# State of the Discipline in 2017: Report on the Australian University Heads of English Survey

Nicole Moore with Airlie Lawson and Jayne Regan



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### Introduction

This report seeks to provide an indicative snapshot of the relative size, health and makeup of the English literary studies discipline as it is currently represented in programs or departments in Australian universities. This picture is built on data provided by convenors of English and literary studies programs or departments from Australian universities, and was compiled by the Australian University Heads of English (AUHE) in November 2017.

There remains some variation in the definition of English or literary studies across Australian universities and internationally. The AUHE prioritises principles of inclusion and therefore uses the widest definition of English and literary studies, in so far as that is recognisable and applied within Australian university programs, departments, schools and faculties in practice. On that basis the AUHE did not request data relating to English or literary studies courses offered only to students enrolled in Education degrees (eg at the University of Technology Sydney) or in literary studies offered in languages other than English. Nor have we sourced data from Creative Writing programs that are not combined with some offerings of literary studies (eg at RMIT University). The reporting programs below all offer literary studies defined as such at undergraduate level in Australian universities and conduct research within a broad definition of literary studies in some capacity.

This report collates this data and makes visible relativities between programs across the higher education sector in order to provide some clearer sense of the internal state of the discipline than otherwise available. The main intended readership is the programs themselves. At the same time, this picture has relevance in regard to interdisciplinary connectivity with historically connected subdisciplines or disciplines such as screen, media, journalism and communication studies, cultural studies, tertiary writing skills programs and stand-alone creative writing programs. It is also indicative for larger formations such as the state of the humanities in Australian universities, regional/metropolitan comparators and higher degree training and research.

It is a synchronic rather than diachronic picture in the main, with historical data available to the AUHE only on first year undergraduate enrolments and then only for 2016 and in a limited way 2015. Some final comparisons are entered into to conclude the report and major points of significance drawn out.



### **About the AUHE**

The Australian University Heads of English association is a peak body currently drawing together English and literary studies programs and departments at more than 30 Australian universities, together with existing scholarly associations in the field. We aim to be a forum in which the present and future of literary studies in Australia is discussed and shaped. AUHE's activities address issues such as quality assurance in university teaching, research funding for literary studies, the relationship between English studies in secondary and tertiary education, curricula development as well as pedagogic strategies for teaching literature in English, and the future of the discipline. Membership is available on an institutional basis to representative heads of discipline or convenors of programs from each and every Australian university.

More detail about the AUHE is available here: www.auhe.org.au

# **Data sourcing**

AUHE has been collecting data from its membership since its founding in 2012. An annual survey sent to heads of programs asks for details on undergraduate enrolments, usually confined to first year enrolments, in order to gain a basic sense of the size and health of the discipline. In 2017 we decided to expand the survey to include further details on Honours and Postgraduate enrolments, as well as staffing, to enable a more robust envisioning, especially of the internal relativities of the discipline.

For this report the AUHE requested data on:

- The number of first year enrolments in English and Creative Writing subjects in semesters one and two of 2017
- The number of students expected to graduate with a major in English in 2017
- The number of students enrolled in English honours courses in 2017
- The number of postgraduate enrolments in English studies in 2017, broken down into course work and research enrolments.
- The number of staff and the employment status of staff in English and Literary Studies programs.

The request for data as sent to members is provided as Appendix A.

**Data was returned from 25 separate programs or departments** from 23 universities – UNSW and Notre Dame each provided data from two separate campuses where programs are run independently.



This data represents over half of the approximately 38 definable programs in English or literary studies, including Creative Writing, offered at the 40 Australian universities, and represents programs hosted by a mix of urban, regional, multi-campus, technical and Go8 universities.

### **Reporting Programs**

Australian National University Charles Darwin University **Charles Sturt University Deakin University** Federation University Flinders University James Cook University Macquarie University Monash University University of Adelaide University of Canberra University of Melbourne University of Newcastle University of New South Wales, Canberra University of New South Wales, Sydney University of Notre Dame, Fremantle University of Notre Dame, Sydney University of Queensland University of the Sunshine Coast University of Southern Queensland University of Sydney University of Western Australia University of Wollongong Victoria University Western Sydney University

#### **Data Overview**

Survey	Figures	Number of responses contributing figures
Responses	25 [24 in 2016]	25/40
Enrolments		
- First Year	16,284 [16,986 in 2016]	25/25
- Honours	247	21/25
- Postgraduate Coursework	256	7/25
- Postgraduate Research	714	21/25
- Postgraduate, Total	1008	23/25
Expected completions, Undergraduate	1257	15/25
Staff		
- Permanent, Teaching	219.5	24/25
- Permanent, Research	4	2/25
- Contract	104	18/25
- Session	63	7/25

Some predictable variation in the data sets occurred. In the case of first year enrolment figures, programs can run between 1 and 4 courses at first year level and in exceptional cases more, while some programs offer summer semester courses or run on a trimester calendar, which their figures reflect (eg Deakin). The figures provided nevertheless demonstrate overall first year load for each program over a calendar year. Some figures were provided as estimates rather than exact - where figures were provided as 'between' two numbers the higher number was chosen. Honours enrolments can be part-time and stretch over more than one year; not all postgraduate enrolments were broken down into course work and research, and some postgraduate course work enrolments include a research component.

Many of the programs found it hard to source a precise number of graduating majors for some common reasons: definitions of a 'major' vary among degrees and among institutions, or are not a structural feature of some degrees; most programs have not finalised student results for the year in November and many could not predict expected graduations; some programs do not have access to figures that are collected only at faculty or university level. We finally received data on graduating majors from 15 programs and many of these were carefully qualified estimates (in line with our request), with convenors cautioning against their reliability. We decided that this data was



insufficient to be meaningful within the survey as a whole, unfortunately. Figures for graduating majors were received from Melbourne, Macquarie, USC, UWA, USQ, Federation, Notre Dame, UQ, UNSW, UNSW Canberra, Monash, Victoria and Western Sydney and James Cook.

Staffing figures were broken down into permanent or continuing staff (or roles) and contract or casual staff, with the latter category proving an elastic and difficult one for many programs. We have visualised the data as provided below but understand that figures for contract and especially for casual staff are not fully or perhaps meaningfully indicative, in that some programs could not supply such and some figures were estimates, while there is no calibration of hours worked, which means that these are not easily comparable to the figures for continuing staff, generally full-time.

The full sets of raw data in Excel are available for members of AUHE on inquiry.

