

HOME AND AWAY:
TERTIARY APPLICATIONS ACROSS STATE BOUNDARIES

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The Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admissions Centres (ACTAC)'s analysis of 1990 tertiary admissions data indicated that some 16,000 persons applied in more than one State. There were net applicant inflows to

Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia and a net outflow from Queensland. Over 82% of the applicants received an offer somewhere.

The paper reports on progress on a replication of the 1990 study at a greater level of detail, giving attention to level of prior qualifications, age and gender of applicants. Variations in patterns are addressed.

Implications of cross-State applications for estimating unmet demand for tertiary entry and for State-of-Origin considerations in enrolment planning are also addressed.

The level of demand for entry to undergraduate courses in higher education has been a matter of public interest for some years, particularly with rising participation rates in Australian secondary schools. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has for some years published reports on the level of demand, with a particular interest in the level of "unmet" demand by qualified applicants willing to commence studies but unable to be accommodated in any relevant course of study.

Drawing upon AVCC data from State admissions centres on the number of applicants, and the number unsuccessful, Table 1 and Table 2 summarise the applications for entry over the past five years and the percentage of applicants receiving no offer, by State.

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Table 1: "Qualified" Applicants for 1988-92 Entry, by State Admissions Centres

Year	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Other	TOTAL	No Offer	% No Offer
1988	65,188	73,418	74,817	18,021	119,238	18,060	186,151	198,676	28%
1989	68,060	77,418	74,817	18,021	119,238	18,060	186,151	27%	27%
1990	68,060	77,418	74,817	18,021	119,238	18,060	186,151	25%	25%
1991	68,060	77,418	74,817	18,021	119,238	18,060	186,151	30%	30%
1992	68,060	77,418	74,817	18,021	119,238	18,060	186,151	42.9%	42.9%

Source: Cameron, Pope and McClelland, 1991; AVCC, 1992.

Table 2: "Qualified" Applicants Receiving No Offer 1988-92, by State Admissions Centres

Year	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Other	TOTAL	% No Offer
1988	30%	25%	28%	36%	25%	25%	32%	53%
1989	30%	25%	28%	36%	25%	25%	32%	53%
1990	30%	25%	28%	36%	25%	25%	32%	53%
1991	30%	25%	28%	36%	25%	25%	32%	53%
1992	30%	25%	28%	36%	25%	25%	32%	53%

Source: Cameron, Pope and McClelland, 1991; AVCC, 1992.

Queensland had the highest "unsuccessful" rate, averaging over 30% of applicants, although Victorian figures for 1992 show 53% unsuccessful for a new high. There are variations across the statewide admissions centres as to the type of university courses applicants can gain entry. For example in South Australia graduates can apply for entry to a range of graduate and postgraduate courses as well as external courses. The level of state spending for Associate Diploma courses in TAFE varies from state to state, for example there were 15,530 new students enrolled in Associate Diploma and Diploma courses in NSW in 1991. These factors aside this study does make a significant contribution to understanding across state applications.

Movement across State boundaries to study in institutions of higher education is not particularly common in Australia. DEET figures for 1991, for example, show that 90% of Australian residents in higher education are studying in their State of permanent home

residence. Figures for students commencing higher education in 1991 continue this pattern.

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When enrolments are expressed, however, as persons per thousand of the 17f64-year-old population cohort, the State figures range from 54 in Victoria (VIC) and 50 in Western Australia (WA) to 46 for Queensland (QLD) and South Australia (SA), 44 for New South Wales (NSW) and 40 for Tasmania (TAS), with a national average of 48 per thousand.

If overseas students, nursing courses and other non-Commonwealth funded courses are excluded, the DEET "State-of-Origin" figures showing for each State the persons per thousand of the 17f64 population cohort who are studying anywhere in Australia in higher education give a national average of 45 (with 49 in VIC, 45 in each of WA and QLD, 44 in SA, 42 in NSW and 40 in TAS). Each of the figures is approximately 3 per thousand higher than the 1990 figure.

Participation rates (by State of participation and by State-of-Origin) are matters of considerable financial importance in State-Commonwealth negotiations regarding higher education enrolments. Substantial arguments have been made on why a State with a participation rate below the national level should not be funded for an increase, while arguments are also made on why funds for the higher education of students resident in one State should be provided for their education in another State rather than the home State. In this context, the level of "home and away" application by intending higher education students is a matter deserving further attention.

The Directors of State admissions centres investigated the extent of interstate application

and enrolment offers for 1990. Their figures, summarised in Table 3, indicate a net inflow of some 3,500 applications to VIC from other States, 2,800 to NSW and 1,800 to SA, while there is a net outflow of some 350 applications from QLD (where it was typically more difficult to gain entry). The ACTAC data also show that 14% of QLD and NSW residents applying interstate received no offer in either their home State or another State, compared with 11% of Victorians and South Australians and 9% for Western Australians.

