



Universities UK
International

2021 International Facts & Figures





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Welcome

International Facts and Figures is our annual snapshot of the international dimensions of UK higher education and research.

It highlights the significant contribution international staff and students make to the global success of UK higher education, and the impact of international partnerships in extending and enhancing our reach.

As we publish this year's report and reflect on the past year, it is clear that the university sector has made extraordinary progress and shown great flexibility and resilience.

Throughout this time, colleagues have demonstrated an enduring commitment to international higher education. Disruption has not prevented UK universities from

collaborating in research with counterparts around the world to address the Covid-19 crisis, or from welcoming international students to the UK, or from offering UK programmes around the world. Neither has it prevented UK students gaining precious international experience. In fact, we have seen enormous innovation this year – and some new mechanisms which will remain part of our sector's approach to teaching and international collaboration in the future.

This perseverance, this dedication to international activities in higher education, underlines how central these relationships are to our universities and to their success.

By working with our international counterparts and by learning from colleagues all around the world, we can better face common challenges.

We hope this report will serve as a reference point for the top facts and figures, and as a reminder of what your collective efforts have achieved for international higher education.

Vivienne Stern

Director · *Universities UK International*

December 2021

Highlights in 2019-20

THERE WERE **538,615** INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS¹ STUDYING IN THE UK, MAKING UP...



27.5%

of the total student population in the UK



15.7%

of all undergraduates



40.3%

of all postgraduates

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION



453,390

students are studying for a UK degree overseas

OUTWARD STUDENT MOBILITY



36,225

students studied, worked, or volunteered overseas as part of their degree in 2019-20

IN 2020, INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS...



59.3%

of all UK publications were the result of international research collaboration (compared to 39.8% in 2010)

INTERNATIONAL STAFF



20.9%

of all staff at UK universities are international

¹ All figures for international students in this report are based on HESA's full time students equivalent marker.

International students

The UK remains the second most popular study destination for international students. Only the US attracts larger numbers of students. In 2019–20, 538,615 international students were studying at UK higher education institutions (HEIs), accounting for 27.5% of the total student population in the UK. 15.7% of all undergraduates and 40.3% of all postgraduates were international students.

The total gross benefit of the 2018-19 cohort of international students to the UK economy was estimated at £28.8 billion. On average, international students made a £40m net economic contribution to the UK economy per parliamentary constituency, which is equivalent to £390 per member of the resident population (after all costs have been accounted for).

In 2019-20,

538,615

international students were studying at UK higher education institutions.

27.5%

of the total student population in the UK.

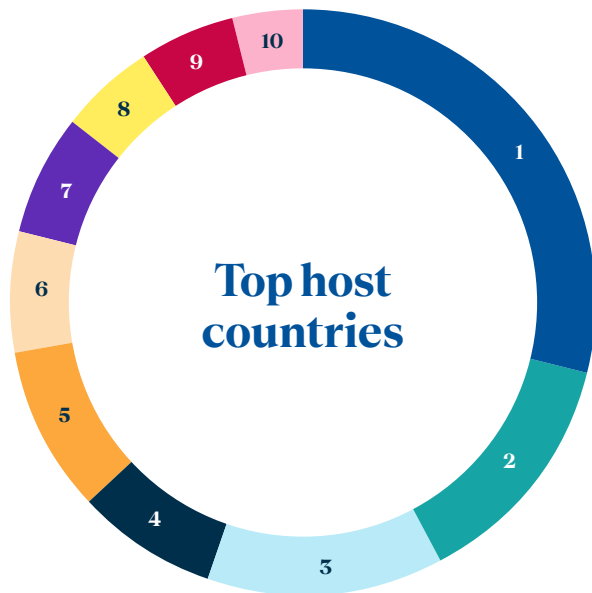
Data source: HESA student record

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Where do international students study?

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1 United States 17.7% | 6 France 4.0% |
| 2 United Kingdom 8.1% | 7 Canada 4.0% |
| 3 Australia 8.0% | 8 Japan 3.3% |
| 4 Russia 4.7% | 9 China 3.2% |
| 5 Germany 5.6% | 10 Turkey 2.2% |



Source: UNESCO, 2021

In 2019, the UK was still the second most popular destination in the world for international students². However, the UK's annual growth rate has been modest, at 3.8% between 2018 and 2019. In contrast, the UK's competitor countries are increasing their market share more rapidly.

Prior to the pandemic, Australia and Canada were expanding fastest among the English-speaking destinations, with a growth rate of 16.6% and 6.9% respectively between 2018 and 2019.

The difference in international student numbers between the UK and Australia in 2018 was very slim, with the UK hosting only about 7,600 more international students than Australia³. Moreover, Japan, China and Russia grew their market share by 11.2%, 13.5%, and 4.7% respectively from 2017 to 2018.

FIGURE 1 · TOP 10 HOST COUNTRIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2017 AND PERCENTAGE SINCE 2017

1	United States	987,314	(984,898 in 2017)	▲ 0.2%
2	United Kingdom	452,079	(435,734 in 2017)	▲ 3.8%
3	Australia	444,514	(381,202 in 2017)	▲ 16.6%
4	Russia	262,416	(277,623 in 2017)	▲ 12.3%
5	Germany	311,738	(258,873 in 2017)	▼ -11.3%
6	France	229,623	(258,380 in 2017)	▲ 1.6%
7	Canada	224,548	(209,979 in 2017)	▲ 6.9%
8	Japan	182,748	(164,338 in 2017)	▲ 11.2%
9	China	178,271	(157,108 in 2017)	▲ 13.5%
10	Turkey	125,138	(108,076 in 2017)	▲ 15.8%

² UIS.stat, last accessed June 2021

³ Why Aren't We Second? Pt.2, UUKi, available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/international-student-recruitment-why-0>

How many international students choose the UK?

In 2019–20, 142,990 EU students studied at UK higher education institutions. Of these, 70.5% were undergraduates, 20.4% were taught postgraduates and 9.2% were research postgraduates. Of the 395,630 non-EU students, 47.3% studied towards an undergraduate degree, 44.5% were taught postgraduates and 8.2% were research postgraduates.

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate (research)
- Postgraduate (taught)

Source: HESA Student record

FIGURE 2 · TOTAL NUMBER OF EU STUDENTS BY LEVEL OF STUDY, 2009–10 TO 2019–20

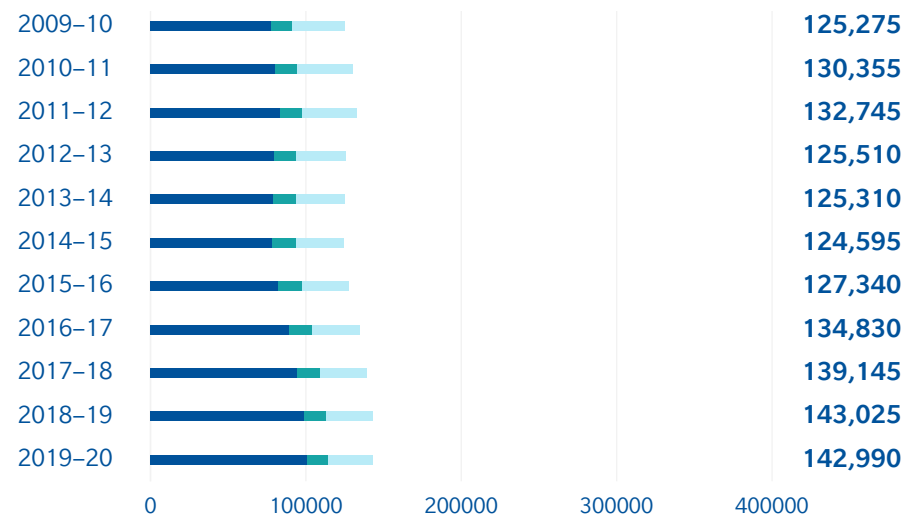
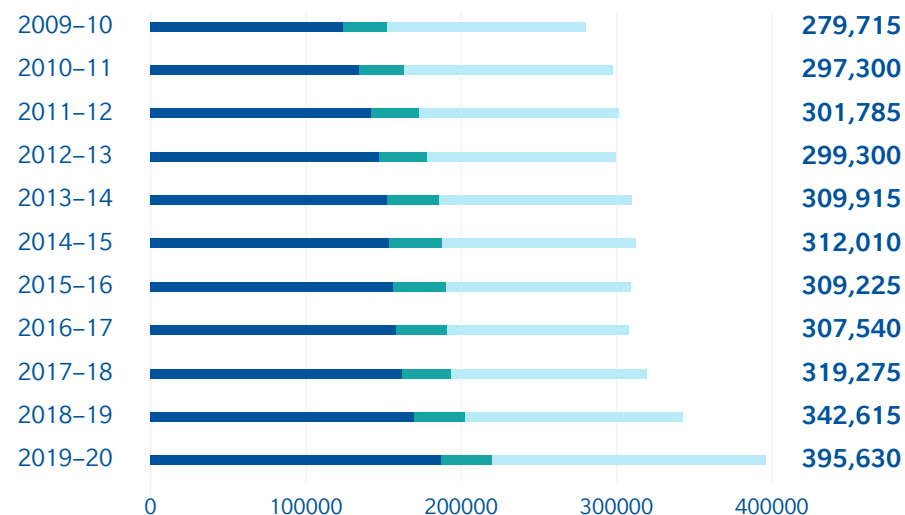


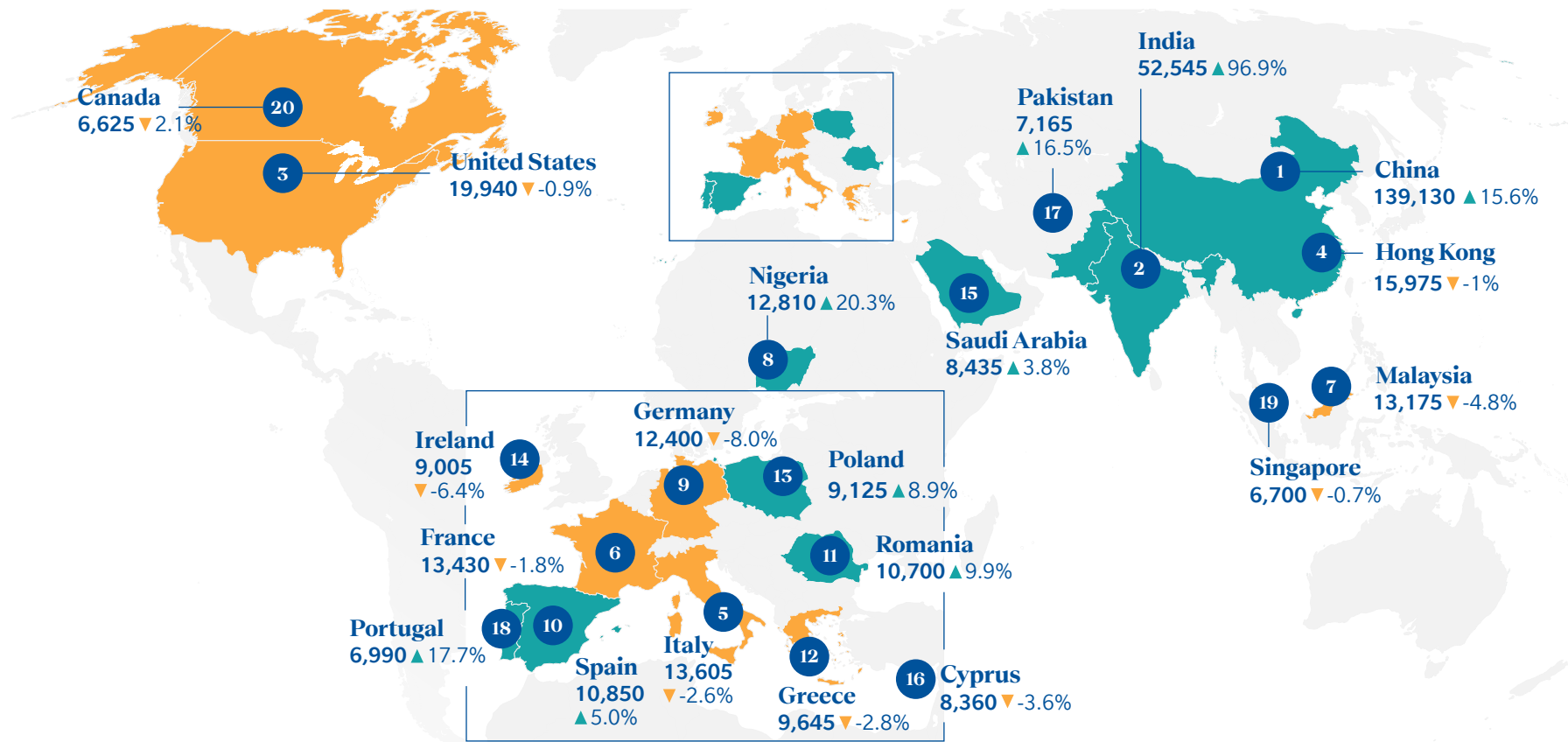
FIGURE 3 · NUMBER OF NON-EU STUDENTS BY LEVEL OF STUDY, 2009–10 TO 2019–20



Where do international students come from?

In 2019–20, the top sending countries and territories for international students were China, India, the US, Hong Kong and Italy. Chinese students at UK higher education institutions made up 28.9% of all international students. The fastest-growing senders were India, with 96.9% increase since 2018–19, Nigeria with 20.3%, Portugal with 17.7% and Pakistan with 16.5%. The top sending countries within the EU were Italy, France and Germany. All three showed a slight decrease compared to 2018–19.

FIGURE 4 · TOP 20 DOMICILES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK 2019–20 AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE SINCE 2018–19

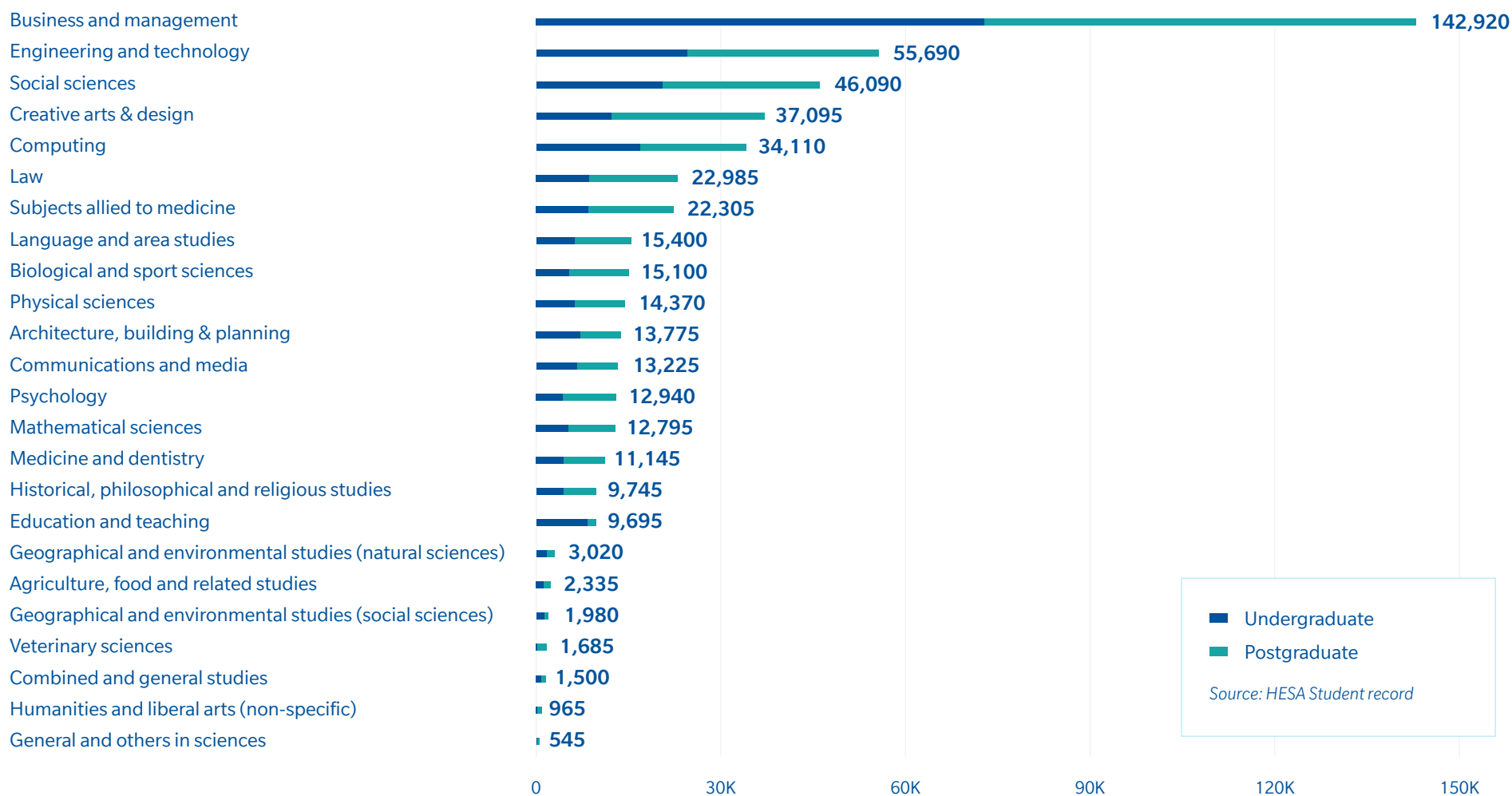


Source: HESA Student record

What do international students study?