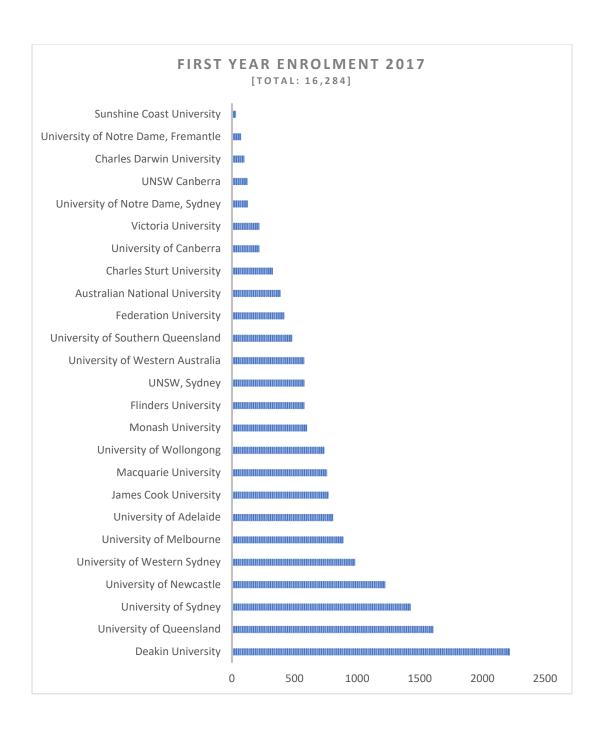
# **Enrolments in first year university English in 2017**

In 2017 there was a total of **16,284 enrolments in first year courses** in English and Literary Studies from the 25 programs surveyed, including Creative Writing courses where offered in combination.

Enrolments were counted separately to EFTSL (Equivalent Full Time Student Load for one year), even where these were provided, because most numbers were raw enrolments sourced from course figures on a semester basis. It is important to emphasise that these enrolment figures do not equate to numbers of students, since students can enrol in more than one course per semester in some programs. These figures are better understood as enrolment loads for teaching across the calendar year.

The following graph shows overall enrolments in first-year English, Literary Studies, and Creative Writing courses from each reporting university, totalled across all semesters and ranked by size. Deakin University had the highest overall enrolments (2218) and the University of the Sunshine Coast the lowest (33). Deakin's figures include enrolments from the School of Education and other majors, including Creative Writing and children's literature.

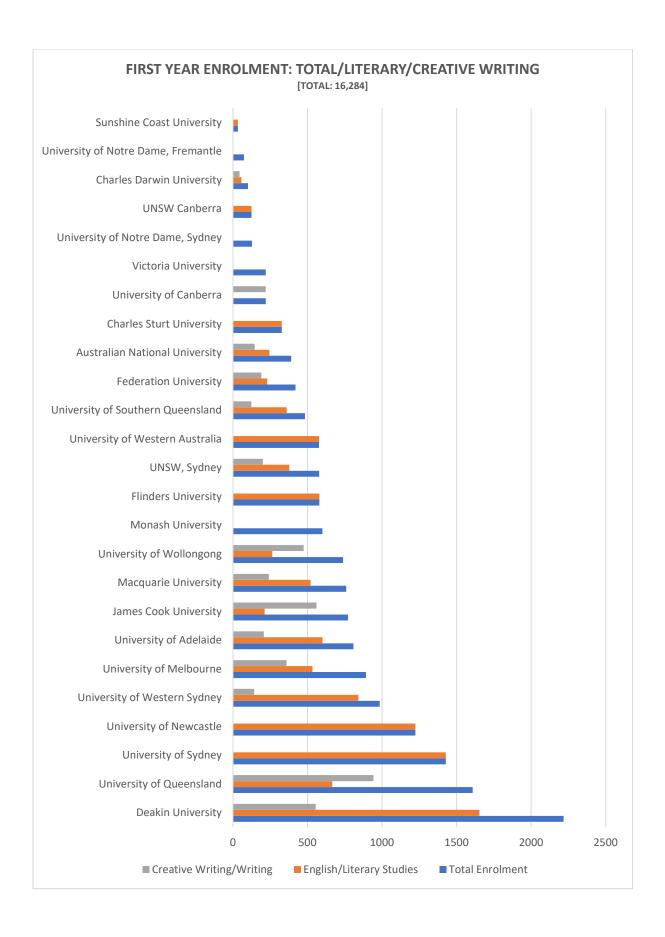




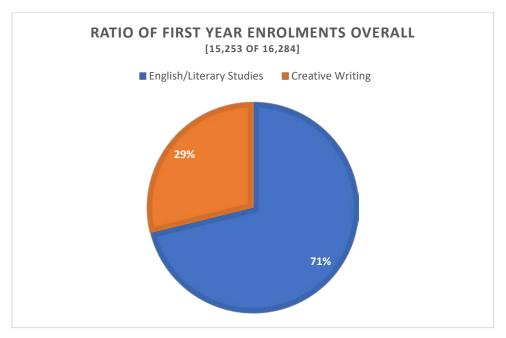
### Literary studies and Creative Writing enrolments at first year

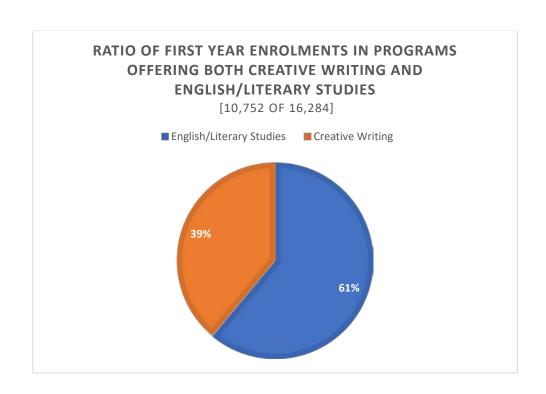
14 of the 25 programs offered at least one Creative Writing course option at first year. Enrolments shown below by institution are separated into Creative Writing, English and literary studies, and totalled figures, the latter including those that didn't categorise enrolments.





