

Australian independent higher education providers dominate national student experience survey

Independent providers ranked highest by students for education quality

- **Australia's higher education students have ranked Independent providers as the top 25 higher education institutions for quality of educational experience**
- The federal government's QILT surveys assess student rankings of the quality of their educational experience across a range of measures including: Skills Development, Teaching Quality, Learner Engagement and Learning Resources
- In the 2020 survey students ranked independent providers:
 - 25 of the top 25 for **Overall Quality**
 - 25 of the top 25 for **Student Support**
 - 24 of the top 25 for **Skills Development**
 - 23 of the top 25 for **Learning Resources**
 - 23 of the top 25 for **Teaching Quality**
 - 23 of the top 25 for **Learner Engagement**
- 41 Australian universities and 92 Non-University Higher Education Institutions (NUHEIs) participated in the 2020 Student Experience Survey.

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) welcomes today's release of the 2020 Student Experience Survey (SES) as part of the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) survey program, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

"QILT survey results are highly respected by higher education providers as quality is assessed directly by students and independent of their educational institution. The 2020 quality survey results reinforce the strength of independent higher education providers in delivering a high-quality student experience across all quality indicators for student experience," said IHEA CEO, Simon Finn.

"Australia's recognised world class higher education system includes the highest quality independent providers who deliver an education experience that students rate highly for teaching excellence, skills development and learner engagement. These are critical attributes of an education that leads to employability and career success."

The 2020 QILT results reflect the high rate of growth in student enrolments with independent providers with growth in enrolments, outstripping public university enrolments. During the period 2012-2017 enrolments in independent institutions grew by 38% compared to a 14.3% growth at public institutions.

Australia's independent sector higher education students are choosing an education experience for the quality the sector delivers.

[Independent Higher Education Providers rise to the challenges of COVID-19](#)

"Today's QILT results show that independent providers responded to the needs of students during a very difficult 2020 when the education sector was hit hard by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mr Finn.

"The COVID-19 pandemic caused closure of campuses and required providers to transition their teaching and learning environments to online delivery. This created major challenges for providers and students across the tertiary sector."

“The response of independent higher education providers to the COVID-19 impacts demonstrates the core focus of the independent sector to deliver on what students need most – high quality learning and teaching. The results also indicate the commitment of independent providers to supporting students to succeed.”

In the 2020 QILT survey the top 25 institutions for Student Support are all independent providers. When asked to rate Teaching Quality, students reported independent institutions in 24 of the top 25 rankings.

The biggest increase in QILT rankings of independent providers was student assessment of the quality of Learning Resources at their institution. In 2020 independent providers ranked 23 of the top 25 scores (92%) on this measure, an improvement on 2019 results where independent providers scored 13 of the top 25 (52%).

“Improved rankings of Learning Resources in the independent sector demonstrates the determination of independent institutions to continue quality teaching and learning through the challenges of 2020.”

“With students unable to attend campus and make use of all of the ancillary benefits of campus life, their core focus remains on their continuing ability to learn and succeed in their studies. The 2020 QILT results show that independent providers deliver the essential learning resources to ensure a quality student experience.”

“Improved student experience ratings for independent providers during one of the most difficult of years demonstrates the benefits of the independent higher education sector, which has swiftly pivoted and tailored course delivery to meet the changing demands of both students and the economy.”

IHEA Member Institutions – Quality Providers

IHEA represents Australia’s high-quality independent higher education providers and congratulates members on their rankings by students in the 2020 QILT survey.

IHEA Members continue to improve their rankings, with 21 of the top 25 places for overall student experience in 2020, up from 17 in 2019. The year-on-year results (2019-2020) show an increase across all QILT categories, the most notable being in Learning Resources where the number of IHEA Members in the top 25 jumped from 10 to 20.

2020 QILT students survey results rank IHEA member institutions:

- 21 of the top 25 for **Overall Quality**
- 21 of the top 25 for **Teaching Quality**
- 21 of the top 25 for **Student Support**
- 20 of the top 25 for **Learning Resources**
- 19 of the top 25 for **Skills Development**
- 19 of the top 25 for **Learner Engagement**

“We congratulate all Australian higher education institutions for continuing to work hard to support students during these very difficult circumstances.”

IHEA CEO, Simon Finn is available for further comment on request.

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Appendix – QILT Result Tables for Independent Sector

About IHEA

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) is a peak body representing Australia's high quality independent higher education providers. Independent higher education employs more than 25,000 Australians and educates 145,000 domestic and international students. Find out more at iheau.edu.au.

Overall Quality				
	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%
2020	25	100	21	84 (+16)
2019	24	96	17	68

	Skills Development				Learner Engagement				Teaching Quality			
	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%
2020	23	92	19	76 (+8)	23	92	19	76 (+12)	24	96	21	84 (+16)
2019	23	92	17	68	23	92	16	64	23	92	17	68

	Student Support				Learning Resources			
	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%	Independent Providers in TOP 25 scores	%	IHEA Members in TOP 25 scores	%
2020	25	100	21	84 (+8)	23	92	20	80 (+40)
2019	25	100	19	76	13	52	10	40

Number	Improved Result for Independent Providers 19-20	Independent providers = Independent HEPS (NUHEI) & Independent Universities (Table B). Does not include Public (Table A) Universities and TAFE Colleges
Number	Unchanged Result for Independent Providers 19-20	

Please note:

The survey results contain university data for 2020 alone and NUHEI data for 2020 and 2019 combined. Although the data being used for two years for the NUHEIs will have softened the negative impacts of COVID on the results for independent providers, the longer-term trend of positive results for the NUHEIs held up in 2020 and this shows that independent providers offered students a quality experience even in the difficulties of COVID.