and domestic students may be partly explained by differing rates of on-campus study.

However, international students were also more likely to provide positive ratings for other skills which may not necessarily be associated with on-campus participation such as the ‘ability to solve complex problems’ (a difference of 8.9 percentage points) and ‘written communication skills’ (a difference of 8.5 percentage points).

Figure 10 / Undergraduate Skills Development by citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



³ Results for postgraduate coursework students are similar. Refer to worksheet DEVEL_PGC_ALL_17-YY_E942 in the 2025 SES International Report Tables and 2025 SES National Report Tables (domestic) available on the QILT website.

2.4 Learning Resources

The Learning Resources focus area captures students' perceptions of the learning resources provided in their course during the year. It reflects students' ratings of the physical, digital and academic resources that support their study, including:

-  teaching spaces
-  student spaces and common areas
-  online learning materials
-  computing/IT resources
-  assigned books, notes and resources
-  laboratory or studio equipment
-  library resources and facilities

Since 2022, ratings of Learning Resources for international students have exceeded those observed in the pre-pandemic period and have remained relatively stable. At the undergraduate level, international students have consistently rated Learning Resources slightly higher than domestic students, with a difference of 1.6 percentage points in 2025. At the postgraduate level, there is a similar trend, although the gap is much wider in the post-pandemic era, being 8.9 percentage points in 2025. This large gap for postgraduate coursework students has largely been driven by increases in international ratings of Learning Resources in the post-pandemic era (88.1 per cent in 2025 compared to 83.7 in 2019); in contrast domestic ratings have decreased slightly (79.2 in 2025 compared to 81.4 in 2019).

Figure 11 / Learning Resources by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)

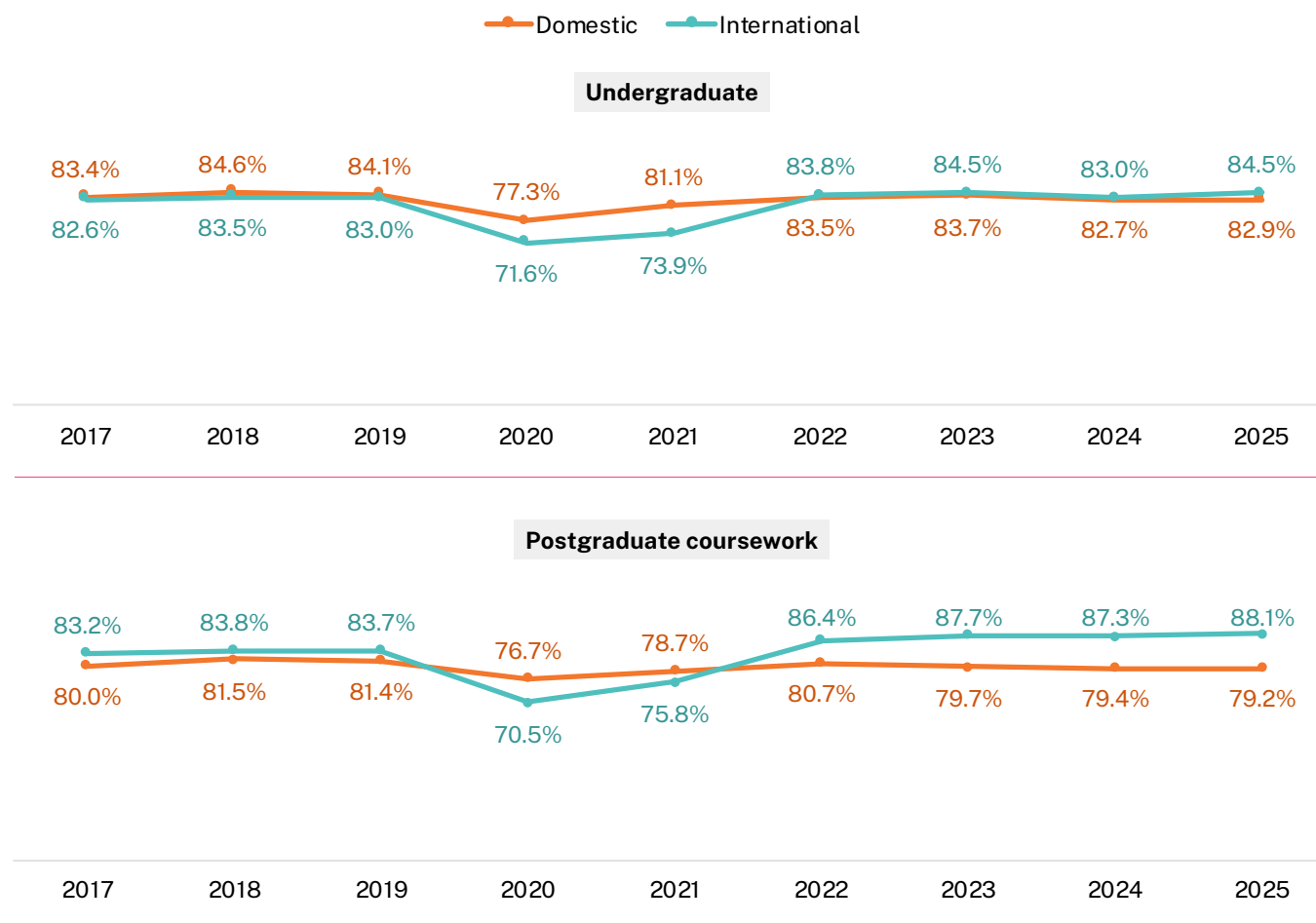


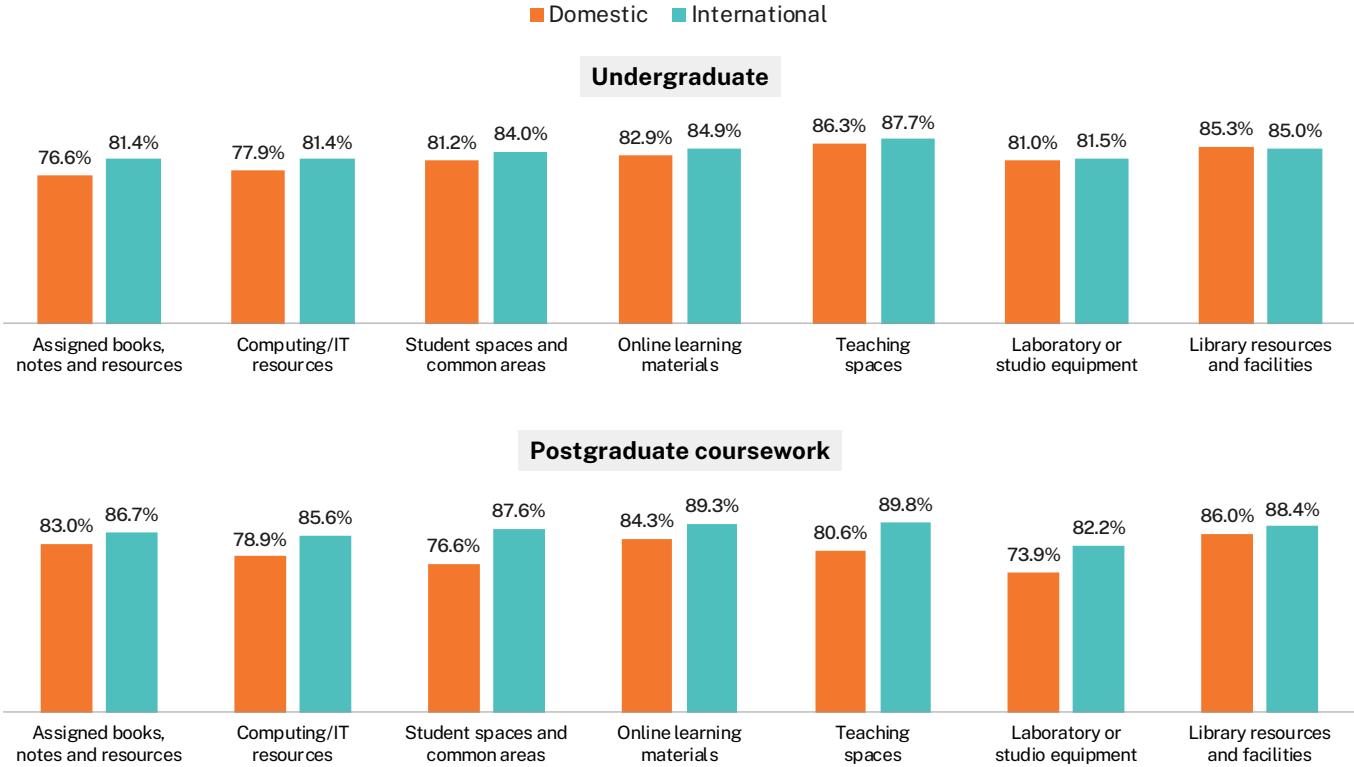
Figure 12 shows undergraduate and postgraduate coursework domestic and international students' percent positive rating for the various items associated with the Learning Resources focus area, sorted by the largest differences between international and domestic students at the undergraduate level.

At the undergraduate level, international students were more likely than domestic students to provide positive ratings for Learning Resources items associated with content and learning material—they were more likely to provide a positive rating for the quality of 'assigned books and resources' (4.8 percentage points difference) and 'online learning materials' (2.0 percentage points difference).

At the postgraduate coursework level, international students were also more likely than domestic students to provide a positive rating for 'assigned books and resources' (3.7 percentage points difference) and 'online learning materials' (5.0 percentage points difference).

Additionally, at the postgraduate coursework level, the larger difference in Learning Resources between international and domestic students may be attributable to international students' higher on-campus participation. International students were much more likely than domestic students to provide positive ratings for resources associated with being on-campus such as 'student spaces and common areas' (11.0 percentage points difference) and 'teaching spaces' (9.2 percentage points difference).

Figure 12 / Learning Resources by course level and citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



2.5 Student Support and Services

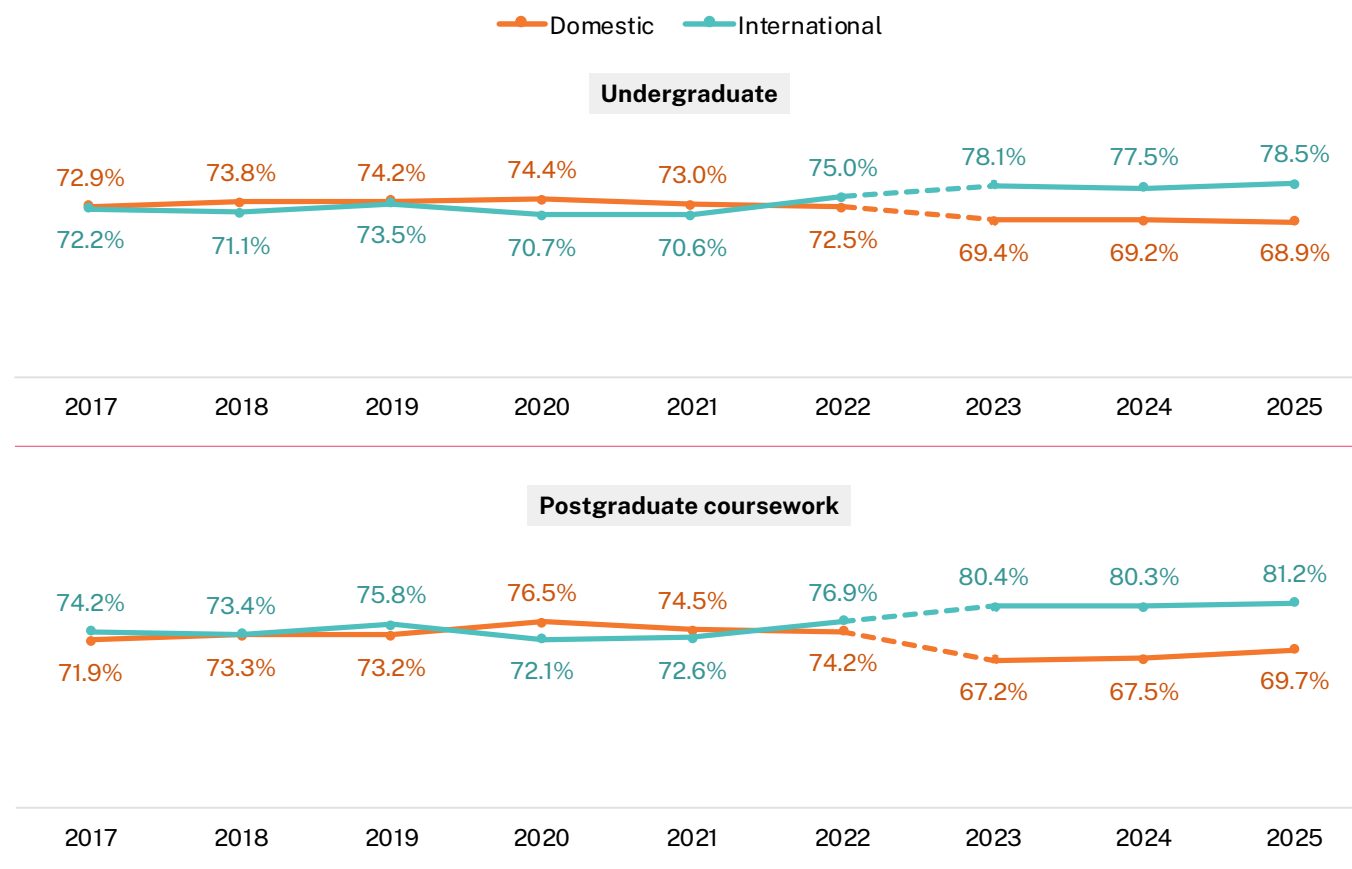
The Student Support and Services focus area captures students' perceptions of how helpful they found key institutional supports during the year. The items cover a range of academic, administrative and wellbeing services, including:

-  enrolment processes and support
-  induction and orientation activities
-  the online learning platform
-  career development services
-  study or learning support services
-  counsellors and/or health services
-  financial and/or legal advisors

The Student Support and Services focus area was reviewed and updated in 2023, with changes made to the underlying survey items, making it difficult to compare ratings in the post-pandemic era to the pre-pandemic era.

In the period since 2023, international ratings of Student Support and Services have remained relatively stable, with a slight increase in 2025 compared to 2024: rising by 1.0 percentage points and 0.9 percentage points for undergraduates and postgraduate coursework students, respectively. At both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, internationals tend to rate Student Support and Services higher than their domestic counterparts, with a difference of 9.6 percentage points among undergraduate students and 11.5 percentage points among postgraduate coursework students.

Figure 13 / **Student Support and Services by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)**



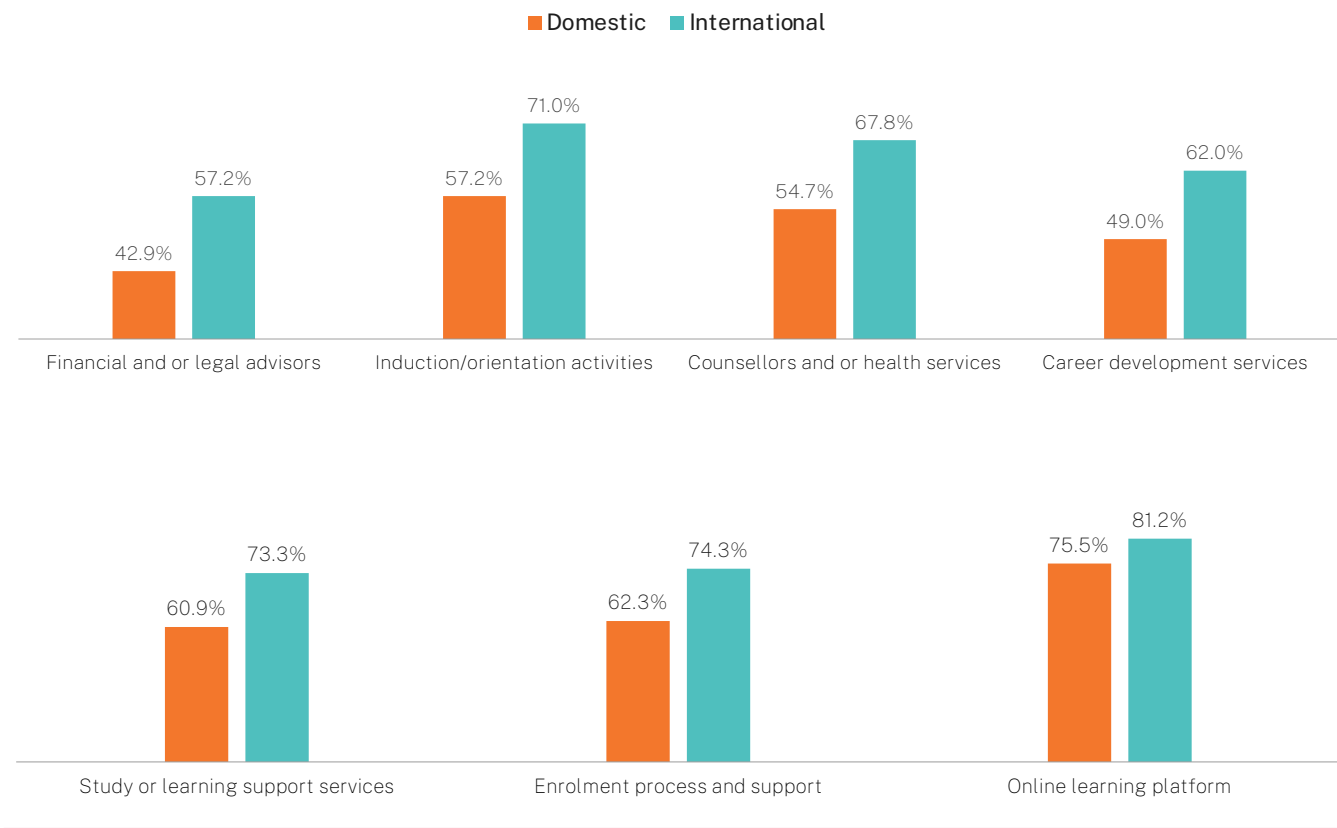
Note that the dotted lines between 2022 and 2023 indicate the change in underlying items of the Student Support and Services focus area. When comparing year-on-year changes, it is recommended that modifications to underlying questionnaire items be taken into consideration. For more information about these changes, refer to the 2023 SES National Report.

Figure 14 shows undergraduate⁴ domestic and international students' percent positive rating for the various questions associated with the Student Support and Services focus area, sorted by the largest difference between international and domestic students.

The differences in percent positive ratings between international and domestic undergraduates for Student Support Services is large across all services: the difference is greater than 12 percentage points for all items, with the exception of 'online learning platform' (5.7 percentage points difference).

Unlike the other focus areas, the differences do not appear to relate to on-campus participation and may instead reflect a greater utilisation of Student Support Services by international students. International students may be more likely to require support as they overcome cultural, social and language barriers during their studies.