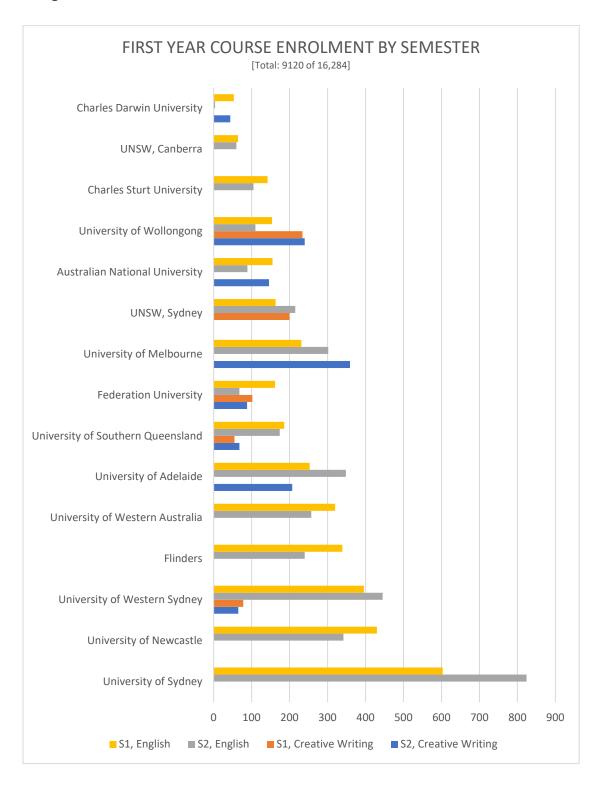
Of the 15,263 enrolments categorised as either literary studies or Creative Writing, 10,850 were in English and literary studies and 4403 in Creative Writing. In those 14 programs that do offer Creative Writing (ie. excluding those that only offer English and literary studies courses), a total of 10,752 had a breakdown of 6559 to 4193. Some programs require Creative Writing students to complete a pre-requisite course in English and literary studies, which further explains some of this dominance.

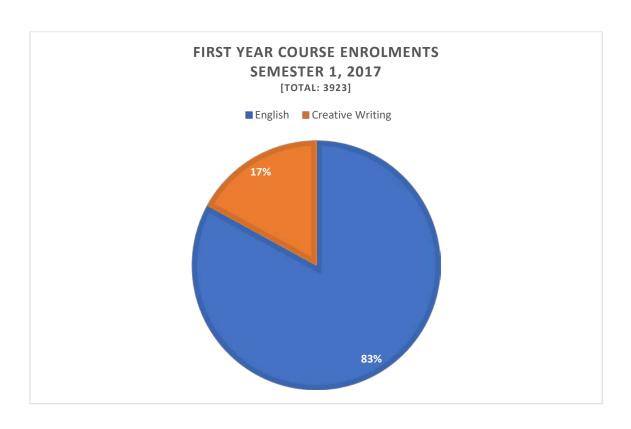


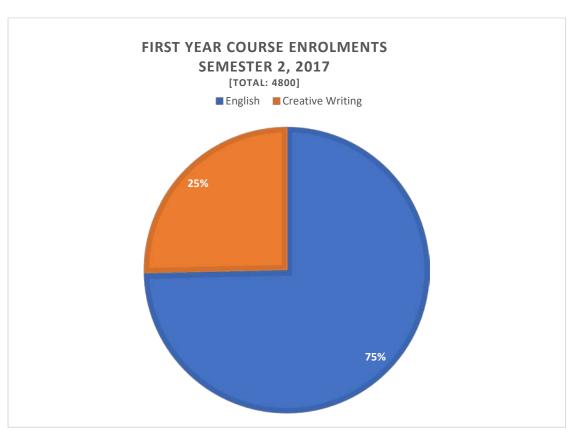


### 2017 first year enrolments by semester

This graph shows enrolments in first-year English or Literary Studies, and Creative Writing subjects, broken down by semester across those programs that reported on semester numbers. Those universities working on a trimester system that hadn't designated numbers for semesters are also excluded.







# **Courses offered in first year English and literary studies in 2017**

The reporting programs named 60 different single-semester courses (or subjects or units) that were offered at first year in English and literary studies in 2017.

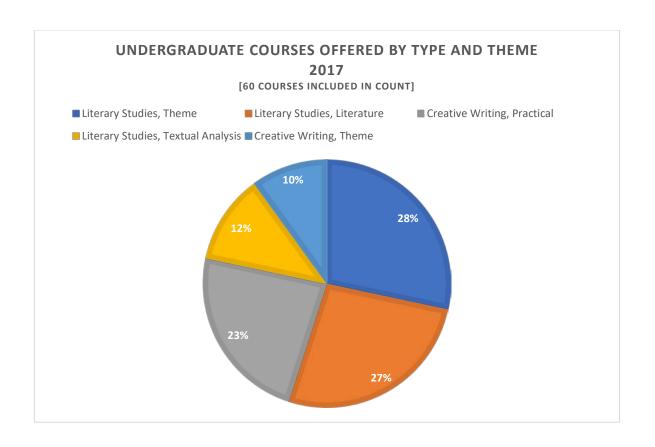
English/Literary Studies/Creative Writing Course by	Course by Theme
Name	
Creative Writing: 100	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: 102	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: 103	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Creative and Critical Writing	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Creative and Professional Writing	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Ideas and Practice	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Introduction to Creative Writing	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Practical Skills and Knowledge	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: The Essentials	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: Writing Craft	CW, Practical
Writing: Academic Writing Fundamentals	CW, Practical
Writing: Effective Thinking and Writing	CW, Practical
Writing: Writing for International Students	CW, Practical
Creative Writing: The Imaginative Life	CW, Theme
Creative Writing: Writing About People	CW, Theme
Creative Writing: Writing Good Prose	CW, Theme
Creative Writing: Writing Spaces	CW, Theme
Writing: Creative Writing: Narrative	CW, Theme
Writing: Writing Creatively	CW, Theme
English: Approaches to Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Australian Literature in the Twentieth Century	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Contemporary Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: English Literature 1	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Global Literatures	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Global Literatures in English	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Introduction to Australian Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Introduction to English	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Introduction to Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Landmarks in Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Literature Classics	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Literature for Children and Young Adults	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Modern and Contemporary Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Reading English Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: The Literature of the North: Australia and SE Asia	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Literary Classics	Eng/Lit Studies, General
English: Intro to Creative Writing	Eng/Lit Studies, Practical



English: Approaches to Text	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Close Encounters: How to Read Literature	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
(Literary Studies)	Analysis
English: Critical Reading & Writing	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Introduction to Literary Studies	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Introduction to Reading Literature and Film	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Literary Interpretations	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Reading Creatively, Writing Creatively	Eng/Lit Studies, Textual
	Analysis
English: Australian Popular Culture	English/Literary Studies,
	Theme
English: Australian Stories	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Children's Literature: Oral Tradition	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Constructing the Fictional Self	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Fiction, Drama, Film	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Film Studies	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: From Horror to Romance: Genre and Its Revisions	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Introduction to Film Studies (co-taught with Art	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
History)	
English: Languages, Texts and Time	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Literature and Performance	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Narratives of Romance and Adventure	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Narrative in the Digital Age	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Power Politics and Texts for Young People	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Reading Across Time and Space	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: Reading Bodies	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: The Gothic Imagination	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme
English: The Stories we Tell: Inventing Selves and Others)	Eng/Lit Studies, Theme

After separating these into either Creative Writing or English literary studies, on the basis only of their titles, the first category was divided into "Practical" and "Themed" courses, and the second into three broad categories: general "Literature" (incorporating period or country/tradition based courses), "Textual analysis" (incorporating method based courses) and "Themed" courses (eg Gothic literature). These five categories were reasonably evenly represented in the total, as below, with smaller proportions of method-based literature courses and themed Creative Writing courses. At first year, however, it is to be expected that a mix of such approaches is employed in many courses, in content and structures not discoverable from course titles only.





