

# Australian DP students consistently outperform non-DP students nationally on post-secondary outcomes

## Research summary

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## Introduction

In this study, researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research examined the university outcomes of students who completed the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) in Australia compared to non-DP students nationally. The findings are based on population-level data for both DP and non-DP students who applied to and entered university between 2013 and 2018.

It is important to note that DP and non-DP students differ in notable ways. Specifically, the DP student population in Australia has a higher concentration

of female students, higher-achieving students and students from a higher socio-economic background. To address some of these differences, the researchers compared groups within the populations that are more alike, for example, by gender and socio-economic status (SES).

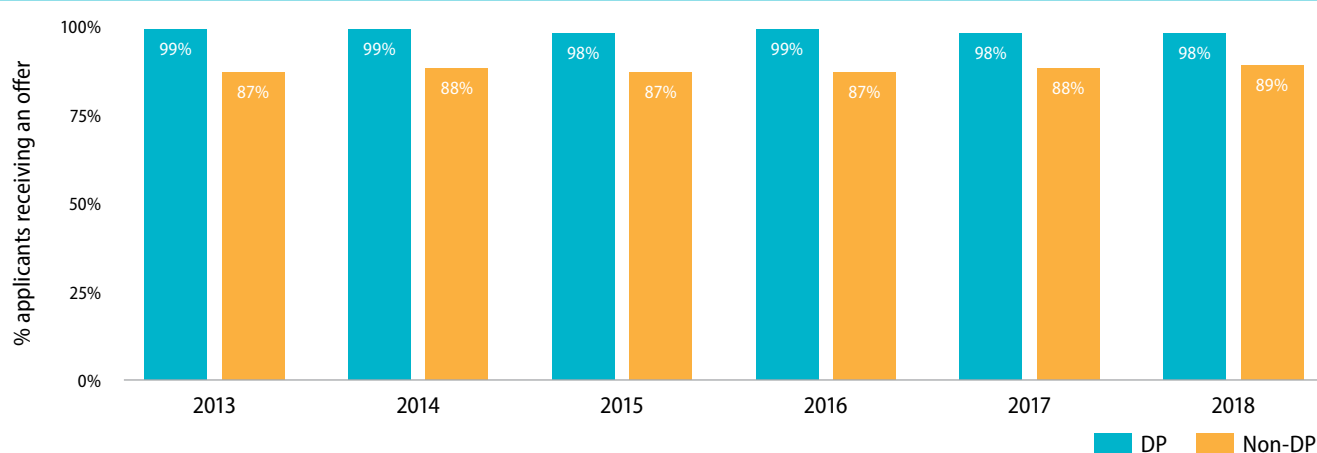
**The study indicates that across all cohorts, DP students gain offers of university admission, continue to their second year of study, and complete university for all check points examined within the study (4 years, 6 years and 9 years after commencement) at significantly higher rates than non-DP students.**

## Findings

### Offers of university admission are significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students

Across all cohorts (2013–2018), almost all DP students who applied for university gained an offer for admittance. As shown in Figure 1, there are statistically significant differences of about 10 percentage points between the DP and non-DP populations each year.

**Figure 1. Offers of university admission were significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students for all cohorts (2013–2018)**