In 2019–20, international student numbers were highest in the subjects of business and management, engineering and technology and social sciences. International students accounted for 43.8% of business and management students and 39.0% of engineering and technology students and 22.1% of social studies students.

FIGURE 5 · FULL-TIME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY SUBJECT AREA AND LEVEL OF STUDY, 2019–20



Where in the UK do international students study?



Similarly to previous years, in 2019-20, most international students were located in England. 104,810 full-time European and 314,405 non-European international students pursued degrees in universities based in England. Since 2015-16, the figures for all provider countries have been growing. While Wales saw a slight decline in 2016-17, in 2019-20, the numbers have recovered to 2015-16 levels.

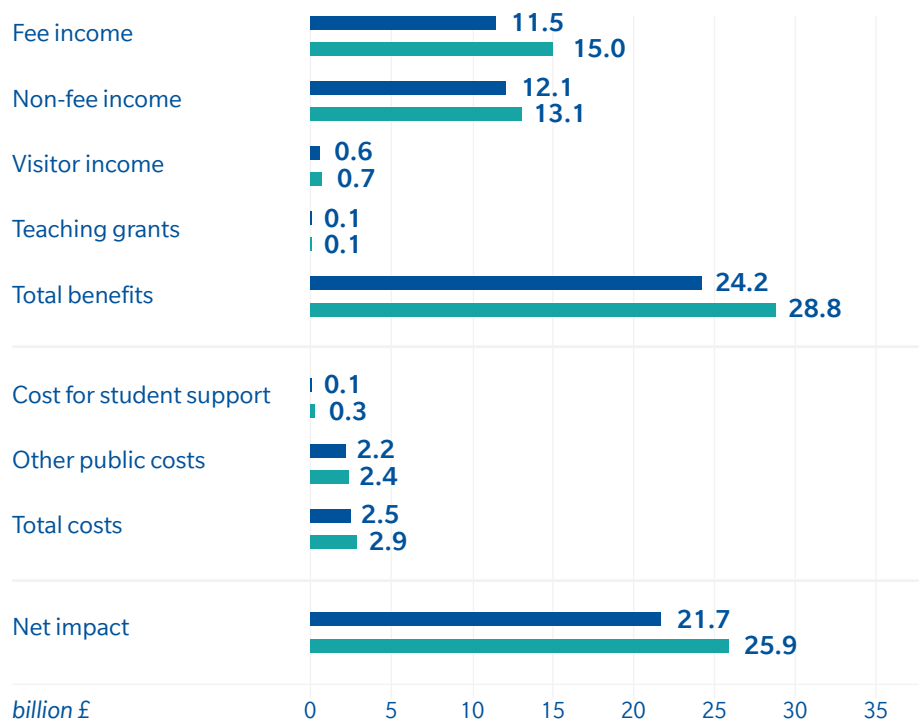
FIGURE 6 · INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PER COUNTRY OF STUDY 2019-20

COUNTRIES	NON-EUROPEAN UNION	EUROPEAN UNION
England	314,405	104,810
Northern Ireland	4,145	1,425
Scotland	38,105	19,370
Wales	14,315	4,855

Source: HESA Student record

What is the economic impact of international students in the UK?

FIGURE 7 · TOTAL BENEFITS, TOTAL COSTS AND NET IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK 2015-16 VS 2018-19



■ 2015-16
■ 2018-19

Source: *The costs and benefits of international higher education students to the UK economy*, last accessed: 16 September 2021

Welcoming a new cohort of international students every year brings economic benefits across the UK. In 2018-19, the total benefit to the UK economy per student from the EU was £94,000 and per student from outside the EU £109,000.^{4,5}

Approximately £22.9 billion of this was generated by non-EU students, and £6.2 billion by EU students. The largest benefit was associated with fees (£15.0 billion), followed by non-fee income (£13.1 billion) and income from students' visitors, such as family members and friends (£0.7 billion).

In 2015-16, non-tuition fee income from international students (£12.1 billion in 2018-19 prices) exceeded fee income (£11.5 billion associated with tuition fee income). The reverse pattern was seen in 2018-19 where non-tuition fee income was £13.1 billion and fee income was £15.0 billion.

After considering costs associated with teaching and international students, the net economic benefit was £25.9 billion in 2018-19, up from £21.7 billion in 2015-16 (a 20% increase in real terms).

The total benefit to the UK economy was approximately £95,000 per EU domiciled student and £110,000 for a non-EU student.

⁴ The figure for 2015-16 has been converted to 2018-19 prices, to allow a like-for-like comparison.

⁵ The costs and benefits of international higher education students to the UK economy, available at: <https://londonconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LE-HEPI-UUKi-Impact-of-intl-HE-students-on-the-UK-economy-Summary-Report-September-2021.pdf>

International staff

In 2019–20, 92,440 international staff worked at UK higher education institutions, representing a fifth (20.9%) of the workforce. Among all international staff, 57.2% came from the EU.

The international nature of academic faculties is integral to the UK's success in teaching and research. More than three-quarters (75.9%) of international staff are academics, with 41.1% of these holding both teaching and research contracts.

In 2019–20,

92,440

international staff worked at UK HEIs, demonstrating an increase of

17.5%

since 2015–16.

Source: HESA Staff record

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Where do international staff come from?

In 2019-20, the top five countries of nationality for international staff at UK higher education institutions were Italy, Ireland, Germany, China and the United States.

Of all international staff, 57.2% were EU nationals. Over the last five years, the numbers of Iranian, Nigerian and Pakistani staff have grown the most, while among EU countries, the biggest increase has been among Romanian staff, whose numbers have grown by 38.5% since 2015-16.



FIGURE 8 · EU AND NON-EU STAFF BY EMPLOYMENT MARKER, 2019-20

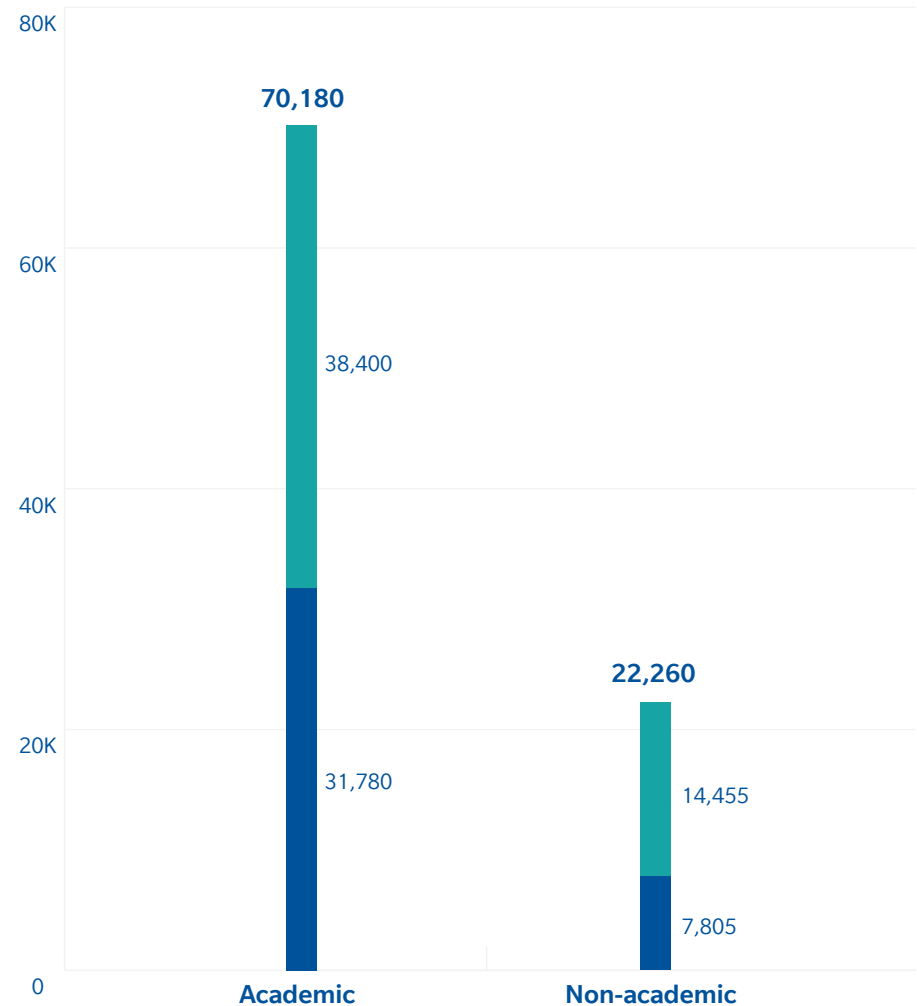
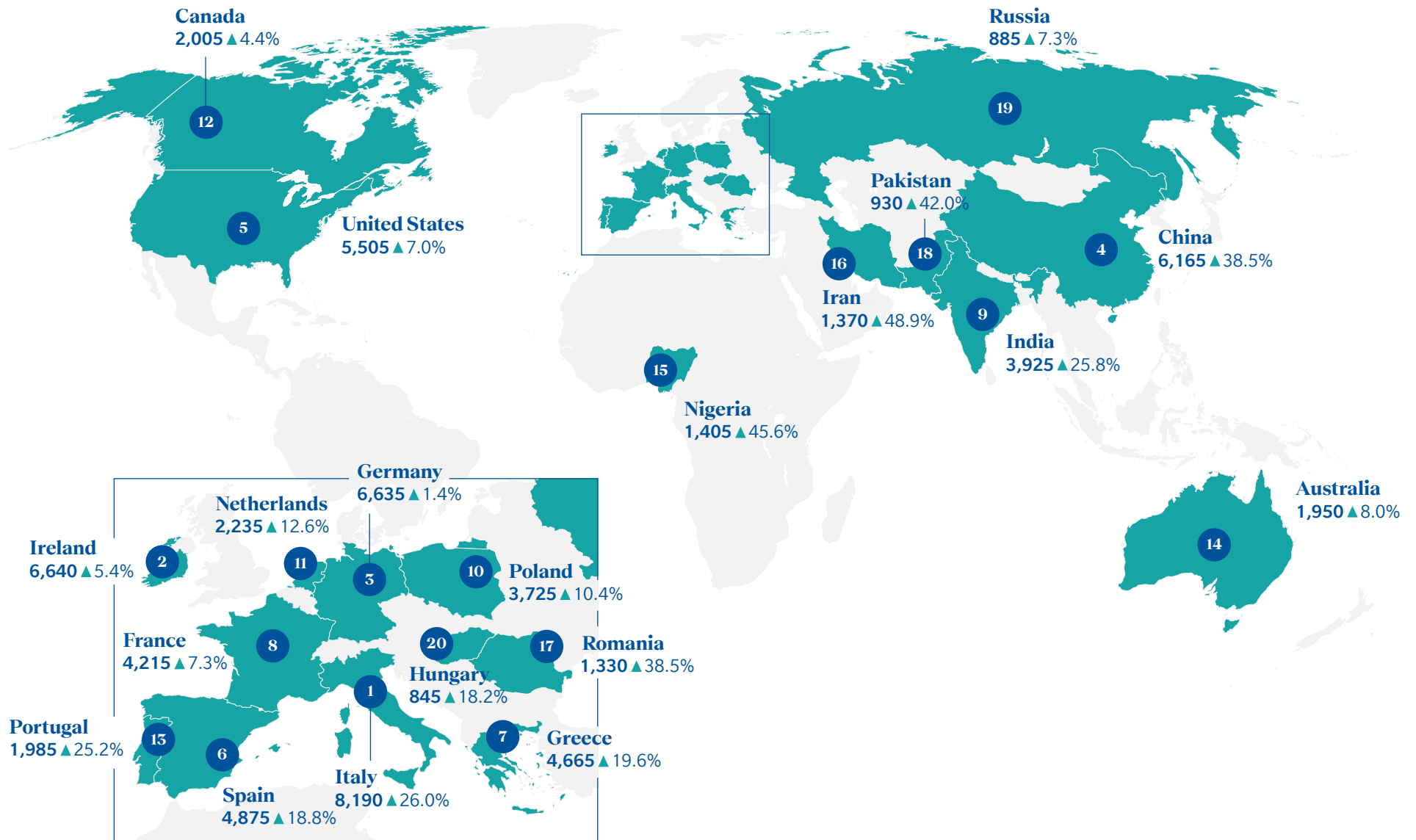
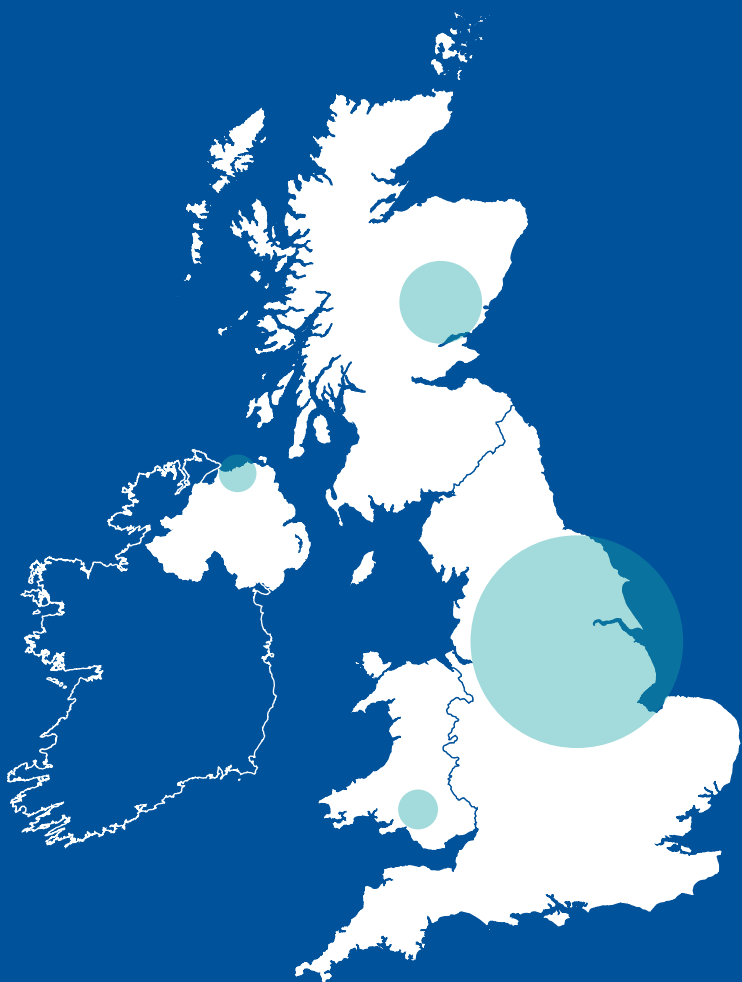


FIGURE 9 · TOP 20 NATIONALITIES OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF IN 2019–20 AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE SINCE 2015–16



Source: HESA Staff record

Where in the UK are international staff based?



