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How has the positioning of
international students
changed over time?

Keynote talk
2023 Vic/Tas State Conference
Friday 08/09/2023

Acknowledgement of Country

I respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which this presentation is delivered, and pay our respect to their elders past, present and future.



Key Points

1. Positioning of international students
2. International student needs and support services
3. International graduates and post-study work

How has the positioning of international students changed over time?





International Education As Being and Becoming

- ❑ International education for academic purposes remains one of the key driving forces for international students
- ❑ Motivations to enhance knowledge, skills and personal and professional transformations
- ❑ Aspirations for being and becoming: past, present and future beings
- ❑ Interrelated, multiple and shifting purposes: study+work+migration+future life
- **Enrich human beings**



Best Practice International Student Engagement Project Overview

The main aims of the project are:

- ❑ to identify good practice in international student engagement across a range of areas
- ❑ to develop and promote good practice Guides and resources to enhance international student engagement

Project Team: Ly Tran, Jill Blackmore, Danielle Hartridge, Helen Forbes-Mewett, Renata Aldana and Diep Nguyen

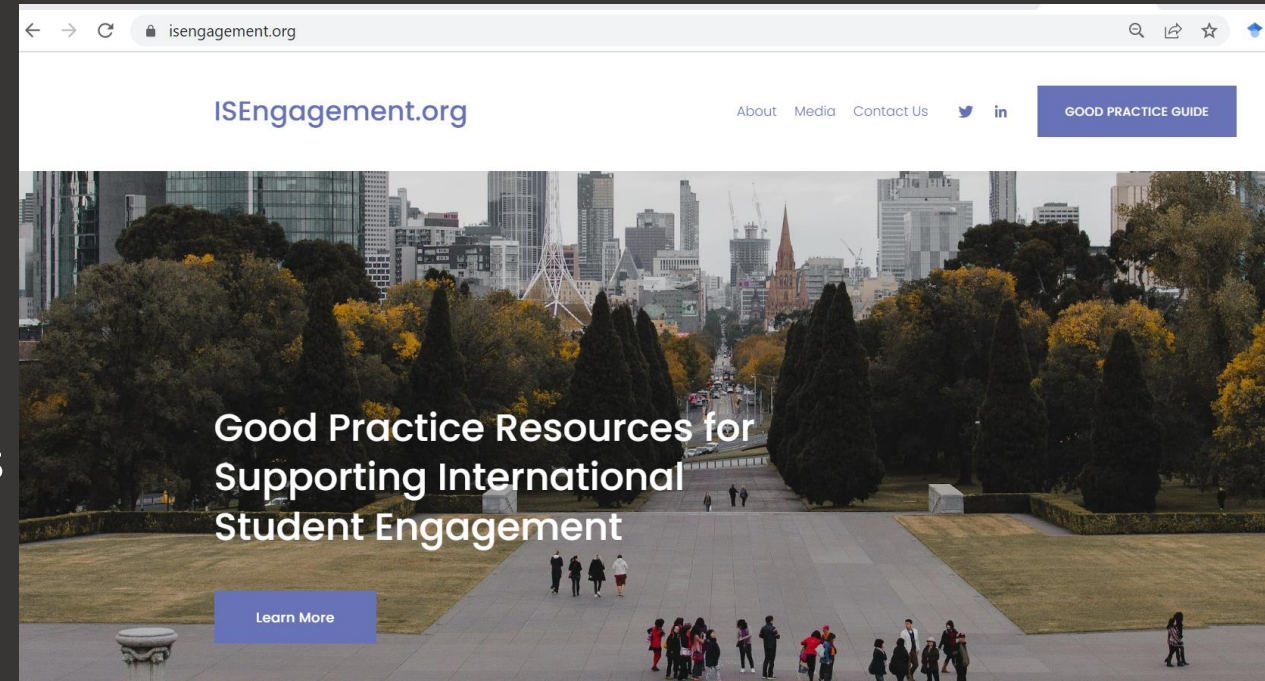


This project is funded by the Australian Government through the International Education Innovation Fund (IEIF)

Multiple approaches to collect data to assist in the development of a series of evidence-based Good Practice Guides and resources




- ✓ Desktop analysis of existing literature and good practice examples
- ✓ Three surveys:
 - As of 31/03/2023: over 6,000 responses
 - International student survey: 3,466 responses
 - Graduate survey: 1,752 responses
 - Stakeholder survey: 956 responses
- ✓ 11 consultation workshops with 213 stakeholders
- ✓ Interviews with 40 key stakeholders
- ✓ Development a series of Guides, Virtual Map and resources to support international student engagement
 - The project is scheduled to conclude in March 2024.





Good practice Guides to be launched:

- Guide for enhancing international student engagement through teaching, language and learning
 - Guide for supporting international students through crisis navigation
 - Guide for supporting international student engagement in accommodation
 - Guide for enhancing international students' intercultural and community engagement
 - Guide for enhancing international student engagement through work-integrated learning and employability
 - Guide for enhancing international students' mental health and wellbeing
 - Framework for guiding the development of international student support programs
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From the perspectives of three groups of respondents, the top areas that international students need support the most (from moderately to extremely) were:

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT ACROSS AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT

From the perspectives of three groups of respondents, the top areas that international students need support the most (from moderately to extremely) were:

International students	International graduates	Education providers and stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● finding jobs (78%) ● career orientation and employability (78%) ● work-integrated learning/internships (76%) ● employment related concerns (70%) ● financial issues (67%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● finding jobs (77%) ● career orientation and employability (77%) ● work-integrated learning/internships (73%) ● employment related concerns (70%) ● Connection with domestic students (67%); Dealing with crisis (67%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English language skills (99%) ● face to face learning (86%) ● adjusting to teaching and learning approaches (85%) ● Connection with local Australian community (84%); Connection with domestic students (84%); Mental health and wellbeing (84%); Work integrated learning (84%); Career orientation and employability (84%); Employment related concerns (84%)