Figure 14 / Undergraduate Student Support and Services by citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



⁴ Results for postgraduate coursework students are similar. Refer to worksheet SUPP_PGC_ALL_17-YY_E942 in the 2025 SES International Report Tables and 2025 SES National Report Tables (domestic) available on the QILT website.

2.6 Peer Engagement

The Peer Engagement focus area reflects how frequently students interacted with other students during the year in ways that supported learning, collaboration and connection. While the items measure frequency rather than students' evaluations of these interactions, the results provide insight into patterns of peer interaction across academic and social contexts. Specifically, this focus area measures how frequently students:



contributed to class discussion



worked with other students as part of the course



interacted with other students to give or receive help with study

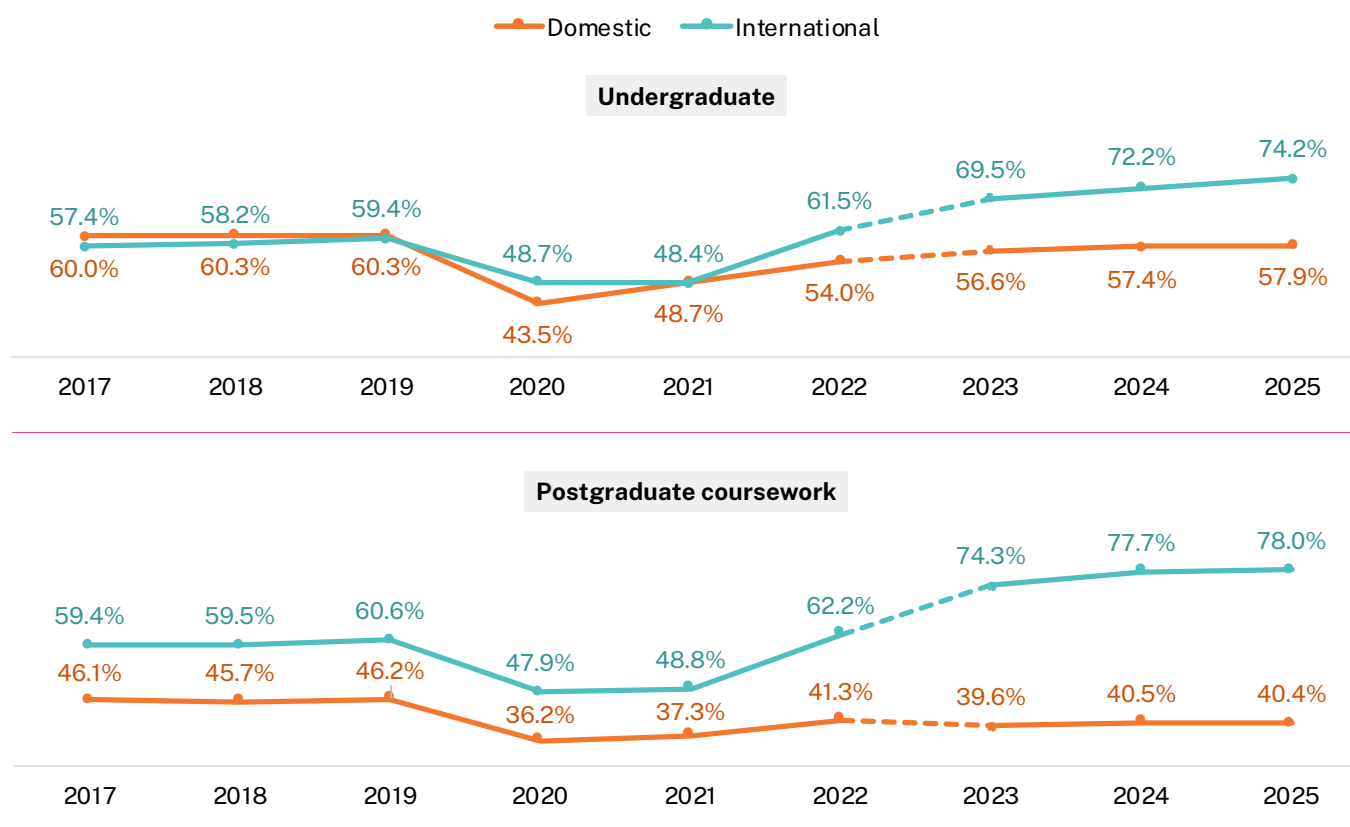


interacted socially with other students outside of study



interacted with a diverse range of students

Figure 15 / Peer Engagement by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



Note that the dotted lines between 2022 and 2023 indicate the change in underlying items of the Peer Engagement focus area. When comparing year-on-year changes, it is recommended that modifications to underlying questionnaire items be taken into consideration. For more information about these changes, refer to the 2023 SES National Report.

The Peer Engagement focus area was reviewed and updated in 2023, with changes made to the underlying survey items, making it difficult to compare ratings in the post-pandemic era to the pre-pandemic era. Since 2023, international students have seen a rise in ratings of Peer Engagement at both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels (**Figure 15**).

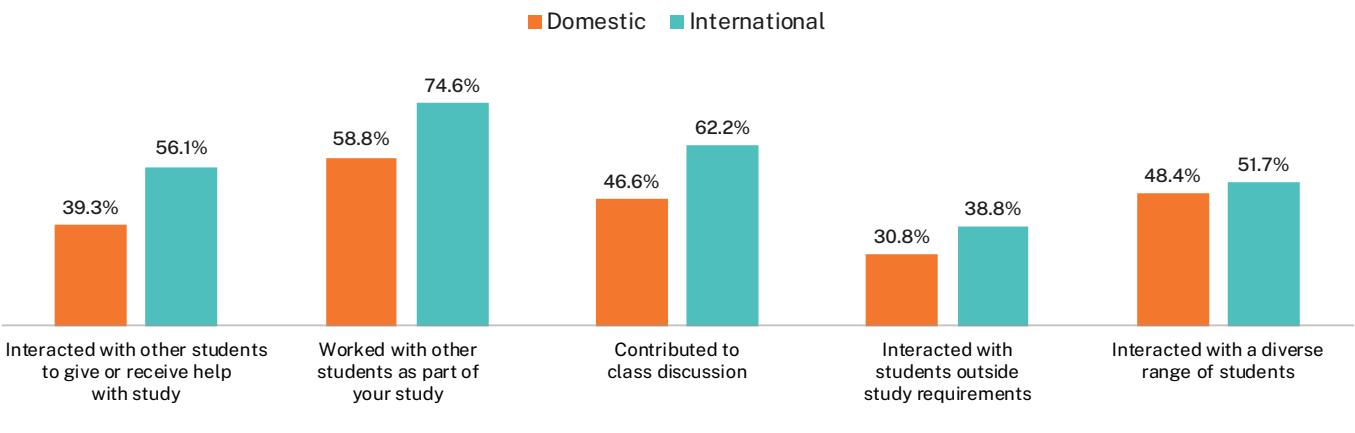
At the undergraduate level, internationals reported Peer Engagement ratings that were 16.3 percentage points higher than domestic undergraduates, and this gap has increased from 14.8 percentage points in 2024. At the postgraduate coursework level, the gap between domestic and international students is even larger, a gap of 37.6 percentage points, although this is similar to the difference of 37.2 percentage points observed in 2024.

The large gaps between domestic and international students for Peer Engagement scores may partly be attributed to differences in on-campus attendance across the two cohorts. While 14.0 per cent of domestic undergraduates and 53.0 per cent of domestic postgraduate coursework students were enrolled in external⁵ courses, international students were required to attend at least some of their classes on-campus as part of visa requirements⁶. See **Appendix 1** for more information.

Figure 16 shows undergraduate⁷ domestic and international students percent positive rating (typically indicating more frequent participation) in the various activities associated with the Peer Engagement focus area, sorted by the difference between international and domestic students.

Consistent with their higher rates of studying on-campus, undergraduate international students reported much higher frequencies of engagement in activities which are facilitated by on-campus presence. International undergraduates were much more likely to indicate that they often ‘interacted with students to give or receive help with study’ (16.8 percentage points difference), ‘worked with other students as part of your study’ (15.8 percentage points difference) and ‘contributed to class discussion’ (15.6 percentage points difference) compared to domestic undergraduates.

Figure 16 / Undergraduate Peer Engagement by citizenship status, 2025 (% positive rating)



⁵ External mode of attendance is where lesson materials, assignments, etc. are delivered to the student, and any associated attendance at the institution is of an incidental, irregular, special or voluntary nature. See [Mode of Attendance | TCSI Support](#) for more information.

⁶ Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth), National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 8.

⁷ Results for postgraduate coursework students are similar. Refer to worksheet ENGAG_PGC_ALL_17-YY_E942 in the 2025 SES International Report Tables and 2025 SES National Report Tables (domestic) available on the QILT website.

3. Other aspects of the higher education experience

3.1 Sense of belonging

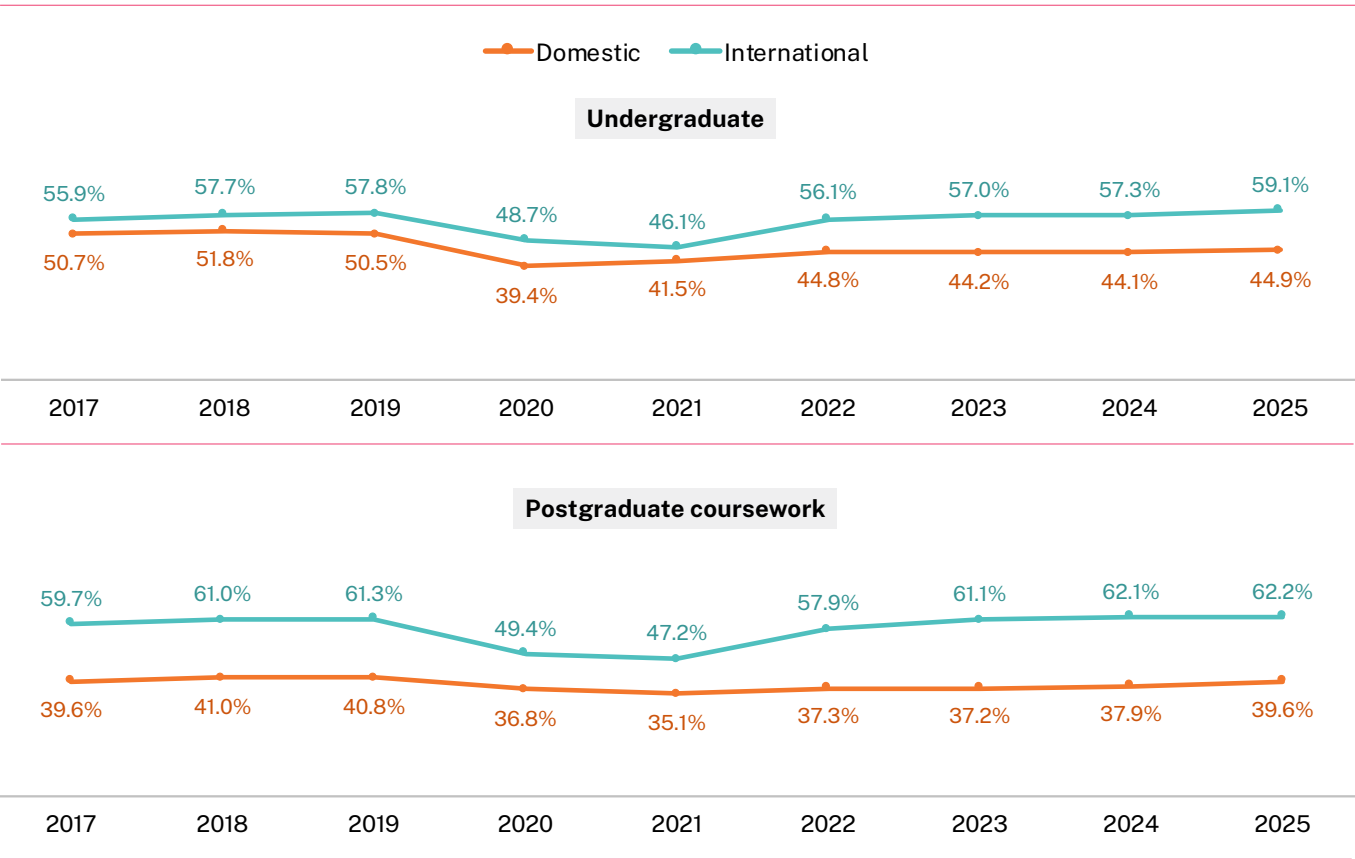
Sense of belonging relates to feelings of connectedness, inclusion and being accepted and valued by others⁸. Research has shown that a student’s sense of belonging among peers and at the institution is linked with academic achievement, personal wellbeing, student satisfaction and attrition⁹.

Positive ratings of students’ sense of belonging to their institution dropped significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among undergraduates, these ratings have progressively improved and in 2025 surpassed pre-2020 levels. This result suggests that international undergraduate students are experiencing greater opportunities for engagement and connection within their institutions.

For international postgraduate coursework students, the trends are similar with positive ratings of sense of belonging dipping during the COVID-19 pandemic, recovering in the post-pandemic period and reaching an all-time high of 62.2 per cent in 2025, a new all-time high for post-graduate coursework students.

For both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, ratings of sense of belonging have historically been higher for international students compared to domestic students, and this trend has continued in 2025 with a slight majority of internationals (59.1 per cent for undergraduate students and 62.2 per cent for postgraduate coursework students) reporting a positive rating for sense of belonging, while less than half (44.9 per cent for undergraduates and 39.6 per cent for postgraduate coursework students) of domestic students report a positive rating.

Figure 17 / Sense of belonging by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25 (% positive rating)



⁸ Allen, K. A., Kern, M. L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M., & Slavich, G. M. (2021). Belonging: a review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 73(1), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409>

⁹ Crawford, J., Allen, K. A., Sanders, T., Baumeister, R., Parker, P., Saunders, C., & Tice, D. (2024). Sense of belonging in higher education students: an Australian longitudinal study from 2013 to 2019. *Studies in Higher Education*, 49(3), 395–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2238006>

3.2 Likelihood to consider leaving current institution

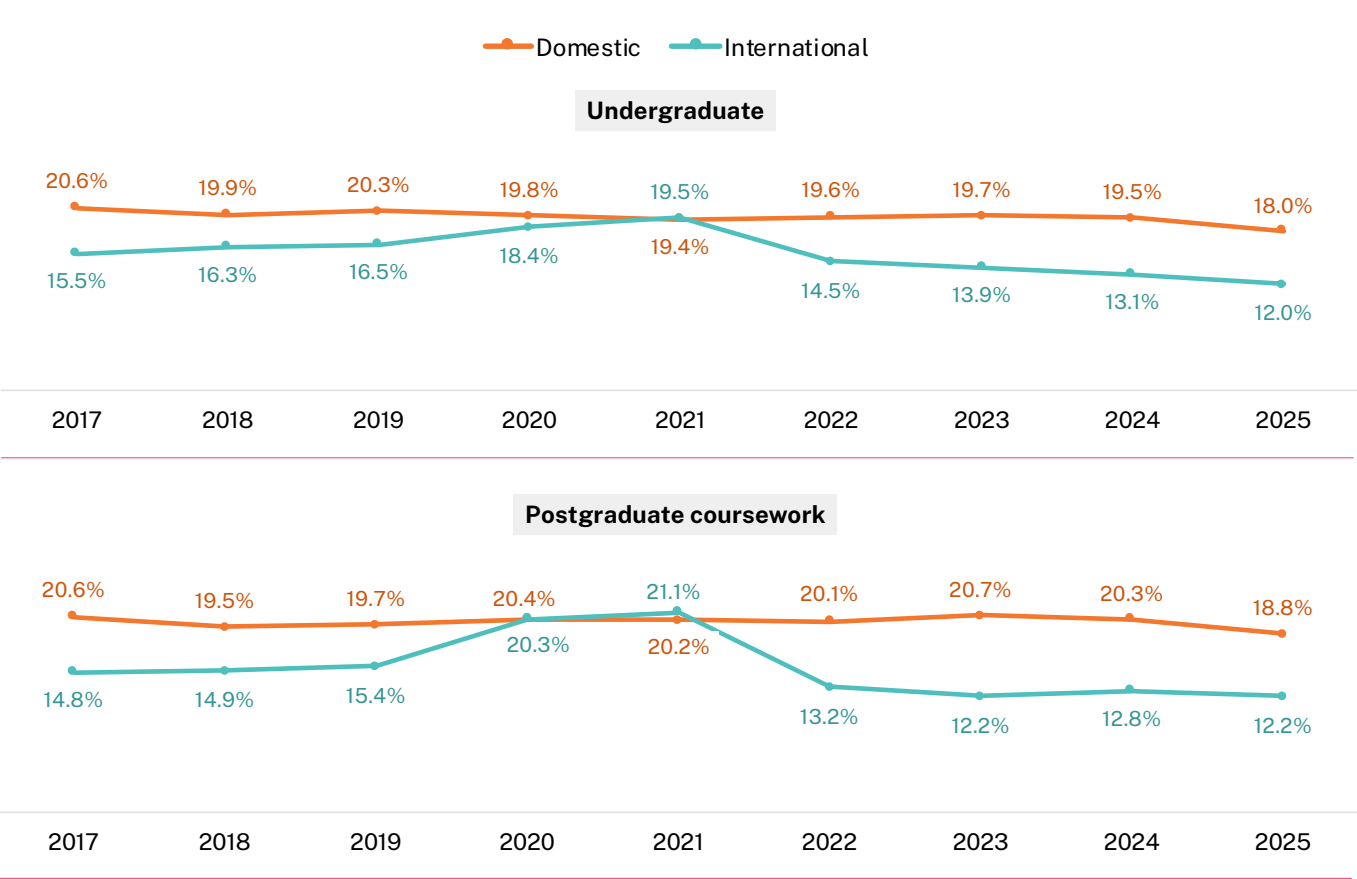
The proportion of international undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students who considered leaving their institution continued to fall in 2025. Overall, 12.0 per cent of undergraduates and 12.2 per cent of postgraduate coursework students indicated they had considered leaving in 2025.

While the SES asks about *consideration* of leaving rather than *actual* leaving behaviour, responses to this item are closely linked to subsequent attrition. When examined together with the reasons provided, this measure offers valuable insight into the challenges and concerns of students who had considered leaving in the survey year.

At both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels, international students have historically been less likely to consider leaving their current institution compared to domestic students, with a 6.0 percentage points difference for undergraduates and a 6.6 percentage points difference for postgraduate coursework students.

When comparing international and domestic students, cultural and logistic factors may influence responses as international students may be less likely to disclose sensitive issues such as considering withdrawal, possibly due to cultural norms, the financial investment involved or concerns about potential visa or enrolment implications.