The majority of international staff are situated in London-based institutions. However, the number of international staff grew fastest in Scottish higher education institutions between 2015–16 and 2019–20.

FIGURE 10 · INTERNATIONAL STAFF BY UK NATION IN 2019–20

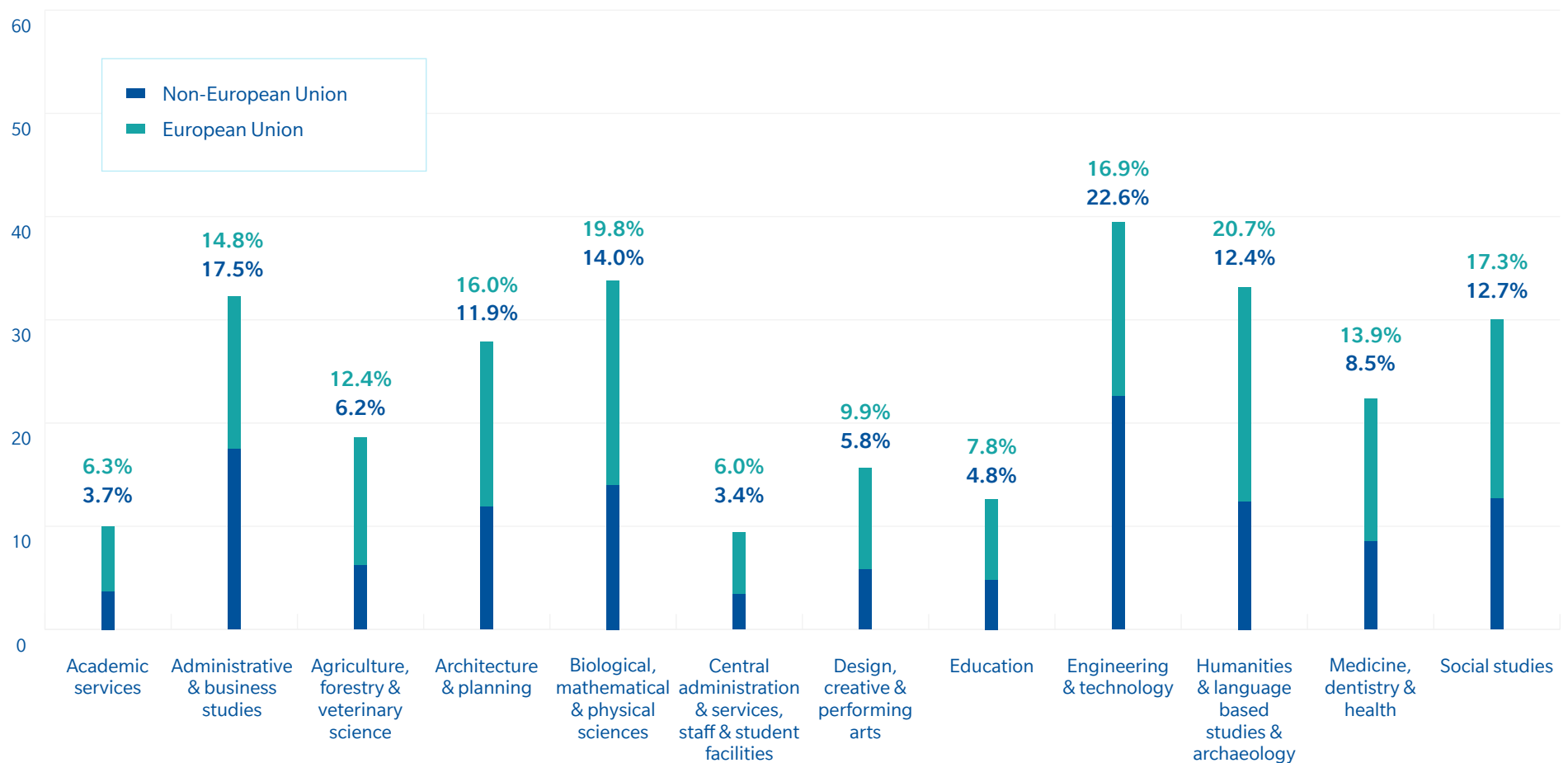
PROVIDER REGION	2015–16	2019–20	% CHANGE
England	65,800	75,365	▲ 14.5%
Northern Ireland	2,010	2,370	▲ 17.9%
Scotland	7,765	11,410	▲ 46.9%
Wales	2,350	2,655	▲ 13.0%

Source: HESA Staff record

What do international academic staff do?

In 2019–20, 75.9% of all international staff were on academic contracts. Subject areas with the highest proportion of international academic staff were engineering and technology (39.5%), biological, mathematical and physical sciences (33.9%), humanities, language-based studies and archaeology (33.1%), and social studies (30.0%).

FIGURE 11 · INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF BY HESA COST CENTRE, 2019–20



Source: HESA Staff (excluding atypical) Full Person Equivalent (FPE) v1

Outward mobility

In 2019–20 international student mobility was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although some students were able to carry out their work or study abroad placement, many HE institutions curtailed or cancelled their study abroad programmes due to the uncertainty around international travel and visits abroad that the dynamic and evolving situation of the pandemic created. As such the 2019-20 data seen below should not be understood as being truly representative of longitudinal trends in outbound student mobility across the sector.

Despite these challenges, 36,225 students had a period of mobility as part of their degree during 2019–20.

1.5% of the total UK student population had a period of mobility during the 2019-20 academic year.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of students with a period of mobility had grown by 39.8% from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

In 2019-20,

36,225

students had a period of mobility as part of their degree.

1.5%

of the total UK student population had a period of mobility during the 2019-20 academic year.

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Where are mobile students based?



FIGURE 12 · MOBILE STUDENTS BY COUNTRY OF UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION, 2016-17 TO 2019-20

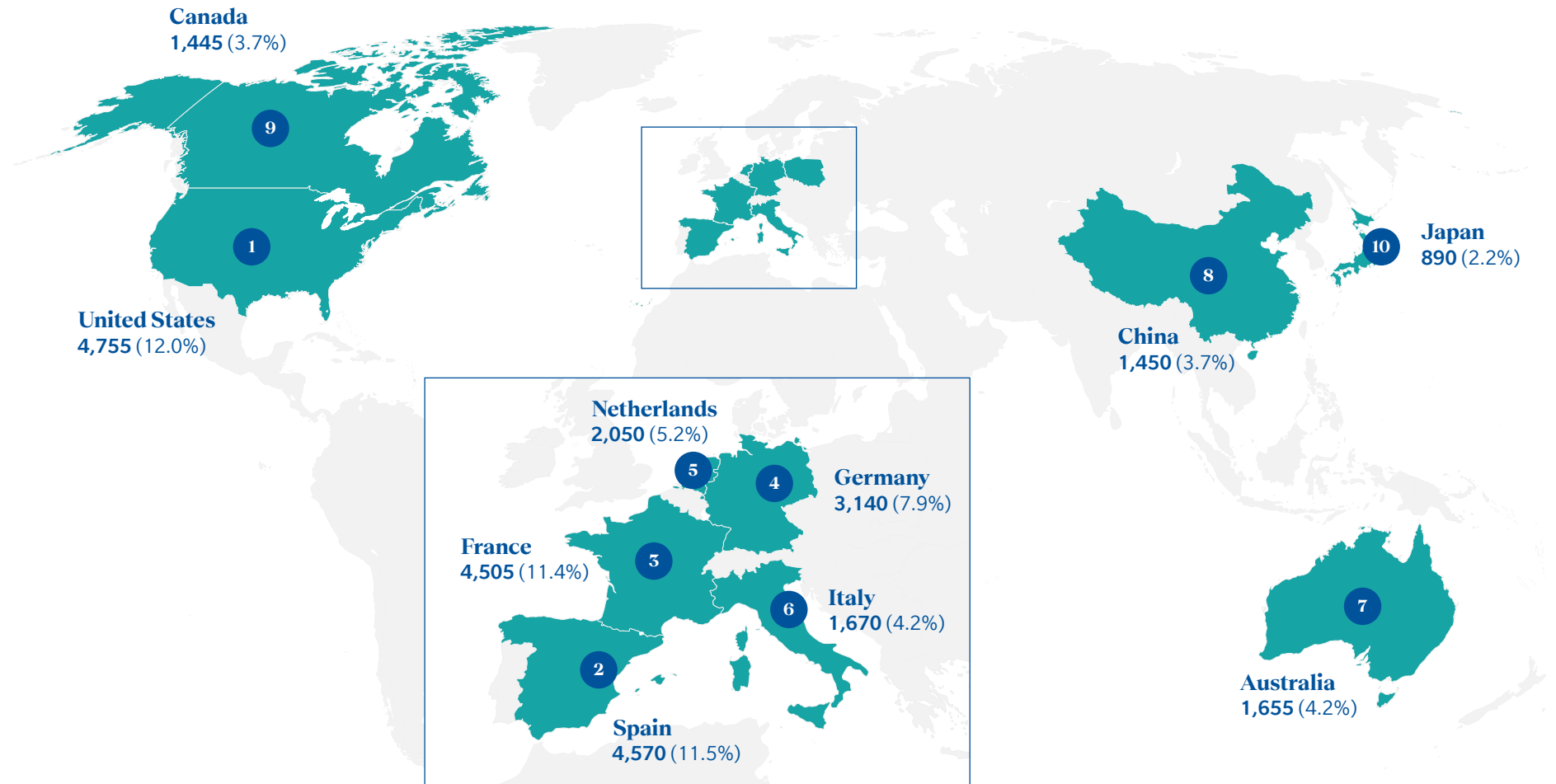
PROVIDER REGION	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
England	32,705	39,115	39,690	28,545
Northern Ireland	1,465	1,425	1,460	950
Scotland	5,415	5,455	6,105	4,935
Wales	2,745	3,205	3,620	1,795

Source: HESA Student record

Top destinations

The top three most popular destinations for mobile students in 2019–20 were the US, Spain, and France: together these countries received 35.0% of all mobile students from the UK.

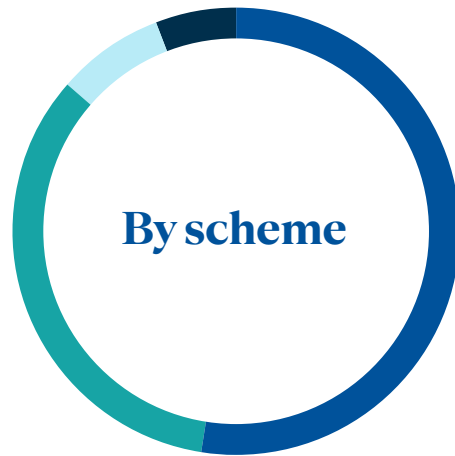
FIGURE 13 · TOP 10 DESTINATIONS BY NUMBER OF MOBILE STUDENTS (AND PERCENTAGE OF GLOBAL TOTAL) 2019-20



What kind of international experiences do UK students have?

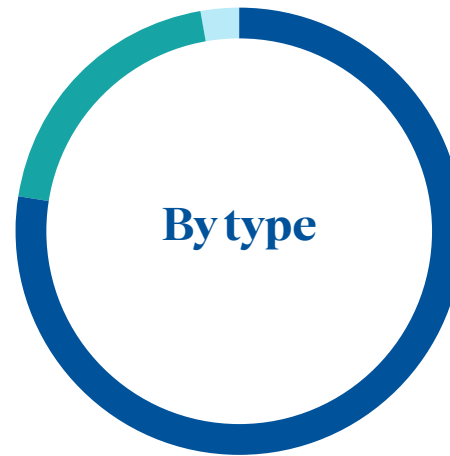
Overall, 77.7% of instances of mobility⁶ in 2019–20 were for studying abroad, 19.7% were for working abroad, and 2.6% were for volunteering. Most mobility periods (60.9%) were long-term – that is, more than 14 weeks' duration.

FIGURE 14 · MOBILITY BY SCHEME, 2019–20⁷



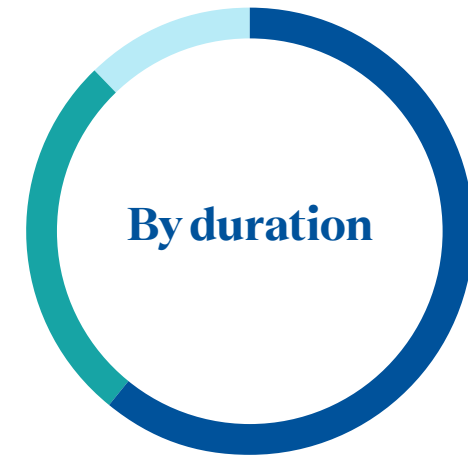
■ Provider led	20,830	52.6%
■ ERASMUS+	13,370	33.8%
■ Another scheme	3,060	7.7%
■ Sandwich placement	2,305	5.8%

FIGURE 15 · MOBILITY BY TYPE, 2019–20



■ Study abroad	30,745	77.7%
■ Work abroad	7,785	19.7%
■ Volunteering	1,040	2.6%

FIGURE 16 · MOBILITY BY DURATION, 2019–20



■ Long term (14 weeks+)	24,105	60.9%
■ Short term (1-4 weeks)	10,700	27.0%
■ Medium-term (5-13 weeks)	4,760	12.0%

Source: HESA Student record

⁶In this section, mobility is measured in instances rather than student numbers as some students undertake more than one mobility period.

⁷The figures in this section predate the introduction of the Turing and other national mobility schemes.

Transnational education

Transnational education (TNE) is the delivery of an educational award in a country other than that in which the awarding body is based. It includes but is not limited to online and distance learning, joint and dual degree programmes, fly-in faculty for short courses, and international branch campuses.

In 2019–20, 156 UK universities delivered some form of TNE to 453,390 students in 225 countries and territories worldwide. The UK is a world leader in this field.

Historically, Oxford Brookes University students accounted for over 40% of all UK TNE student numbers, due to a partnership with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). However, in 2019–20 Oxford Brookes changed its reporting practices, leading to a reduction of 256,450 in the total number of students it reported to HESA for the Aggregate Offshore Record (AOR) between 2018–19 and 2019–20. To reflect sector-wide trends more accurately over time, the following data analysis therefore excludes Oxford Brookes University.

In 2019-20,

453,390

students were studying on UK TNE programmes (or 449,690 excluding Oxford Brookes students).

More UK universities than ever,

156

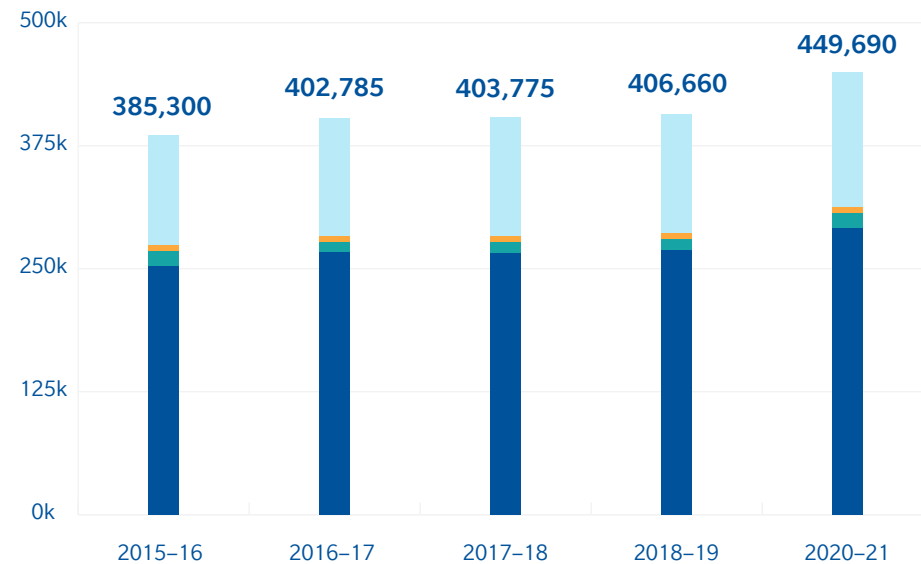
were delivering UK TNE in 2019-20.