AREAS OF HELP SEEKING

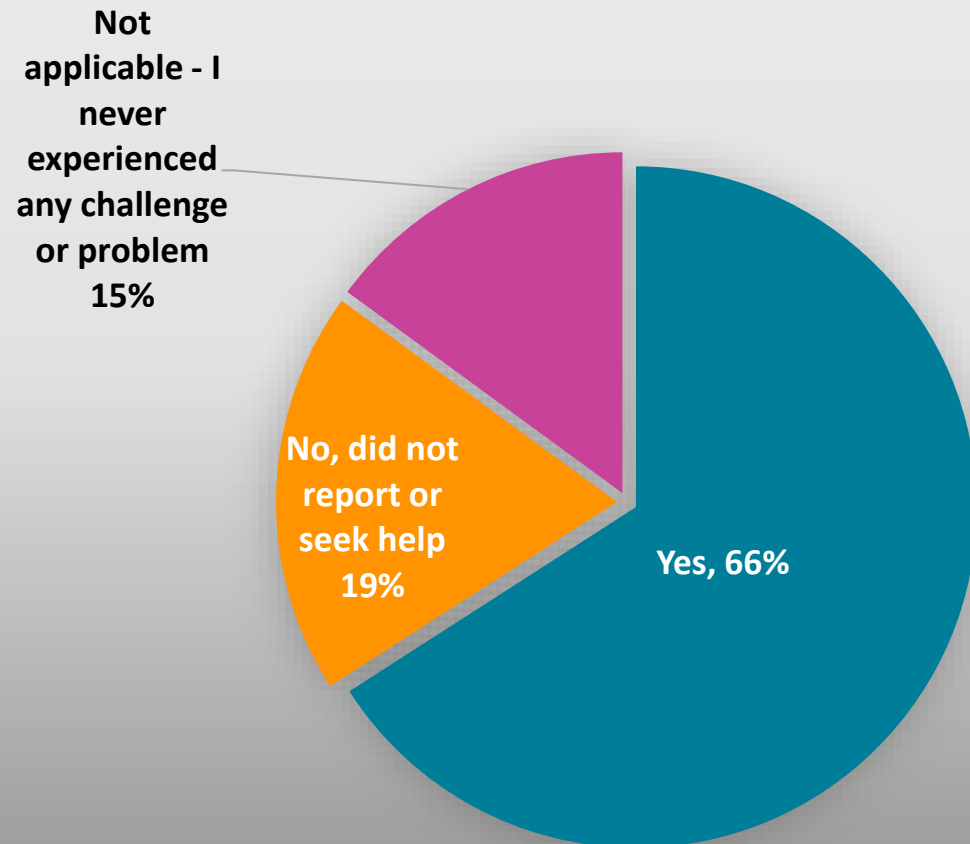
The top areas that international students have sought support from moderately to extremely identified across three surveys are:

International student	International graduate	Education provider and stakeholder
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding jobs (59%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding jobs (70%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language skills (80%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career orientation and employability (58%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career orientation and employability (69%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation (65%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-integrated learning/internships (56%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-integrated learning/internships (67%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face learning (64%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face learning (56%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, war, political tension, financial crisis, natural disaster (64%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding jobs (63%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with teachers and staff (55%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face learning (62%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the impacts of a crisis (63%)

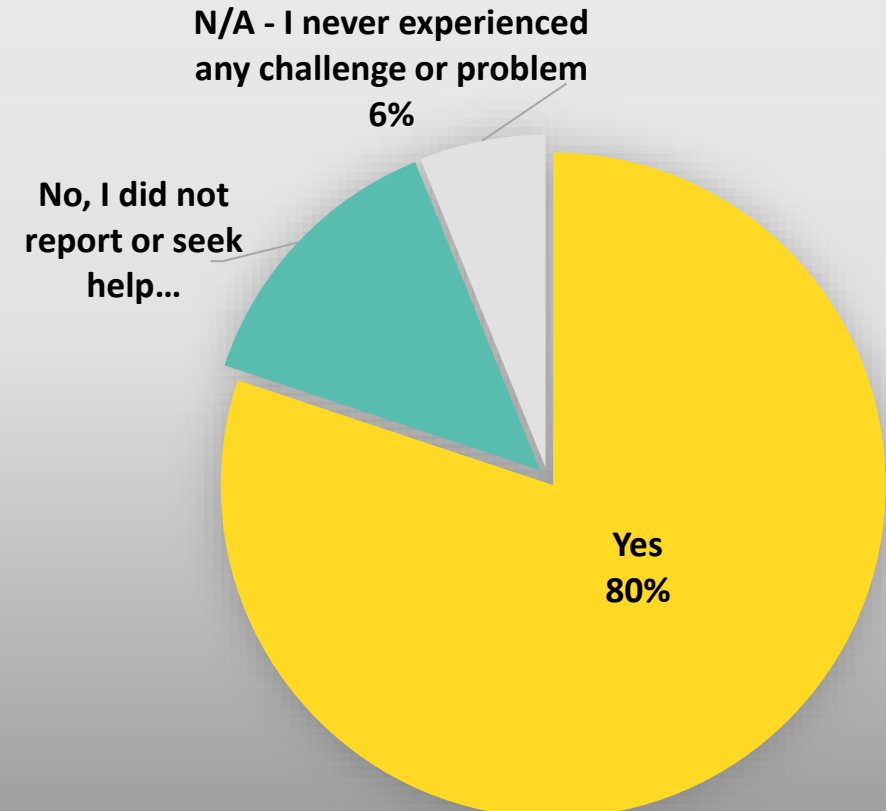
WHETHER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SEEK HELP WHEN EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS



International students- If you experienced any challenges or problems and needed help, did you actually seek help?



International graduates - If you experienced any challenges or problems and needed help, did you actually seek help?



REASONS FOR NOT SEEKING HELP

The main reasons why participating international students and graduates did not seek help or report their problems were:

International student survey	International graduate survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not know the process (15%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not know the process (14%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not know how to articulate the problem (11%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unaware that support would be available (13%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unaware that support would be available (11%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not want to get into trouble (10%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not want to get into trouble (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not think anything would be done about it (9%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fear that my request will be rejected (9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fear of discrimination (8%)