Figure 18 / Proportion of students who considered early departure from institution by course level and citizenship status, 2017–25



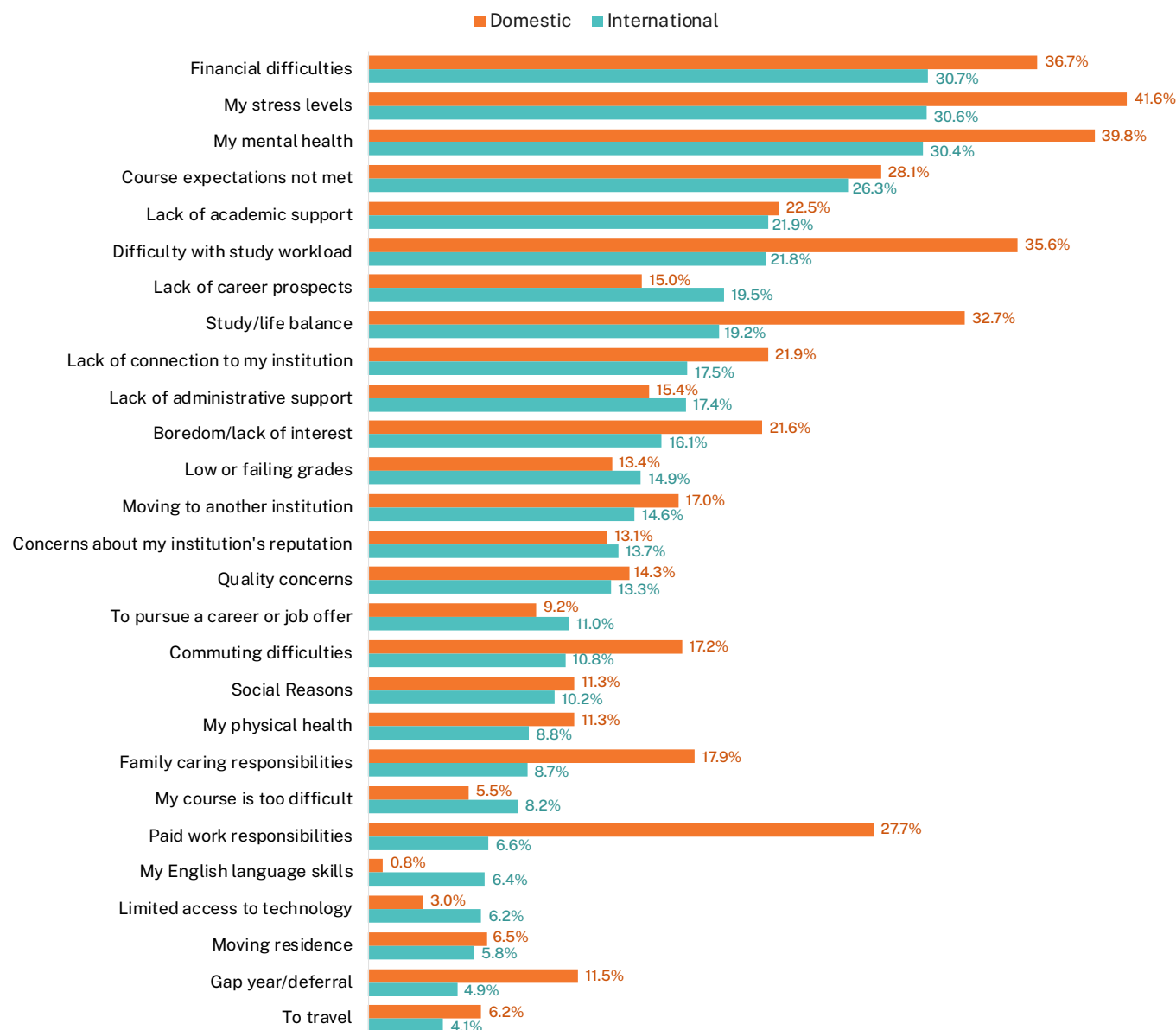
Students who reported considering leaving their institution were asked to select from a list of possible reasons for their consideration. Comparing the reasons cited by domestic and international students provides valuable insight into the distinct challenges faced by each group.

For international undergraduates, the top three reasons cited for considering leaving in 2025 were: 'financial difficulties' (30.7 per cent), 'stress levels' (30.6 per cent), and 'mental health' (30.4 per cent). Domestic undergraduates cited the same top three reasons, though at higher rates than their international peers (36.7 per cent, 41.6 per cent and 39.8 per cent respectively (**Figure 19**).

Compared to domestic students, international students were much less likely to report external factors such as 'paid work responsibilities' (27.7 per cent for domestic, 6.6 per cent for international) or 'study/life balance' (32.7 per cent for domestic, 19.2 per cent for international) as reasons to consider leaving compared to domestic undergraduates.

On the other hand, they were more likely to cite 'lack of career prospects' (15.0 per cent for domestic, 19.5 per cent for international) and 'limited access to technology' (3.0 per cent for domestic, 6.2 per cent for international) as reasons for considering leaving. These differences suggest that international students are more likely to consider leaving due to institutional or educational factors rather than external circumstances.

Figure 19 / **Reasons for considering early departure among undergraduate students by citizenship status, 2025**
(% of those who had considered leaving)

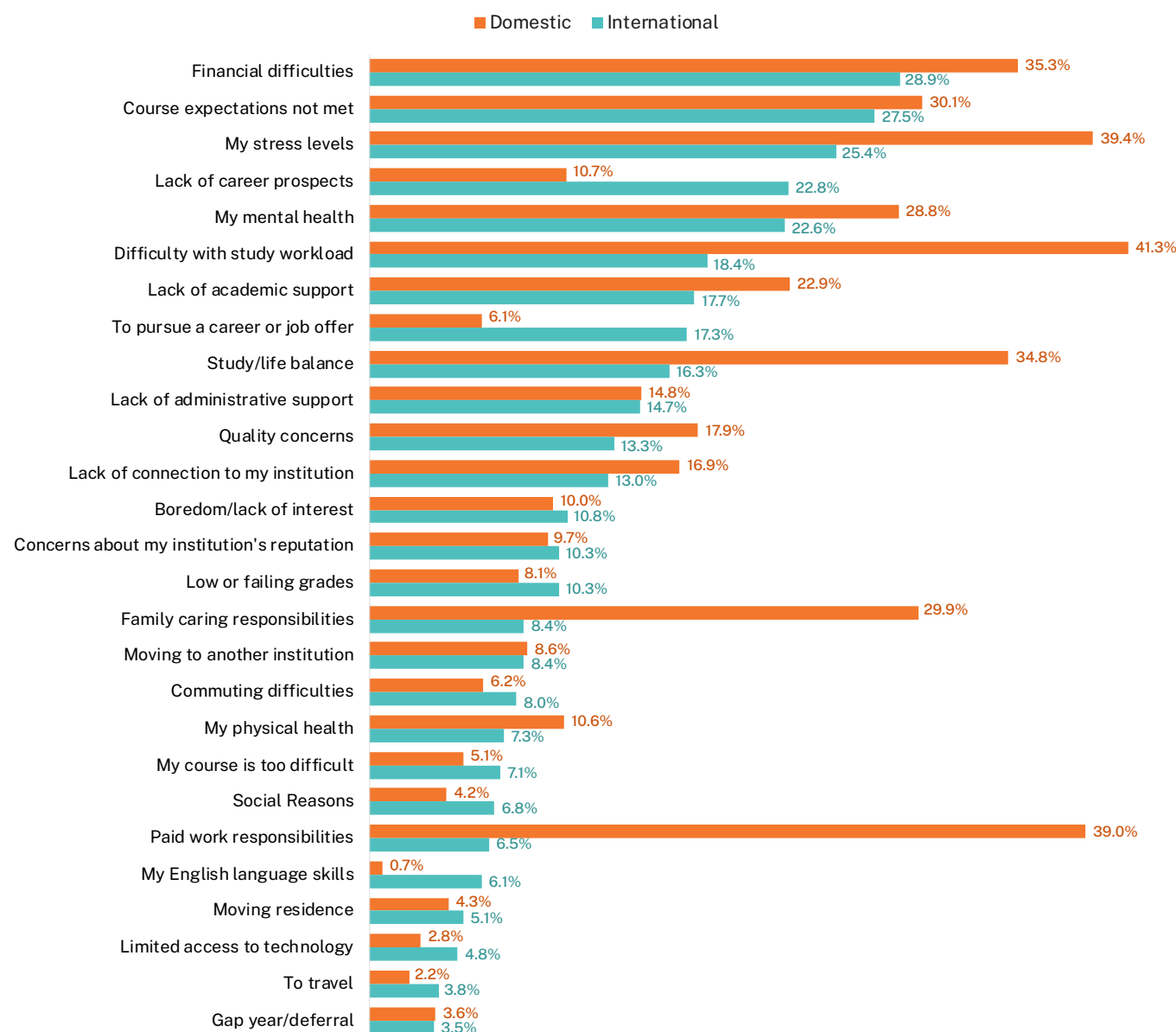


At the postgraduate coursework level, 'financial difficulties' (28.9 per cent) 'course expectations not met' (27.5 per cent), and 'stress levels' (25.4 per cent) were the most cited reasons international students considered leaving (**Figure 20**). In contrast, the top reasons for domestic students were 'difficulty with study workload' (41.3) 'stress levels' (39.4 per cent) and 'paid work responsibilities' (39.0 per cent).

Similar to observations at the undergraduate level, international postgraduate coursework students were more likely to consider leaving due to institutional or educational factors rather than external circumstances.

In particular, they were less likely to cite 'paid work responsibilities' (39.0 per cent for domestic, 6.5 per cent for international) and 'study/life balance' (34.8 per cent for domestic, 16.3 per cent for international) and more likely to cite 'lack of career prospects' (10.7 per cent for domestic, 22.8 per cent for international) as reasons for considering leaving.

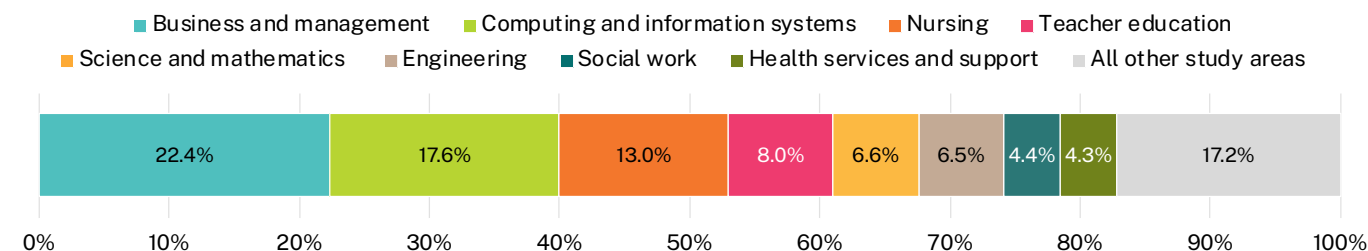
Figure 20 / **Reasons for considering early departure among postgraduate coursework students by citizenship status, 2025 (% of those who had considered leaving)**



4. Study area

This section explores international student ratings broken down by study areas. The study areas with the largest number of international undergraduate respondents were Business and management, Computing and information systems, and Nursing (Figure 21). Together, these 3 study areas accounted for over half of all international undergraduate respondents.

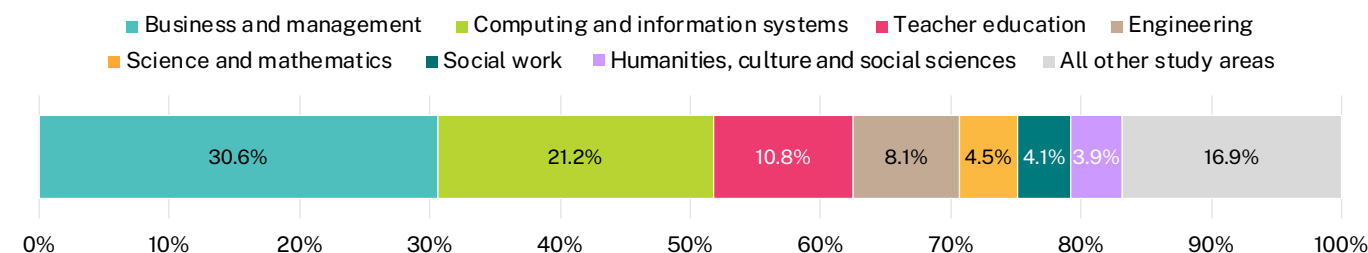
Figure 21 / International undergraduate study area profile, 2025



Note: Proportions are based on responses to the 2025 SES.

At the postgraduate coursework level, international respondents were even more concentrated. More than half of all respondents came from just two study areas: Business and management, and Computing and information systems (Figure 22).

Figure 22 / International postgraduate coursework study area profile, 2025



Note: Proportions are based on responses to the 2025 SES.

4.1 International undergraduate student experience

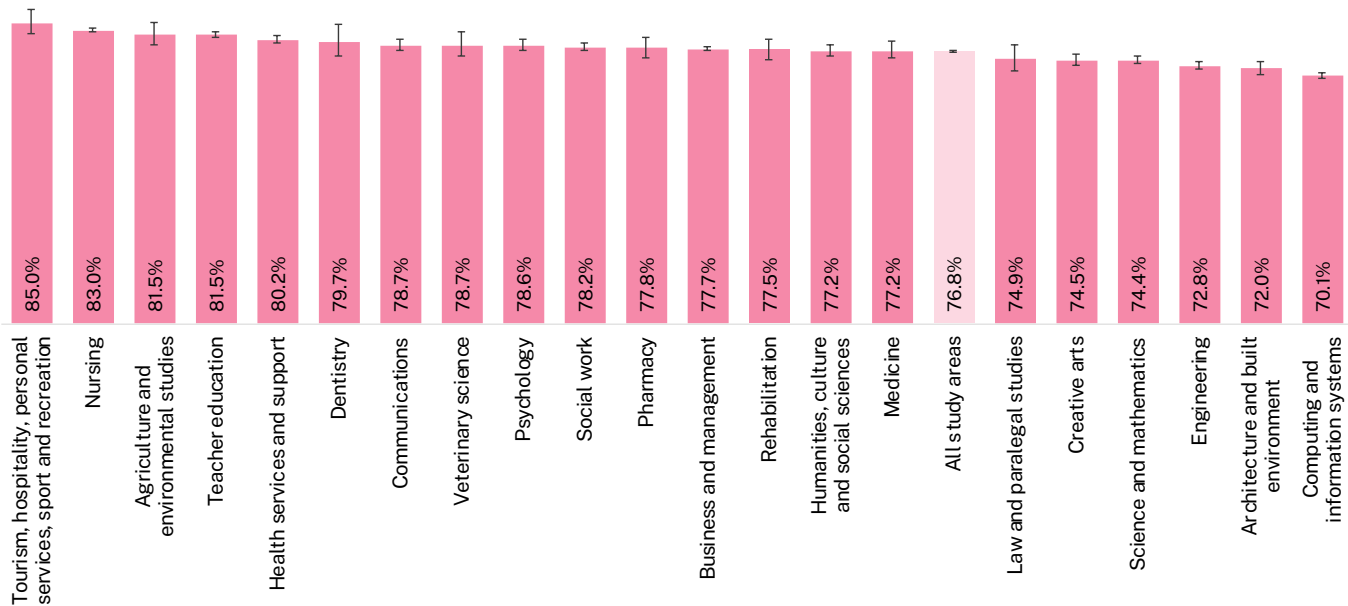
Percent positive ratings for Overall Educational Experience for international undergraduate students by study area are shown in **Figure 23**.

Students from the Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, Nursing, Agricultural and environmental studies, and Teacher education study areas had the highest ratings (81.5 per cent and above) for Overall Educational Experience.

On the other hand, students from Computing and information systems, Architecture and built environment, and Engineering had the lowest ratings (72.8 per cent and below).

The considerable difference in percent positive ratings between the highest (85.0 per cent) and lowest (70.1 per cent) study areas suggests that study areas are important context when considering ratings of Overall Educational Experience.

Figure 23 / Overall Educational Experience by study area, international undergraduate, 2025 (% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



Note: Further details on the calculation of confidence intervals are detailed in [Construction of confidence intervals in QILT surveys](#).

Table 1 shows the Overall Educational Experience percent positive ratings as well as the percent positive ratings for the five focus areas across all study areas for undergraduate international students.

At the undergraduate course level, international students from study areas such as Nursing, Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, and Teacher

education had relatively high percent positive ratings across multiple focus areas as well as a high Overall Educational Experience rating. International students from other study areas meanwhile had more selective positive ratings; for example, students from Agriculture and environmental studies had the highest percent positive ratings for Learning Resources but otherwise had close to or below average ratings for other focus areas.

Relatively high or low performance in individual focus areas do not necessarily translate into corresponding high or low ratings of Overall Educational Experience. For example, international students from Veterinary science had lower than average percent positive ratings for three of the five focus areas, however they had an Overall Educational Experience percent positive rating which was slightly higher than the average.

Table 1 / **International undergraduate student experience by study area, 2025 (% positive rating)**

	Skills Development	Peer Engagement	Teaching Quality and Engagement	Student Support and Services	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Agriculture and environmental studies	82.6	67.1	83.3	74.9	91.0	81.5
Architecture and built environment	80.9	70.9	80.9	72.7	84.3	72.0
Business and management	84.8	76.2	83.8	80.5	86.1	77.7
Communications	85.0	73.3	84.7	75.7	89.3	78.7
Computing and information systems	80.8	74.4	79.2	77.5	81.4	70.1
Creative arts	82.9	67.7	84.6	73.3	84.4	74.5
Dentistry	88.7	70.3	83.8	72.5	82.6	79.7
Engineering	83.2	71.7	79.4	75.6	85.8	72.8
Health services and support	86.3	72.8	86.8	80.8	87.0	80.2
Humanities, culture and social sciences	82.4	65.5	83.2	74.3	88.4	77.2
Law and paralegal studies	86.8	59.0	83.4	76.4	82.8	74.9
Medicine	90.3	78.1	82.1	76.5	79.5	77.2

Table 1 / International undergraduate student experience by study area, 2025 (% positive rating)

(continued)

	Skills Development	Peer Engagement	Teaching Quality and Engagement	Student Support and Services	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Nursing	90.2	75.5	86.5	84.5	88.6	83.0
Pharmacy	86.2	69.0	82.6	75.6	81.5	77.8
Psychology	86.5	64.4	84.5	76.8	87.8	78.6
Rehabilitation	85.4	66.6	79.8	73.4	84.1	77.5
Science and mathematics	81.6	64.3	81.9	75.3	88.9	74.4
Social work	90.1	83.5	86.3	76.3	73.4	78.2
Teacher education	90.0	83.2	85.8	77.8	76.7	81.5
Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation	90.5	81.7	88.3	86.4	82.7	85.0
Veterinary science	82.9	72.0	79.1	63.0	79.2	78.7
All study areas	85.1	74.2	83.3	78.5	84.5	76.8

Note: Cells are shaded to indicate relative position within each focus area, with green shading indicating results above the national average and orange shading indicating results below the national average.