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Overview of UK TNE provision

Between 2018–19 and 2019–20, the total number of UK TNE students increased by 10.6%. Collaborative provision accounted for 39.1% of the global UK TNE student population, making this the most popular type of provision. The majority of students (68.3%) were studying for undergraduate degrees. Distance learning saw the largest percentage growth of all types of provision (+16.0%) from 2018-19.

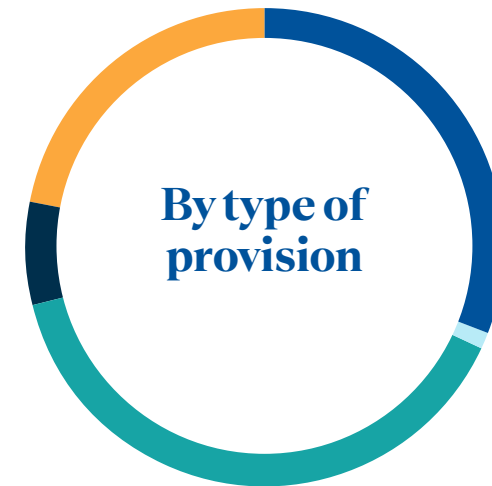
FIGURE 17 · UK HE TNE STUDENTS BY LEVEL OF STUDY⁸



- First degree
- Other undergraduate
- Postgraduate research
- Postgraduate taught

Source: HESA Aggregate offshore record

FIGURE 18 · UK TNE STUDENT NUMBERS BY TYPE OF PROVISION, 2019-20



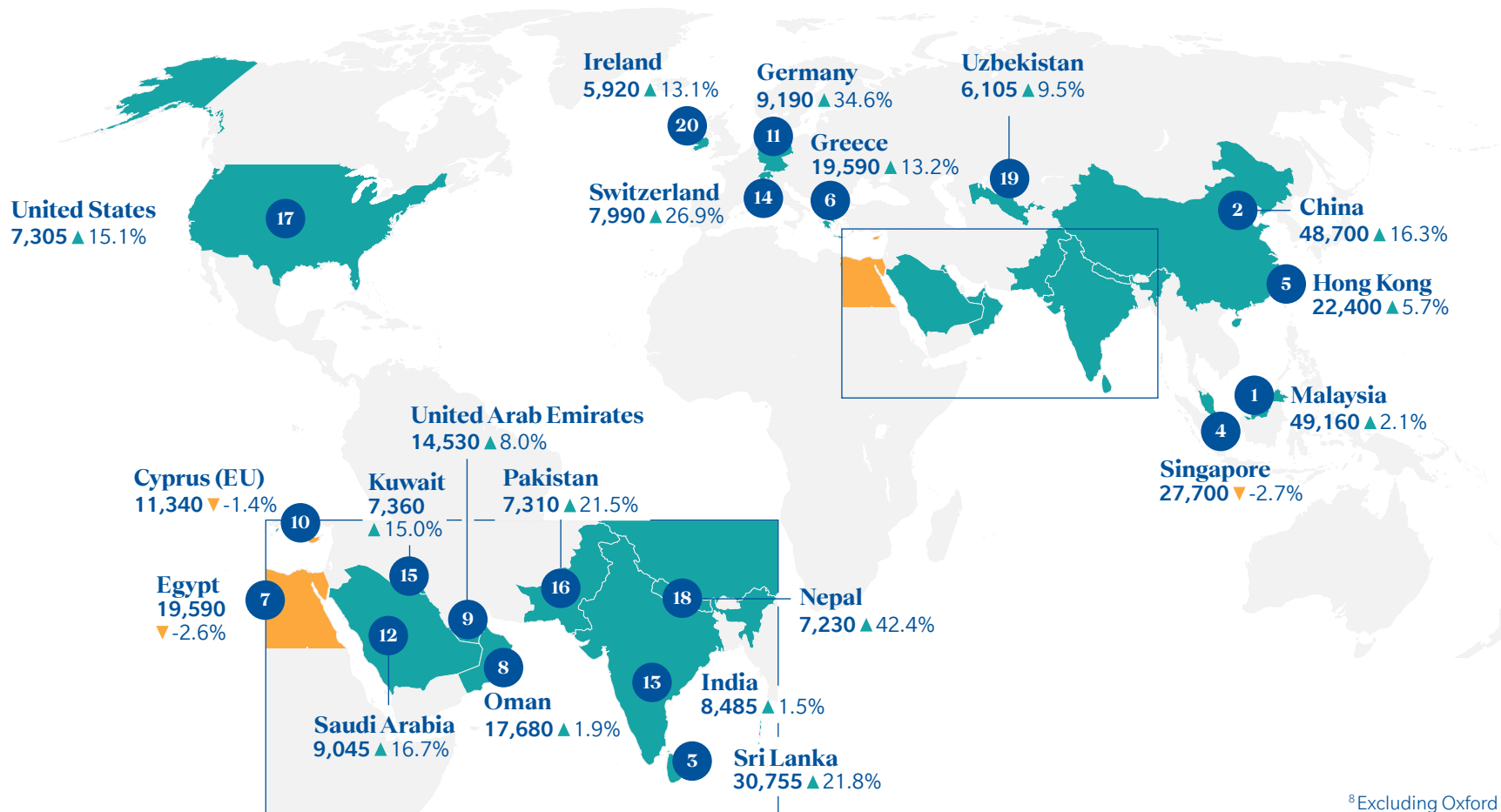
Type of Provision	Number of Students	Percentage
Distance, flexible or distributed learning	139,245	31.0%
Other arrangement	5,160	1.1%
Collaborative provision	175,755	39.1%
Overseas campus	31,295	7.0%
Overseas partner organisation	98,230	21.8%

⁸Excluding Oxford Brookes University.

Where are UK TNE students based?

The top five host countries and territories for UK TNE in 2019–20 were Malaysia, China, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Hong Kong. The top host country for TNE outside of Asia is Greece, ranking 6th globally. Asia accounts for the largest proportion of the top 20 countries, followed by Europe, the Middle East, Africa and North America.

FIGURE 19 · TOP 20 UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES, 2019–20⁸



⁸ Excluding Oxford Brookes University.

International research

In 2020, UK universities continued to produce high-quality and globally collaborative research, attracting world-leading researchers and investment from around the world. The UK is a science superpower, with a research base that continues to outperform its demographic status. Although the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the R&D sector is not yet clear, the UK has continued to prioritise international research collaboration.

The UK has been at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, working with partners in low- and middle-income countries to produce high performance ventilators at low cost and increase disaster resilience. UK universities continue to strengthen their research partnerships with European counterparts post-EU exit, with the government announcing that the UK will associate to Horizon Europe.

In 2019-20,

59.3%

of UK publications were the result of international collaboration, compared to 39.8% in 2010–11.

The UK's field-weighted citation impact (FWCI) has ranked

1st

in the G7 every year since 2007.

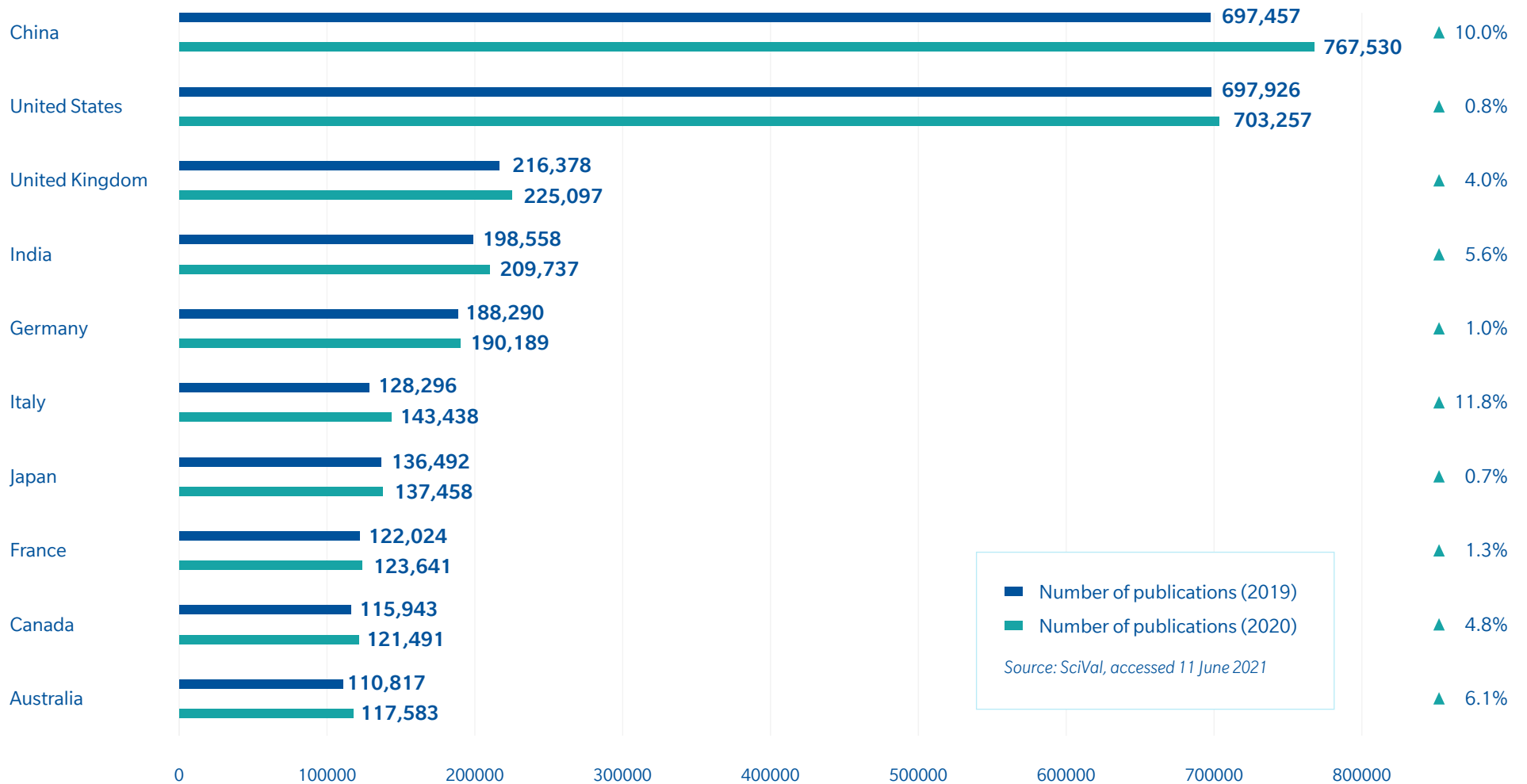
(FWCI: 1.56)

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How does the UK publication rate compare internationally?

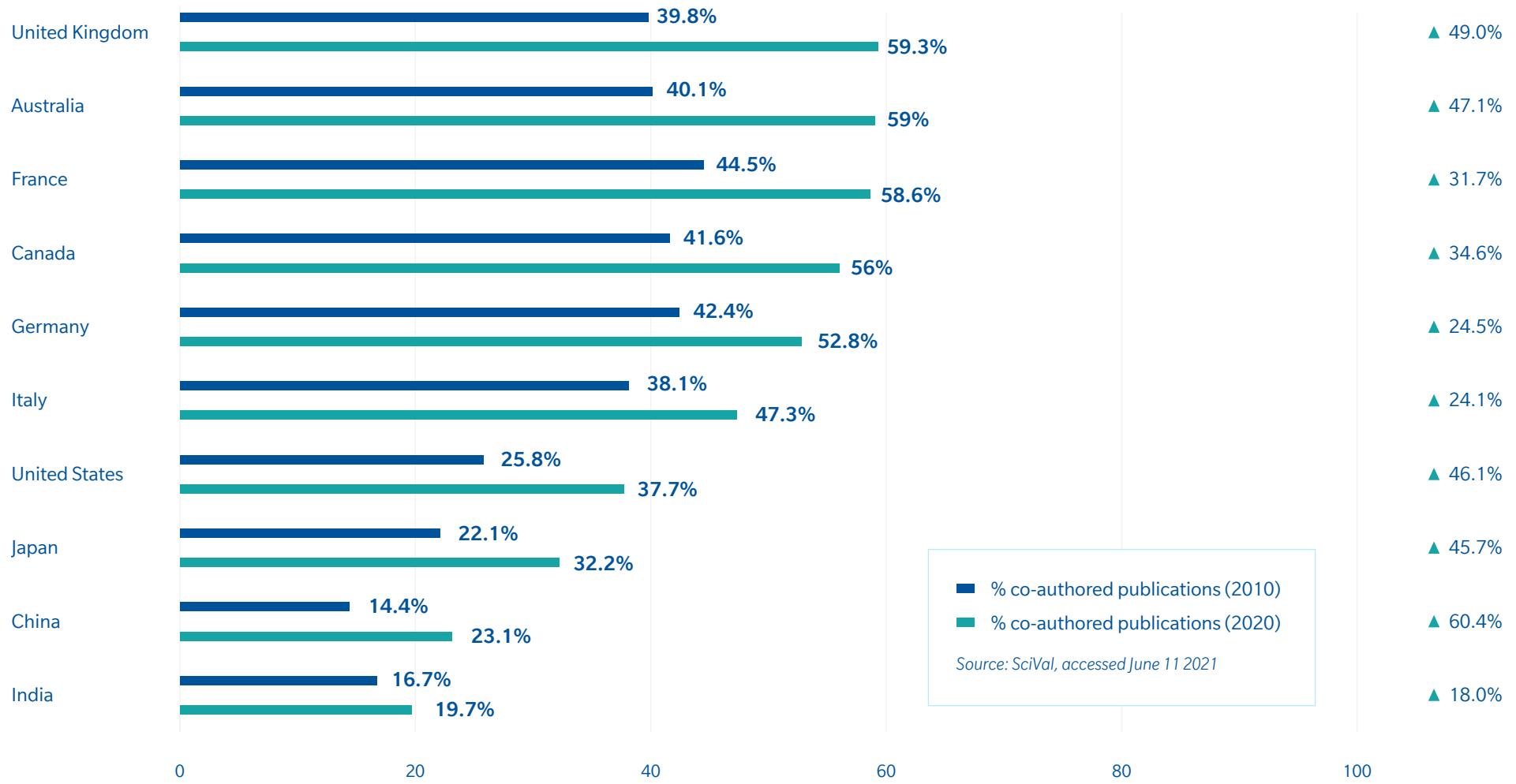
FIGURE 20 · TOP 10 COUNTRIES BY RESEARCH OUTPUT (ALL PUBLICATION TYPES) 2019 AND 2020





Proportion of internationally co-authored publications

FIGURE 21 - PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONALLY CO-AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS, 2010 TO 2020



What is the impact of UK research?

THE UK POPULATION REPRESENTS



0.87%

of the global population⁹

BETWEEN 2017-20



3.9%

of the world's publication authors were from the UK¹⁰

IN 2019-20, THE UK PRODUCED



6.4%

of the world's publications¹¹

IN 2019-20



9.5%

of the UK's publications were in the top 5% of the world's most-cited publications¹²

IN 2019-20, THE UK RECEIVED



10.5%

of the world's citations¹³

IN 2018, TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON R&D WAS



£37.1 billion

or the equivalent of 1.7% of GDP¹⁴

⁹Worldometer, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/>

^{10,11,12,13} SciVal, accessed 15 June 2021

¹⁴House of Commons Briefing Paper, Research and Development spending, 16 March 2021, p.3

How has the UK contributed to Covid-19 research?

THE UK HAS PRODUCED



10.8%

(8,089 out of 74,425) of the world's Covid-19 publications, making it the third-highest producer in the world, only surpassed by the US and China¹⁵

COVID-19 PUBLICATIONS



26%

(3,859 out of 14,843) of all internationally co-authored Covid-19 publications had at least one UK co-author, only surpassed by the US (43.7%)¹⁶

THE FIELD-WEIGHTED CITATION IMPACT



8.42

The field-weighted citation impact of the UK's Covid-19 publications is 8.42, surpassed only by China (FWCI 15.90)¹⁷

UK RESEARCH COUNCILS HAVE INVESTED OVER



£554 million

in over **3,600 Covid-19 research and innovation initiatives** in the UK and globally¹⁸, with over £17 million invested in projects with partners in DAC (Development Assistance Committee) countries¹⁹

^{15, 16, 17} SciVal, accessed 14 June 2021

¹⁸ UKCDR, COVID-19 Project Tracker, <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/covid-circle/covid-19-research-project-tracker/>, accessed 14 June 2021.

