

English as a Second Language Enrolments

Key Points

The number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students attending independent schools in Queensland increased slightly in 2020, following a significant decrease in ESL enrolments in the previous year. Just under half of independent schools (48% of schools) catered for these ESL students in 2020, compared to a peak of nearly 60% of schools having enrolled ESL students in 2015.

Since 2013 there has been an overarching pattern of reductions in ESL enrolments at independent schools, when ESL enrolments represented 5.1% of all enrolments at independent schools. In 2020 only 3.3% of students attending independent schools were ESL students.

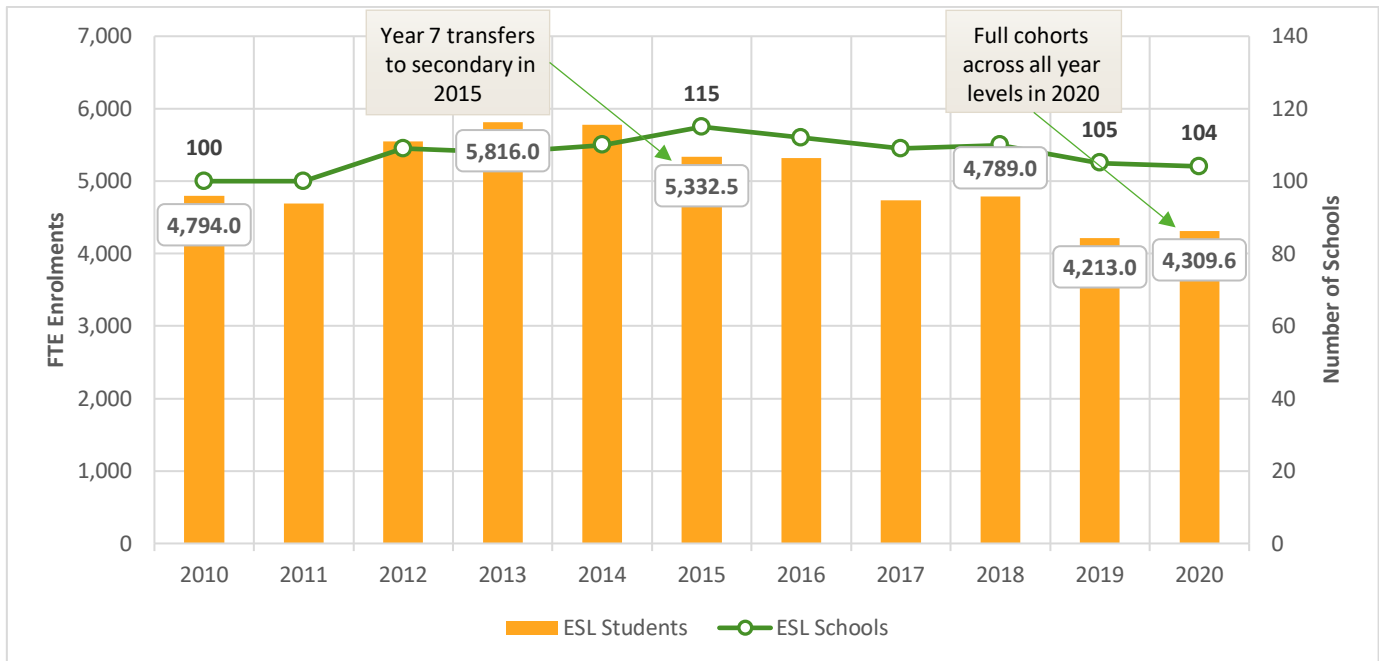
Highest ESL enrolments are in lower primary, with more than one-quarter of ESL students (27%) in 2020 enrolled in either Prep or Year 1, while only 3% of Year 12 students were ESL students.

Three schools enrolled more than 150 ESL students, together catering for just over one-third (34%) of ESL student enrolments at independent schools, while in seven schools ESL students represented more than 50% of each school's total enrolments.

Enrolments

In 2020 the independent school sector catered for 4,309.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) ESL student enrolments, an increase from 4,213.0 ESL student enrolments in 2019. This increase of 96.6 FTE ESL enrolments is equivalent to a 2.3% increase in enrolments (refer Figure 1). This contrasts with the previous year, from 2018 to 2019, when ESL enrolments decreased by 12.0% (-576 enrolments).