# **Enrolments in Honours in English and literary studies** 2017

A total of **247 students were enrolled in Honours** in English and literary studies in the reporting programs for 2017. Honours is defined as a fourth year of study in a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree, specialising in English or literary studies with a prerequisite cutoff targeting advanced students and a substantial required research component.

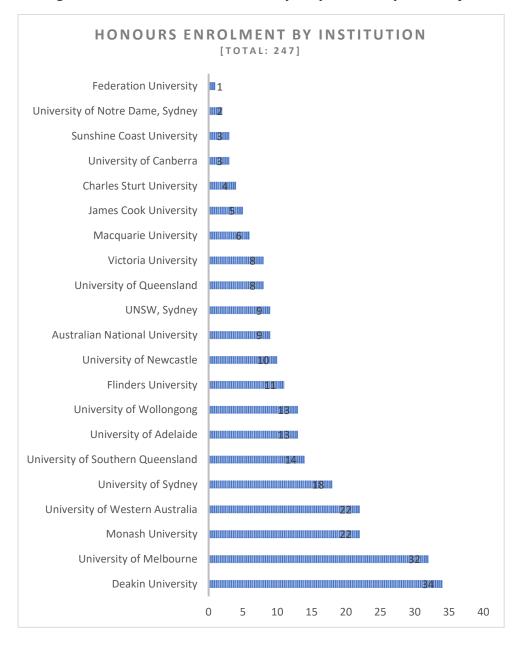
The following graph shows the numbers of honours students (both part-time and full-time) enrolled in each program in 2017, ranked by size. Importantly, these numbers represent students rather than enrolments – we collected raw numbers of students in Honours programs, rather than numbers of enrolments in courses offered at Honours level.

The English departments at Melbourne and Macquarie universities now offer separate Masters of Research (MRes) degrees instead of defined Honours programs. These are completed over two years and open to new enrolments with different entry



requirements. Melbourne and Macquarie supplied 2017 figures for the second year of enrolment in each program's MRes, when the thesis component is undertaken, as the most directly comparable to Honours enrolments.

Only 11 students were identified as enrolled in Creative Writing Honours – most programs did not report separate enrolments or provide separate figures for Creative Writing. Charles Darwin University, Notre Dame Fremantle and UNSW Canberra reported having no honours students; Western Sydney University did not provide their figure.

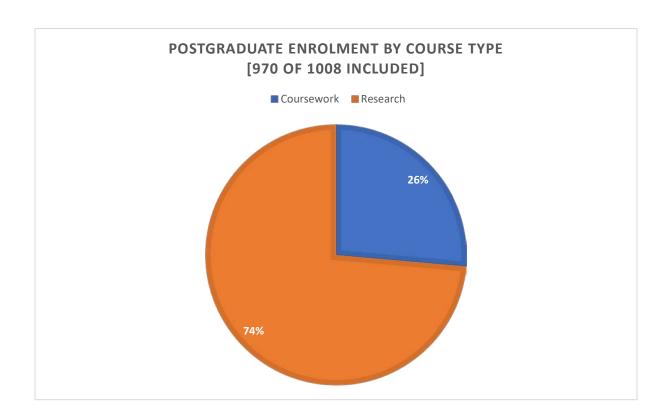




# Postgraduate Enrolments in English and Literary Studies in 2017

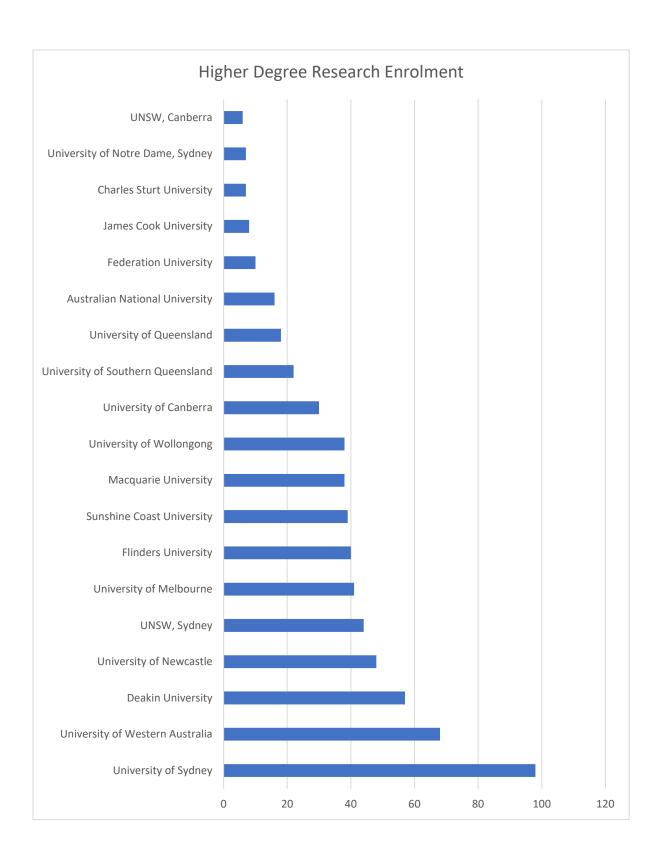
**970 students were enrolled in postgraduate degrees** in English and literary studies from the reporting programs in 2017. **714 of those were Higher Degree Research** candidates, while **256 were enrolled in course work** higher degrees.

The following chart shows the total number of postgraduate students including part-time and full-time students, contrasting the numbers of course work students and research candidates enrolled at all reporting universities in 2017. Charles Darwin University, Notre Dame Fremantle and Western Sydney University did not report postgraduate enrolments.



