

CISaustralia Releases 2025 Learning Abroad Industry Survey (8.0) Results

Advancing Strategic Insights for the Future of Learning Abroad in Australia

CISaustralia is pleased to announce the release of the 2025 Learning Abroad (LA) Industry Survey (8.0), supporting Australian university administrative and academic staff in their 2026 Learning Abroad strategic planning and program development. Now in its 8th edition, the survey reflects CISaustralia's continued commitment to advancing knowledge, collaboration, and sustainable growth in the Learning Abroad sector.

Since launching in 2020, the CISaustralia Learning Abroad Industry Survey has evolved into one of the sector's recognised data benchmarking opportunities, delivering robust data and analysis that help Australian universities shape Learning Abroad strategies, respond to challenges, and identify opportunities for student engagement.

Key insights from the 2025 (8.0) report are outlined below, with the full survey data and results available via the [CISaustralia website](#). A summary of findings was also presented at the IEAA Learning Abroad Forum (Hobart) in August 2025 by CISaustralia's Founder & CEO, Brad Dorahy.

2025 Learning Abroad Survey (8.0) Summary and Key Data Highlights

1. Sector Growth and Enrolment Trends

- A small number of Australian universities dominate the Learning Abroad (PA) landscape in terms of enrolments, with FIVE universities reporting a min of 1500 LA enrolments in 2025 and 2026. And in 2025 & 2026, TWO universities also reported 4,000+ LA enrolments and ONE additional university reporting 5,000+ LA enrolments.
- These same FIVE Australian universities will effectively support 50% of the total outbound LA enrolments in 2026 (3,650 average enrolments per university), with the other 35 universities that completed the survey supporting the remaining 50% balance (522 average enrolments per university).
- 14 Australian universities (41%) plan to send between 500-1,499 students abroad in 2026, for academic credit.
- The data suggests that across the LA Sector, universities are projecting a slight decline in LA enrolments from 2024 to 2025 (-13%) and subsequent increase in LA enrolments from 2025 to 2026 (+5%).

2. Barriers to Learning Abroad

- The survey produced some very positive indicators surrounding the primary barriers to Learning Abroad, that have all decreased in 2025 (from 2024);
 - A. Limited (LA) Marketing: -25%
 - B. Limited Interest (in LA) from Academic Staff: -20%
 - C. Limited Senior Management Support (for LA): -11%
 - D. Low Awareness (of LA) Across Institution: -11%
- Universities reported that a "Lack of funding / scholarships" had increased by 11% in 2025, compared to 2024, as a barrier to limiting LA enrolment levels.

3. Academic Engagement

- 25 (69%) Australian universities are anticipating sending 90-100% of their students abroad in 2026, for academic credit.
- 47% of Australian universities require 1 semester or less to be completed prior to being approved for a LA program, while 80% require 2 semesters or less.
- The primary barrier to academic staff engagement for Learning Abroad in 2025/26 continues to be: Workload pressure, reduced resourcing, changes to NCP, low morale, curriculum fit and limited incentives.

4. Program Preferences and Destinations

- Universities are projecting that short term faculty led study tours will continue to be the most popular type of LA programming for students in 2025, however, they are also anticipating a downward trend in short term faculty led study tours of 11% from 2024 to 2025.
- In stark comparison, universities reported that short term faculty led study tours were the least efficient LA programs to deliver.
- Europe is projected to be the number ONE region for LA students in 2026 with a +17% increase projected from 2025, and a subsequent decline in Asia and the Pacific of -14% in 2026.
- The most popular Learning Abroad countries (in order) are projected to be England, Japan, Korea, USA, Canada and Netherlands.
- Countries projected to either decline or grow significantly in 2026 include Fiji (-25%), Scandinavia combined (-20%), Japan (+17%), Netherlands (+16%) and China (+11%).

5. Environmental and Institutional Policies

- In a disappointing sectorial trend, the number of Australian universities that still have no institutional environmental policy in place (to lower carbon emissions) because of student travel is still at close to 50%.

6. Funding and Financial Support

- In a positive development, 72% of Australian universities indicated their institutions will provide some form of internal central funding to support LA in 2025-2026, with nearly 60% providing \$500 to \$3,000 in central support, per student.
- 83% of Australian universities indicated they will not be employing any new LA staff within the next 12 months.
- 18 Australian universities (50%) indicated they have between 1-3 dedicated LA FTE staff within their institution.

7. Learning Abroad - Retention and Domestic Recruitment

- 67% of Australian universities have a low to moderate understanding of the value of Learning Abroad to their institutions when used as a domestic recruitment tool to attract Australian high school students.
- And related, 75% of Australian university Learning Abroad Offices, meet with their institutions Domestic Recruitment Office between ZERO and TWICE per year.
- 70% of Australian universities have a low to moderate understanding of the positive impact that Learning Abroad has on student retention at their institutions (after a student has returned from a LA experience, compared to students that never attend a LA program).

8. Evaluation and Strategic Planning

- In a disappointing result, 50%+ of all Australian universities in 2025 still do not have Learning Abroad clearly articulated into their institutions central overarching strategic plan (and climbs to 64% when you add those institutions that are “unsure” if it is or is not articulated).

A Call for Strengthened Commitment to Learning Abroad

The 2025 survey underscores the continued need for deeper academic engagement, policy integration, funding equity, and systematic engagement on sustainable Learning Abroad travel policies. With anticipated growth in student demand and increasing institutional collaboration, there is strong potential for programs to expand enrolments and impact—provided the sector continues to address its challenges.

Any questions or feedback on survey data should be directed to CISAustralia CEO, Brad Dorahy: brad@cisaustralia.com.au. For an individual consultation and review of the survey data and specific feedback on data benchmarked against your Australian University, please contact CISAustralia.

About CISAustralia

CISAustralia was established in 2012/13 and has sent 8,000+ students abroad, has 38 formal agreements out of the 40 Australian Universities, and over 98% of all CISAustralia students have been awarded academic credit from their Australian home university, for their program abroad.

About Brad Dorahy

Brad Dorahy, Founder and CEO of CISAustralia: With over 30 years of experience in the Education Industry, Brad has lived, studied, volunteered and worked abroad, including positions at a number of Australian Universities (The University of Newcastle, Bond University and Navitas at Griffith University). Brad studied abroad at the University of Canterbury – NZ and Harvard University – USA, & has attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). Brad has volunteered extensively overseas and was an active volunteer with Surf Life Saving Queensland for 9 years. He loves the outdoors - hiking, biking and surfing, & has completed the Australian Ironman, hiked Kokoda and to Base Camp Mt. Everest. Brad has presented at international conferences such as NAFSA, ISANA, the Mobility Forum, AIEC and CCIS. [LinkedIn profile](#).

For further information or to access the full survey data, please visit the [CISAustralia Industry Research pages on our website](#).