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Table 3: Interstate Applications and Offers, 1990

Home State	Applied from Other States	Applied Interstate	Net Applicant Inflow	No Offer
NSW	5,829	3,028	2,801	14%
VIC	3,962	3,403	522	11%
QLD	3,066	3,420	-354	14%
WA	780	747	69	6%
SA	1,974	1,621	812	11%

Source: Cameron, Pope and McClelland, 1991.

Cameron, McClelland and Pope (1991) analysed data for the 1988-90 admissions period for the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) which indicated that 80% of unsuccessful applicants in any one year do not re-apply. Of those who do re-apply,

however, some three-quarters receive an offer, which some 85% of the offer recipients accept (although it may not have been one of their more highly preferred courses).

Their survey of unsuccessful applicants found that more than half of unsuccessful applicants for 1990 were in employment in mid-1990 (with more than half still in the employment they held when applying). Over 10% had returned to full-time secondary education and some 17% were studying in QLD or interstate post-secondary education institutions. (Many of these had sought to change courses, while others had obtained a [better] offer interstate.) Some two-thirds intended to apply in the near future (although 20% had been the typical pattern to that time), while those not intending to re-apply gave as their reasons their poor prospects of success, their satisfaction with current employment, or a belief that TAFE offered better prospects. A variety of reasons related to employment and family pressures, and the pointlessness of applying, were also given as reasons for not intending to re-apply.

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Demand for entry to higher education has grown rapidly since 1990. Of the 200,000 students commencing higher education in Australia in 1991, over 60,000 did so in NSW. The Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) for NSW and ACT had made enrolment offers to more than 58,000 of its applicants for that year, of whom over 6,800 (or 8%) were from outside NSW, including some 6,500 interstate school-leavers. Over 3,000 of the interstate applicants to NSW for 1991 entry were from QLD (and over 2,100 of them received an

offer, including 1,350 school-leavers). Some 85% of the QLD applicants receiving a NSW offer were under 20 years of age.

Half of the more than 2,100 Victorian applicants for 1991 entry in NSW were school-leavers and two-thirds received an offer. Two-thirds of the Victorian applicants receiving a NSW offer were under 20 years of age. Of the some 300 applicants from each of WA and SA receiving an offer in NSW (of the some 500 applying from each State), however, only about half were aged under 20 years.

For 1992 entry in NSW, over 7,500 (or 8%) of the 97,000 applicants were from outside NSW. While applications from QLD and VIC increased by some 10% and 20% respectively, the numbers of offers to VIC remained steady while those to QLD declined by 10%. Applications from WA declined by 10% and offers by 30%. Applications from SA remained steady, but offers fell by 15%.

Of the more than 52,000 applicants for study in QLD in 1991, over 5,600 (or 11%) were from outside the State, including some 3,500 from NSW, 750 from VIC, over 250 from SA and over 200 from WA. Over 50% of the interstate applicants received an offer (which was declined by 15%, deferred by 5%, accepted but not taken up by 5%, and led to enrolment [at census date] by 25%).

Of the some 3,500 NSW applicants for QLD entry in 1991, two-thirds were under the age of 20, almost 80% were under the age of 25, and for some two-thirds the highest academic qualification was matriculation. Some 10% had completed a diploma or degree. Some 28% accepted an offer and enrolled, 6% deferred, 6% accepted but did not enrol, and 17% declined the offer.

Of the some 65,000 applicants for study in QLD in 1992, over 7,000 (or 11%) were from outside the State, including some 4,250 from NSW, 1,200 from VIC, 300 from each of SA and WA, and 200 from TAS. Over 45% received an offer (declined by 15%, deferred by 5%, accepted but not taken up by 7%, and leading to enrolment by over 21%). Almost one-third of the applicants were under 20 years of age, and half aged under 25.

Of the NSW applicants to QLD, however, two-thirds were again under 20 and 80% were under 25. Half the Victorian applicants were under 20 and 80% were under 25. For interstate applicants, matriculation on completion of Year 12 was by far the most common highest qualification.

It should be noted that the UAC and QTAC did not use a common definition of applicants' State of permanent home address (for NSW, the postcode of the applicant's address when the application was made is taken; while for QTAC, the postcode is for the applicant's permanent home address). With the co-operation of Directors of admissions centres, action is proceeding to match on name, date of birth, gender by computer and by manual inspection of records as necessary, so as to permit a replication of the 1990 study. At this stage however, it is not possible to indicate how many applicants applied to all admissions centres (125 had done so for 1991 entry) although the earlier finding that the greatest incidence of cross-State application occurred between NSW and QLD and NSW and VIC (proportionately as well as absolutely) has again emerged.

Although directors of state admissions centres have co-operated extensively in seeking to have their data more comparable, there remain extensive differences in the scope, design, and operations of their systems, consistent with variations in the complexity of Year 12 results reporting in the various States, inter-institutional relationships and level of co-operation, and (it would appear) the level of political interest in unmet

demand in various
regions.

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While increases in cross-State applications (and cross-State enrolments) can be expected with the continuing mismatch between the higher education demand and supply across Australia, economic imperatives suggest that States will continue to pressure the Commonwealth for funding of the higher education needs of their citizens within State boundaries.

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