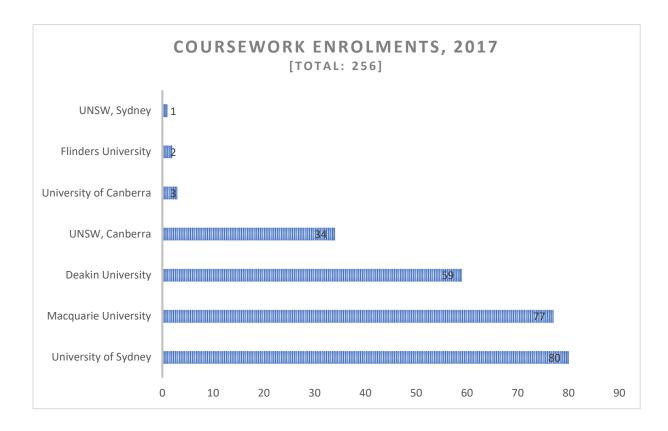
The University of Sydney has the largest number of postgraduate students, with a total of 178, including the highest numbers of research students (98) and course work enrolments (80). UNSW Canberra has the smallest number of HDR students, currently 6.







Only 7 of the 22 reporting programs offer course work degrees and of those the smallest enrolment was 1 at UNSW Sydney.



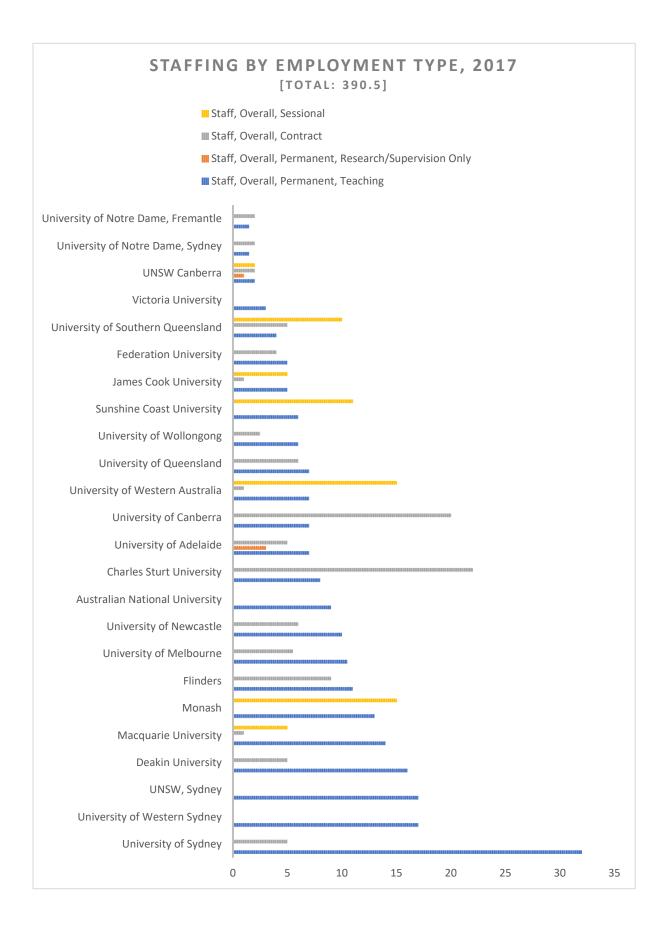
# Numbers of staff in English and literary studies in 2017

24 of the 25 programs reported a total of 390.5 staff members in English and literary studies at their universities, including permanent or continuing staff and contract or sessional/casual staff. There were 223.5 permanent staff and 167 contract or casual staff.

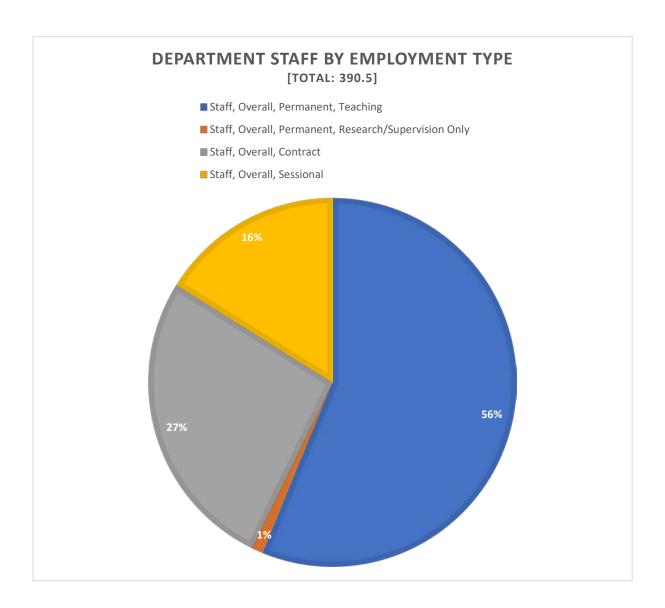
Of the permanent staff, only 4 were identified as engaged in full-time research: 3 at the University of Adelaide and 1 at UNSW Canberra. Most programs did not distinguish research-only staff within either the permanent or contract/casual categories.

The following graph shows the number of English and Creative Writing staff employed by each university in 2017 broken down into permanent and contract or casual staff.





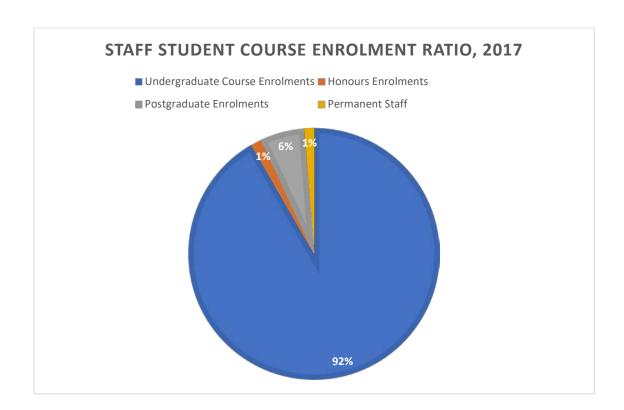
Relative disparities in the numbers of contract or casual staff are likely to reflect reporting variations, in that these numbers were provided in several different ways, as well as different employment practices across universities and programs. Notably, these figures include contract or casual research staff and some administrative staff, as well as teaching staff. Moreover, because hours worked are not tallied, these numbers may not be meaningfully comparable across programs or to the numbers of permanent staff within and across programs. Nevertheless, the proportions of each category of staff is represented below:



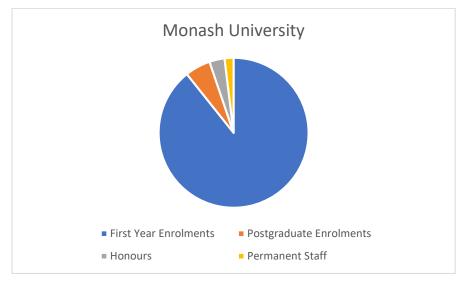
### Staff and student ratios in English and literary studies in 2017

The graphs below visualise the ratios, as proportional percentages, of enrolments (both first year and postgraduates) against the permanent staff roles collected by the survey for each reporting university. Contract and sessional staff numbers were excluded because they do not accurately measure labour or staff time. These proportional percentages are just one way of representing staff teaching and supervision loads from the reporting English and literary studies programs, keeping in mind that these measure enrolments and not students, and permanent staff only.

