

ACGR Leadership in Graduate Research Program 2021

Thanks for attending!



What is ACGR?

‘Australian Council of Graduate Research Inc’

- Formed from the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Research (DDoGs)
- 46 members from PhD conferring Australian Universities and Colleges
- 13 associate members (mainly NZ Universities plus CSIRO, CAPA, ARTN)
- Peak body for Graduate Research Education and Training



What is ACGR?

The **mission** of the Australian Council of Graduate Research is to promote excellence in graduate research education and training

Areas of Focus

<https://www.acgr.edu.au/about/strategic-plan-2020/>

- Developing and promoting quality research training across the sector
- Interacting with Government and influencing development of policy, standards and reference points related to research training
- Providing a forum for networking and practice sharing between leaders of graduate research nationally
- Engaging with equivalent bodies internationally



Program to support development of new and emerging Leaders in Graduate Research Training

New Deans and Directors of Graduate Research
Associate Deans (Graduate Research)
Postgraduate Coordinators (Directors of HDR)

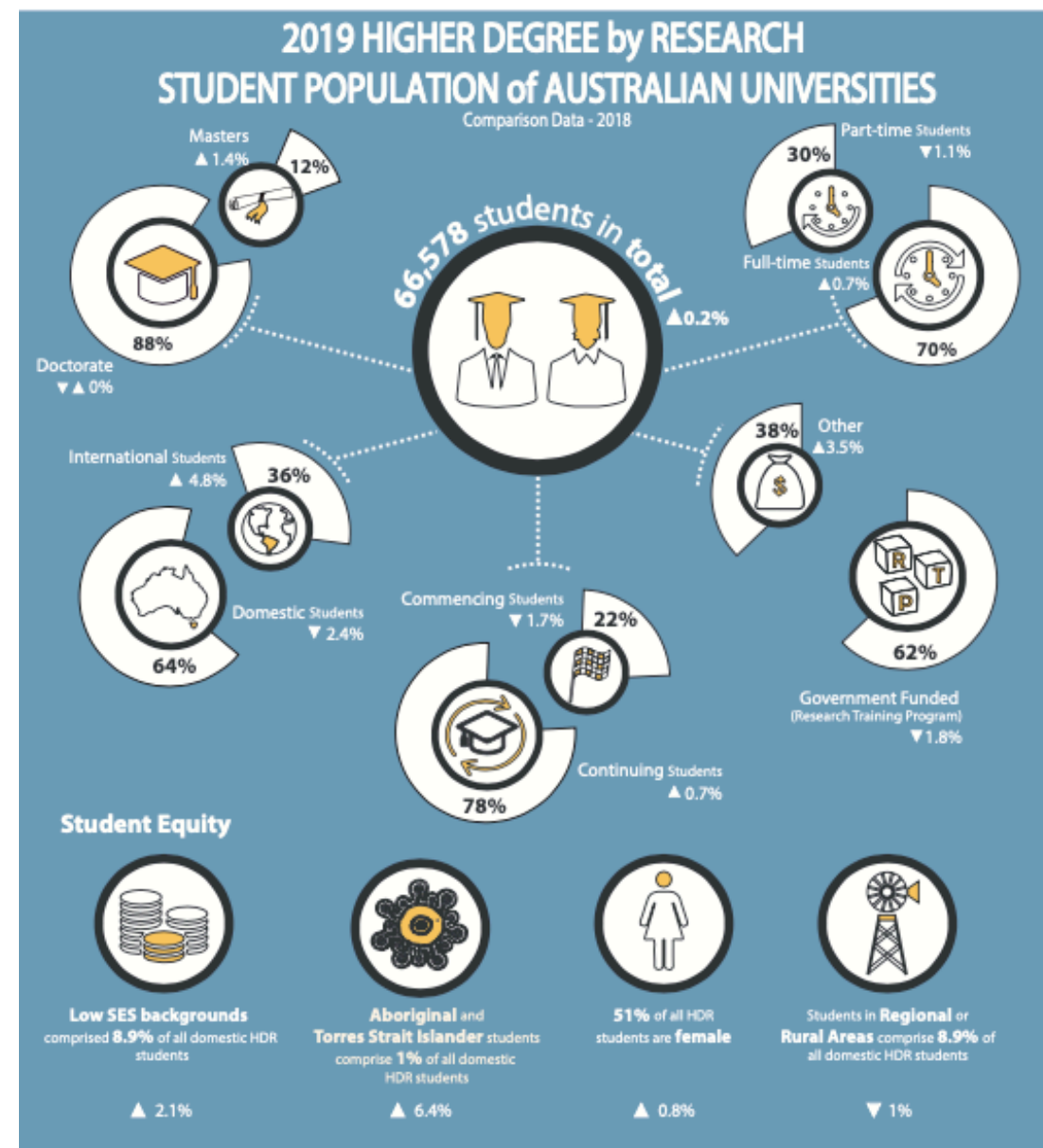
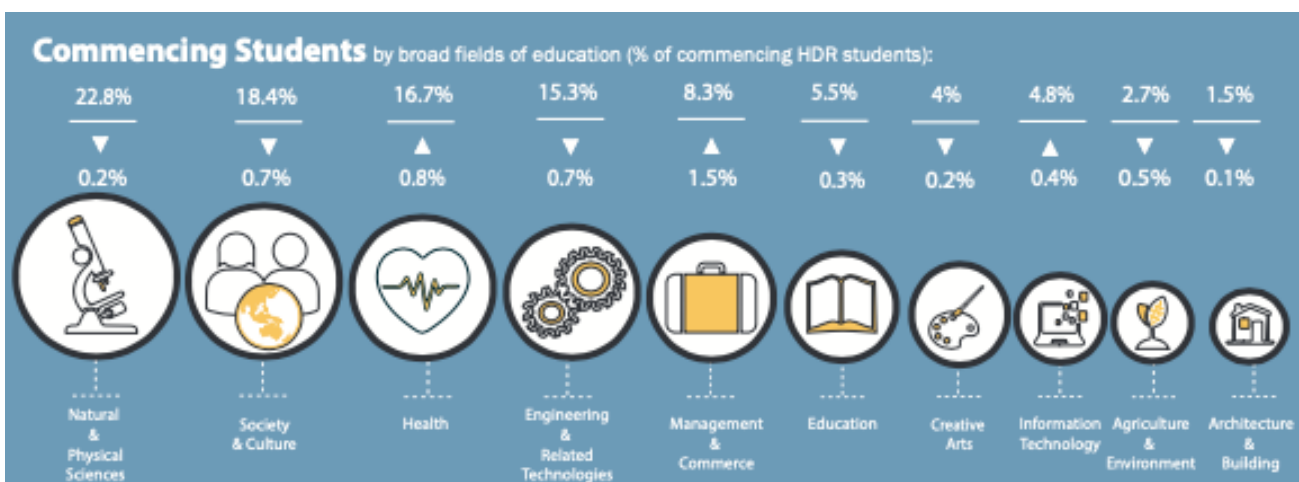
Key leadership positions in an Academic Org Unit

