

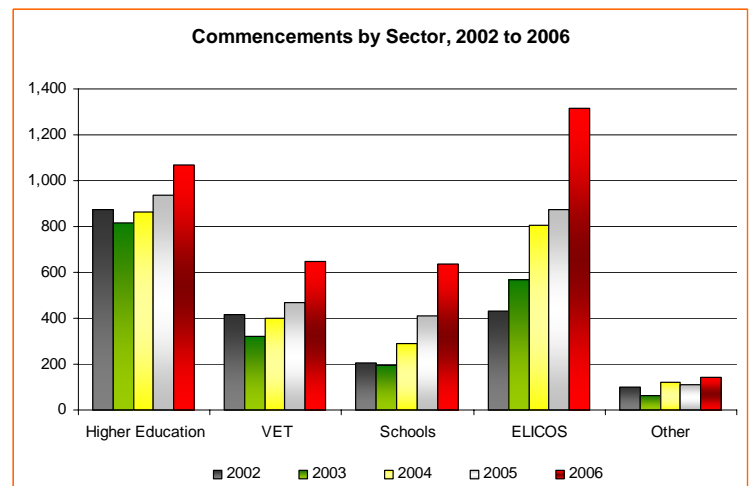


Vietnam

Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organisation has set a milestone in its economic and investment performance. It remains one of the fastest growing economies in the region with 8.17% growth in 2006. In 2007 so far, total foreign development investment broke the record of US\$ 5.2 billion; the stock market is booming and Vietnam has announced it will be a middle income country by 2010. Although still a poor country, a significant number of people can increasingly afford an international education experience. By year-to-date (YTD) April 2007, Vietnam had double digit student growth with a 36% increase on the same period the previous year. Recent positive changes to visa assessment levels in the higher education and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sectors effective from 14 May 2007 are expected to add to this growth. Visa approval rates for prospective students are over 90%. Recent visa figures suggest growth is significantly higher for end of May 2007 over the same period last year particularly for the South (from Danang down). Our major competitors (UK, USA, Singapore, Europe, etc.) also report substantial increases, however Australia remains the leading English speaking destination.

Higher Education (HE)

In YTD April 2007 enrolment growth for Vietnam was 19% while commencement growth was 39.7% over the same period last year. Although the largest sector for Vietnamese student enrolments to Australia, it showed slower growth compared to the others. Positive changes in student visa assessment levels to AL2 and AL1 (postgraduate research) should help growth. 'Business Administration, Management', 'Computer Science, Information System' and 'Engineering, Surveying' continue to be the most popular fields of study for Vietnamese students although increased interest is noted in 'Nursing' and 'Medical Science, Medicine'. HE is the most fiercely competitive sector with the UK, US and Singapore very active. There are also increasing in-country delivery options including RMIT Vietnam, and joint/twinning/sandwich arrangements by other Australian and foreign tertiary providers.



Vocational Education & Training (VET)

Vietnam has achieved an increase of 55.6% in YTD enrolments for April 2007 compared to the same period last year with a total number of 1,126 students. Recent visa figures indicate that growth is set to go even higher. Although assessment levels remain the same for VET, high growth is expected to continue as VET courses remain a favoured pathway for Vietnamese students. A strong rise in interest in permanent residency and skilled migration has also been noted.

More enrolments from Vietnam in the VET sector are in Victoria and New South Wales. Growth has also been noted for South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland from smaller bases.

Schools

With 1,352 students enrolled, Vietnam has performed very well in the schools sector becoming the third largest schools market in Australia with strong growth of 59.4% in enrolments and 88.8% in commencements by YTD April 2007. The strong schools sector is also an important factor for the vocational education and training and higher education sectors. The Austrade Schools exhibition organised in May 2007 attracted large interest from parents especially in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). There are an increasing number of in-country international schools being set up attracting Vietnamese students that could be viewed as either competitors or possible feeders.

English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS*)

Vietnam moved to ninth position for ELICOS with YTD enrolments for April 2007 showing a 60% growth over the same period last year. The majority of Vietnamese students study a packaged programme. The new Assessment Level three for independent ELICOS with no International English Language Testing System requirement should drive even greater growth for this sector. Ability to pay for stand-alone short English courses will however, remain a factor. In-country delivery continues to grow with expansion of Australian invested centres in Hanoi, HCMC and emerging Danang. High interest in overseas summer study has been noted in Vietnam with Singapore being the strongest competitor to Australia.

* ELICOS students in Australia on a student visa only. A 2005 *English Australia* survey found that about half of all ELICOS students in Australia are on a student visa. For further information about international education in Vietnam, contact Bettina Cooke, Counsellor (Education, Science & Training) at Bettina.Cooke@aei.gov.au or consult AEI Online <https://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/CurrentMarketInformation/ByCountry/default.htm>.