Figure 1: ESL Student Enrolments & Number of Schools Attended, 2010-20



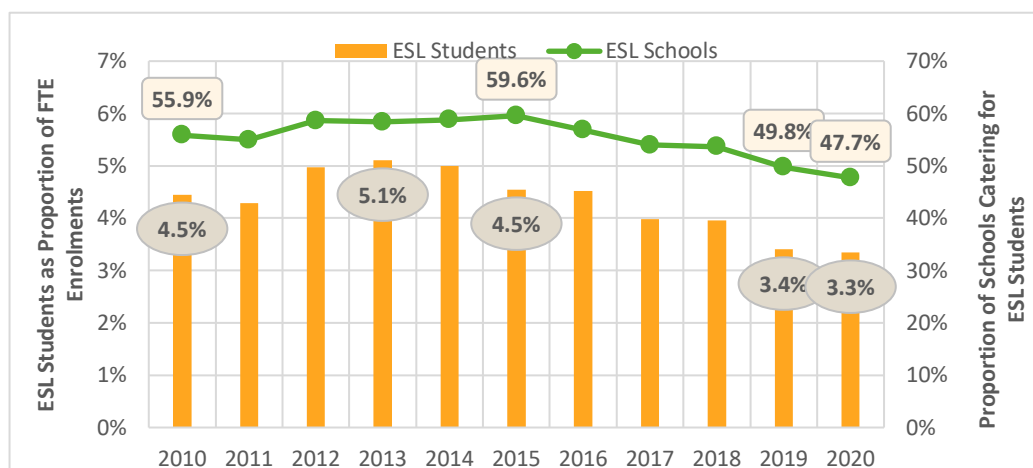
Over the period from 2010 to 2020, ESL enrolments decreased by 484, which represents a 10% decrease in the number of FTE enrolments over the ten-year-period. In the interim period however, enrolments increased to reach a peak of 5,816 in 2013 before enrolments present a general pattern of decline.

ESL students in 2020 were catered for by 104 independent schools, one fewer than the number of schools that enrolled ESL students in 2019. In preceding years, from 2010 to 2018 the number of independent schools catering for ESL students ranged from 100 to 115 (refer Figure 1).

In 2020 ESL student enrolments represented 3.3% of all ESL enrolments at independent schools, down from a peak of 5.1% in 2013 (refer Figure 2).

Similarly, over the last ten years the proportion of independent schools that have enrolled ESL students has reduced. In 2020 nearly 48% of independent schools enrolled ESL students. This is a decrease from nearly 60% of independent schools in 2020 catering for ESL students in 2015.

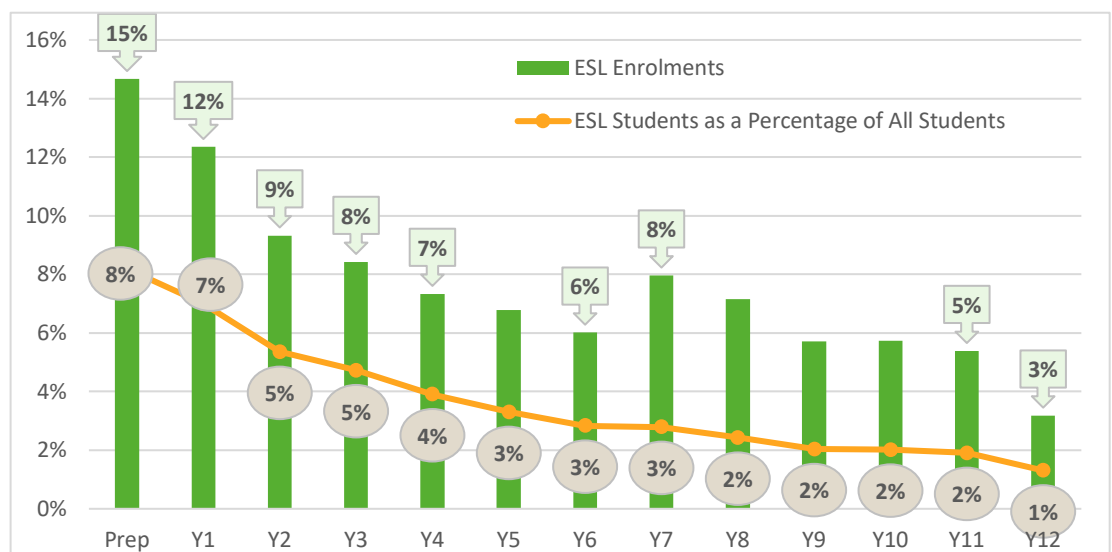
Figure 2: ESL Student and School Share of Independent School Enrolments and Schools, 2010-2020



More ESL students are primary students than secondary students. Overall, 64.9% of ESL enrolments are in primary year levels and 35.1% of ESL enrolments are in secondary year levels. This compares to primary year levels representing 44.0% of all enrolments at independent schools in 2020 and secondary year levels representing 56.0% of all enrolments at independent schools in 2020.