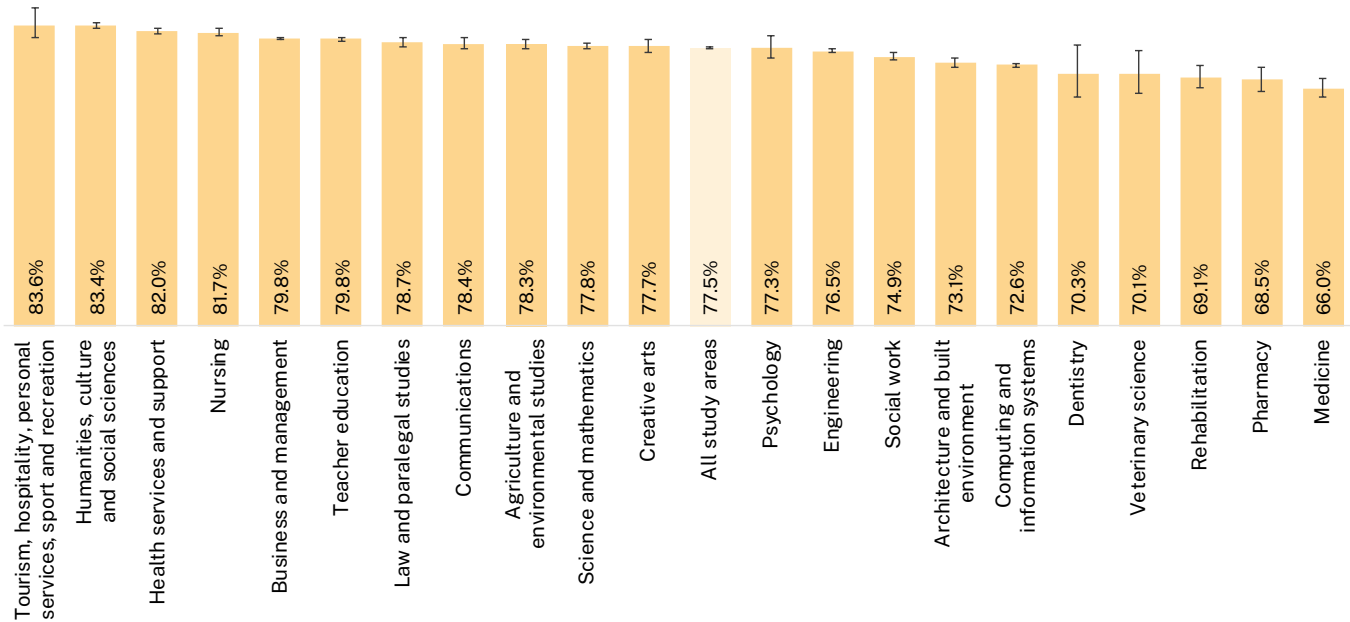
4.2 International postgraduate coursework students

Percent positive ratings for Overall Educational Experience for international postgraduate coursework students by study area in **Figure 24**.

Students from Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation, Humanities, culture and social sciences and Health services and support had the highest ratings (82.0 per cent and above), while students from Medicine, Pharmacy and Rehabilitation had the lowest ratings (69.1 per cent and below).

The difference between highest (83.6 per cent) and lowest (66.0 per cent) ratings was 17.6 percentage points, slightly higher than the difference at undergraduate level.

Figure 24 / Overall Educational Experience by study area, international postgraduate coursework, 2025 (% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



Note: Further details on the calculation of confidence intervals are detailed in [Construction of confidence intervals in QILT surveys](#).

Table 2 shows the Overall Educational Experience percent positive ratings as well as the percent positive ratings for the five focus areas across all study areas.

At postgraduate coursework level, students from Dentistry and Medicine have relatively low ratings across multiple focus areas as well as a low Overall Educational

Experience rating. Note that focus area ratings for postgraduate students do not necessarily follow the same trends as undergraduate students. For example, undergraduate students from Medicine had positive ratings for Skills Development (90.3 per cent) above the average, while postgraduate students from the same

study area had positive ratings for Skills Development (82.7 per cent) below the average, highlighting that the student experience across course levels for the same study area can be quite distinct.

Table 2 / **International postgraduate coursework student experience by study area, 2025 (% positive rating)**

	Skills Development	Peer Engagement	Teaching Quality and Engagement	Student Support and Services	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Agriculture and environmental studies	88.8	78.5	88.1	83.0	93.4	78.3
Architecture and built environment	86.0	78.9	83.2	75.1	85.4	73.1
Business and management	87.8	81.5	86.7	83.9	88.8	79.8
Communications	87.4	80.1	87.1	78.4	92.2	78.4
Computing and information systems	83.0	76.7	80.5	79.9	86.5	72.6
Creative arts	86.0	78.1	88.1	75.0	88.0	77.7
Dentistry	86.3	63.5	71.2	50.8	70.6	70.3
Engineering	86.9	78.6	85.5	82.7	92.5	76.5
Health services and support	89.5	75.2	88.7	83.7	89.3	82.0
Humanities, culture and social sciences	90.1	78.4	91.2	83.9	93.1	83.4
Law and paralegal studies	84.2	66.5	85.3	77.9	88.7	78.7
Medicine	82.7	74.4	66.9	61.5	69.8	66.0

Table 2 / International postgraduate coursework student experience by study area, 2025 (% positive rating)

(continued)

	Skills Development	Peer Engagement	Teaching Quality and Engagement	Student Support and Services	Learning Resources	Overall Educational Experience
Nursing	87.9	72.9	85.5	83.5	90.0	81.7
Pharmacy	88.6	84.4	80.9	81.7	87.1	68.5
Psychology	94.6	72.5	88.0	78.1	84.9	77.3
Rehabilitation	87.9	76.1	78.7	67.6	83.2	69.1
Science and mathematics	86.4	72.7	85.7	82.4	92.4	77.8
Social work	88.4	82.5	82.4	76.3	81.6	74.9
Teacher education	88.2	74.1	85.8	78.9	84.2	79.8
Tourism, hospitality, personal services, sport and recreation	86.9	76.7	88.7	75.0	89.2	83.6
Veterinary science	91.9	75.0	78.2	50.0	77.5	70.1
All study areas	86.7	78.0	84.9	81.2	88.1	77.5

Note: Cells are shaded to indicate relative position within each focus area, with green shading indicating results above the national average and orange shading indicating results below the national average.

5. Institutional comparisons

5.1 Institution type

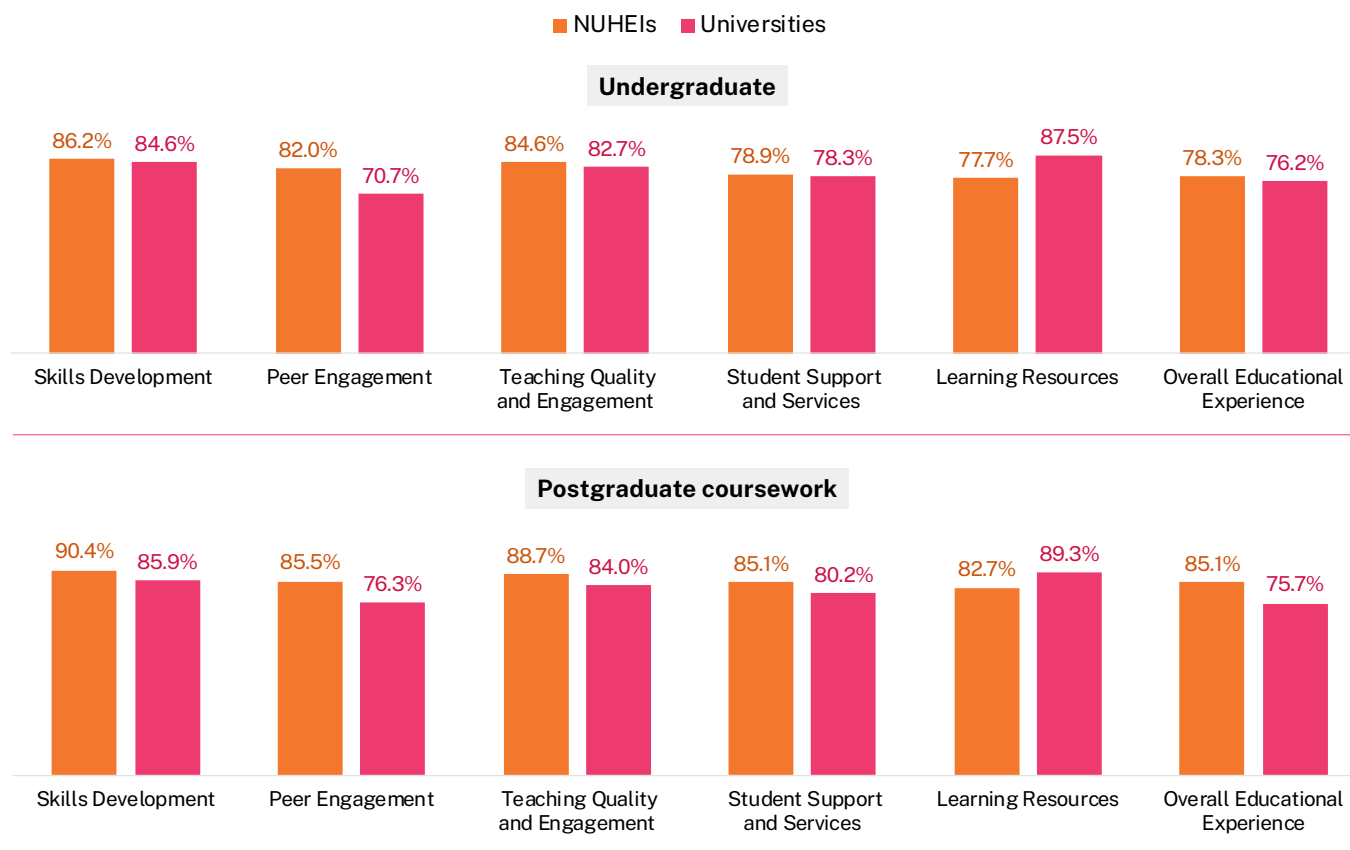
In 2025, 68.7 per cent of undergraduate respondents and 80.9 per cent of postgraduate coursework respondents to the SES were enrolled in courses at universities, while 31.3 per cent of undergraduates and 19.1 per cent of postgraduate coursework respondents were studying at a non-university higher education institution (NUHEI).¹⁰

In 2025, international students at NUHEIs generally rated their Overall Educational Experience and most focus areas more positively than those at universities, at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels, with the exception of Learning Resources.

Among undergraduate students, ratings for Overall Educational Experience were comparable between NUHEIs and universities differing by only 2.1 percentage points (see **Figure 25**). However, postgraduate coursework students at NUHEIs rated their experience 9.4 percentage points higher than their university counterparts.

It is important to note that differences in course offerings, study area profiles, and the composition of the international student population, including source countries, can influence these results.

Figure 25 / International student experience by institution type and course level, 2025 (% positive rating)



Note: Universities account for the majority of international student respondents, with NUHEIs representing 31.3 per cent of undergraduate and 19.1 per cent of postgraduate coursework students.

¹⁰ The SES has included non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs) since 2015. The number of NUHEIs participating in the SES has been increasing and in 2025, NUHEIs accounted for 110 of the 153 registered institutions that participated.

5.2 Comparative institution outcomes

Student ratings vary across institutions. Note that factors beyond the quality of teaching, resources/facilities and services provided by the institution can affect results for institutions. These include study area offerings, study mode and the composition of the student population.

To assist interpretation of results, 90 per cent confidence intervals are included in the figures that follow, which indicate the confidence intervals for the survey estimates. Note that where confidence intervals for institution estimates overlap, it cannot be inferred that there is or is not a significant difference in outcomes in a statistical sense¹¹.

Notwithstanding differences in course offerings, modes of study and student populations, it appears there is some differentiation among institutions, with some achieving higher ratings of Overall Educational Experience than others.

The following sections present institution-level ratings of Overall Educational Experience by course level. Focus area results by institution are available in supplementary tables on the QILT website.

5.2.1 Universities

The Overall Educational Experience ratings for international undergraduate students at the institutional level have continued to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

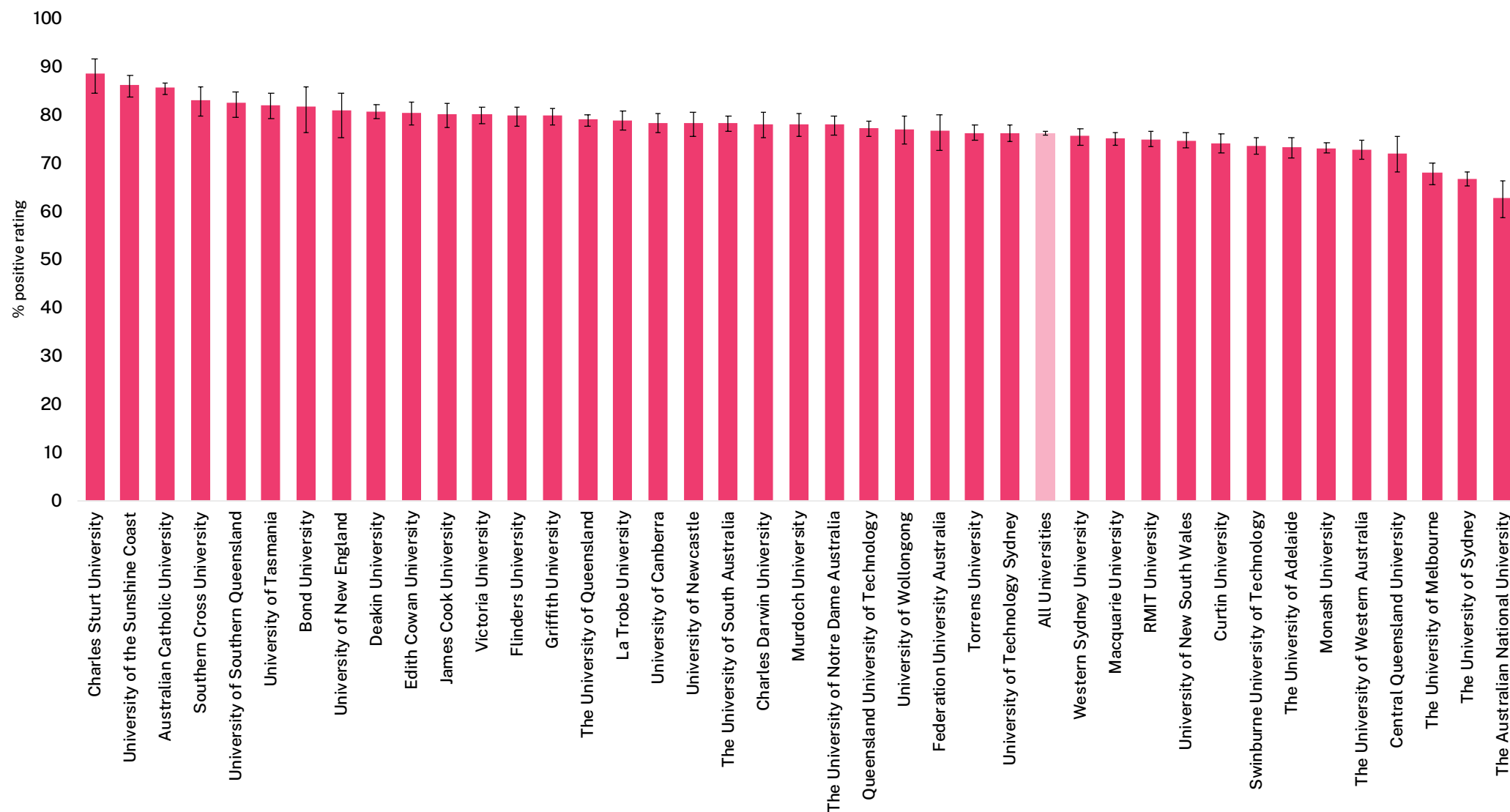
There was a 26.0 percentage point gap between the highest and lowest scoring universities in 2025. As shown in **Figure 26**, the universities with the highest positive ratings included Charles Sturt University, University of the Sunshine Coast and Australian Catholic University.

At the lower end, The University of Melbourne, The University of Sydney and The Australian National University had the lowest ratings for Overall Educational Experience by undergraduate students.

At the postgraduate coursework level, the University of Southern Queensland, James Cook University and Southern Cross University had the highest rating for Overall Educational Experience in 2025, while the University of Notre Dame Australia had the lowest positive rating.

¹¹ The calculation of confidence intervals is detailed in [Construction of confidence intervals in QILT surveys](#). Confidence intervals may be wider where the number of survey responses for a given institution is relatively small. Where confidence intervals for institution estimates do not overlap, this broadly implies the difference in labour market outcomes is statistically significant. Where confidence intervals overlap it cannot be inferred that the difference either is, or is not, statistically significant.

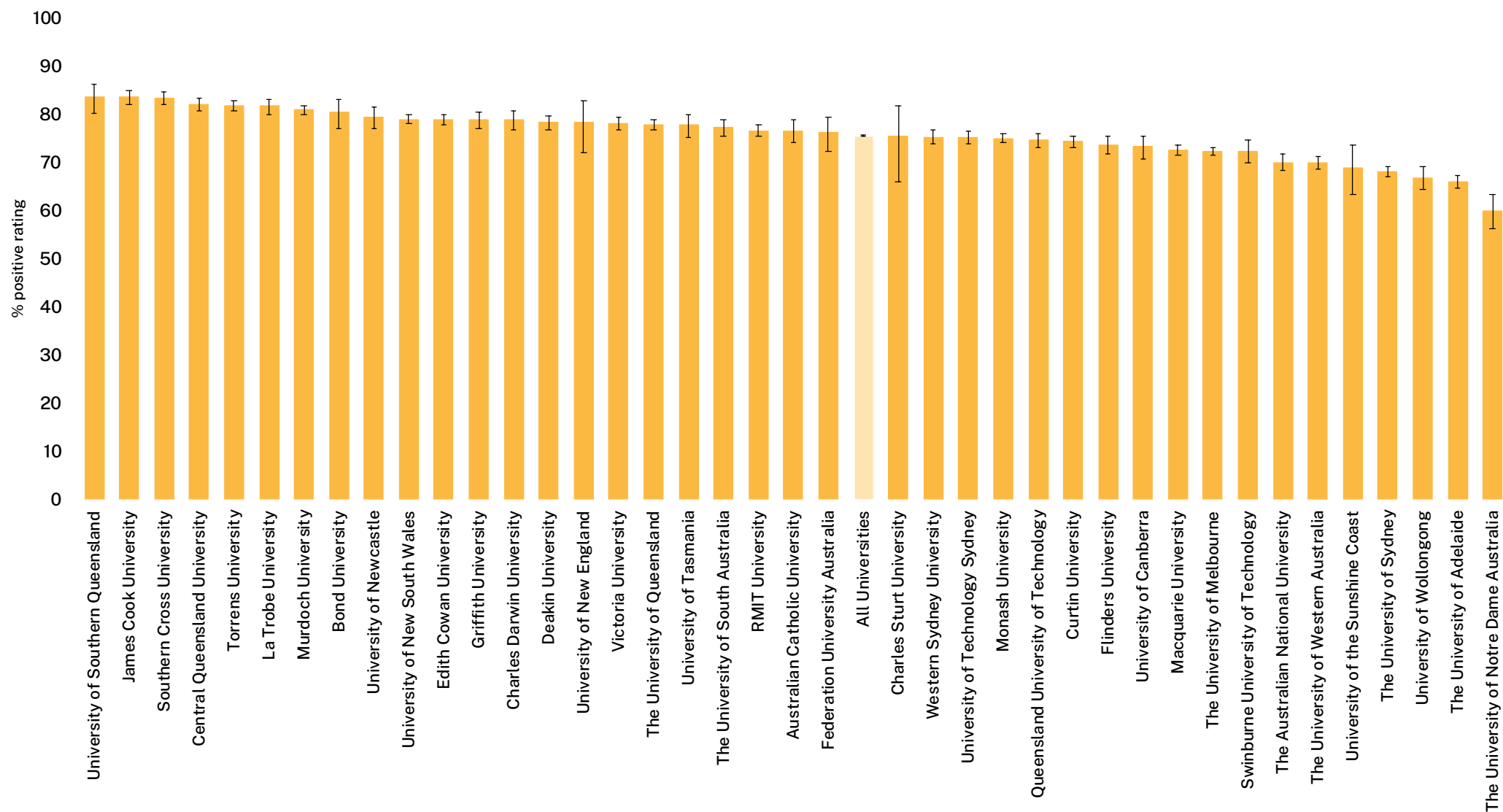
Figure 26 / Overall Educational Experience for international undergraduate university students, 2025 (% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



Note: Only institutions with sufficient data (i.e. $n \geq 25$) are presented in this figure. For the complete table, refer to worksheet QOE_UG_UNI_1Y_INST_FIG in the 2025 SES International Tables on the QILT website.