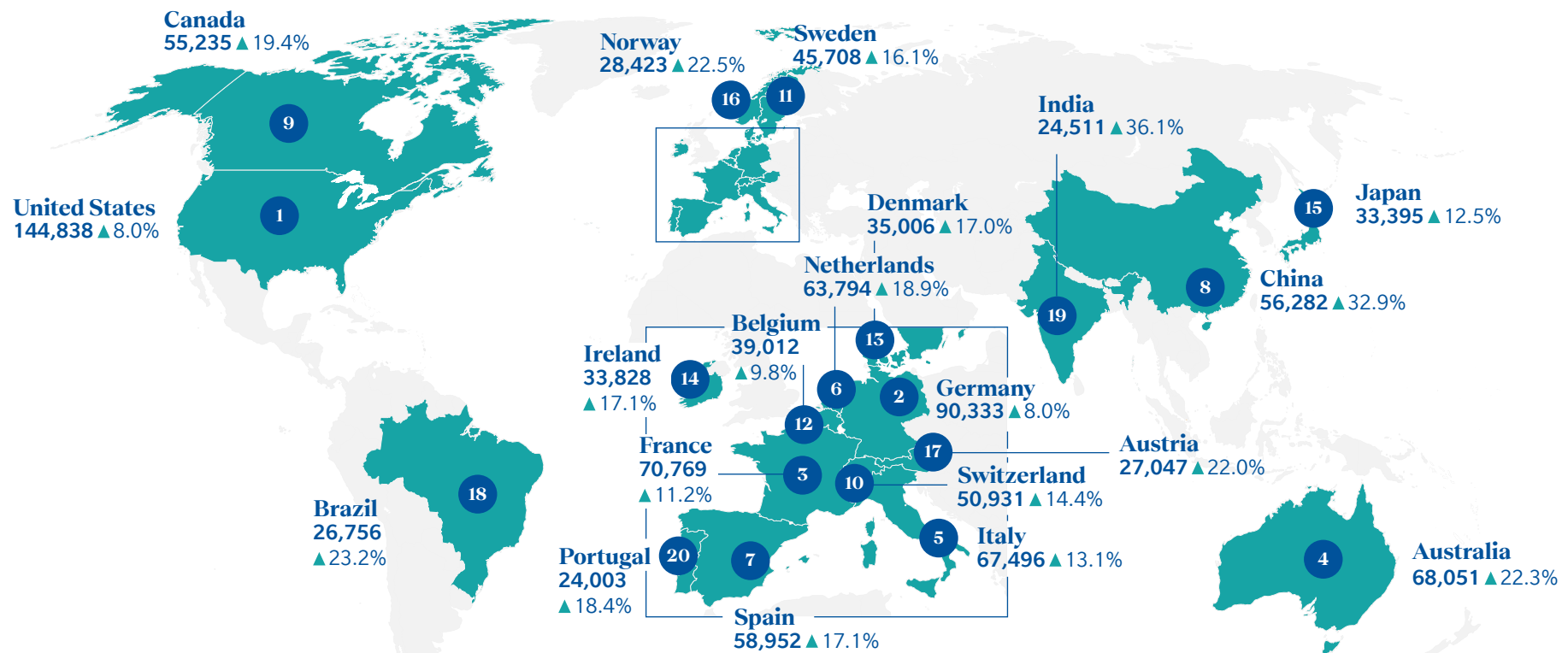
¹⁹ UKRI, <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/tackling-the-impact-of-covid-19/>

Which countries are the UK's top collaborative partners?

The UK's most frequent collaborative research partners are the US, Germany, and France, with 20.6%, 47.5% and 57.2% of publications featuring one or more UK co-authors respectively²⁰. Most notably, research collaborations with India have increased by 36.1% since 2017, while collaborations with China have increased by 32.9%.

The UK is itself a popular partner, ranking first for Austria, second for the majority of its other partners, third for the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland and Portugal, and fourth for Japan.

FIGURE 22 · TOP 20 UK COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 2017-2020



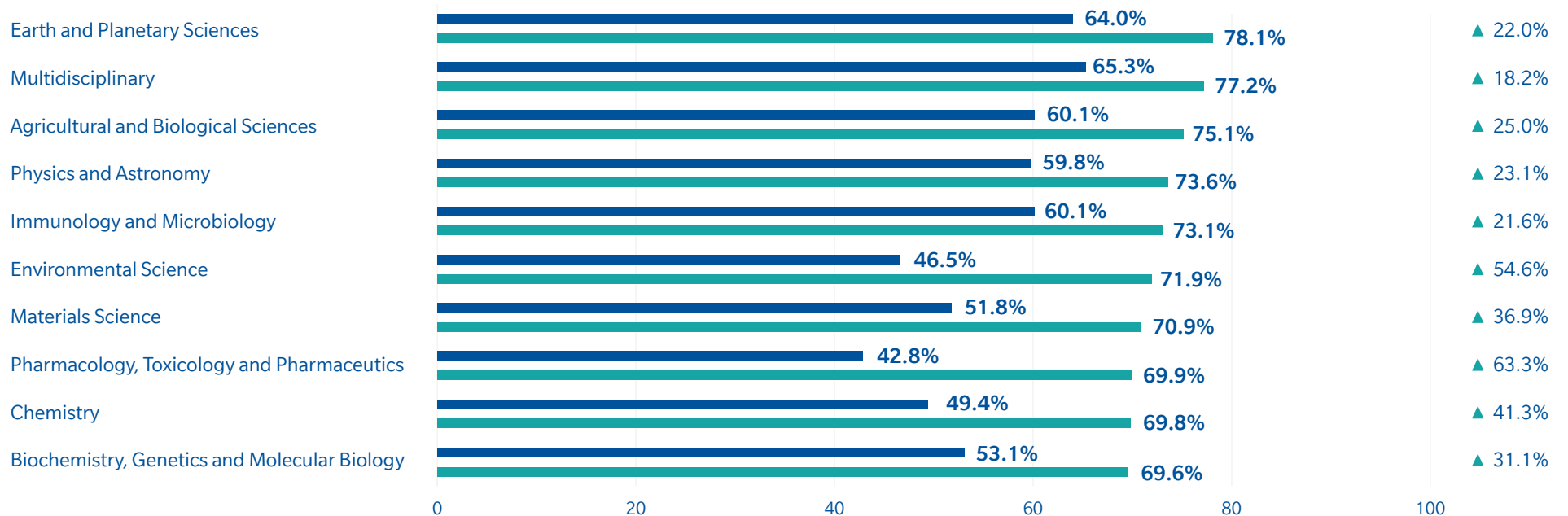
Source: SciVal, accessed 14 June 2021.

²⁰Frequency of research partnerships measured according to numbers of joint publications in SciVal

In which subject areas does the most international collaboration take place?

In 2020, the subject area of Earth and Planetary sciences produced the largest share of publications with one or more UK co-author(s) (78.1%), remaining the top subject area for international collaboration since 2016. Pharmacology, toxicology and pharmaceuticals saw the most rapid year-on-year growth, with collaboration in this field increasing by 63.3% between 2010 and 2020. Nursing saw the largest increase in internationally co-authored publications, at 12.1%, followed by health professions (9.8%). Fewer arts and humanities publications have international co-authors (25.5%) compared to most science and engineering subject areas.

FIGURE 23 · TOP 10 SUBJECT AREAS BY PERCENTAGE SHARE OF INTERNATIONALLY CO-AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS, 2010–2020



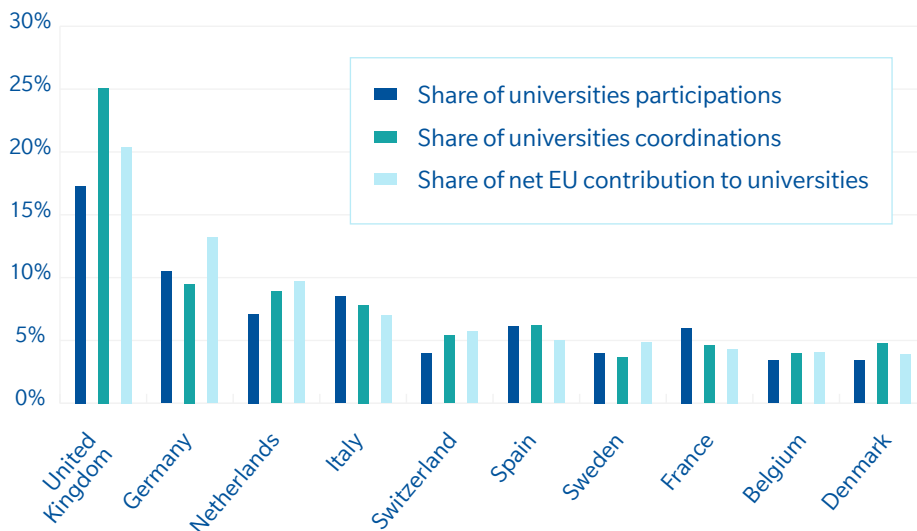
■ % share (2010) ■ % share (2020)

Source: SciVal, accessed 11 June 2021

The UK's participation in Horizon 2020

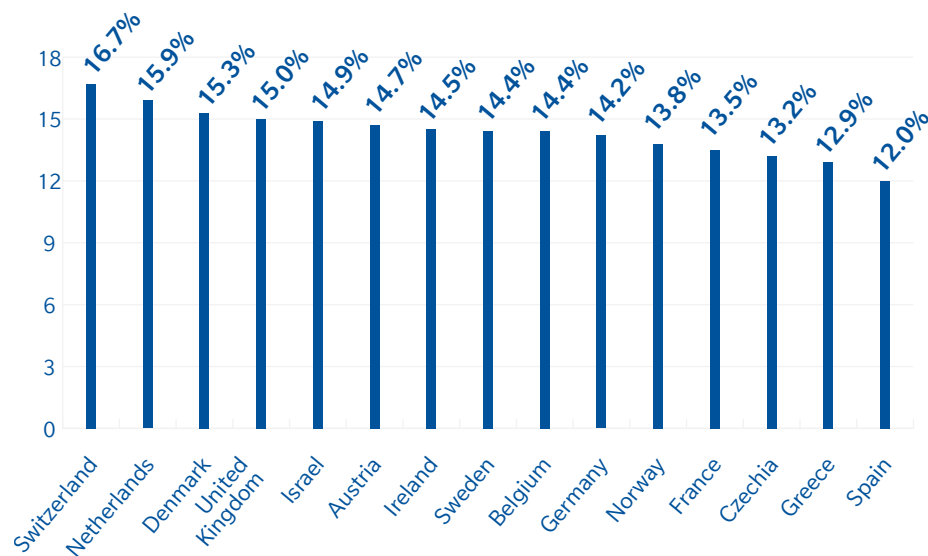
The UK was a full participant in the entire Horizon 2020 programme until its conclusion at the end of 2020, even after the UK left the European Union in January 2020. The UK participated in calls with 160 countries in Horizon 2020. The UK's share of funding dropped from a peak of 26.7% in 2014 to 13.4% in 2020. Nonetheless, the UK was one of the top performing nations in the programme, especially when looking specifically at university participation. UK university researchers participate in and lead more Horizon 2020 projects than any other participant country, and the UK had one of the programme's highest funding bids success rates (15.0%).

FIGURE 24 · UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON 2020



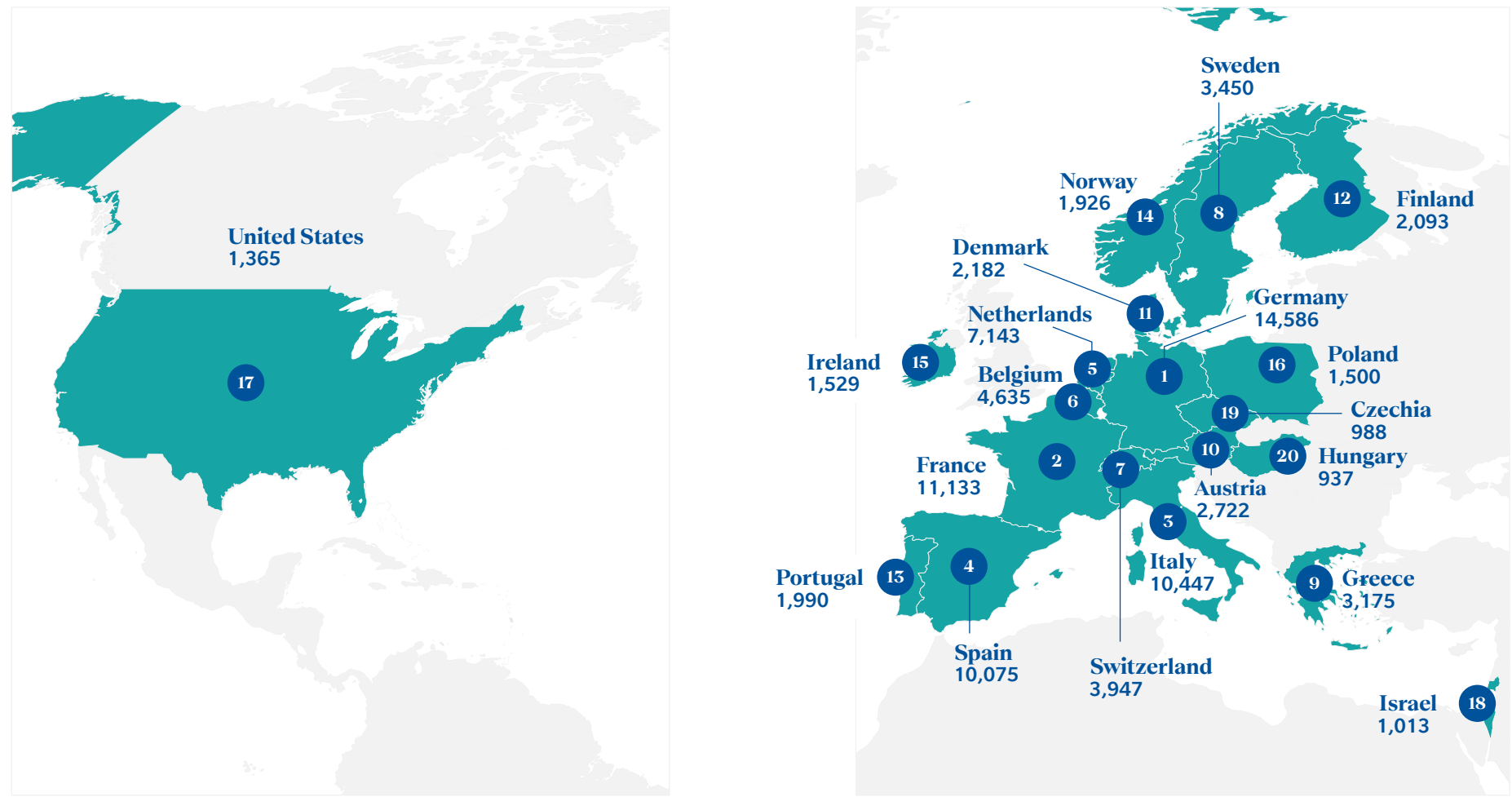
Source: h2020viz.vinnova.se, accessed 15 June 2021

FIGURE 25 · THE SUCCESS RATE OF UK COLLABORATIONS WITH A PARTNER



Source: [Horizon 2020 proposals dashboard](https://horizon2020proposals.dashboard), accessed 15 June 2021

FIGURE 26 · TOP PARTNERS OF THE UK IN HORIZON 2020 ACCORDING TO NUMBERS OF COLLABORATIVE LINKS²¹



Source: h2020viz.vinnova.se, accessed 15 June 2021

²¹ Number of connections between entities

What are the sources of UK research funding?

In 2019–20, 23.4% of UK research funding came from international sources. EU funding, which makes up more than half of the UK’s international funding, has decreased by 11.0% since 2018–19, whereas non-EU funding has increased by 3.3% during the same period.