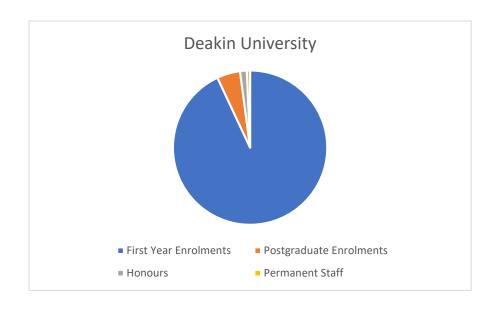
The charts are most meaningful as relative indicators comparable to each other. In that regard, it is indicative that Deakin University, with the largest first year enrolments, has the fourth largest number of permanent staff, while Sydney University, with the largest number of postgraduate students, has the largest number of permanent staff. Of the reporting programs, the two Notre Dame campuses have the smallest number of staff, with 1.5 staff members each: Notre Dame Sydney reported the fifth smallest first year enrolments and Notre Dame Fremantle the second smallest. At the same time, these pie graphs do not reflect relativities of scale: UNSW Canberra's percentage of permanent staff equates to 3 people, for example, while UNSW Sydney's only slightly larger percentage equates to 17.

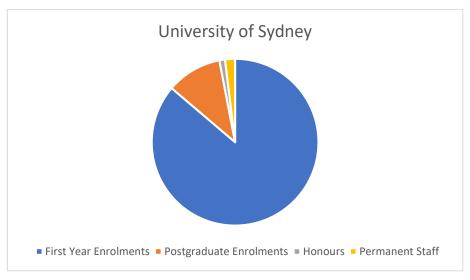


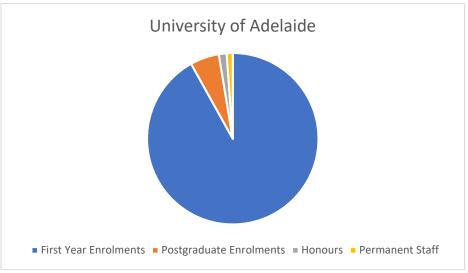
# Staff and enrolment ratios by reporting university