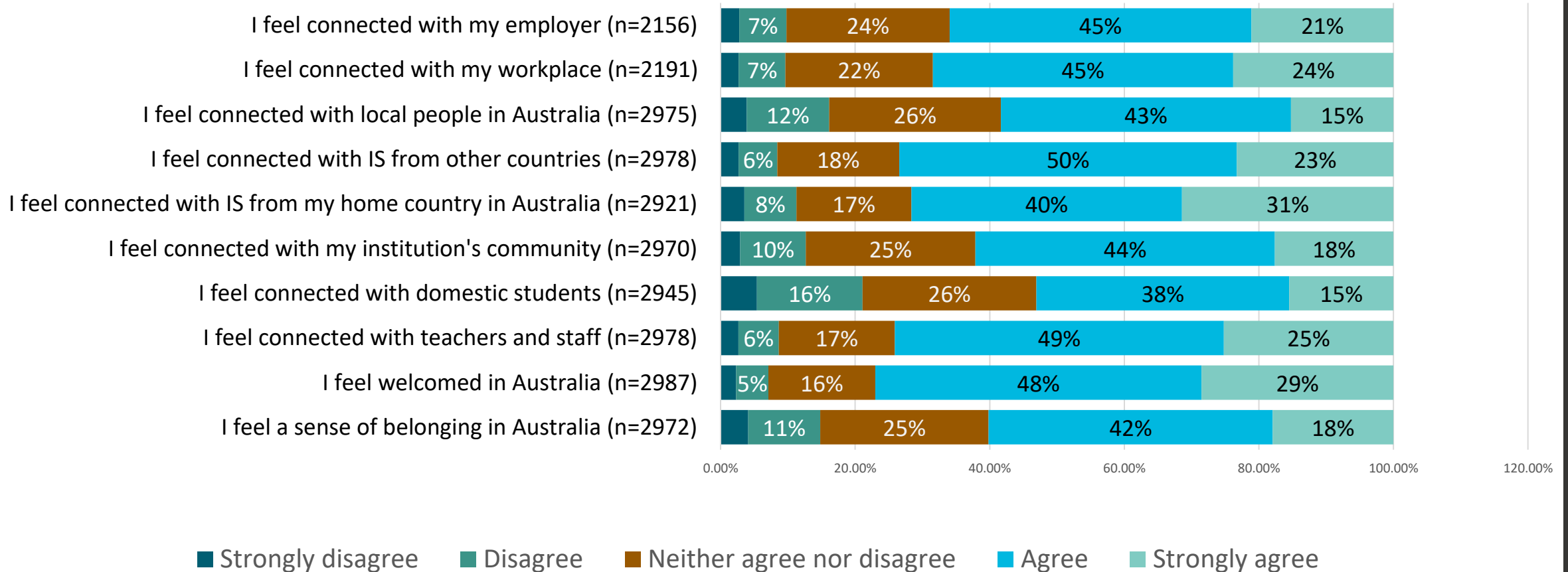
MOST NEEDED AND USED SUPPORT SOURCES

The top support sources needed and used by international students were:

International student survey	International graduate survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my family at home (61%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my family at home (55%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my teachers/lecturers (58%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my teachers/lecturers (49%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my international friends from other countries (50%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my international friends from other countries (46%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support services provided by my institution (47%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support services provided by my institution (45%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my domestic friends or co-national friends (43%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from my co-national friends (44%)

International student survey

Student survey Q20 - To what extent do you feel engaged while undertaking an Australian qualification?



Top challenging areas for support provision are:

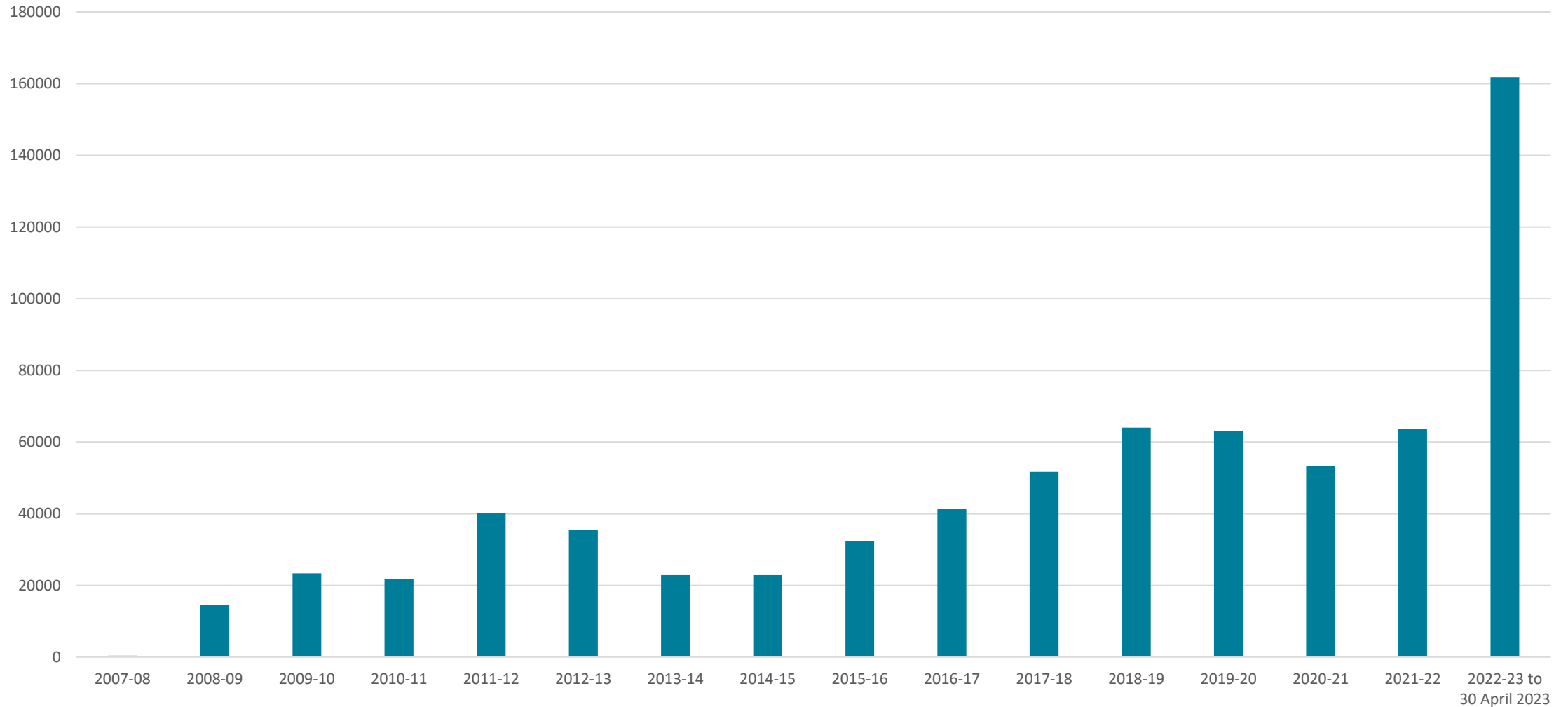
- supporting international students in English language skills (89% of provider respondents believed it was moderately, very much or extremely challenging to provide support in this area).
- dealing with racism or discrimination (74%).
- mental health and wellbeing (73%), finding jobs (73%), adjusting to teaching and learning approaches (73%), and employment-related concerns (73%).

International graduates and Post-study work rights: Temporary graduate visa (subclass 485)