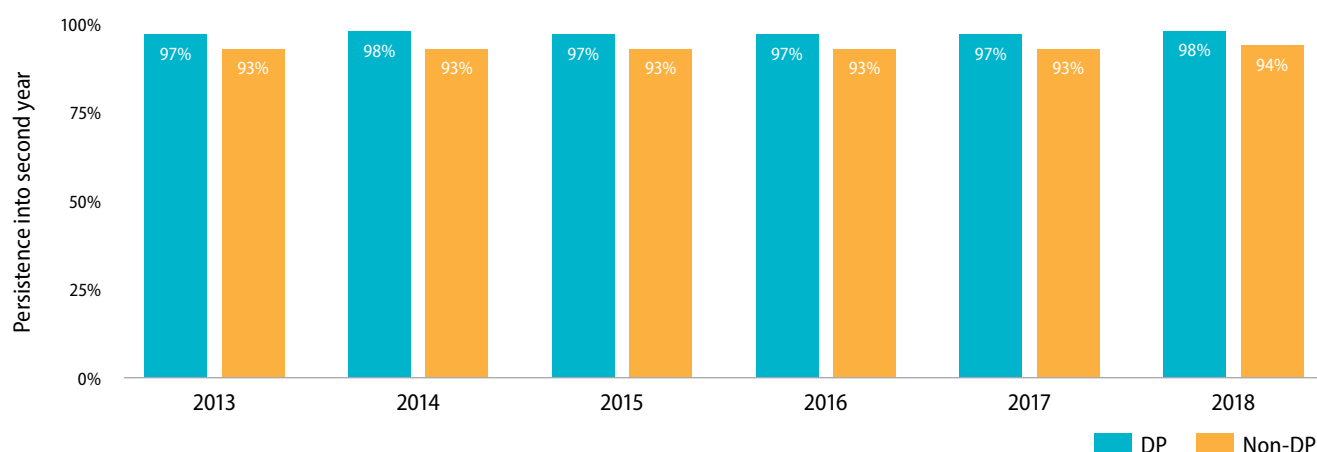


Furthermore, in analyses of outcomes by SES for these cohorts, DP students from low-SES backgrounds tend to gain offers for university admittance at rates similar to those for students from high-SES backgrounds. This pattern is *not* observed in the non-DP population, where success rates differ by SES.

## Persistence rates are significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students

For those who commenced university between 2013 and 2018, almost all DP students continued to their second year of university study. The persistence rate is consistently higher, by about 4 percentage points, for DP students compared to non-DP students (Figure 2). These positive persistence findings for DP students hold even when considering a variety of student characteristics, such as gender and academic achievement, compared to non-DP students.

**Figure 2. Persistence rates were significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students for all cohorts (2013–2018)**

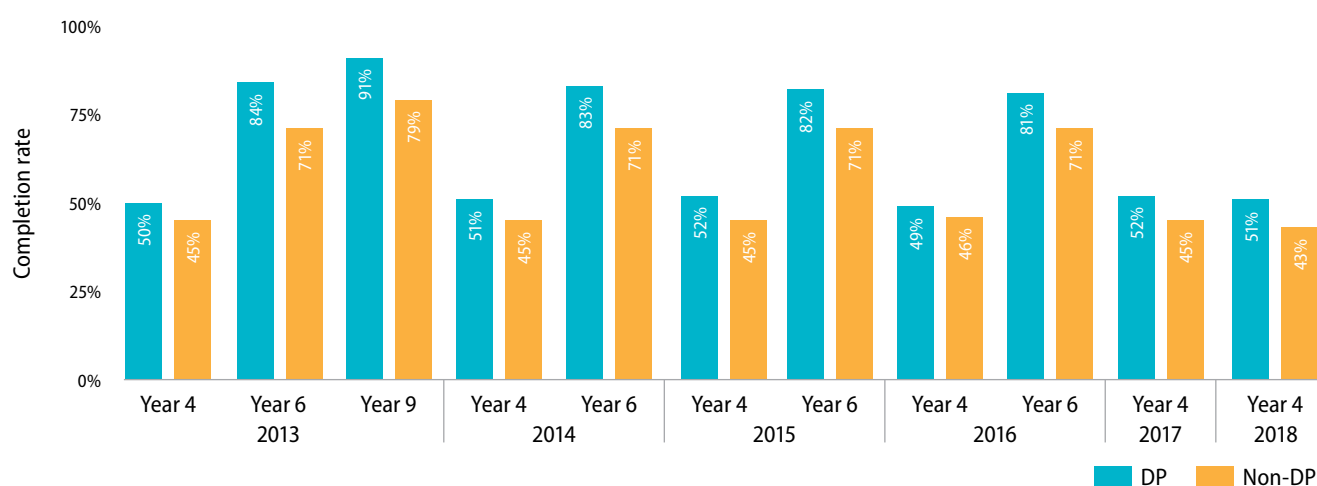


## University completion rates are significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students

Notably, DP students had significantly higher university completion rates than non-DP students for all cohorts (2013–2018) and for all check points examined within the study (4 years, 6 years and 9 years after commencement). As shown in Figure 3:

- **four years after starting university:** completion rates for DP students were around 50% compared to 45% for non-DP students (approximately a 5-percentage point difference)
- **six years after starting university:** completion rates for DP students were around 80% compared to 70% for non-DP students (approximately a 10-percentage point difference)
- **nine years after starting university:** completion rates for DP students were 91% compared to 79% for non-DP students (approximately a 12-percentage point difference).