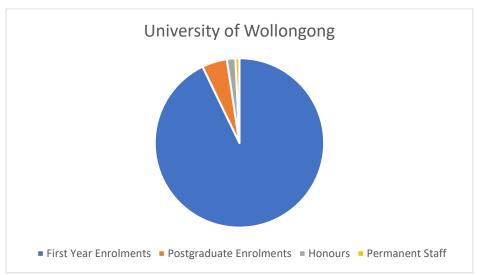


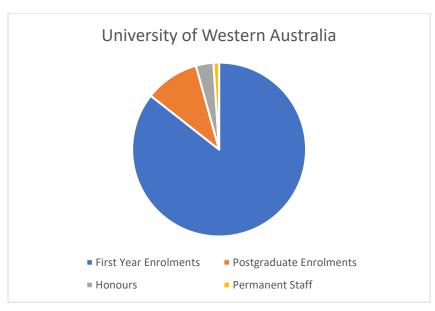


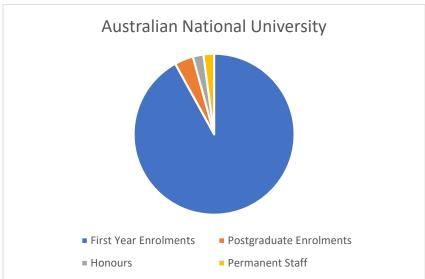


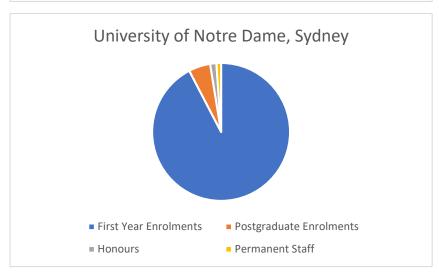


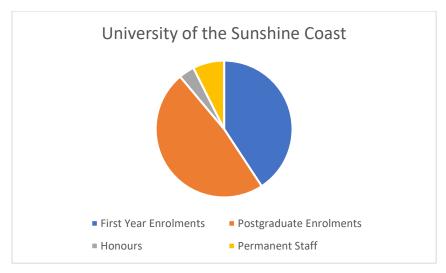




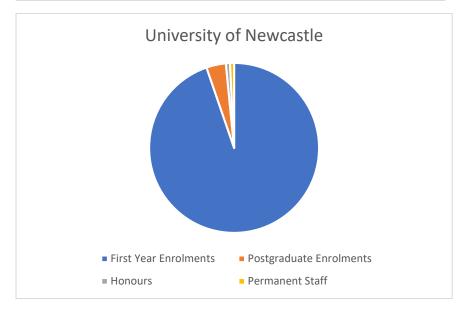


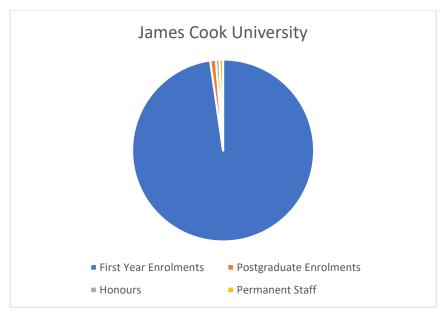


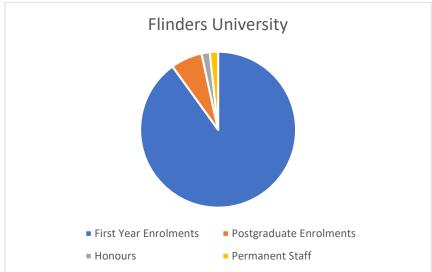


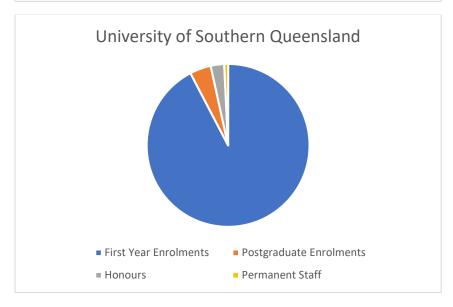


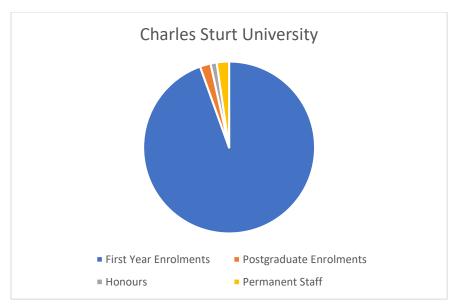


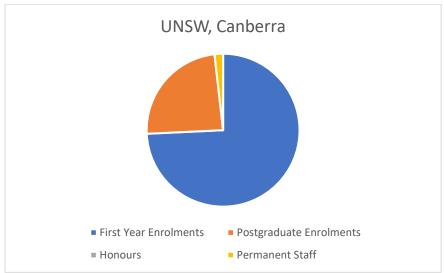


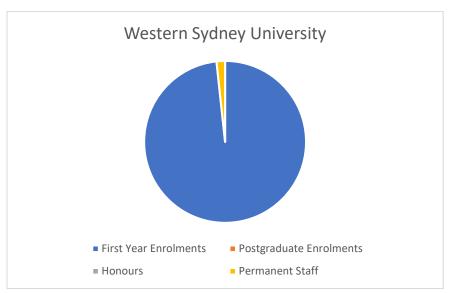


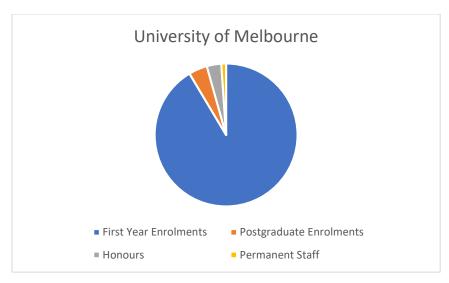


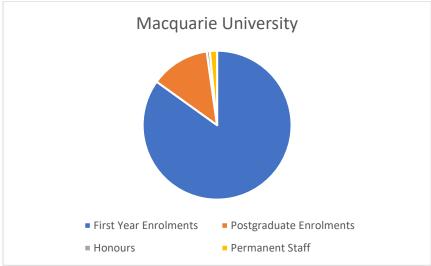


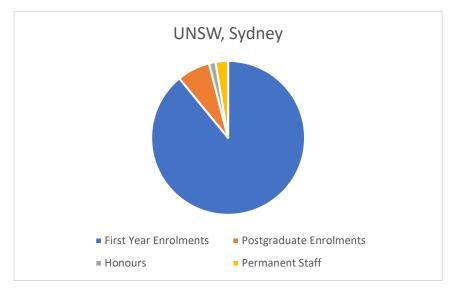


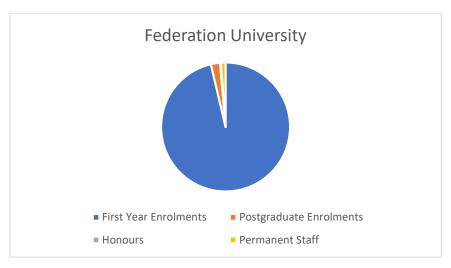


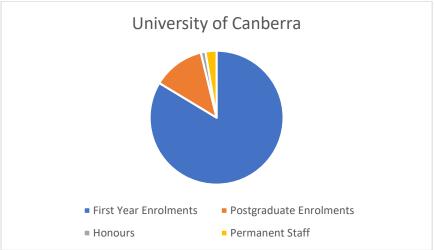


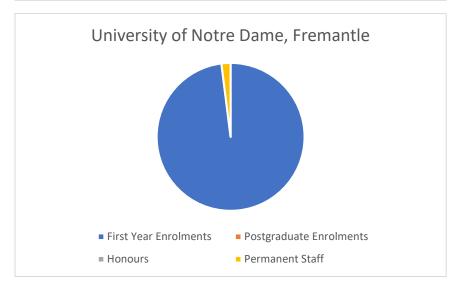












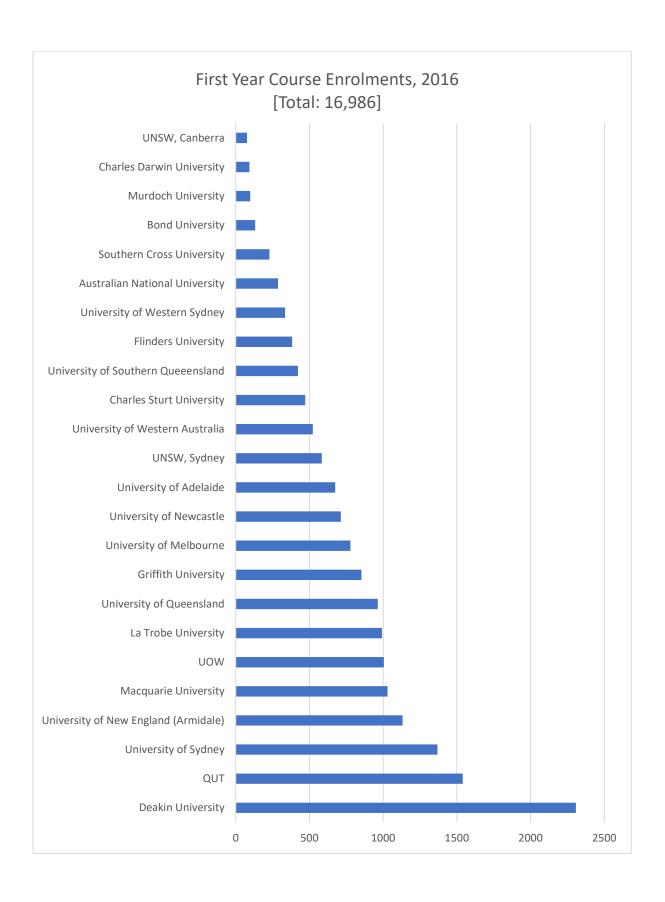
# 2017 first year enrolment compared to 2016