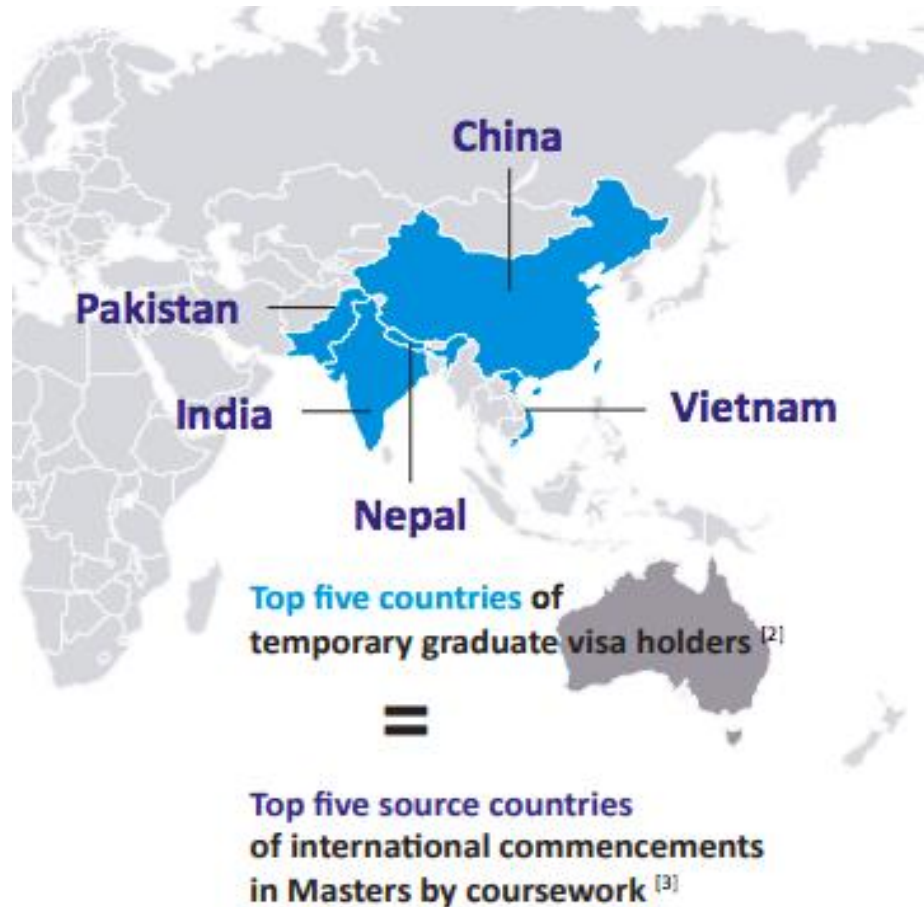
- At the national level: 485 is vital for the competitiveness of the education export sector and have implications for migration and talent acquisition agendas.
- For institutions: 485 visa is a drawcard to attract international students and one of the tools to support commitment to graduate employability.
- International students/Graduates: return on investment, employment goals, and life & migration aspirations.

(Tran et al., 2020; 2022)

485 visa grants 2007/08 to April 2023



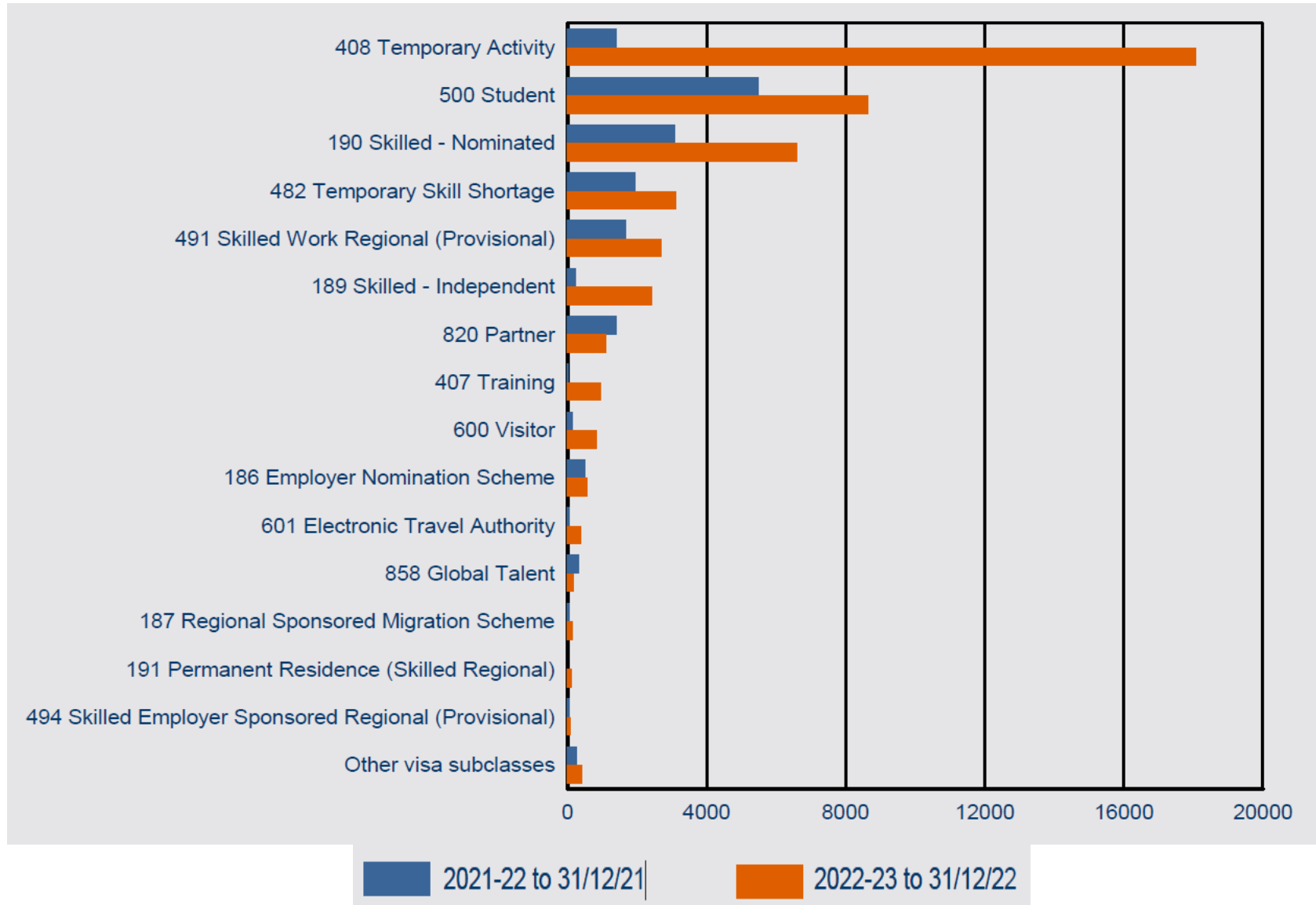
Impacts of post-study work rights policy



- More than 160,000 485 visas granted b/t 2022-April 2023
- 76% international graduates said access to the visa was an important factor in their decision to study in Australia.
- Dissonance b/t policy intention and labour market

(Australian Government, 2023; Tran et al., 2020)

Destination of Temporary Graduates by visa subclass (Department of Home Affairs)



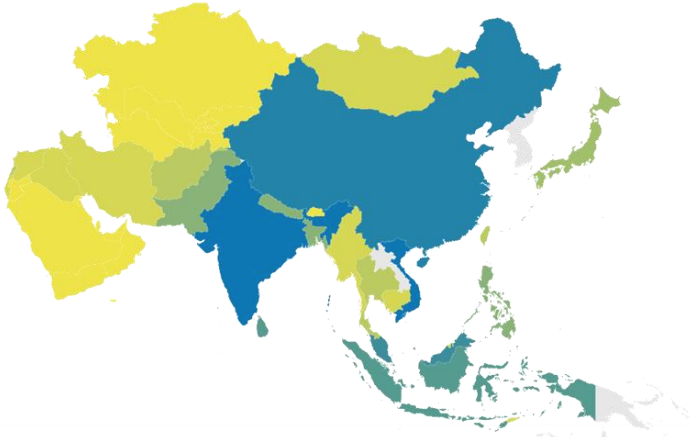
Project: Impact of post-study work rights in Australia