- Promotes a supportive research environment and culture
- Supporting candidate recruitment and progression
- Key partner with Graduate School and other central divisions



Introductions

The Australian HDR Landscape



The Changing Expectations of the PhD in Australia

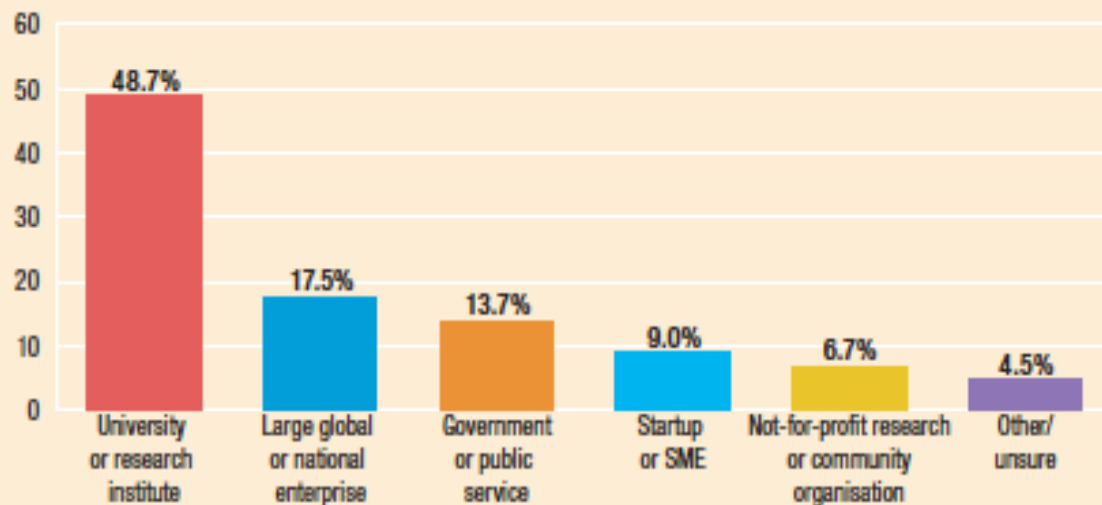
Traditional view:

- PhD is primarily a preparation for an academic career and involves a PhD candidate working with a 'Professor' to produce scholarly/ research outputs (the thesis)

Reality:

- **Australian PhD students have diverse aspirations**

Figure 11: Where do Australia's current PhD students want to work?²⁸



CSIRO
Data 61 &
AMSI
National
Survey of
PhD
students -
2019



ACOLA Review (2016)

(<https://www.education.gov.au/review-australia-s-research-training-system>)

HDR studies should produce graduate researchers who can enter a wide variety of careers (not just academia)

- Focus is on the **person** not (just) their research outputs:
 - development of professional and transferable skills
 - Industry* (end-user) linkages

*= business, government and public sector enterprises, not-for-profit sector, community groups

RTP funding (2017)

- University income driven by completions (50%) and research grants (50%)
- No income for student load
- Weighting for internships (from 2022)?



Candidate Development

- Discussions should be about more than just the research project
- How can we enable candidates to plan their development?



Your Research Degree



Knowledge Transfer
and Strategy



Academic
Development



Commercialisation
and Entrepreneurship



HDR Supervisor Development

- ACOLA Review of Research Training identified key action items to improve the Quality of the HDR Training System (Priority Item 4) - including Advisor Development:
 - Universities (must) have a clear strategy for supervisory professional development
- Chief Scientist has described future expectations in research practice (Finkel, *Nature* **566**, 297 (2019))
 - Training for PhD supervisors in mentoring and fostering a 'healthy research culture'
 - Accredited, practical and respected research training as part of PhD programs



Major challenges

- Managing tension between educational imperatives (HDR candidates are *students and developing early career researchers*) and their role as a key component of the *research workforce*
- Supporting local research culture and advisor-candidate relationships – critical for sense of belonging and resilience
- PhD is a demanding degree – challenges of burn-out, work-life balance, anxiety about future