FIGURE 27 · TOTAL RESEARCH FUNDING BY SOURCE, 2019–20



■ United Kingdom (UK)	£4,820,655,000	76.6%
■ European Union (EU)	£881,498,000	14.0%
■ Non-EU	£590,657,000	9.4%

FIGURE 28 · INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FUNDING BY SOURCE (EU AND NON-EU), 2019–2020



■ EU Government	£701,166,000	47.6%
■ EU Charities	£10,099,000	0.7%
■ EU Industry	£121,219,000	8.2%
■ EU Other	£49,014,000	3.3%
■ Non-EU Charities	£138,175,000	9.4%
■ Non-EU Industry	£199,714,000	13.6%
■ Non-EU Other	£252,768,000	17.2%

Source: HESA Finance Record 2019–20, accessed July 2021 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/income>)

Regional profiles

In this section, we have provided an overview of UK universities' international activity relating to world regions. This includes summaries on international student and staff recruitment, transnational education, outward student mobility and international research collaboration.

[Africa](#)

[Asia](#)

[Australasia](#)

[Europe](#)

[Middle East](#)

[North America](#)

[South America](#)

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Africa

Although Nigeria continues to represent the most significant sender of students to the UK, Ghana is the fastest growing market in the continent, demonstrating 26.2% growth in student numbers since 2018–19 academic year.

The growing significance of African research partners is reflected in the sustained increase in the number of co-authored publications from the region in the last five years. South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda are the UK’s main research partners.

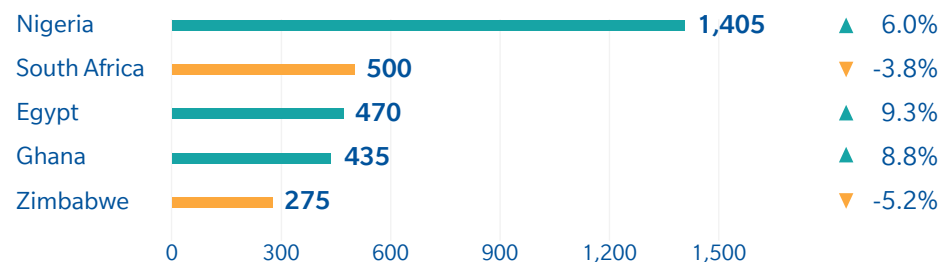
Despite previous indications of decline, UK TNE student numbers in Africa have increased by 5.3% since 2018–19 and have grown by 19.3% and 20.6% in South Africa and Nigeria respectively. Egypt is still the continent’s largest TNE market with 19,590 students in 2019–20.

International staff

4,290 ▲ +3.6%

Total number of international staff from Africa in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 29 · TOP FIVE AFRICAN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2019–20



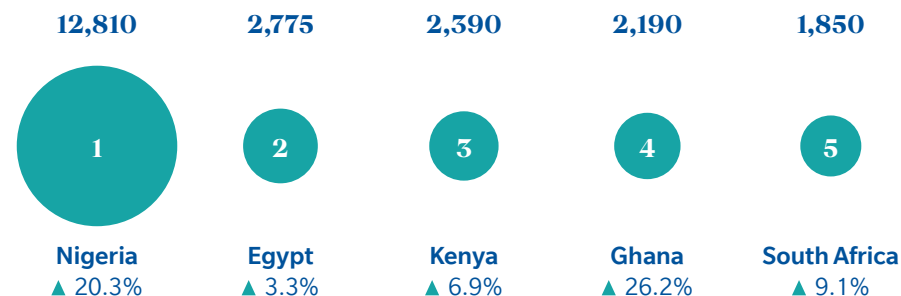
International students

28,950 ▲ +11.9%

Total number of international students from Africa in the UK in 2019–20

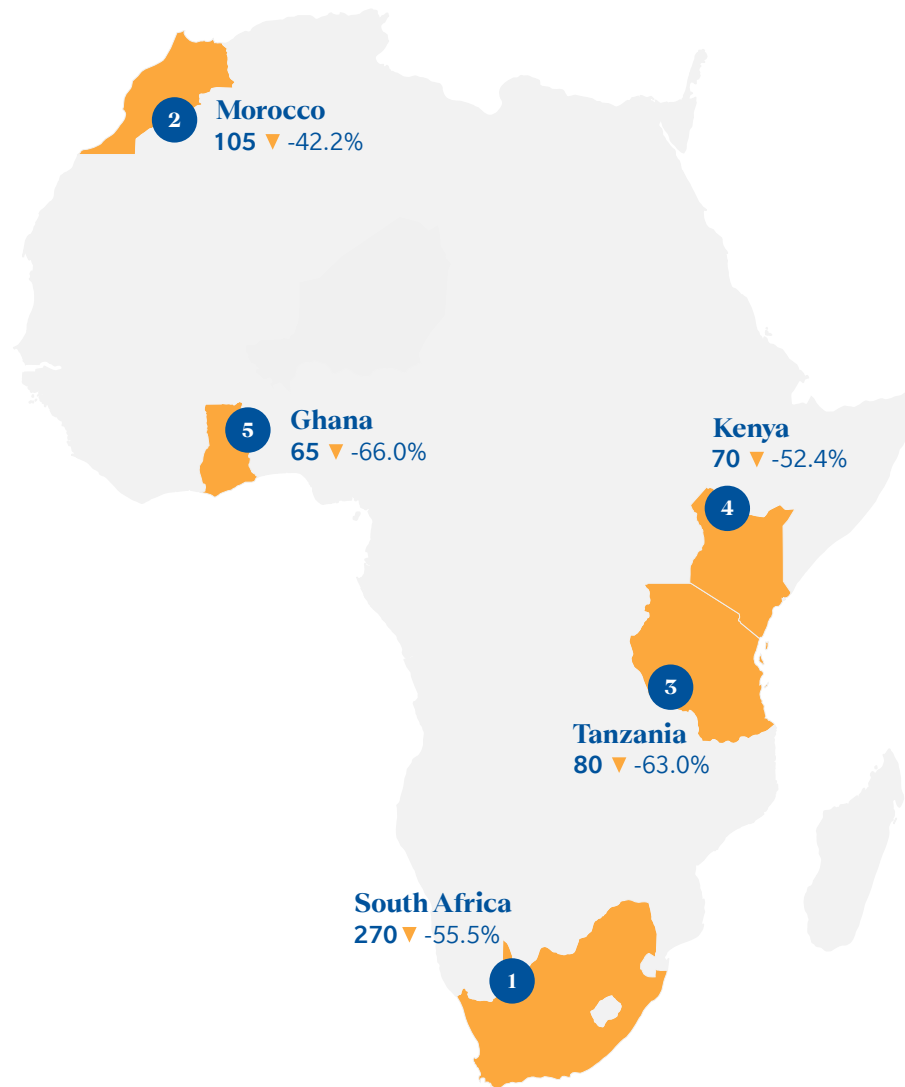
FIGURE 30 · TOP FIVE AFRICAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20

Rank	Nationality	Number of Students	Change (%)
1	Nigeria	12,810	▲ 20.3%
2	Egypt	2,775	▲ 3.3%
3	Kenya	2,390	▲ 6.9%
4	Ghana	2,190	▲ 26.2%
5	South Africa	1,850	▲ 9.1%



Outward mobility

FIGURE 31 · TOP FIVE AFRICAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

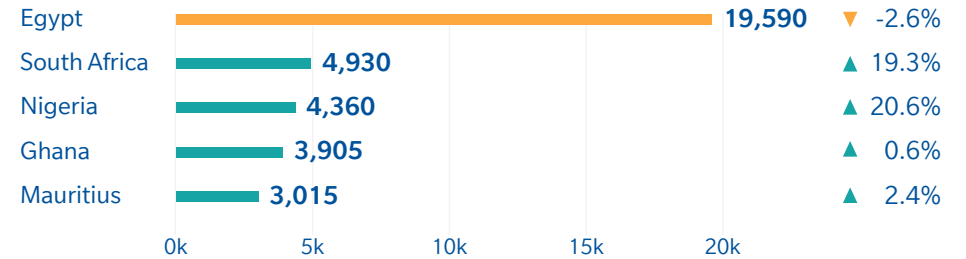


Transnational education

47,845 ▲ +5.3%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in Africa, 2019–20²²

FIGURE 32 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Collaborative provision

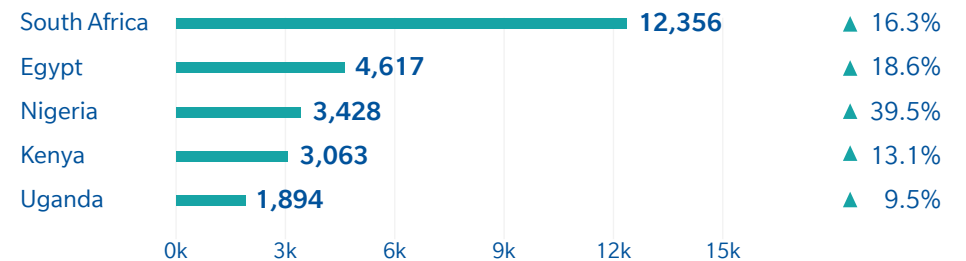
²² Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

32,799 ▲ +44.0%

Total UK publications with an African co-author between 2017 and 2020

FIGURE 33 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH AN AFRICAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2017–2020



Asia

Asia continues to be the fastest-growing and most resilient market for student recruitment. Chinese students represented 33.5% of all non-EU students in the UK in 2019–20.

Nevertheless, the fastest growing market in the region is India, reaching 96.9% growth in 2019–20. Research collaboration continues to grow, with the number of co-authored publications with China increasing by over 13% in 2017–20.

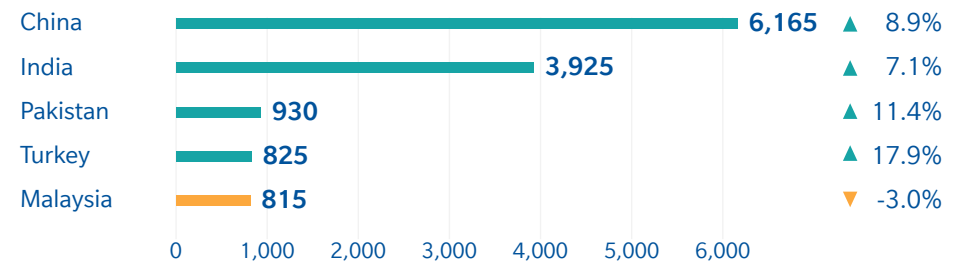
Asia remains by far the largest market region for UK TNE, with rising student numbers in China, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Nepal driving growth. Singapore, however, saw a slight decrease of 2.7% in TNE student numbers compared to 2018–19.

International staff

16,485 ▲ +6.6%

Total number of international staff from Asia in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 34 · TOP FIVE ASIAN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2019–20

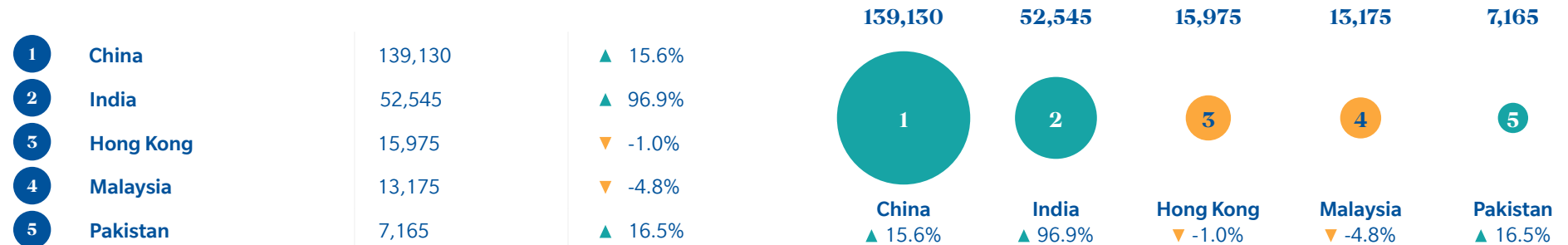


International students

272,755 ▲ +21.4%

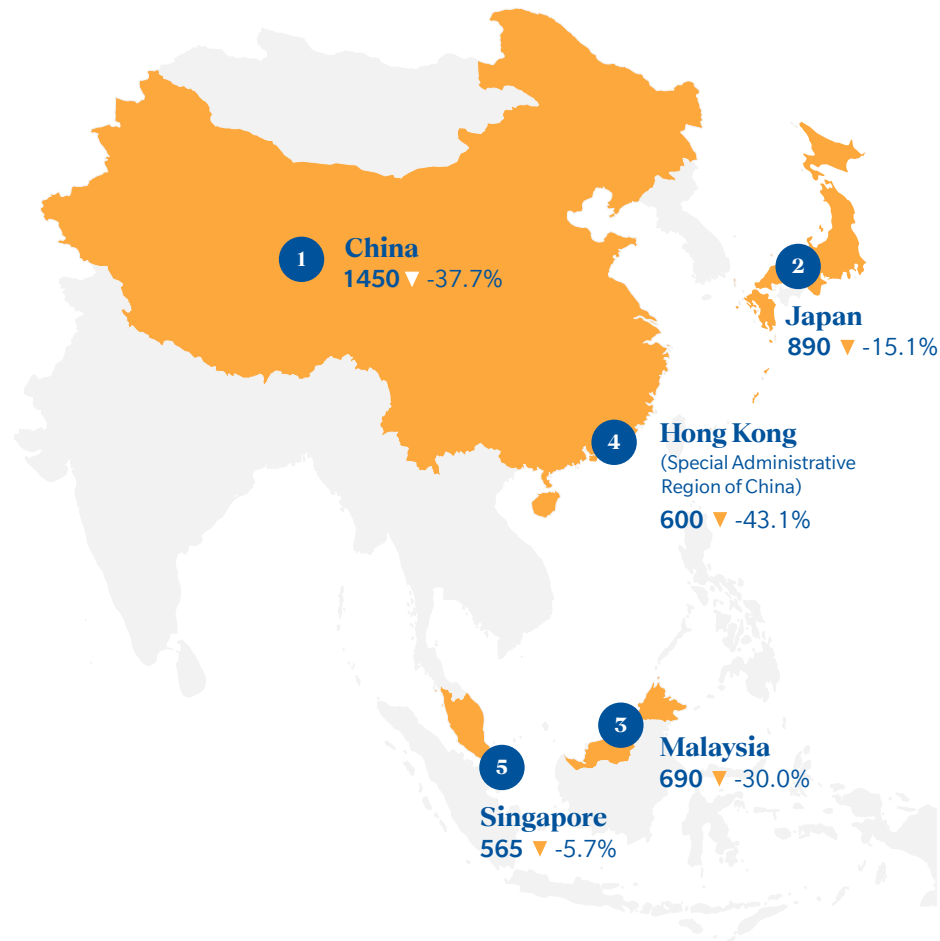
Total number of international students from Asia in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 35 · TOP FIVE ASIAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20



Outward mobility

FIGURE 36 · TOP FIVE ASIAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2018–19

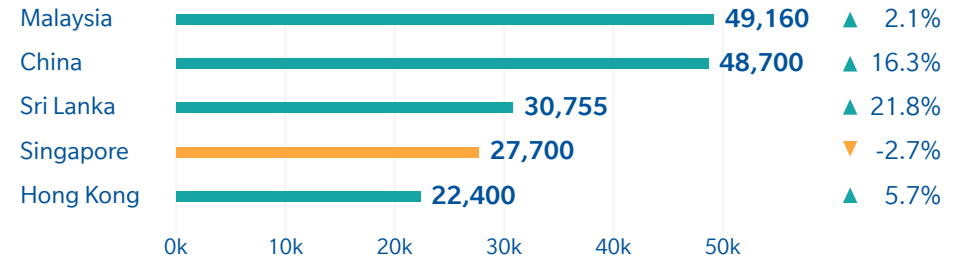


Transnational education

224,970 ▲ +9.9%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in Asia, 2019–20²³

FIGURE 37 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN ASIA, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Collaborative provision

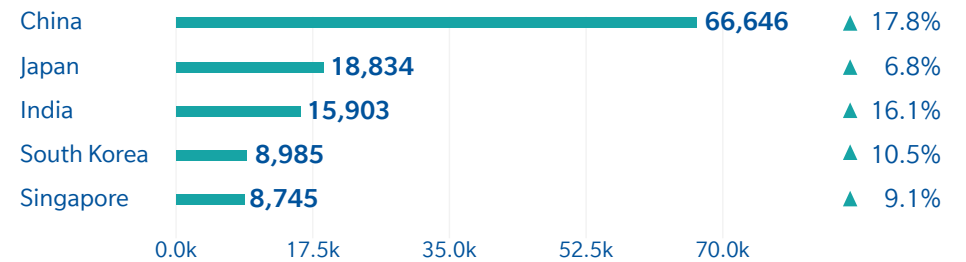
²³ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

133,346 ▲ +13.6%

Total UK publications with an Asian co-author between 2017–2020

FIGURE 38 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH AN ASIAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2017–2020



Australasia

The number of students from Australia and New Zealand coming to the UK continues to increase.