Project members: Ly Tran, Mark Rahimi, George Tan, Huyen Bui

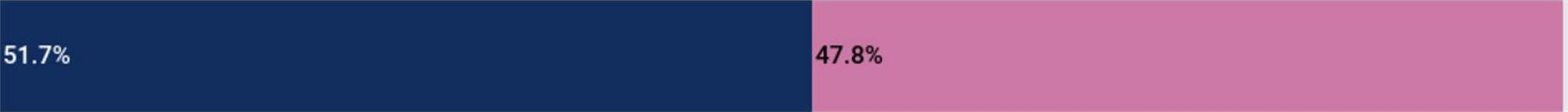
About the research project

Methodology

- A mixed-methods research:
- Critical analysis of policy and secondary datasets
 - 50 in-depth interviews over three years
 - A quantitative survey (Dec 2018 - Jul 2019)



Survey: 1,156 Participants

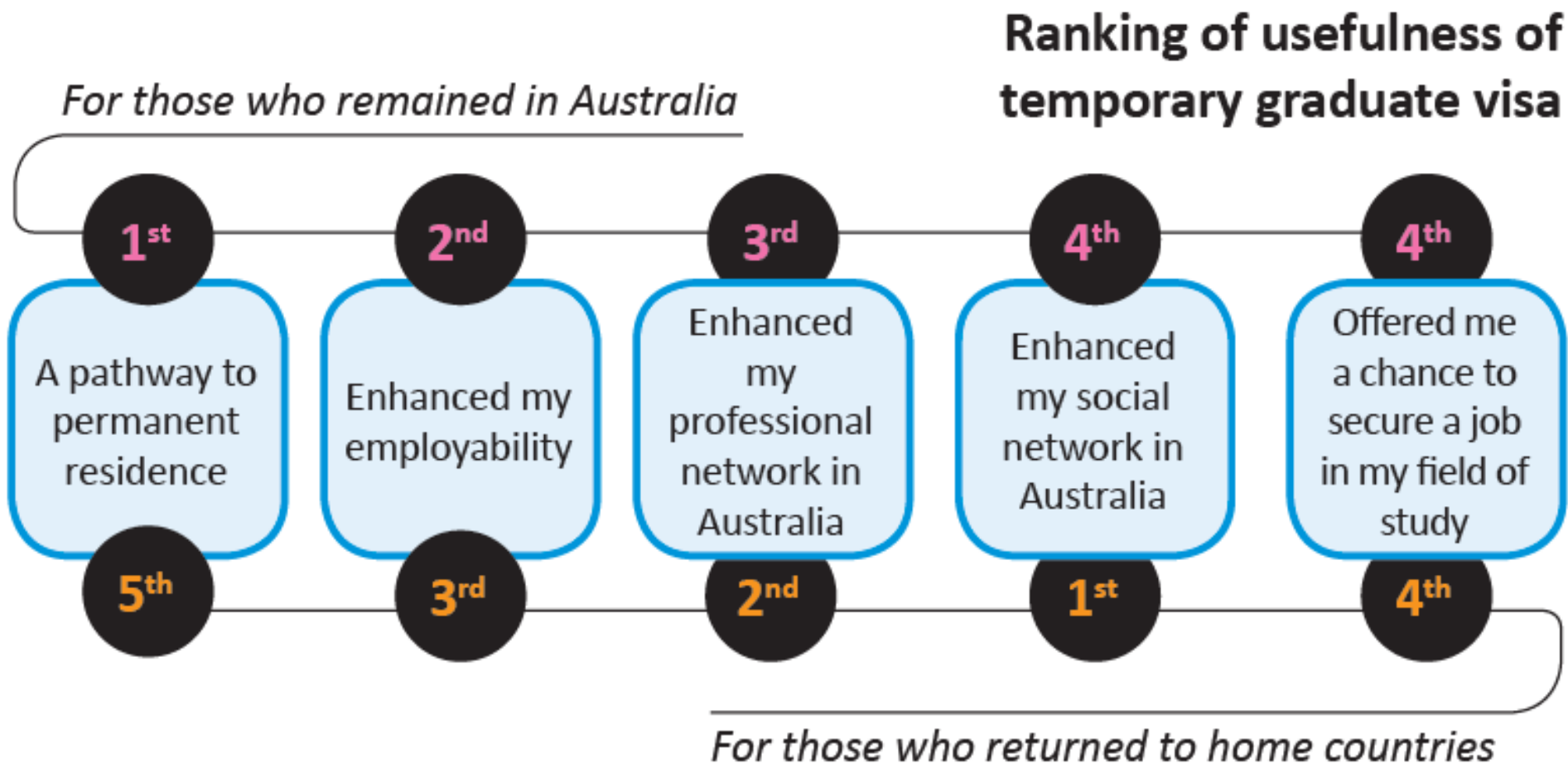


● Male ● Female ● Other

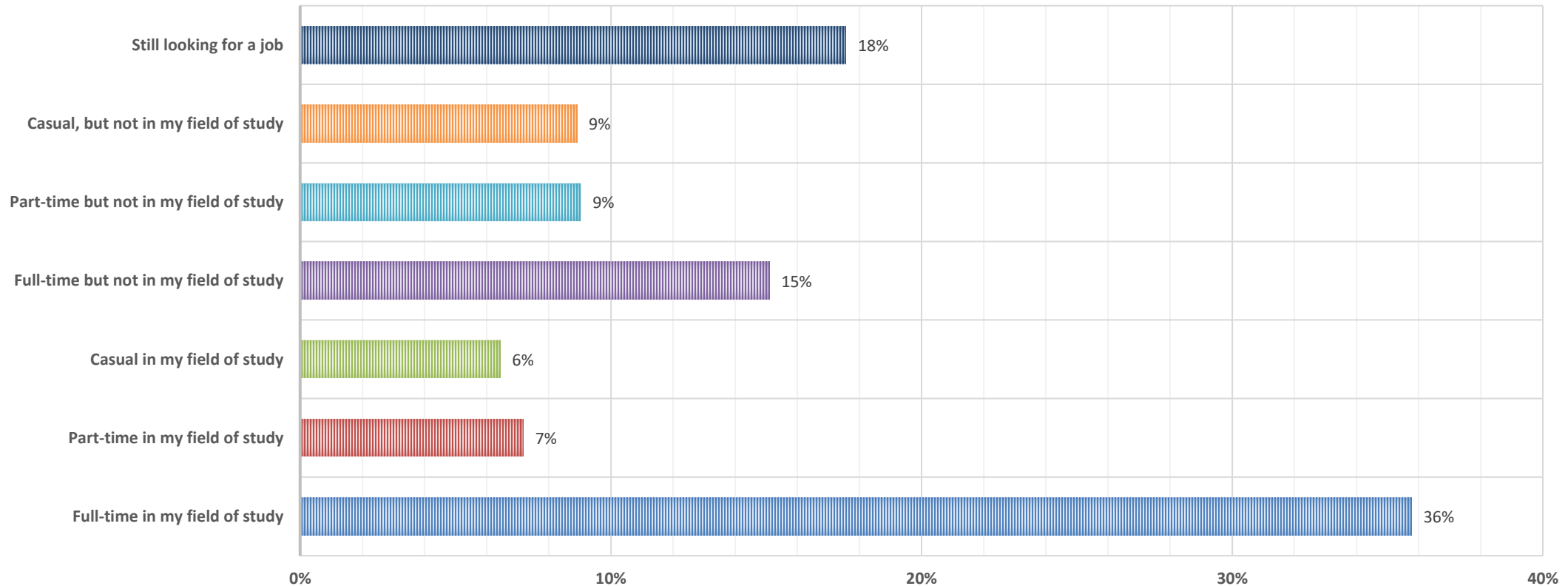


● In Australia ● In their home country ● In another country

Ranking of usefulness



Current employment status of past and present temporary graduate visa holders staying in Australia (n=808)