Note: As of January 2026, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia have merged to form Adelaide University. Data for the 2025 SES were collected when the institutions operated separately as the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia.

Figure 27 / Overall Educational Experience for international postgraduate coursework university students, 2025 (% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



Note: Only institutions with sufficient data (i.e. $n \geq 25$) are presented in this figure. For the complete table, refer to worksheet QOE_PGC_UNI_1Y_INST_FIG in the 2025 SES International Tables on the QILT website.

Note: As of January 2026, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia have merged to form Adelaide University. Data for the 2025 SES were collected when the institutions operated separately as the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia.

5.2.2 Non-university higher education institutions (NUHEIs)

Since international student enrolments at individual NUHEIs tend to be much smaller than at universities, the survey data shown in **Figure 28** and **Figure 29** is based on data pooled across 2 survey years. This approach, also used on the ComparED website, ensures that more institutions have sufficient data for reporting. To maintain data quality, results based on fewer than 25 responses have not been published.

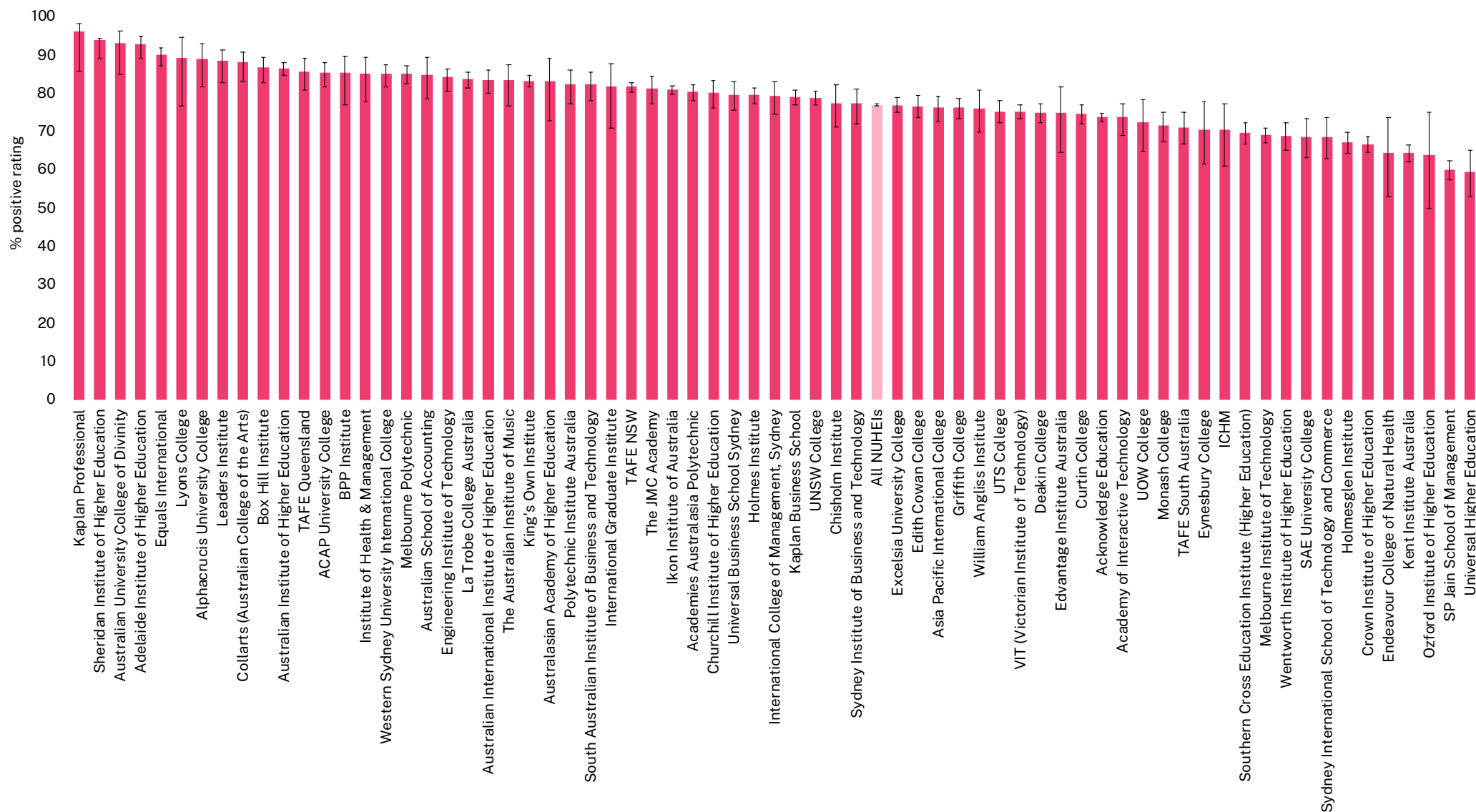
Despite pooling data across two survey years, the confidence intervals for some NUHEIs remain wide. Nonetheless, there are NUHEIs where students rated their Overall Educational Experience significantly higher than in other institutions.

The same caveats about interpreting results at the institution level apply. This is even more important among NUHEIs because of the greater specialisation in course offerings by level of education and study area than among universities.

In 2024-2025, 5 NUHEIs had over 90 per cent of undergraduate students rate their Overall Educational Experience positively and 4 NUHEIs had over 90 per cent of postgraduate coursework students rate their Overall Educational Experience positively.

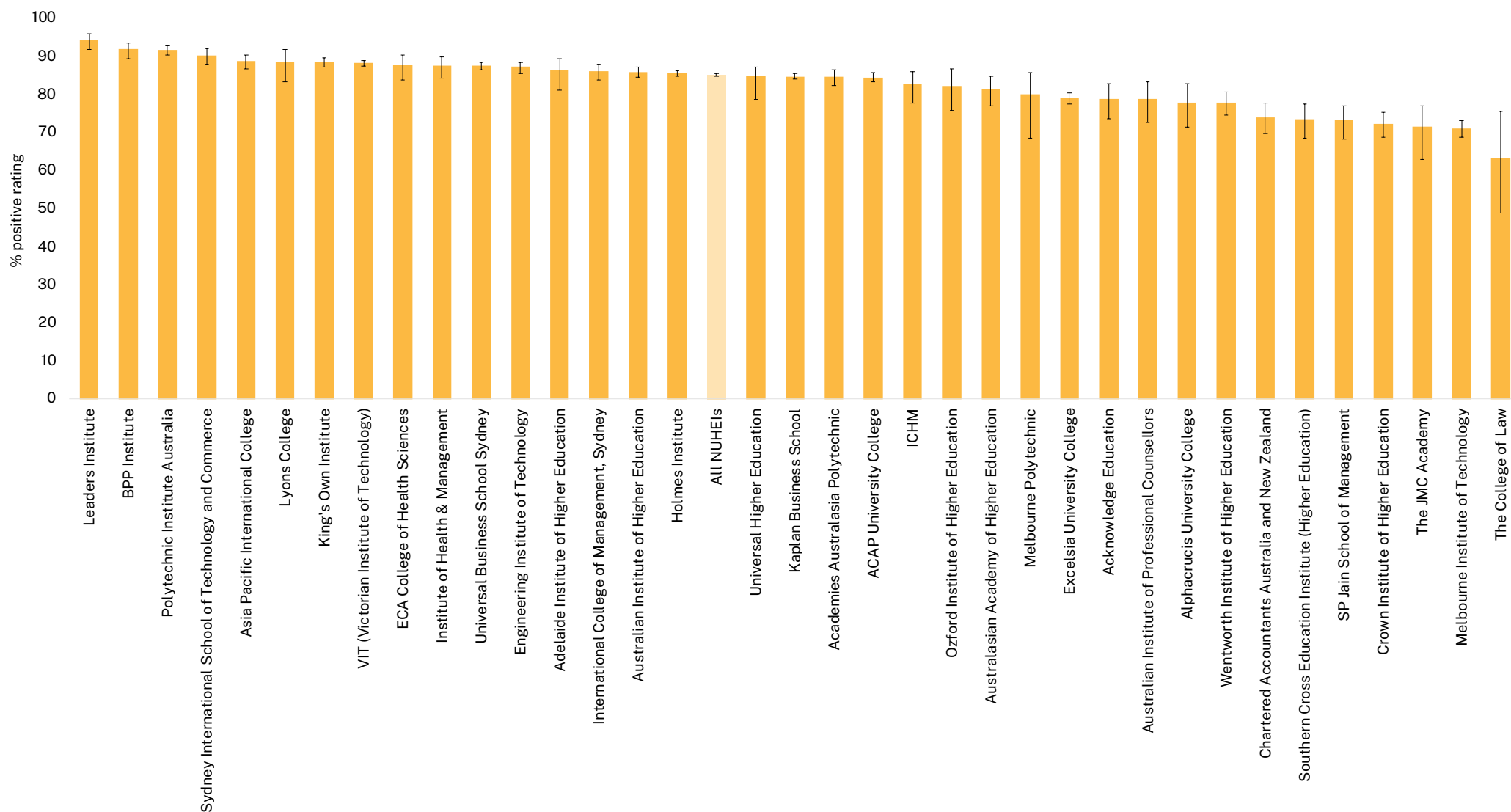


Figure 28 / **Overall Educational Experience for international undergraduate non-university higher education institution (NUHEI) students, pooled 2024-2025**
(% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



Note: Only institutions with sufficient data (i.e. n≥25) are presented in this figure. For the complete table, refer to worksheet QOE_UG_NUHEI_2YP_INST_FIG in the 2025 SES International Tables on the QILT website.

Figure 29 / **Overall Educational Experience for international postgraduate coursework non-university higher education institution (NUHEI) students, pooled 2024-2025**
(% positive rating, with 90 per cent confidence intervals)



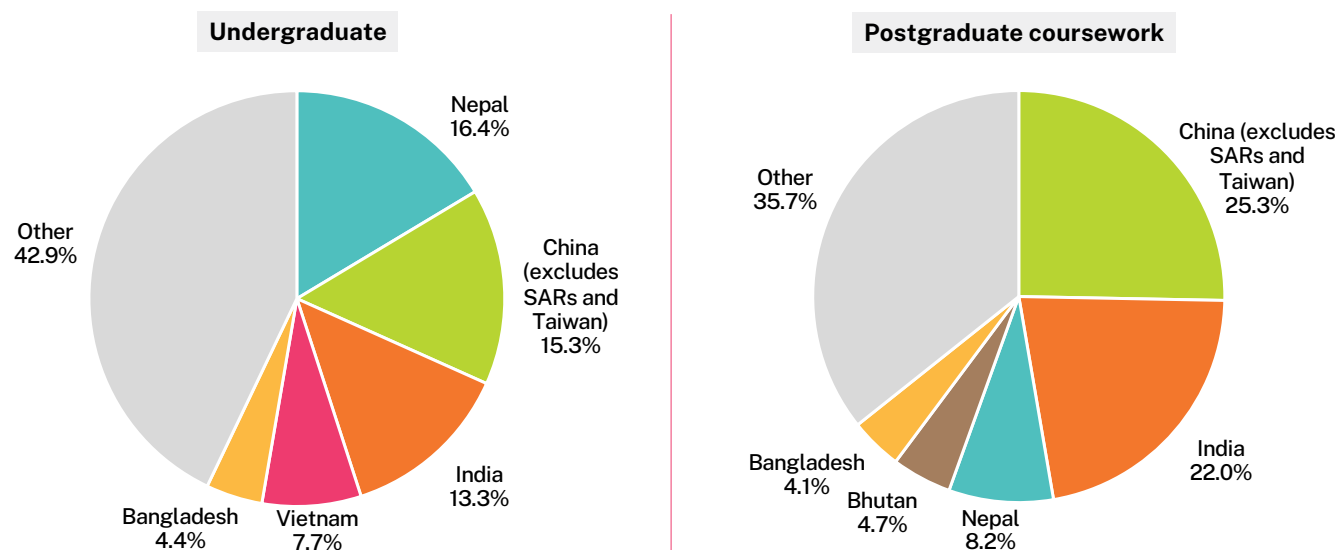
Note: Only institutions with sufficient data (i.e. $n \geq 25$) are presented in this figure. For the complete table, refer to worksheet QOE_UG_NUHEI_2YP_INST_FIG in the 2025 SES International Tables on the QILT website.

6. Source country

This section presents international student experience results broken down by students' source country and course level. In this report, source country is defined as the country of permanent residence of a student before commencing their studies in Australia.

Overall, the top source countries for international students, were China (excludes SARs and Taiwan), India and Nepal (**Figure 30**). However, the mix of source countries varied across study levels.

Figure 30 / **Top 5 source countries for international students by course level, based on responses to the 2025 SES**



6.1 Undergraduate

Amongst the top 5 source countries, students from India and Nepal rated their Overall Educational Experience highest (80.7 and 78.9 per cent respectively) and had higher ratings than the average across all international students (76.8 per cent). Meanwhile, China (excludes SARs and Taiwan), Vietnam and Bangladesh all had ratings below the international average (71.7 to 74.1 per cent).

The finding that Nepal and India have higher ratings of Overall Educational Experience may be partly explained by the higher proportion of vocational students in Nursing and Teacher education compared to the other top 5 countries (**Figure 32**). These study areas had relatively high Overall Educational Experience ratings at the undergraduate level (refer to **Section 4.1**).

Notably, despite having relatively low focus area ratings and Overall Educational Experience ratings, students from China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) had the highest positive percent rating for the Learning Resources focus area (89.2 per cent), 4.7 percentage points above the international average of 84.5 per cent.

While all international students are required to attend classes on-campus, there were notable differences in Peer Engagement ratings across the various source countries. Students from Nepal and India were much more likely (83.0 per cent and 81.4 per cent respectively) to report a positive Peer Engagement rating compared to the international average (74.2 per cent).

In contrast, students from China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) were less likely to report positive Peer Engagement ratings (67.2 per cent) compared to the international average. This may suggest variation in the levels of social integration in higher education among international students from different countries. Higher education institutions may benefit from addressing these differences with targeted institutional support.

Figure 31 / **International undergraduate educational experience and focus areas by source country, 2025**
(% positive rating)

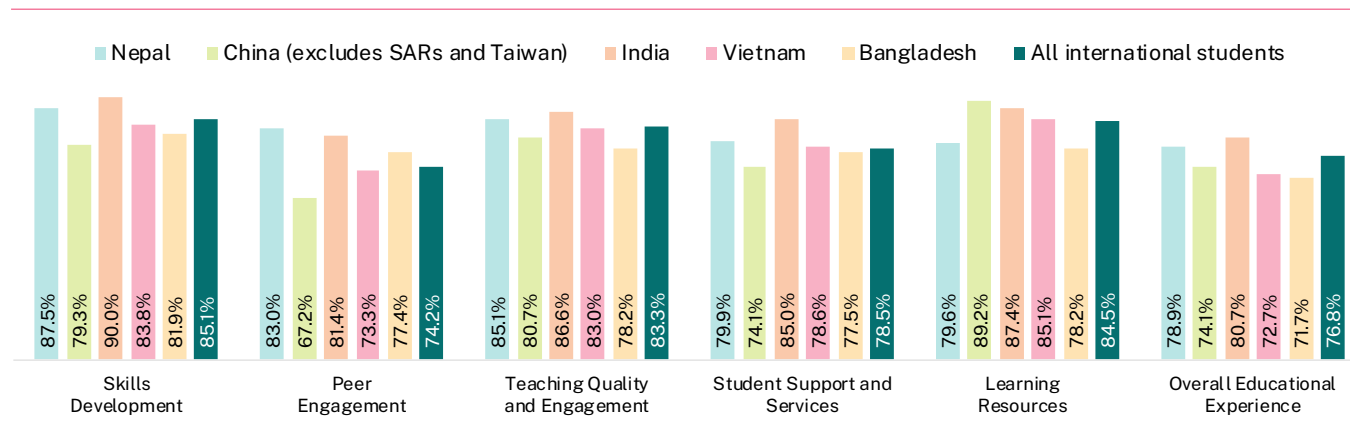
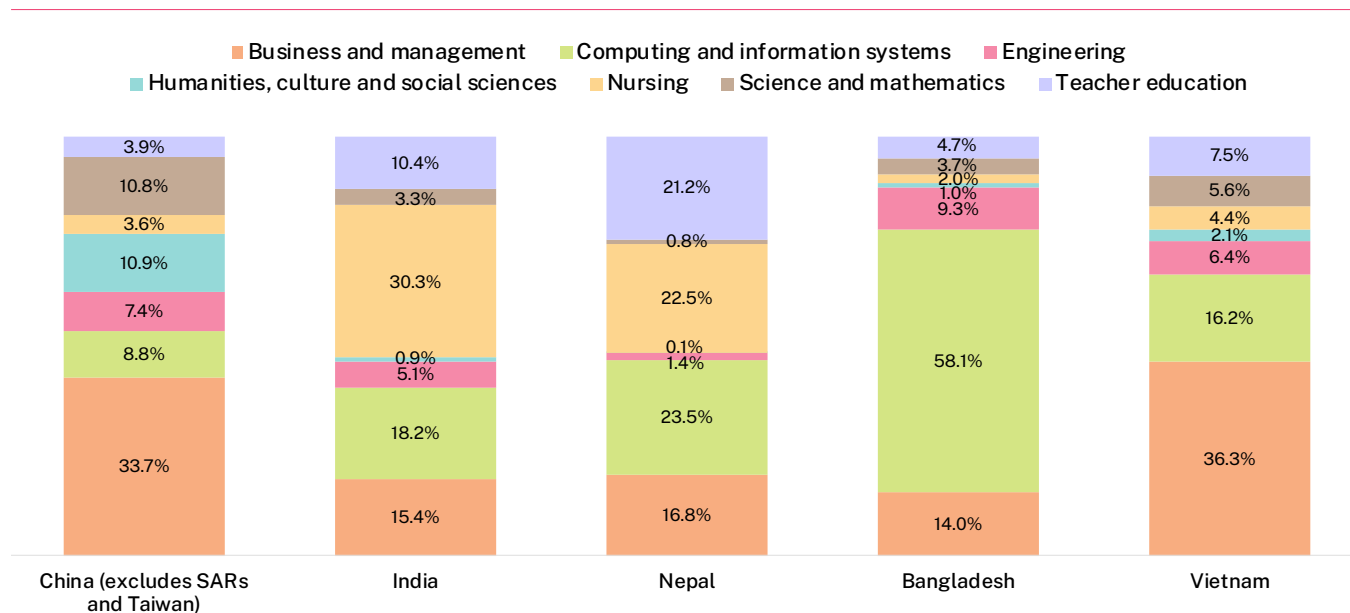


Figure 32 / **Key study areas by top 5 source countries based on international undergraduate responses to the 2025 SES**



6.2 Postgraduate coursework

Among the top 5 source countries at the postgraduate coursework level, students from Nepal, India and Bhutan rated their Overall Educational Experience highest (from 79.4 to 82.6 per cent) and had higher ratings than the average across all international students (77.5 per cent). Meanwhile China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) and Bangladesh had ratings below the international average (73.4 per cent for both countries) (Figure 33).