In 2019–20, the number of UK TNE students in the region grew by 14% since 2018–19, which is significant progress from the preceding period.

UK TNE provision in Australasia is largely based on online and distance learning, with the majority of students in Australia and New Zealand.

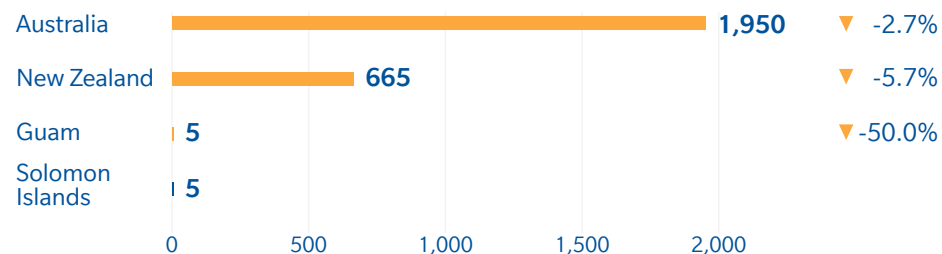
Similarly to other regions, UK outward student mobility to Australasia decreased dramatically during the 2019–20 academic year. Research collaboration has continued to expand, growing by 30% since 2016–19.

International staff

2,625 ▼ -3.7%

Total number of international staff from Australasia in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 39 · TOP FOUR AUSTRALASIAN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2019–20



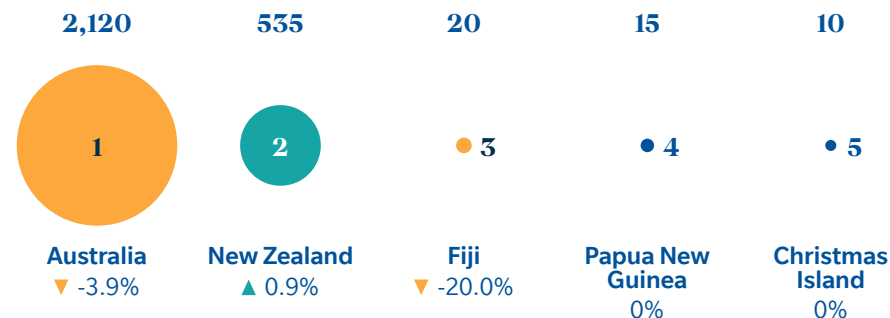
International students

2,760 ▲ +2.7%

Total number of international students from Australasia in the UK in 2019–20

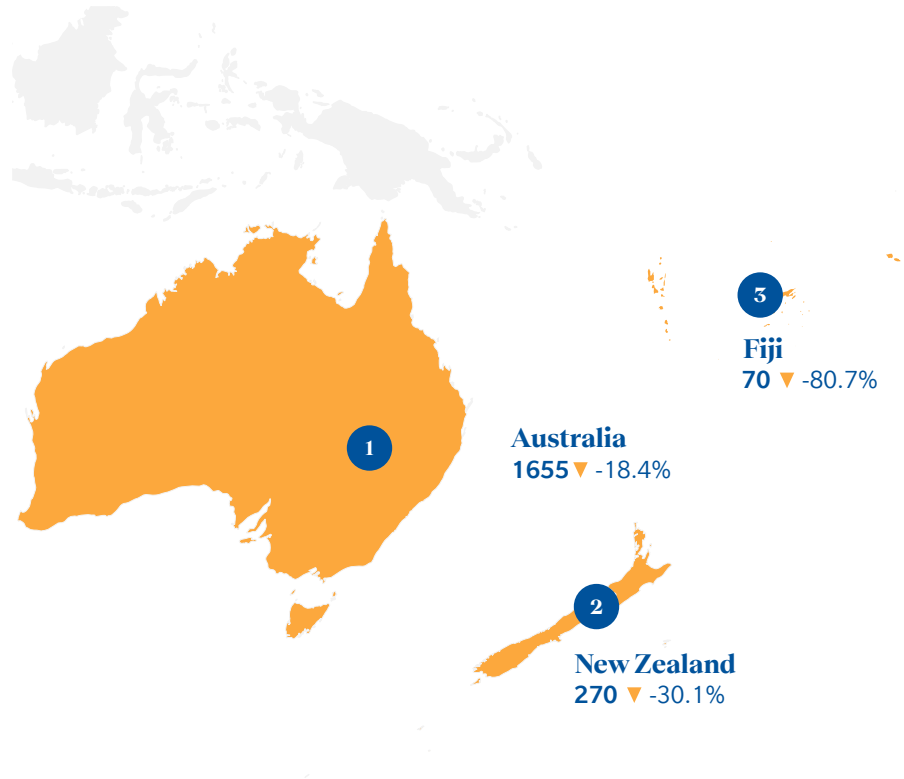
FIGURE 40 · TOP FIVE AUSTRALASIAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20

1	Australia	2120	▼ -3.9%
2	New Zealand	535	▲ 0.9%
3	Fiji	20	▼ -20.0%
4	Papua New Guinea	15	0.0%
5	Christmas Island	10	0.0%



Outward mobility

FIGURE 41 · TOP THREE AUSTRALASIAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

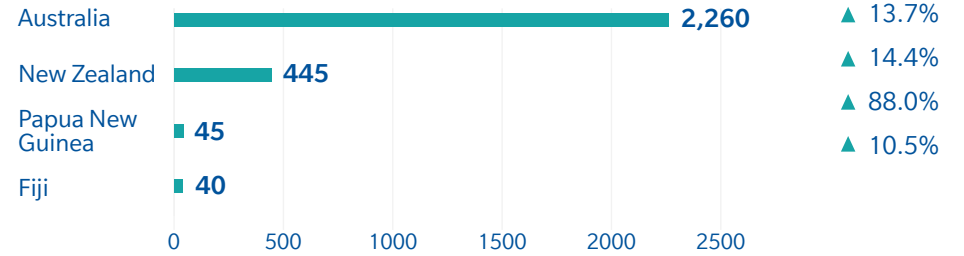


Transnational education

2,830 ▲ +14.0%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in Australasia, 2019–20²⁴

FIGURE 42 · TOP FOUR UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN AUSTRALASIA, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Distance, flexible or distributed learning

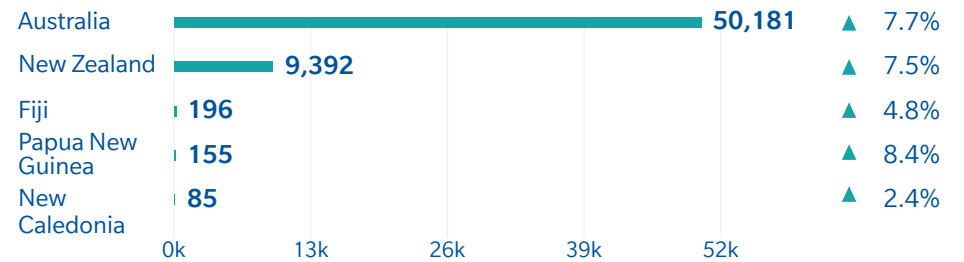
²⁴ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

42,517 ▲ +30.0%

Total UK publications with an Australasian co-author between 2017–2020

FIGURE 43 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH AN AUSTRALASIAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2017–2020



Europe

Europe is the top regional partner of the UK in research with 265,835 joint publications in 2017-20. The 2019-20 academic year was the last year in which EU students enjoyed Home fee status.

Despite the slight overall increase in EU student numbers in 2019-20 (+2.3%), all major sending countries (Italy, France and Germany) saw a decrease compared to 2018-19, but more dramatic changes are expected as data becomes available about subsequent years.

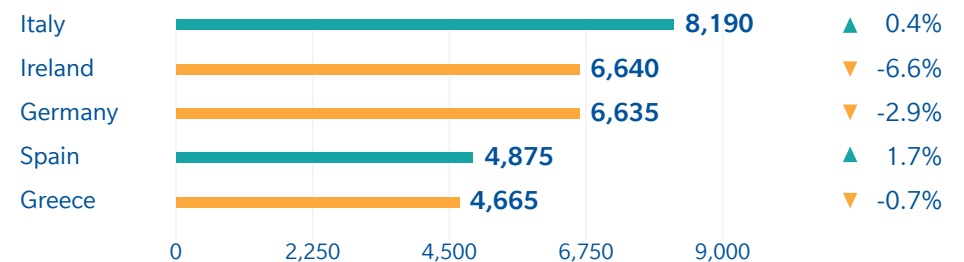
Unlike 2018-19, there has also been a decline in the number of European staff (-1.4%). Instances of mobility to Europe demonstrate a more significant decline. The traditionally most popular destinations – Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy – saw declines of 26.7%, 17.8%, 28.2%, 25.8% and 21.2% respectively. Europe is the UK’s second largest TNE market behind Asia, with 88,435 students (+14.6% since 2018–19) and continues to demonstrate strong growth in demand.

International staff

52,855 ▼ -1.4%

Total number of international staff from Europe in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 44 · TOP FIVE EUROPEAN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2018–19



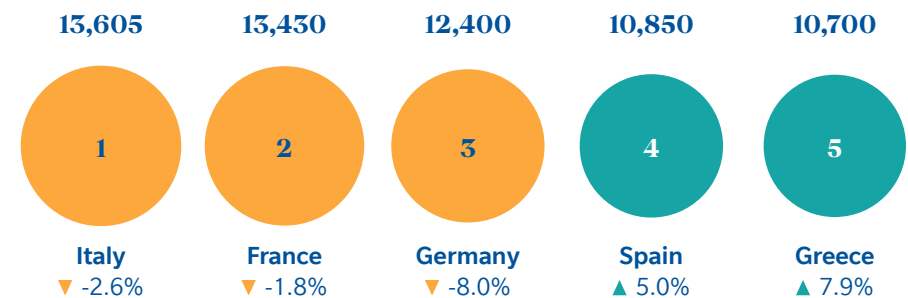
International students

165,225 ▲ +2.3%

Total number of international students from Europe in the UK in 2019-20

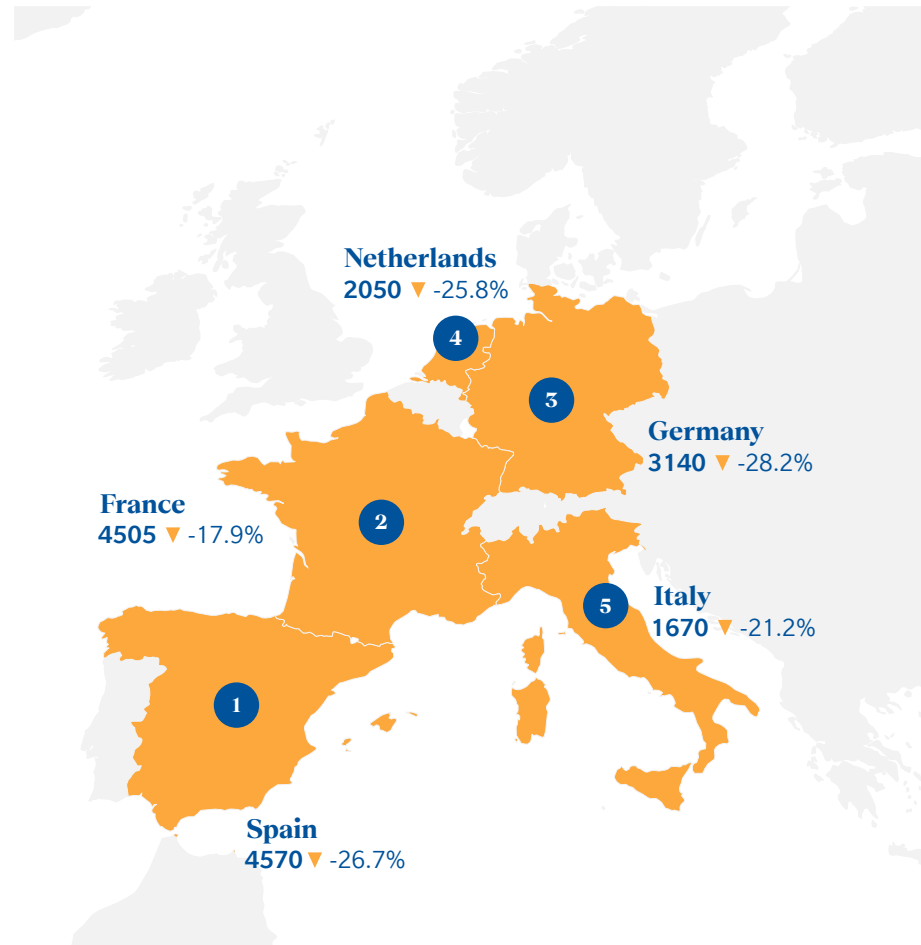
FIGURE 45 · TOP FIVE EUROPEAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20

1	Italy	13,605	▼ -2.6%
2	France	13,430	▼ -1.8%
3	Germany	12,400	▼ -8.0%
4	Spain	10,850	▲ 5.0%
5	Greece	10,700	▲ 7.9%



Outward mobility

FIGURE 46 · TOP FIVE EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

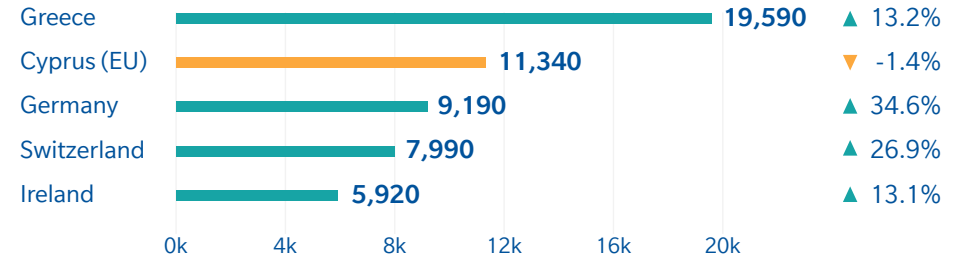


Transnational education

88,435 ▲ +14.6%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in Europe, 2019–20²⁵

FIGURE 47 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN EUROPE, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Distance, flexible, or distributed learning

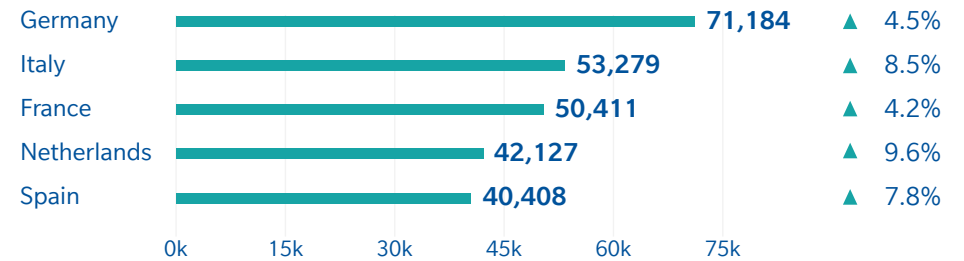
²⁵ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

265,835 ▲ +37.1%

Total UK publications with a European co-author between 2017–2020

FIGURE 48 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH A EUROPEAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2017–2020



Middle East

In the Middle East, trends from previous years continued in 2019–20, with Saudi Arabia still sending the largest number of students to the UK (8,435 in 2019–20) and Kuwait continuing to grow fastest, with student numbers increasing by 14.9% since 2018–19.