**Figure 3. University completion rates were significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students for all cohorts (2013–2018) and check points after commencement (4, 6 and 9 years)**



As with other portions of this study, the researchers found that completion rates are higher for DP students across a range of student characteristics.

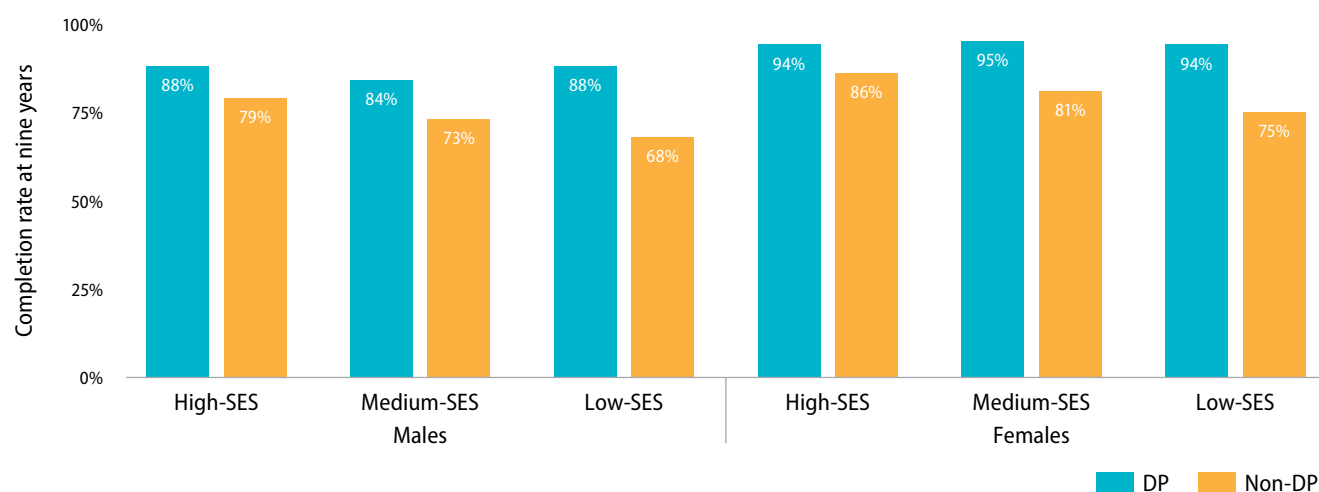
## DP students exhibit an “added layer of benefit” in university outcomes compared to non-DP students

The findings from this study indicate an “added layer of benefit” for DP student groups, which already demonstrate relative high success in the Australian higher education system. For example, persistence and completion rates are already higher for female students compared to male students overall, but they are higher still for female DP students compared to female non-DP students.

Additionally, completing the DP appears to offer an advantage in university completion rates for students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. In all but one case (males from low socio-economic backgrounds), DP students have statistically significant higher completion rates nine years after commencement (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Nine-year university completion rates (2013 cohort) were significantly higher for DP students than for non-DP students in all cases except for males from low socio-economic backgrounds**

*Note.* The result for males from low socio-economic backgrounds was likely not significant due to an imbalance in the sizes of the DP and non-DP groups.



## Summary

The findings from this study demonstrate that DP students consistently and significantly outperform non-DP students in offers of university admission, persistence to the second year of study, and university completion rates. Positive post-secondary outcomes are evident across gender and SES, with DP students from low-SES backgrounds showing similar success to higher-SES peers. Additionally, findings indicate that the DP offers an “added layer of benefit” in university outcomes compared to non-DP students.

This summary was developed by the IB Research department. A copy of the full report is available at: [www.ibo.org/en/research/](http://www.ibo.org/en/research/). For more information on this study or other IB research, please email [research@ibo.org](mailto:research@ibo.org).

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