At the postgraduate coursework level, study area appears to play less of a role in the Overall Educational Experience across different source countries, with the most common study areas across all top 5 source countries being Business and management and Computing and information systems.

There is an exception for Bhutan, whose students have a relatively higher proportion of students enrolled in Humanities, culture and social sciences, which may in part explain their higher overall ratings compared to the average and the other top 5 source countries (Figure 34).

Figure 33 / International postgraduate coursework educational experience and focus areas by source country, 2025 (% positive rating)

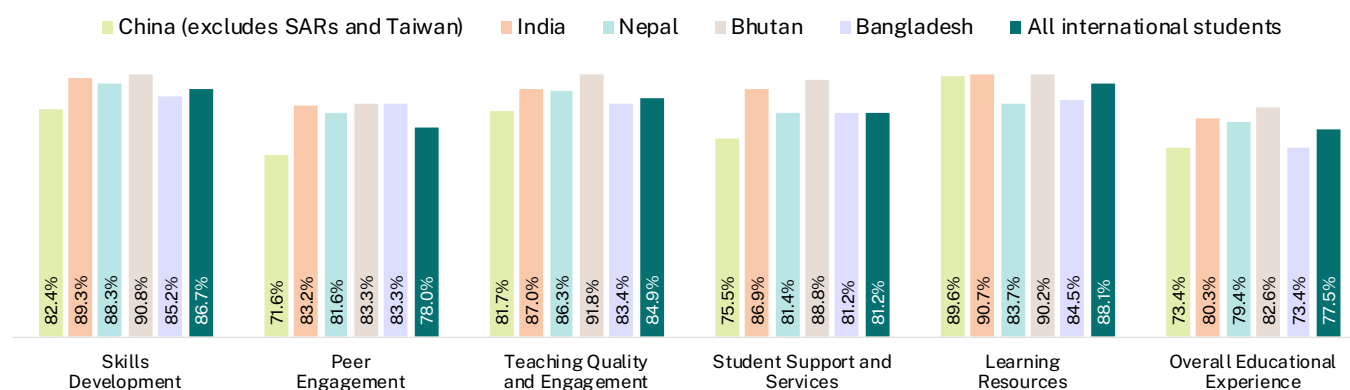
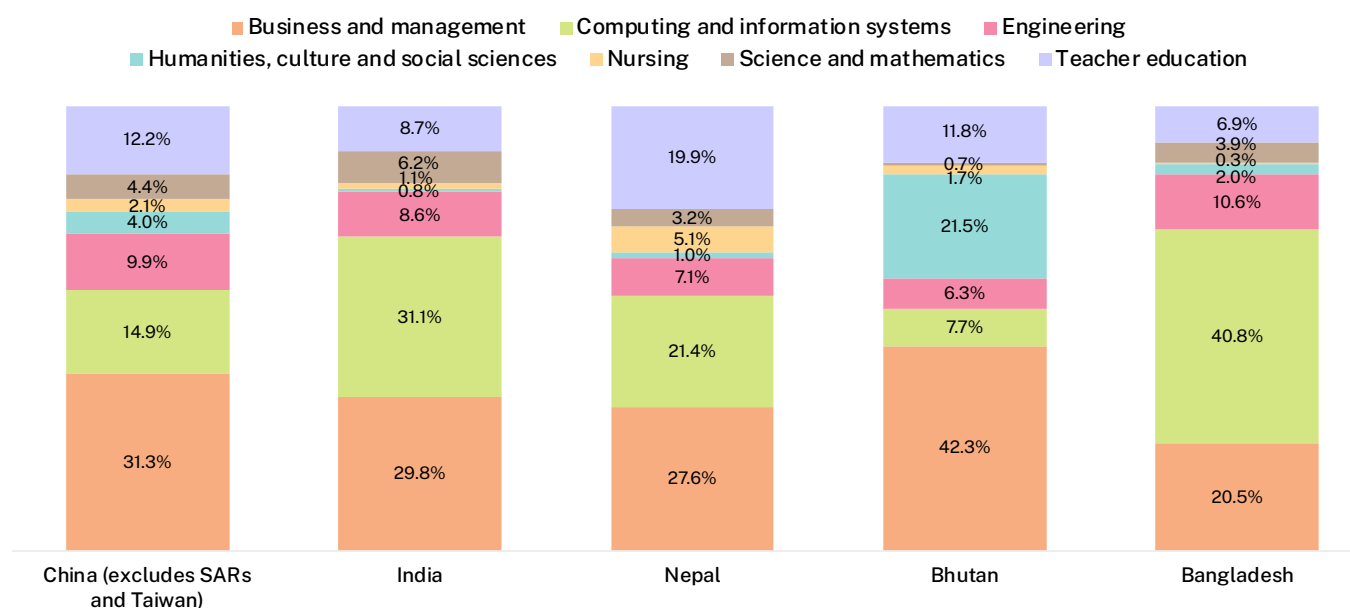


Figure 34 / Key study areas by top 5 source countries based on international postgraduate coursework responses to the 2025 SES



7. The living experience of international students in Australia

This section explores the living experience of international students in Australia and therefore excludes responses from those who were located overseas at the time of the survey.

7.1 Overall living experience

International students at both levels of study generally rate their overall living experience in Australia very positively, and these ratings have remained relatively stable since 2022.

As shown in **Figure 35**, 93.9 per cent of international undergraduates and 93.7 per cent of international postgraduate coursework students rated their overall living experience in Australia positively in 2025.

Figure 36 highlights how international students rated different aspects of their living experience in Australia in 2025. The highest-rated aspects at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels were 'personal safety on campus' (97.7 per cent and 97.9 per cent respectively) and 'improving English skills' (96.0 per cent and 93.9 per cent respectively).

International undergraduates and postgraduate coursework students tend to rate the various aspects of living in Australia similarly, with notable differences in ratings for 'work experience' and 'employment while studying', which postgraduate coursework students rated 8.6 and 4.5 percentage points lower than undergraduate students. The gap in ratings for these two aspects of the international student living experience may reflect the higher expectations and greater challenges faced by postgraduate students in finding meaningful work opportunities while studying.

Figure 35 / International student overall living experience by course level, 2020-25 (% positive rating)

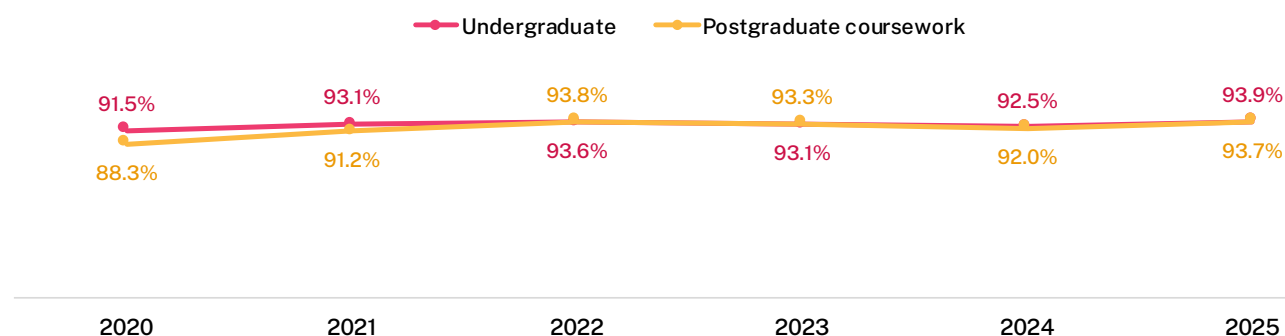


Figure 36 / International student living experience by course level, 2025 (% positive rating)

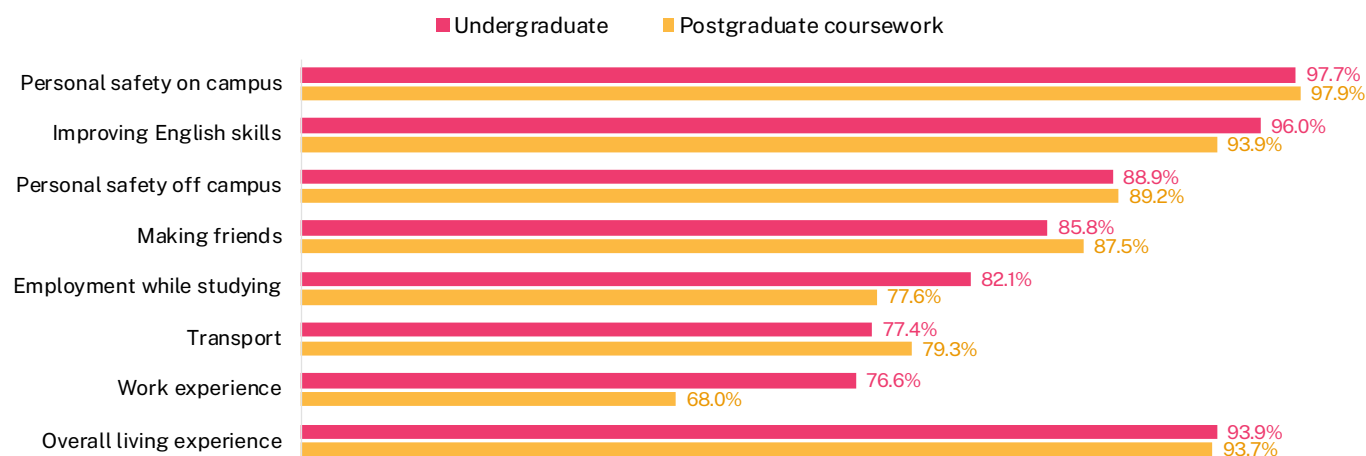
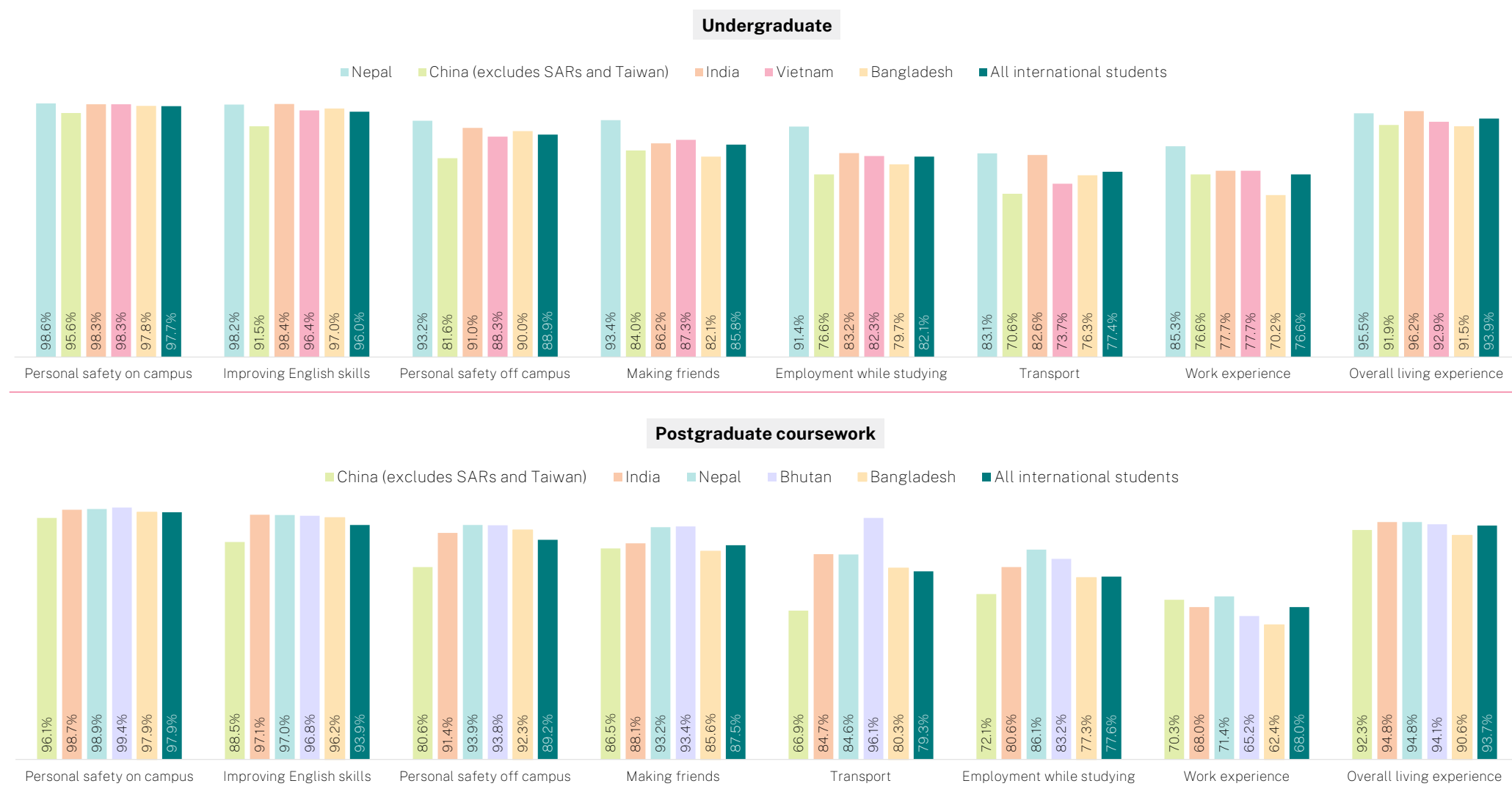


Figure 37 presents ratings for overall living experience for undergraduate students from the top 5 source countries, focusing on various aspects of living in Australia. Although overall satisfaction with living in Australia was high across all countries, there were noticeable differences in specific aspects. For example, at both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels, students from Nepal rated all aspects of their living experience as higher than the international average, and were especially positive about employment while studying, gaining work experience in their field and making friends—suggesting a more positive integration into both academic and social life in Australia.

Figure 37 / International student living experience by course level and source country, 2025 (% positive rating)



7.2 Accommodation experience

Similar to overall living experience, international students generally rate satisfaction with their accommodation in Australia very positively, and this continued in 2025 with 91.3 per cent of undergraduates and 91.8 per cent of postgraduate coursework students rating this aspect positively.

As shown in **Table 3**, in 2025, over half of international students lived in privately rented accommodation (such as house, flat, room, or apartment) at both undergraduate (53.9 per cent) and postgraduate coursework (66.7 per cent) levels.

The highest positive ratings for living arrangements came from students living with family, friends, or relatives in their accommodation (94.2 per cent and 94.8 per cent) while the lowest ratings were reported for private halls of residence for undergraduate students (84.7 per cent) and student house or flats controlled by university for postgraduate coursework students (87.3 per cent).

Figure 38 / International student accommodation experience, 2020-25 (% positive rating)

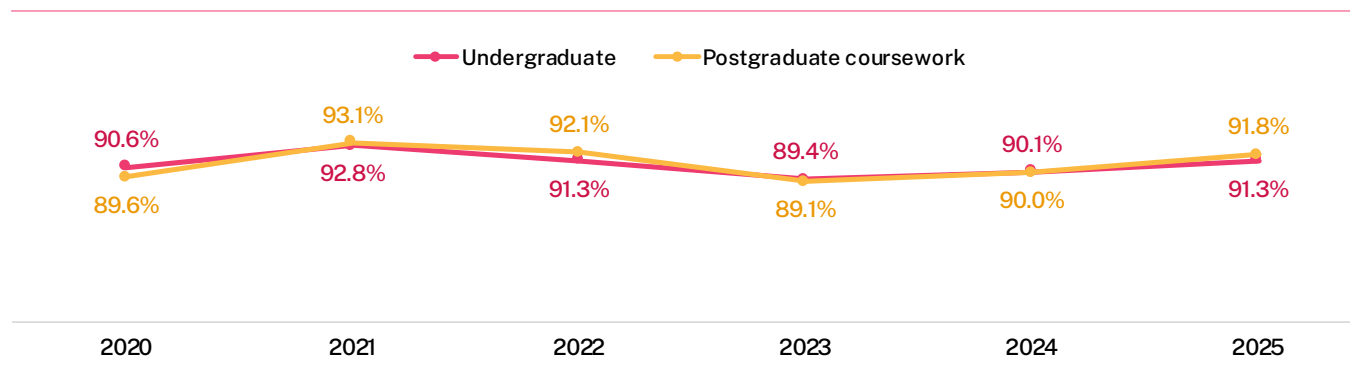


Table 3 / International student living arrangements and positive ratings by course level, 2025 (%)

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate coursework	
	% of students living in accommodation type	% positive rating of current living arrangements	% of students living in accommodation type	% positive rating of current living arrangements
Private rented house/flat/room	53.9	91.2	66.7	91.7
With friends or relatives in their accommodation	20.8	94.2	15.5	94.8
University or college halls of residence	6.3	90.1	3.9	91.6
Private halls or student hostel	5.4	84.7	5.2	87.7
Student house or flat controlled by university	4.9	86.6	3.6	87.3
Homestay with a family not related to you	4.6	90.6	3.9	89.8
Living with parents	3.5	94.3	0.9	94.3
Other	0.5	92.7	0.3	94.0

Privately rented houses, flats or rooms were the most common types of accommodation among international undergraduate respondents across the top five source countries in 2025 (**Figure 39**). Notably, undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students from China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) were much less likely to live with friends or relatives (7.4 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively) compared to the international average (20.8 per cent and 15.5 per cent respectively) and more likely to live in purpose-built accommodation (26.5 per cent and 23.5 per cent respectively) such as private halls or student hostels, university or college halls of residence, or student housing controlled by universities compared to the international average (16.6 per cent and 12.7 per cent respectively).