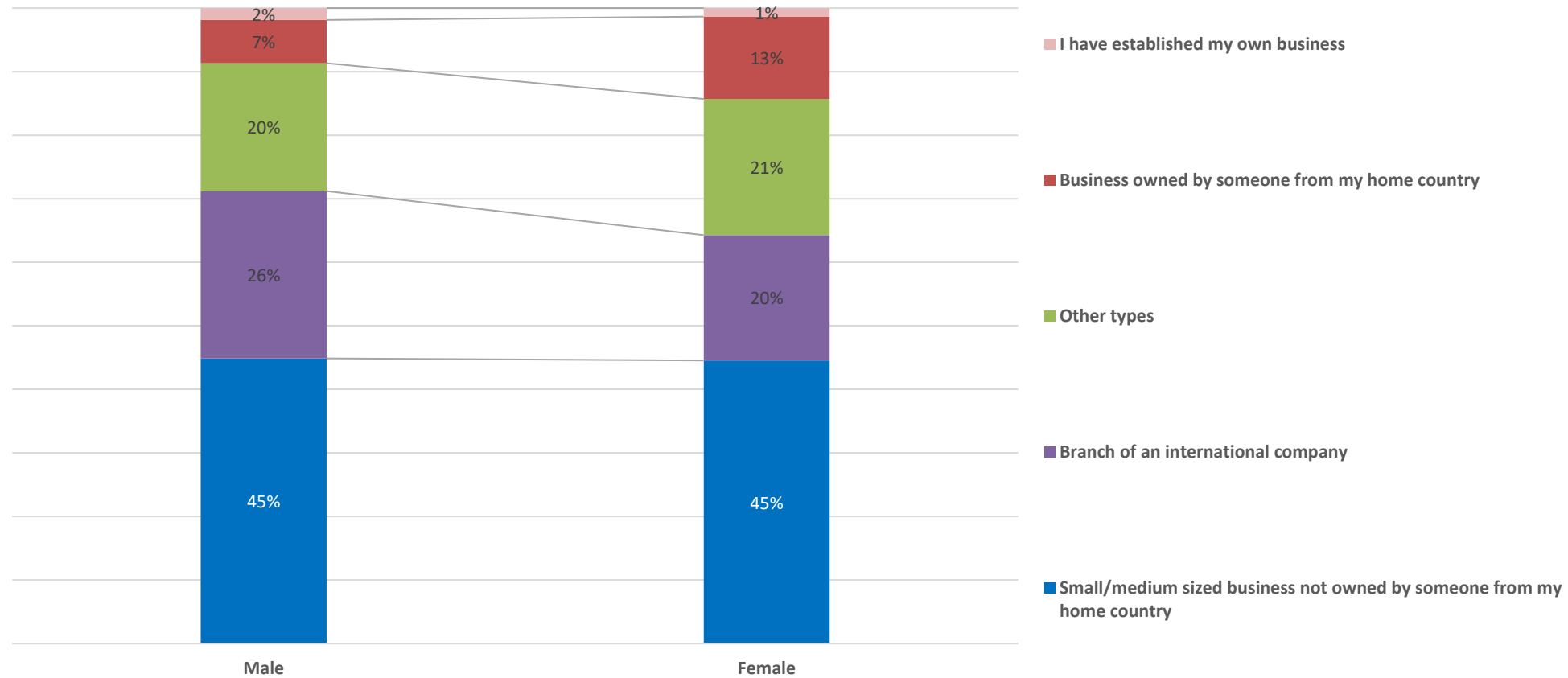


Top 10 occupations of 485 visa holders

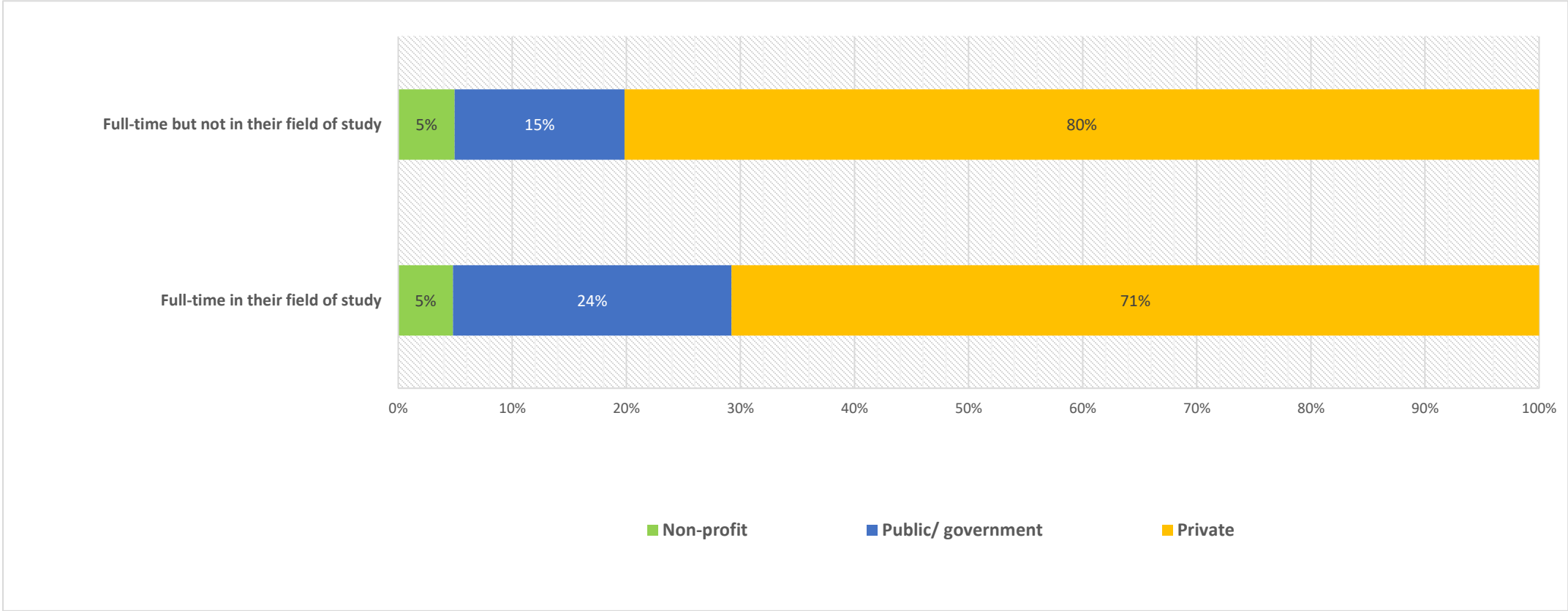
Occupation	Number	Percent
Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	2,845	10.8
Sales Assistants and Salespersons	2,463	9.4
Cleaners and Laundry Workers	1,773	6.8
Carers and Aides	1,481	5.6
Hospitality Workers	1,450	5.5
ICT Professionals	1,333	5.1
Health Professionals	1,058	4.0
Numerical Clerks	1,027	3.9
Food Trades Workers	993	3.8
Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	936	3.6
Others	10,881	41.5
Total	26,239	100.0