Figure 3: Distribution of ESL Students and All Students at Independent Schools by Year Level, 2020

When year levels are considered it is evident that highest numbers of ESL students are enrolled in lower primary years, with ESL students representing 8% of all Prep students attending independent schools, reducing through to only 1% of all Year 12 students (refer Figure 3).



This pattern is also similar when the distribution of ESL by year level is considered. Higher proportions of ESL students are evidenced in lower primary year levels, with 36% of ESL students enrolled in Prep to Year 2 (15% of Prep students, 12% of Year 1 students and 9% of Year 2 students) (refer Figure 3). In comparison, only 18% of all students attending independent schools are enrolled in Prep to Year 2. Lowest proportions of ESL students are in secondary year levels, with only 3% of ESL students enrolled in Year 12 compared to 8% of all independent school students being enrolled in Year 12.

Size of ESL Enrolments at Schools

Of the 104 schools catering for ESL students in 2020, only one school catered for more than 300 ESL students and a further two schools catered for more than 150 students to 300 ESL students (refer Table 1). These three schools catered for just over one-third (34%) of ESL student enrolments at independent schools. A further 47% of ESL students attended one of 23 schools where ESL student enrolments ranged from more than 50 students to 150 students. The balance of ESL students, 30% of ESL students, attended one of 78 schools where ESL student enrolments totalled 50 or fewer students.

Table 1: Size of ESL Student Enrolments, 2020

ESL Enrolment	Schools		Total ESL Enrolment	
	No.	%	No.	%
>0-5	22	21%	51.6	1%
>5-10	10	10%	84	2%
>10-25	28	27%	496	12%
>25-50	18	17%	652	15%
>50-100	16	15%	1163	27%
>100-150	7	7%	844	20%
>150-300	2	2%	478	11%
>300	1	1%	541	13%
Total	104	100.0%	4,310	100.0%

Table 2: ESL Student Enrolments as a Percentage of Each Schools' Total Enrolment, 2020

ESL Proportion of Total School Enrolment	Schools		Total ESL Enrolment	
	No.	%	No.	%
0%	114	52.3%	0	0.0%
>0-2.5%	45	20.6%	482	11.2%
>2.5-5.0%	21	9.6%	683	15.8%
>5-10%	21	9.6%	1,175	27.3%
>10-25%	8	3.7%	687	15.9%
>25-50%	2	0.9%	163	3.8%
>50-75%	3	1.4%	717	16.6%
>75%-<100%	4	1.8%	403	9.4%
Total	218	100.0%	4,310	100.0%

Over half of independent schools (52.3%) did not cater for ESL students.

ESL students in 2020 represented more than 75% of the schools' total student body in four schools, with another three schools having >50-75% of total enrolments as ESL students (refer Table 2). These seven schools catered for just over a quarter of ESL students (26%). Nearly another 20% of ESL students attended schools where the ESL school component represented at least 10% to 50% of the student body.

In nearly 40% of independent schools (87 schools) ESL students represented 10% or lower proportions of school enrolments, with these schools catering for more than half (54.3%) of all ESL students

Non-Government Sector Representation

Of those ESL students enrolled in non-government schools (independent and Catholic schools) in 2020, independent schools catered for 35.3% of ESL students with the balance of ESL students, 64.7%, attending Catholic schools (refer Figure 4). In the year before, 2019, independent schools catered for 36.0% of ESL students attending non-government schools. This decline in independent market share reflects ESL student enrolments at independent schools increasing from 2019 to 2020, by only 96.6 enrolments, while significant growth occurred in Catholic schools (416.6 students). The net effect was one of 4.4% growth in ESL enrolments in the non-government school sector from 2019 to 2020, and a commensurate increase change in Catholic school market share.

Figure 4: ESL Students by Non-Government School Sector, 2020