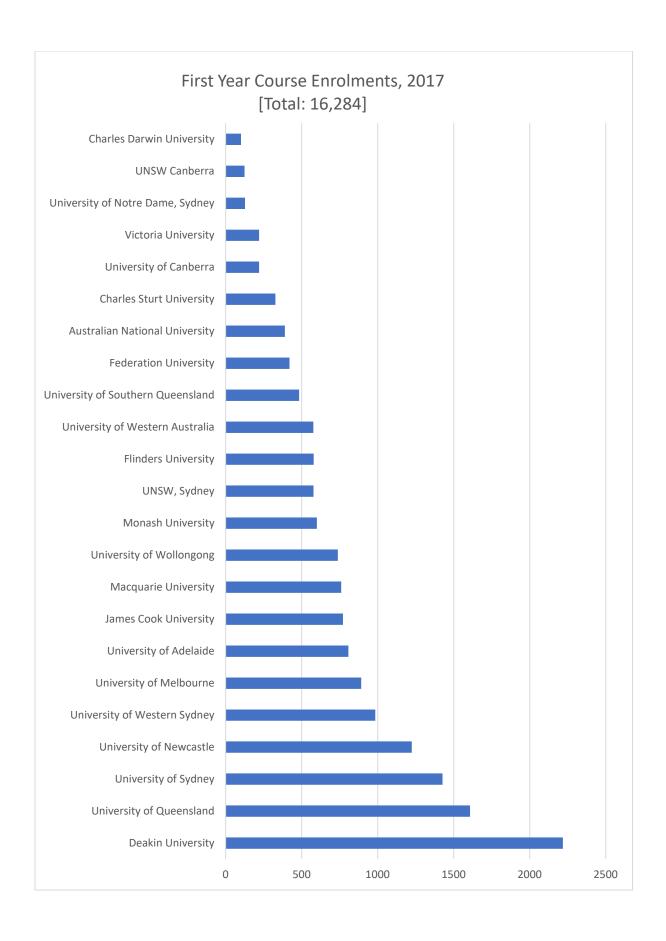
In 2016, 24 of 40 universities responded to the AUHE request for first year enrolment data; in 2017 25 responded. The quantity of data is thus comparable but the figures represent a different selection of programs or departments from some of the same and some different universities.

In **2016 there were a total of 16,986 enrolments** in first year English and literary studies in the 24 programs; in **2017 there were 16,284 enrolments** in first year in the 25 programs – making the load or intake broadly similar, with a small decrease in 2017 of 703 students or 4.3% while counting one additional cohort.

The bar charts below allow more detailed comparison across the two years. Notably, Deakin's enrolment numbers for 2016 have been updated from an earlier count of 492, which did not include Creative Writing and children's literature enrolments. No data was received this year from the program at Queensland University of Technology, which recorded 2016's second largest enrolments at first year (1540). In 2015, La Trobe's first year enrolments were the largest reported, at 700+.

Despite the visuals at first glance, there are some reasons to read these figures as evidence of stable maintenance of first year enrolments in the discipline. A total 30 of 38 possible programs reported in at least one of the two years, and that data indicates relatively stable total enrolments for the discipline despite the variation in the pool of reporting programs, suggesting a generalisable picture for the sector. Notably, the largest cohorts are exceptional cases in which enrolments from Education and named majors in Creative Writing and children's literature (Deakin) or a named specialist degree in Creative Writing (QUT) have boosted enrolments significantly. But the second-tier cohorts are strong and in some cases have grown notably between 2016 and 2017 (UQ, Newcastle), while some large programs saw their first year enrolments drop (Flinders, Macquarie). Some of this is inevitable individual course and program variation across a mere two years; some of it may also reflect data collection discrepancies and structural changes between the two years. As a comparative picture, nevertheless, the data suggests some patterned stability in overall numbers of first year enrolments over the two years.





### **Conclusions**

This data set presents a suggestive picture or snap shot, via a defined set of indicators, of the state of the discipline of literary studies at Australian universities in 2017. Despite a minor degree of variation or incommensurability between some figures in the reported data sets, notably in graduating majors, which were excluded, and in contract/casual staff numbers, the data is sufficiently robust to yield this.

These are the most significant findings of the analysis as we identify them:

- English and literary studies is represented at all identifiable university types and in all portions of the sector (eg Go8 and regional)
- Total enrolments in first year undergraduate courses in reporting English and literary subjects have remained relatively stable across the past two years
- Approximately one-third of first year undergraduate enrolments in English and literary studies are in Creative Writing courses/subjects
- While first year course offerings are generically introductory across the sector, there is sufficient diversity to represent the main features of the discipline
- The great majority of reporting programs continue to offer Honours years for advanced undergraduate students, with only two universities having moved to the MRes model
- Only 4 of the 25 reporting universities currently offer viable course work degrees or courses in literary or English studies, including Creative Writing
- 714 students are enrolled in higher research degrees in English and literary studies, including Creative Writing, at the reporting universities
- There are currently 223.5 permanent staff roles in English and literary studies in the reporting programs, representing 57% of total staff numbers
- Comparison of staff/student proportions in percentages across the sector allows some indication of relative staff load in individual programs.

Other quantitative studies in the Australian university sector are available with which to compare this report, including Brass and Turner's *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia* (2014) commissioned by the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Office of the Chief Scientist, available here: <a href="https://www.humanities.org.au/issue-item/mapping-humanities-arts-social-sciences-australia/">https://www.humanities.org.au/issue-item/mapping-humanities-arts-social-sciences-australia/</a>. The Australian History Association has a State of the Discipline report currently in preparation, which unfortunately was not yet available when this report was finalised.

The authors of the report recommend ongoing collection of comparable data by the AUHE, addressing shortfalls in reliability where indicated and possible.



# Appendix A

### **Request for Data**

13 October 2017

Dear Member,

The Australian University Heads of English (AUHE) is currently gathering data relating to the number of students enrolled in Australian programs in literary studies, broadly defined, and the number of research and teaching staff employed in the discipline across the country. This data will help complement and extend that which we have collected in previous years, and enable us to report back on the state of the discipline in Australia.

We would be very appreciative if you could provide data about the number of students and staff in your program or department for 2017, by responding to the following queries:

#### Students

- The number of first year enrolments in English or literary studies subjects (including Creative Writing subjects) in semesters one and two of 2017. It would be especially useful to use if these enrolments were broken down by subjects offered as well as totalled.
- The number of students expected to graduate with an English major in 2017.
- The number of students enrolled in an English honours course in 2017.
- The number of postgraduate students enrolled in English studies in 2017. It would be
  especially useful if this figure was broken down into the number of Masters by Coursework
  students and Higher Degree Research students.

#### Staff

- Number of continuing staff (both fulltime and part-time) in English studies in 2017.
- Number of contract staff (both teaching and research) in English studies in 2017.

In order to compile our report before the end of the year, we ask that all data to be returned by **Friday the 10**<sup>th</sup> of **November 2017**, to **jayne.regan@anu.edu.au**.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the data we require or how it will be used. We appreciate the time spent to gather such information and thank you for your contribution.

Kind regards,

Nicole Moore AUHE President



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