From the Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset (ACTEID-2016)

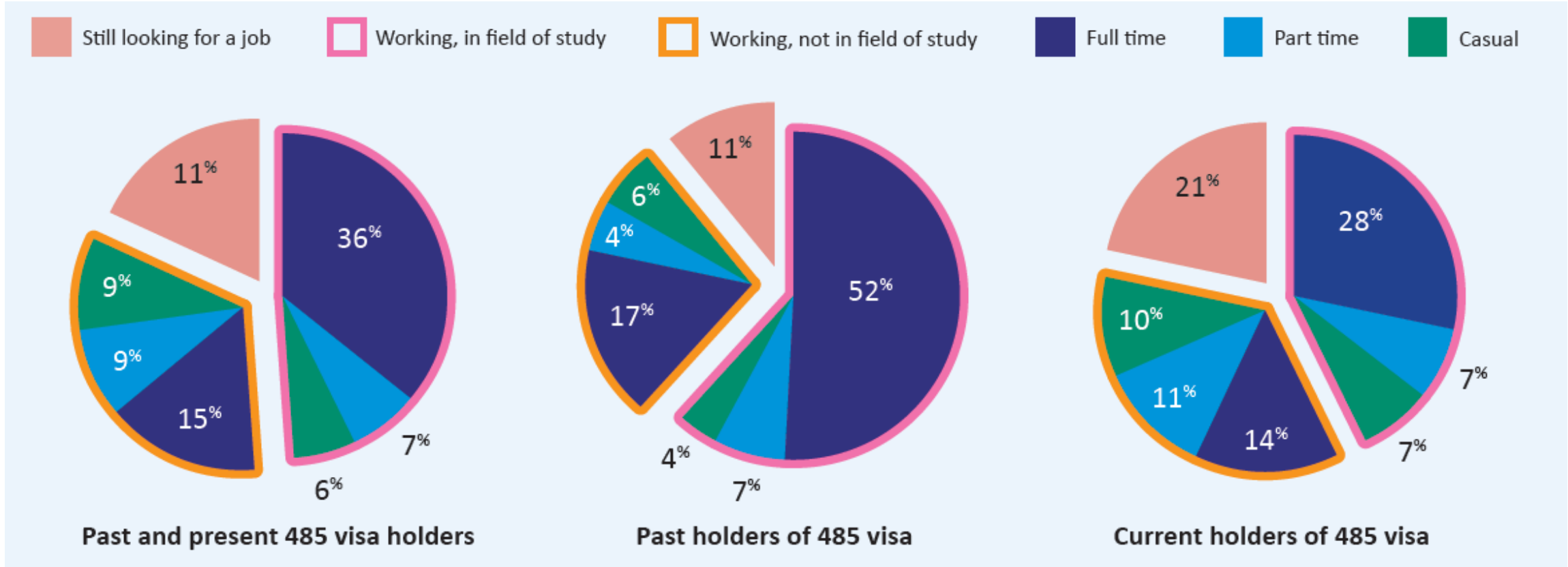
Where do international graduates work?