Figure 39 / **International undergraduate student accommodation arrangements by source country, 2025**

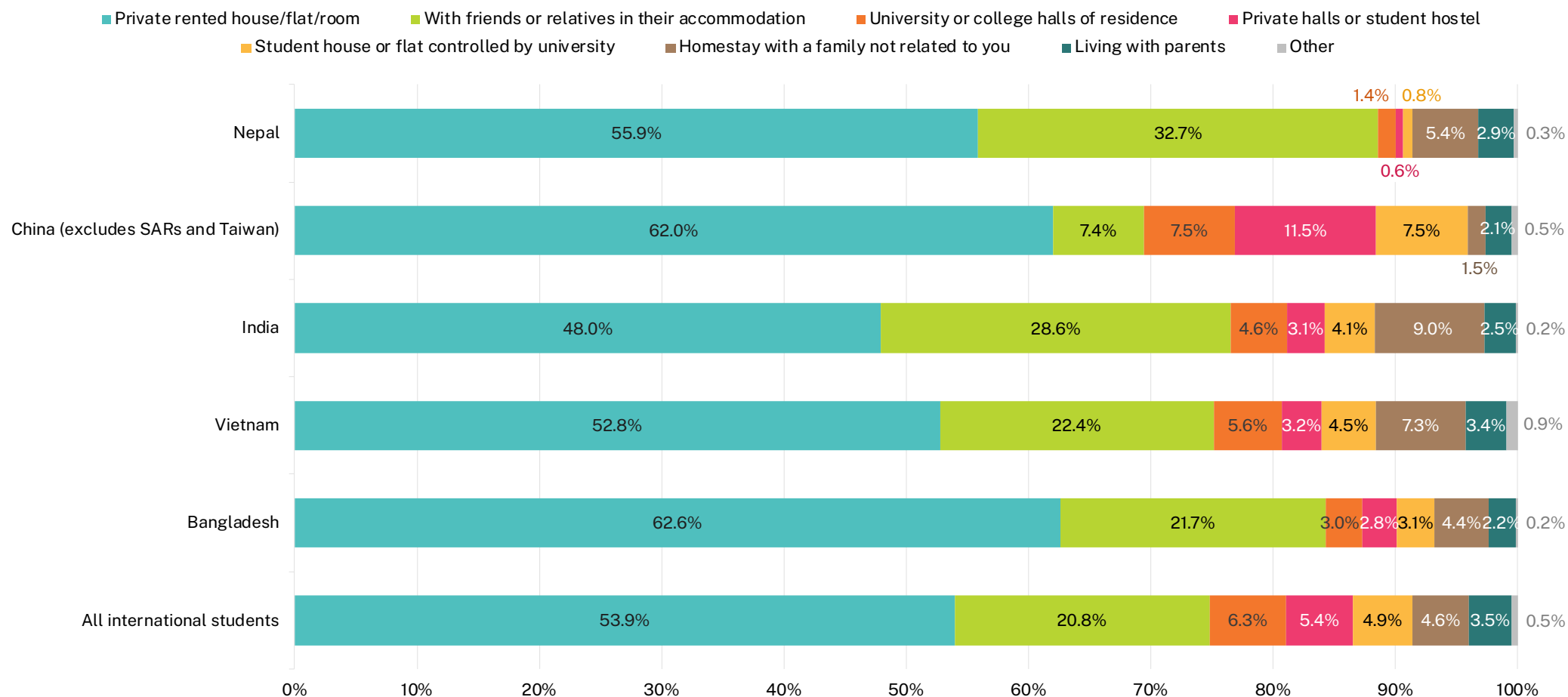
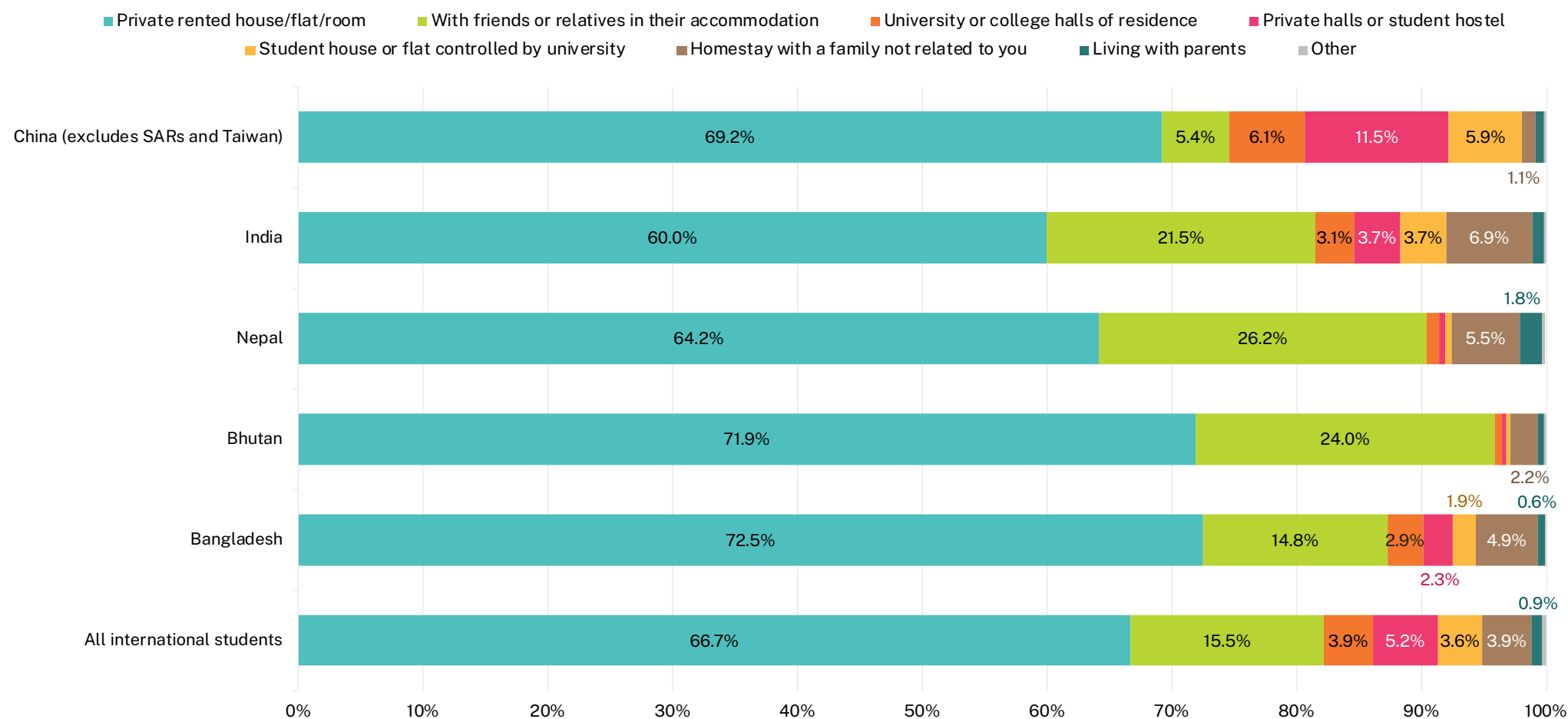


Figure 40 / International postgraduate coursework student accommodation arrangements by source country, 2025



7.3 Use of agents

International education agents specialise in helping prospective international students navigate institutional enrolment, visa application processes and other factors relating to studying and living in Australia. Understanding how students engaged with agents, how they found them, and the quality of information provided by agents helps provide a picture of the broader infrastructure of support for international students.

As shown in **Figure 41**, the majority of international students used an agent to assist with their ‘visa application’ (83.6 per cent to 86.7 per cent), or for ‘enrolment’ at an institution (76.8 per cent to 77.9 per cent). Beyond this primary role, just under half of international student respondents (44.6 per cent to 48.9 per cent) used an agent to help with ‘deciding on an Overseas Student Healthcare Cover (OSHC) provider’ which is a requirement for their visa¹². Although primarily engaged to support enrolment and visa applications, agents also provided support for other services: 11.3 per cent to 12.7 per cent of international students indicated that an international agent assisted in ‘finding accommodation’ and 3.0 per cent to 3.1 per cent indicated that an agent was used to assist with ‘finding employment’.

When looking at the ways in which students found the agents that assisted them, just over half of international undergraduates (51.9 per cent) and international postgraduate coursework students (52.0 per cent) found their agent through a ‘personal recommendation’ (**Figure 42**).

For international undergraduate students, ‘study abroad agencies’ (19.8 per cent) and ‘internet search’ (16.7 per cent) were the next most reported ways that students found their agents. For postgraduate coursework students, ‘internet search’ (20.3 per cent) and ‘social media’ (19.4 per cent) were next most reported source of agents.

Figure 41 / Proportion of services provided by international education agents by course level, 2025

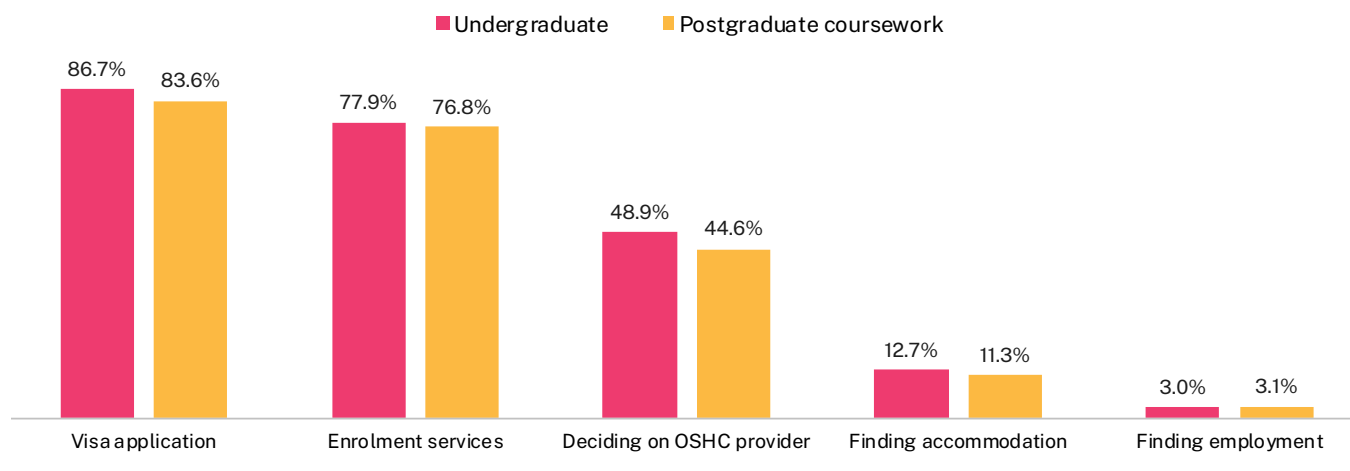
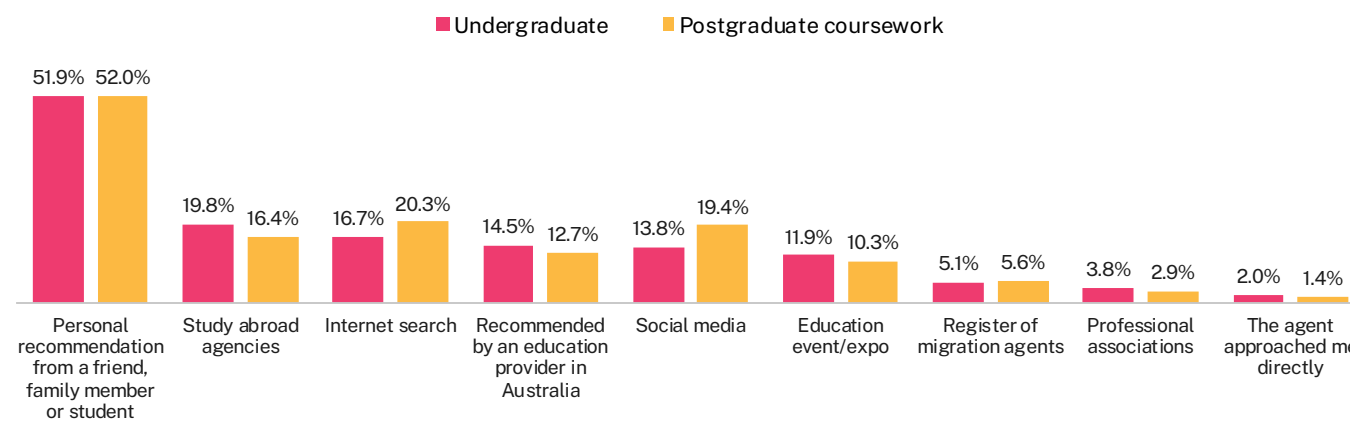


Figure 42 / Ways in which international students found their international education agent by course level, 2025

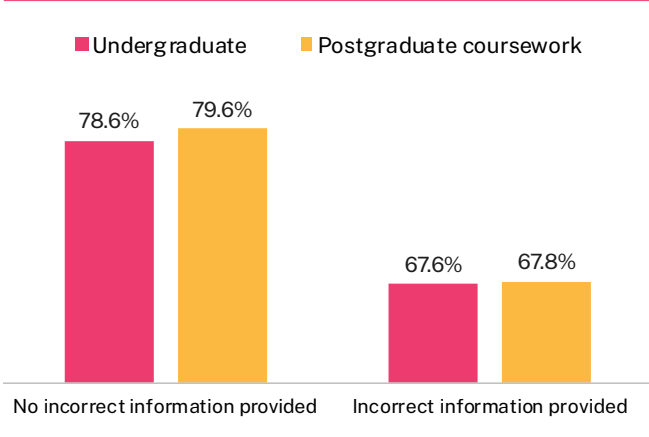


¹² [Subclass 500 Student visa](#)

Given the prevalence of agent use amongst international students, it is important to consider the quality of agent service as well as the quality of information they provide. Majority of international students (93.8 per cent of undergraduate and 92.9 per cent of postgraduate coursework students) reported the service provided by their agent as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Notably however, 11.9 per cent of undergraduate and 13.0 per cent of postgraduate coursework students reported receiving incorrect information from their agent.

As shown in **Figure 43** below, the accuracy of information provided by international agents is to some extent, related to the student’s percent positive rating for Overall Educational Experience. International students who reported receiving incorrect information from their agent were less likely to provide a positive rating for their Overall Educational Experience (a difference of 11.0 percentage points for undergraduates and 11.8 percentage points for postgraduate coursework students), demonstrating the important role that international agents play in the international student experience.

Figure 43 / **Overall Educational Experience by course level and accuracy of information provided by agent, 2025 (% positive)**

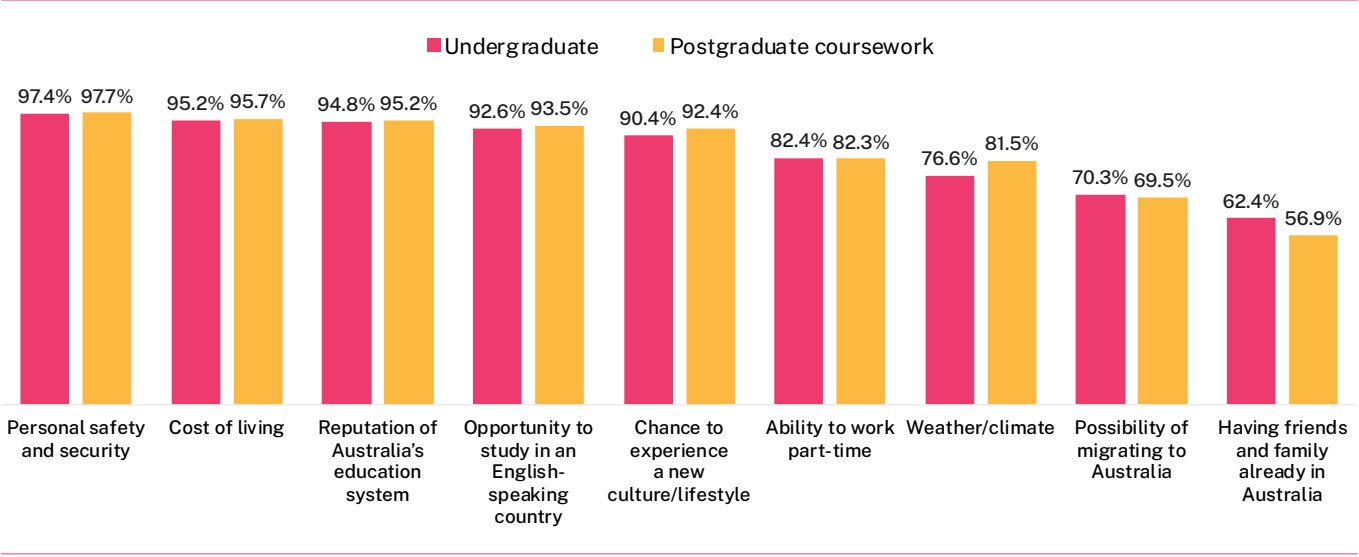


7.4 **Reasons for choosing to study in Australia**

When asked to rate the importance of various factors in their decision to study in Australia, the percentage of respondents who noted reasons as being ‘extremely important’ or ‘important’ are presented in **Figure 44**. Across both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework cohorts, ‘personal safety and security’ (97.4 per cent and 97.7 per cent), ‘cost of living’ (95.2 per cent and 95.7 per cent), ‘reputation of Australia’s education system’ (94.8 per cent and 95.2 per cent), ‘personal safety and security’ (97.4 per cent and 97.7 per cent), ‘cost of living’ (95.2 per cent and 95.7