Share of private/public/non-profit sectors

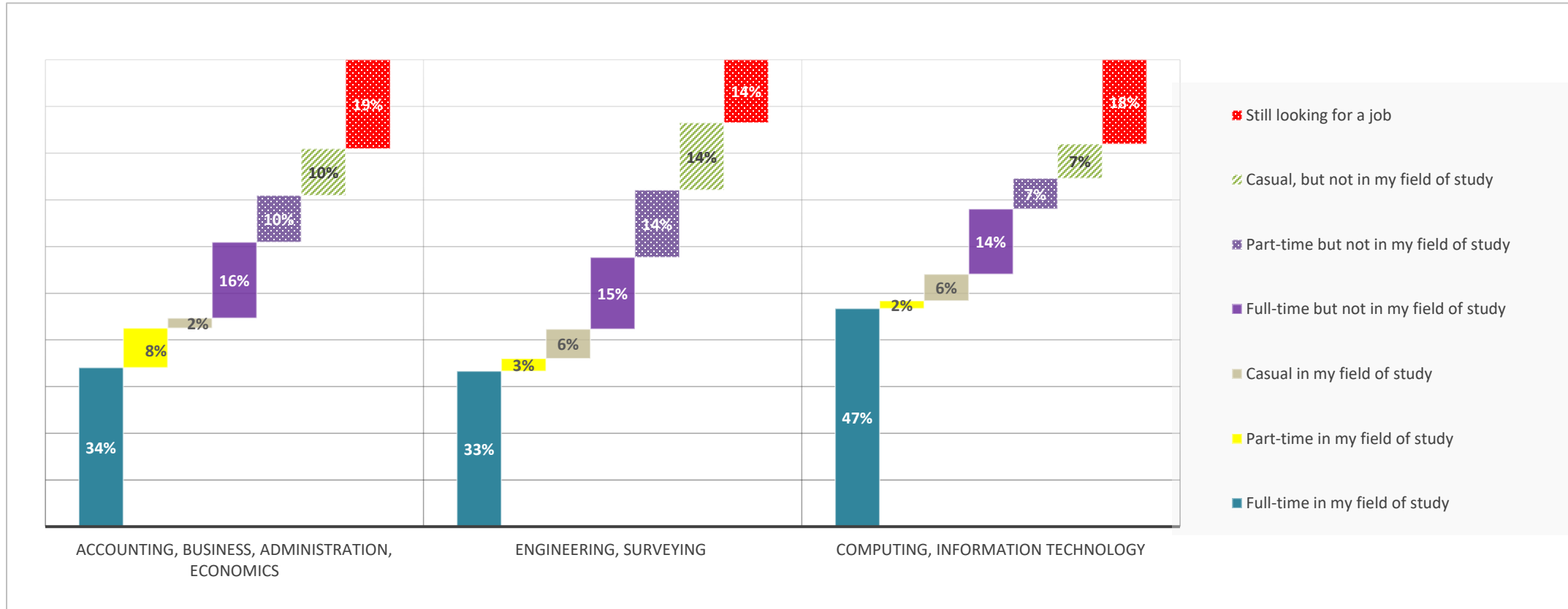


Current employment status for those staying in Australia

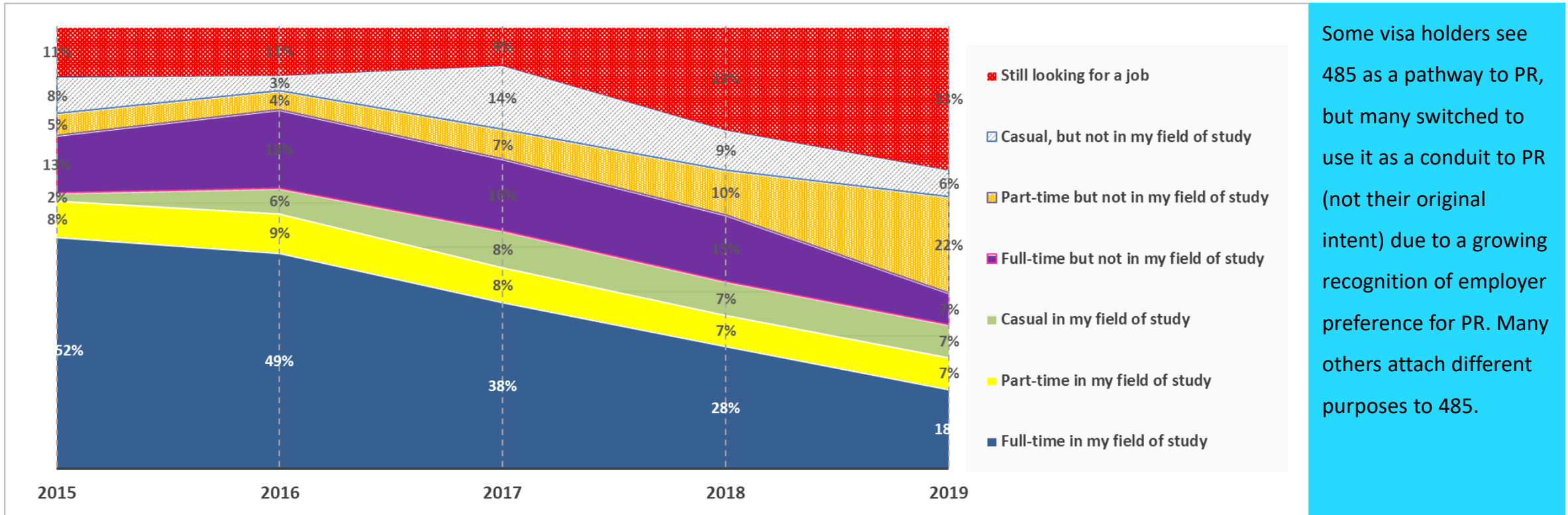


Only **36 per cent** of current and past visa holders who stayed in Australia secured full-time employment in their field of study, compared to **49 per cent** who returned to their home country.

Participants' employment status in three fields of Accounting, Engineering and IT



Time lapse between Post-graduation and Employment in Australia



Some visa holders see 485 as a pathway to PR, but many switched to use it as a conduit to PR (not their original intent) due to a growing recognition of employer preference for PR. Many others attach different purposes to 485.

(n=814)

Question for audience

What are three factors that most negatively affect international students'/graduates' job application?


Key factors impacting employment status



 *impact positively*  *impact negatively*


68%  | 6% 
English proficiency level

49%  | 23% 
Work experience
in Australia



54%  | 23% 
Job seeking skills

43%  | 21% 
Professional networks
in Australia

43%  | 13% 
Networks of friends

47%  | 18% 
Familiarity with the
Australian market

23%  | 21% 
Cultural background

28%  | 49% 
Visa status

Constraints



- ❖ Employers are unclear about 485 visa or prefer PR/citizenship
- ❖ Employers' misconceptions
- ❖ Using visa label to filter: "restricted work visa" vs "unrestricted work visa"
- ❖ Visible and invisible exclusion: Job ads "Full-time Permanent" "Full-time Ongoing"
- ❖ Temporary status of the visa
- ❖ "Best Fit"
- ❖ Lack of continuing support from institutions
- ❖ Illusion that the temporary graduate visa is an easy pathway to PR.
- ❖ Tran et al., (2019, 2020)

“The 485 visa does provide a potential pathway to employment with local companies. Yet, successfully securing one appears to be a slim chance in reality. As local companies are not well educated or aware of the visa, they are often not prepared to employ the holder. In fact, some even exclude 485 visa holders from the initial hiring process implicitly.” (International graduate)

International student graduates

- ✓ Young, highly qualified and global competent workforce
- ✓ Educated in Australian Universities
- ✓ Multilingual capabilities
- ✓ Transnational knowledge and skills
- ✓ International experiences
- ✓ Transnational networks
- **Contribute to tax revenues but not entitled to subsidised gov services > net income to the economy**
- Has Australia **really tapped on** this pool of talent to deliver benefits to its economy and society?
- A range of initiatives to support international students and graduates to enhance employability and employment outcomes.
- Employers who have prior experience in recruiting IS are willing to do so again.

Thank you for listening!

Best Practice IS Engagement project:

Website: <https://www.isengagement.org>

Contact: best-practice-ise@deakin.edu.au

Post-study work rights:

Infographic: https://wordpress-ms.deakin.edu.au/redi/wp-content/uploads/sites/260/2023/02/Impact_of_Post_Study_Work_Rights_in_Australia_Infographics.pdf

Report: <https://wordpress-ms.deakin.edu.au/redi/wp-content/uploads/sites/260/2023/02/Temporary-graduatification-Final-report.pdf>



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Australian Government (2023). Student visa and Temporary Graduate visa program report. Department of Home Affairs.

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Tran, L. T., Rahimi, M., Tan, G., Dang, X. T., & Le, N. (2020). Post-study work for international graduates in Australia: opportunity to enhance employability, get a return on investment or secure migration?. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 18(5), 495-510

Tran, L., Rahimi, M. & Tan, G. (2019). Temporary Graduatification: Impacts of Post-Study Work Rights Policy in Australia. REDI: Deakin University.

Tran, L., Tan, G. & Rahimi, M. (2019). Australia's temporary graduate visa attracts international students but many find it hard to get work in their field. *The Conversation*. 30 September 2019.