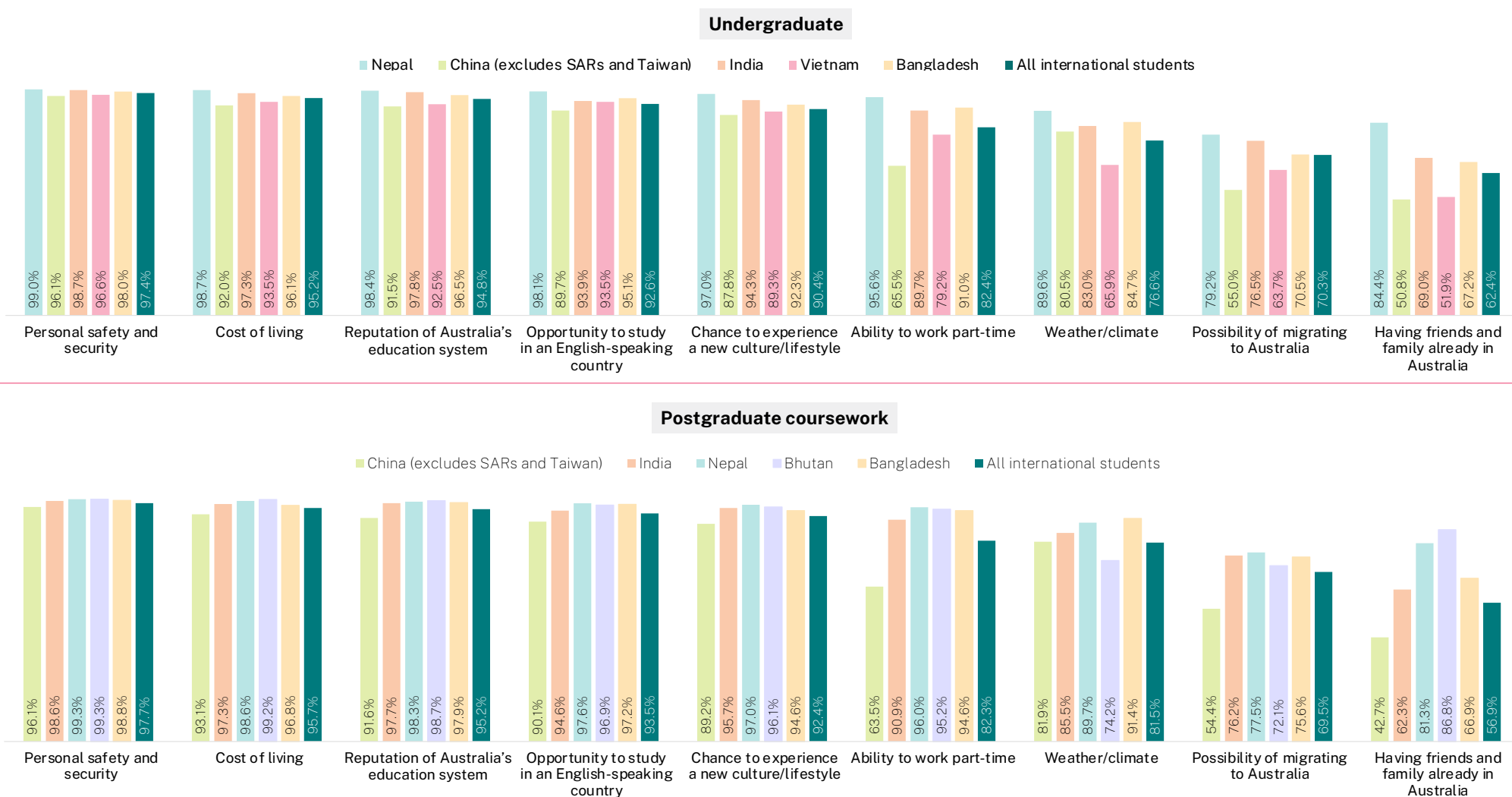
per cent) and the ‘reputation of Australia’s education system’ (94.8 per cent and 95.2 per cent) are associated with the highest importance for choosing to study in Australia. In contrast, ‘having friends and family already in Australia’ is only noted as important for 62.4 per cent of undergraduates and 56.9 per cent of postgraduate coursework students, indicating that pre-existing social ties are a comparatively lesser factor in international students’ decision to choose Australia as a study destination.

Figure 44 / **International student reasons for choosing to study in Australia by course level, 2025 (% importance rating)**



Amongst the top 5 source countries, reasons rated as highly important at the aggregate level such as ‘personal safety and security’, ‘cost of living’ and ‘reputation of Australia’s education system’ tend to also be rated as highly important across all top 5 source countries. For other reasons, there was notable variation. For example, across both the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework level, students from Nepal, India and Bhutan were more likely to cite migration opportunities as an important factor for choosing Australia as a study destination compared to the overall international average, while Chinese and Vietnamese students were less likely than the international average to cite migration as important. These responses highlight differences in motivations for these cohorts in pursuing higher education in Australia.

Figure 45 / International student reasons for choosing to study in Australia by source country and course level, 2025 (% importance rating)



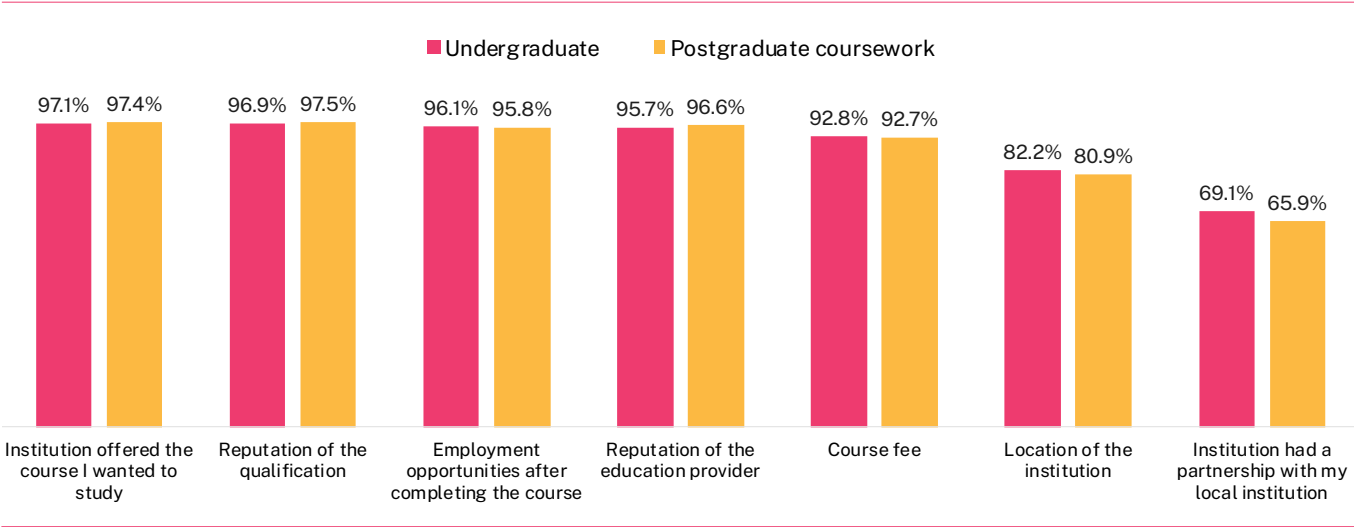
7.5 Reasons for choosing to study at institution

International students studying in Australia were asked to rate the importance of various factors in their decision to apply to their current institution.

As shown in **Figure 46**, the most important reasons cited across both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework cohorts included the institution offering the desired course (97.1 per cent and 97.4 per cent), the reputation of the qualification (96.9 per cent and 97.5 per cent), employment opportunities after completing the course (96.1 per cent and 95.8 per cent), and the reputation of the education provider (95.7 per cent and 96.6 per cent).

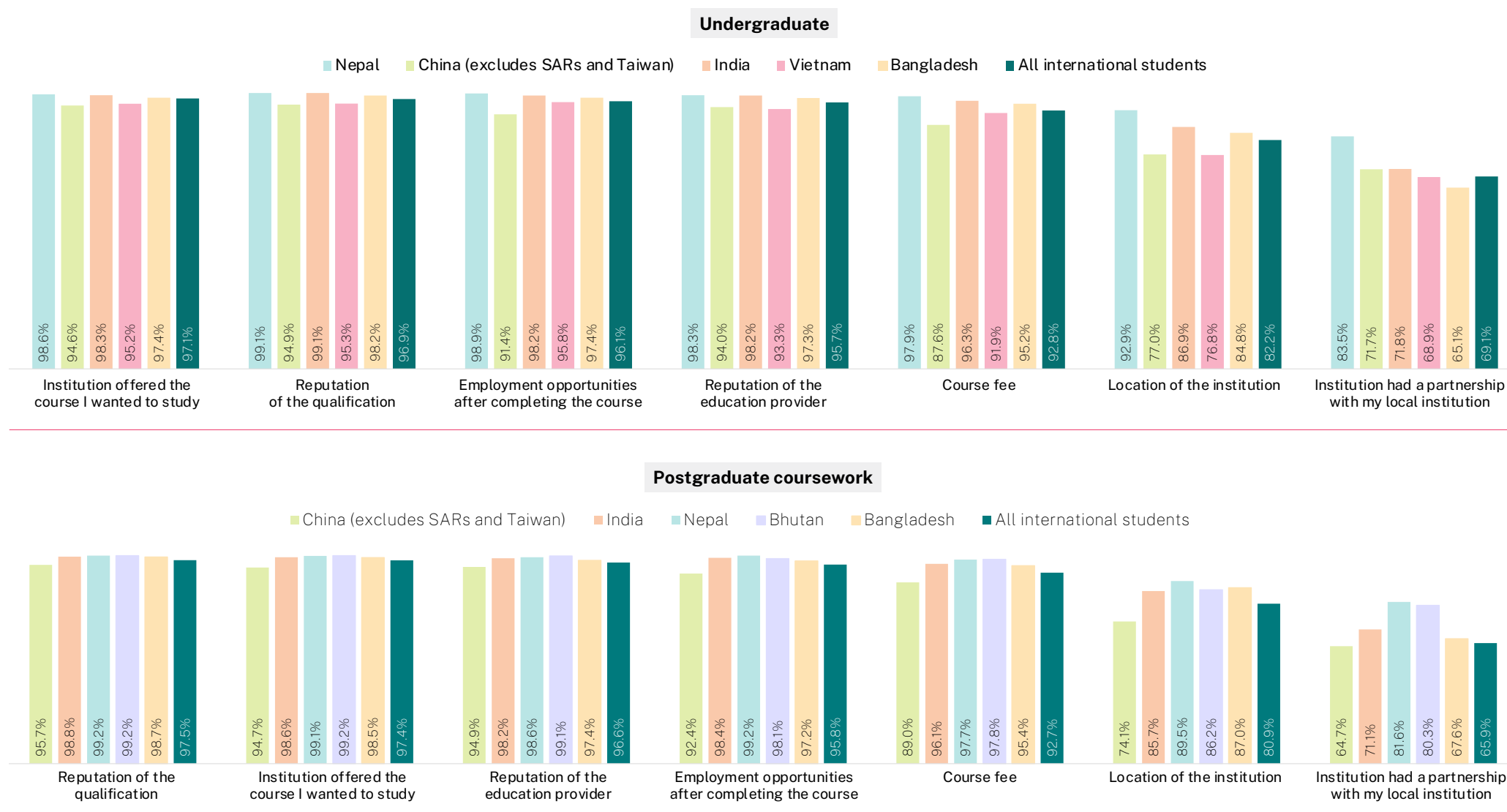
The least important factor was whether the institution had a partnership with the student’s local institution, with only 69.1 per cent of international undergraduates and 65.9 per cent of postgraduate coursework students rating it as important.

Figure 46 / International student reasons for choosing current institution by course level, 2025 (% importance rating)



Similar to the reasons for choosing to study in Australia, ratings of importance when choosing an institution were generally consistent across the top 5 source countries for highly important reasons as shown in **Figure 47**. There was notably variation with the importance ascribed to having a partnership with a local institution, with students from Nepal and Bhutan being much more likely to cite this as important compared to the international average.

Figure 47 / **International students' reasons for choosing to study at current institution by source country and course level, 2025 (% importance rating)**



Understanding student experience by study mode and class participation: post-pandemic dynamics

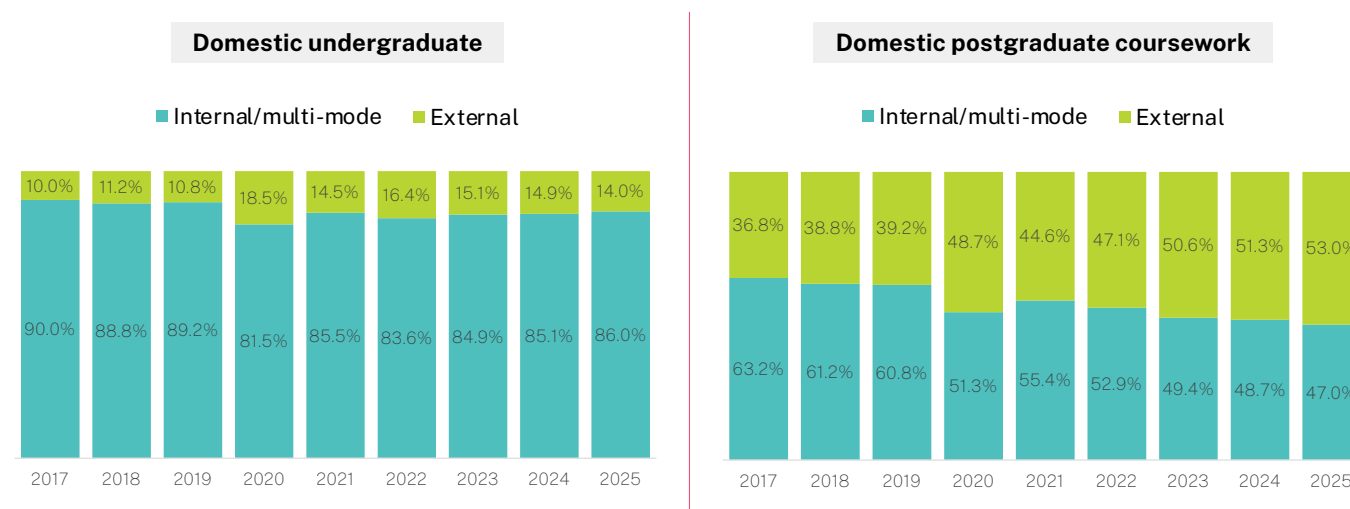
A1.1 Study mode (institution-reported)

Institutions record a student's mode of study, along with other enrolment information, in the Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI) system. A student's mode of study can be categorised as 'internal', 'external' or 'multi-modal'.¹³ Due to differences in how institutions define internal and multi-modes of attendance, these two groups are reported as a single category in SES reporting.

While international students are required to attend at least some of their classes in-person¹⁴, precluding them from studying externally, there is a lot more flexibility for domestic students. **Figure 48** shows that among domestic undergraduates, 86.0 per cent of respondents to the 2025 SES were enrolled in either an internal or multi-mode course while 14.0 percent of respondents were enrolled in an external course. The proportion of students studying internally or by multi-mode dropped to its lowest level of 81.5 per cent in 2020, and while it has not returned to the rates seen prior to the pandemic, it has been increasing year-on-year since 2020.

In contrast to domestic undergraduates, most domestic postgraduate coursework students study externally, due to their older demographic and greater involvement in work or family responsibilities. The proportion of students studying internally or by multi-mode has been decreasing since 2022, and in 2025, less than half (47.0 per cent) of domestic postgraduate coursework respondents to the SES were enrolled in an internal or multi-mode course.

Figure 48 / Domestic study mode profile by course level, 2017–25 (based on responses to the SES)



Note: International students are precluded from studying externally by their visa.

¹³ Internal mode of attendance is where (i) the study is undertaken through attendance at the higher education provider on a regular basis, or (ii) for higher degree unit enrolments, where regular attendance is not required but the student attends the higher education provider on an agreed schedule for the purposes of supervision and/or instruction. External mode of attendance is where lesson materials, assignments, etc. are delivered to the student, and any associated attendance at the institution is of an incidental, irregular, special or voluntary nature. Multi-mode of attendance is where study is undertaken partially on an internal mode of attendance and partially on an external mode of attendance. See [Mode of attendance code | TCSI Support](#) for more information.

¹⁴ Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth), National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 8.

A1.2 Class participation (self-reported) and citizenship status

To gain a deeper understanding of how students participated in their classes, the SES includes a self-reported measure of class participation, capturing whether students engaged mostly in-person, mostly online, or through a mix of modes.

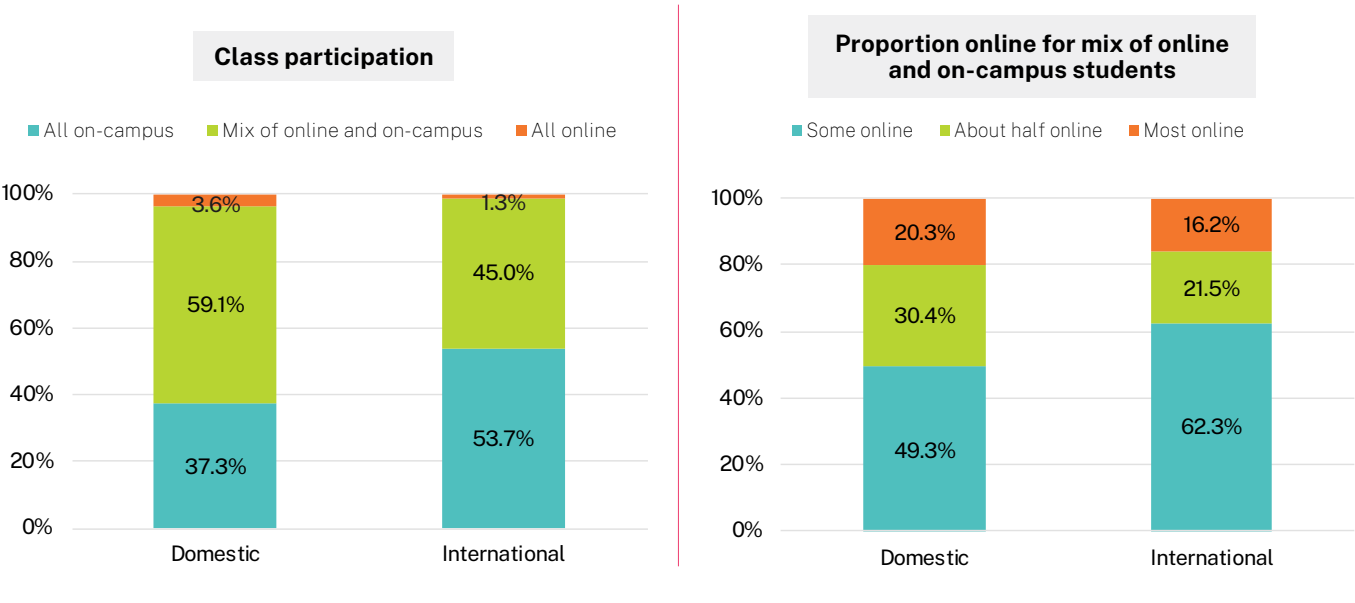
This self-reported measure allows for more nuanced analysis of students enrolled in internal/multi-mode and enables exploration of the extent to which domestic and international students participate in their courses in-person or online.

Figure 49 shows that among undergraduates enrolled in internal/multi-mode courses, international students were more likely to have participated in all of their classes on-campus compared to domestic students (53.7 per cent and 37.3 per cent respectively).

Furthermore, among those who reported participating in a mix of online and on-campus classes (45.0 per cent of international and 59.1 per cent of domestic students), international students were more likely to report doing ‘some’ of their classes online than domestic students (62.3 per cent and 49.3 per cent respectively).

In contrast, domestic students were more likely to have done ‘about half’ or ‘most’ of their classes online (50.7 per cent) compared to international students (37.7 per cent) in 2025.

Figure 49 / Undergraduate class participation for internal/multi-mode students by citizenship status, 2025



Published 2026

For more information on the conduct and results of the 2025 SES see the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) website: gilt.edu.au
The QILT team can be contacted by email at: gilt@srcentre.com.au