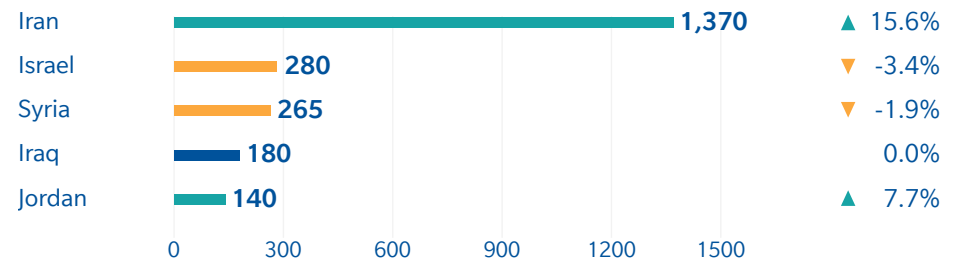
The region is an established UK TNE hub, and a recent decrease in numbers was averted in 2019–20, with an increase of 9.2% in TNE student numbers across the region. While Oman and UAE are the largest markets for UK TNE, the most rapid growth was seen in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, with increases of around 17% in both countries. The number of international staff continues to grow, with the greatest number of staff coming from Iran. The primary research partner in the region is Israel, closely followed by Turkey, but collaborations with the UAE increased the most, by around 60%, between 2017 and 2020.

International staff

52,855 ▼ -1.4%

Total number of international staff from the Middle East in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 49 · TOP FIVE MIDDLE EASTERN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2019–20



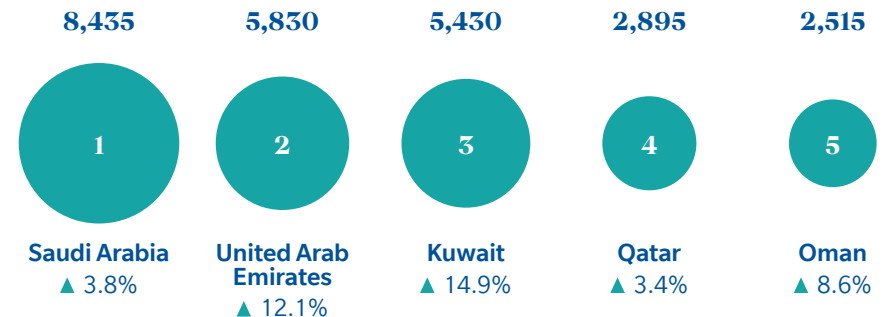
International students

32,630 ▲ +5.2%

Total number of international students from the Middle East in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 50 · TOP FIVE MIDDLE EASTERN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2018–19

1	Saudi Arabia	8,435	▲ 3.8%
2	United Arab Emirates	5,830	▲ 12.1%
3	Kuwait	5,430	▲ 14.9%
4	Qatar	2,895	▲ 3.4%
5	Oman	2,515	▲ 8.6%



Outward mobility

FIGURE 51 · TOP FIVE MIDDLE EASTERN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

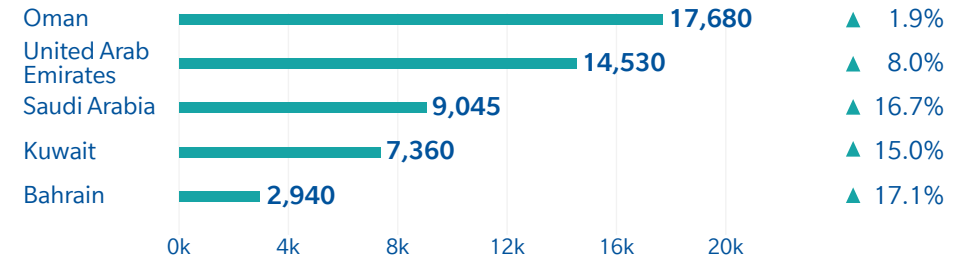


Transnational education

58,815 ▲ +9.2%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in the Middle East, 2019–20²⁶

FIGURE 52 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Registered at an overseas partner organisation

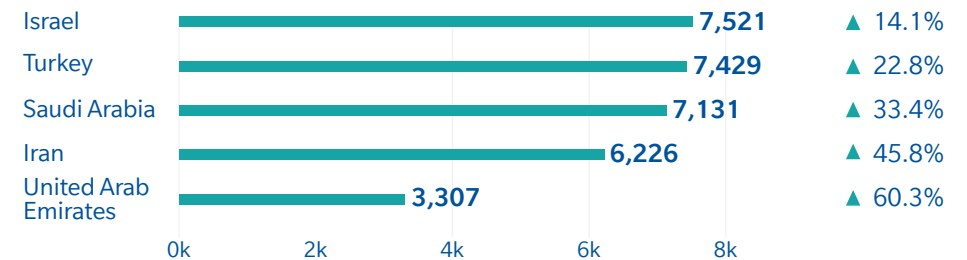
²⁶ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

36,354 ▲ +45.2%

Total UK publications with a Middle Eastern co-author between 2017–2020

FIGURE 53 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH A MIDDLE EASTERN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2016–2019



North America

The number of international students coming from North America has remained stable in comparison to 2018–19. The majority of students are from the US. There has been a notable decrease of 11.8% in the numbers of Mexican students.

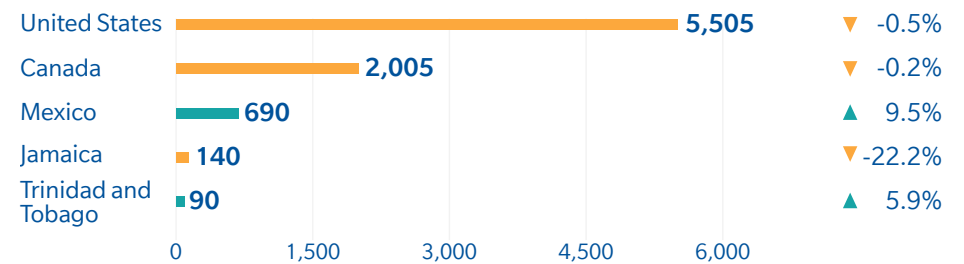
In 2019–20, 20% fewer UK mobile students went to Canada and the US compared to the previous year, but North America nevertheless remained a popular destination. The scale of UK TNE provision in North America is small compared to other regions in the world. Although there had, in previous years, been a drop in North American TNE students (with a 6.6% decrease since 2017–18), in 2019–20, the trend was averted, and UK TNE provision achieved a 16.7% growth. The United States continues to be the largest market for UK TNE in the region, but Canada has demonstrated the most significant growth (20%) in the last year. The UK has long-standing research relationships in North America, and the number of research collaborations is growing across the US, Canada and Mexico.

International staff

8,630 ▼ -0.3%

Total number of international staff from North America in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 54 · TOP FIVE NORTH AMERICAN STAFF DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20

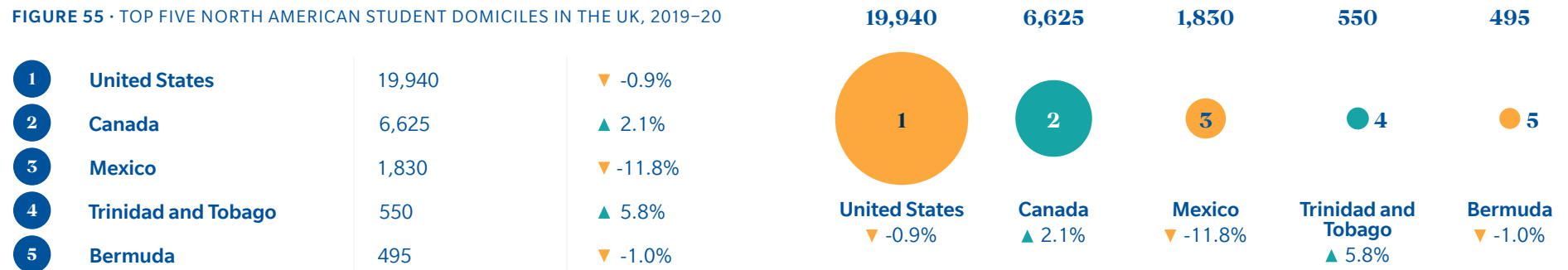


International students

27,880 ▲ +0.8%

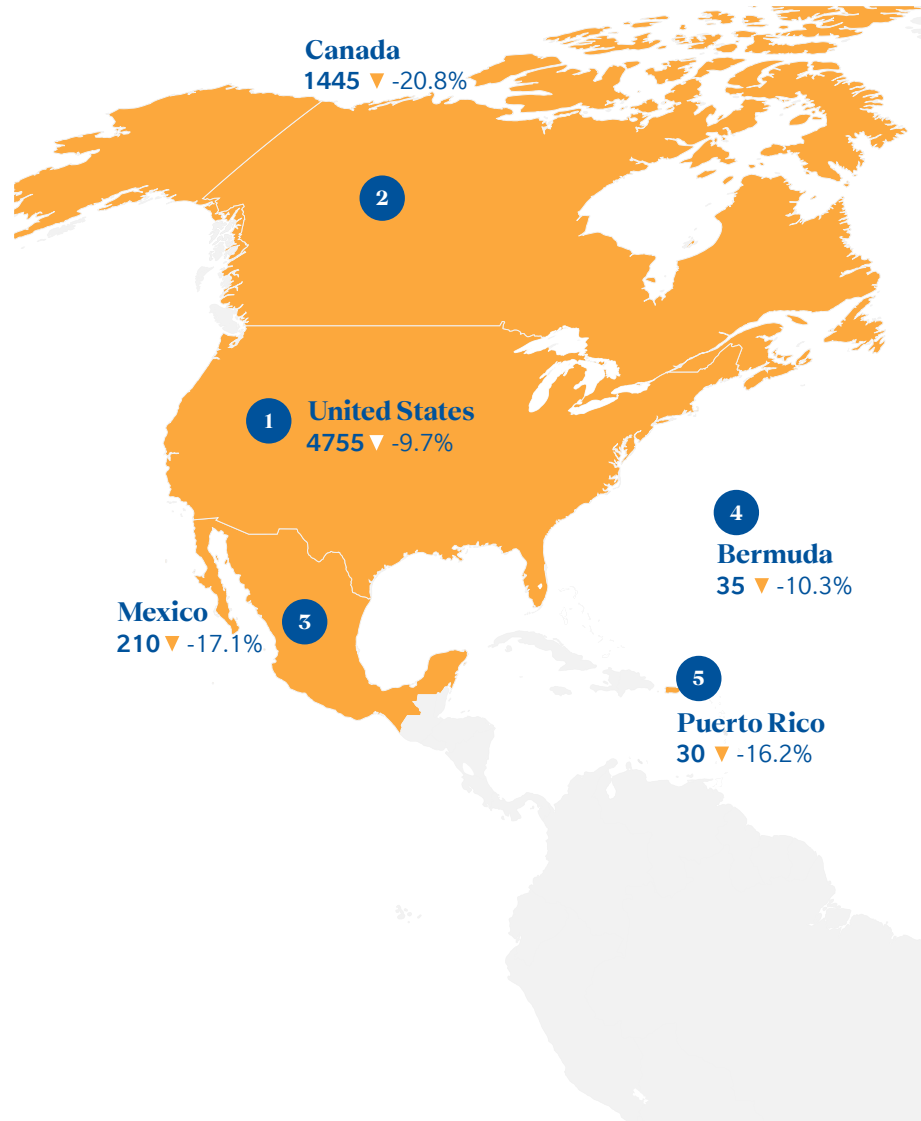
Total number of international students from North America in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 55 · TOP FIVE NORTH AMERICAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20



Outward mobility

FIGURE 56 · TOP FIVE NORTH AMERICAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

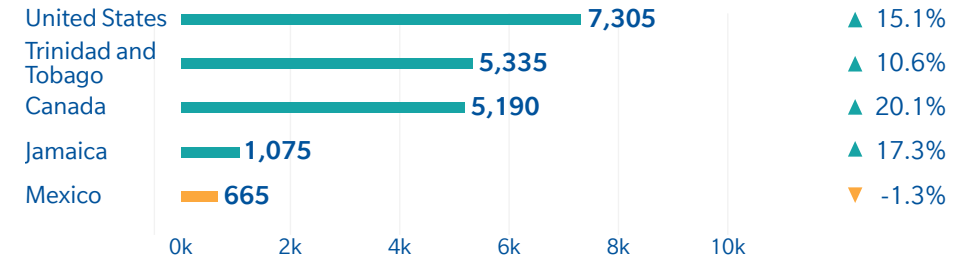


Transnational education

23,075 ▲ +16.7%

Total number of students on UK HE TNE in North America, 2019–20²⁷

FIGURE 57 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Distance, flexible or distributed learning

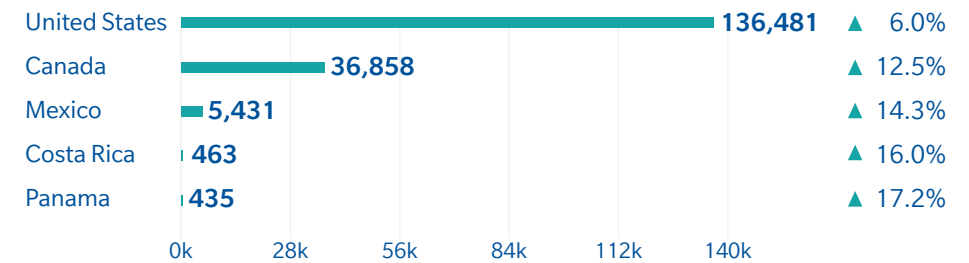
²⁷ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

158,843 ▲ +37.0%

Total UK publications with a North American co-author between 2017–2020

FIGURE 58 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH A NORTH AMERICAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2017–20



South America

The number of international students from South America is small compared to other regions and continues to decrease.

However, research collaborations, UK TNE provision and international staff numbers from the region have been growing consistently. The total number of international staff from South America in the UK in 2019–20 was 1,770, an increase of 11% since 2018–19.

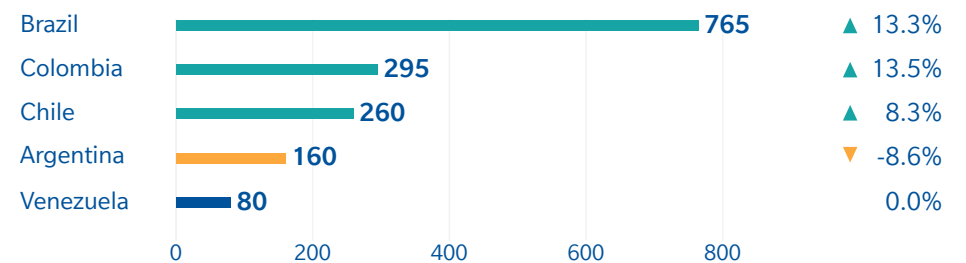
While the scale of TNE provision in the region is still relatively small, South America continues to see the fastest global growth rate in TNE student numbers of students, especially in Guyana. Research collaborations have also increased significantly, especially with Peru, which saw the highest growth for a second consecutive year.

International staff

1,770 ▲ +11.0%

Total number of international staff from South America in the UK in 2019–20

FIGURE 59 · TOP FIVE SOUTH AMERICAN STAFF NATIONALITIES IN THE UK, 2019–20



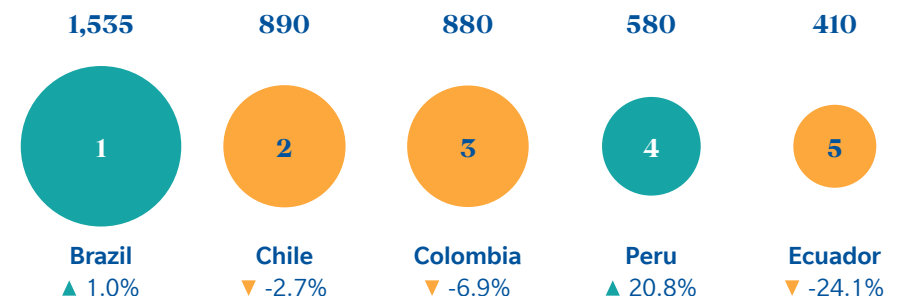
International students

5,160 ▼ -1.2%

Total number of international students from South America in the UK in 2019–20

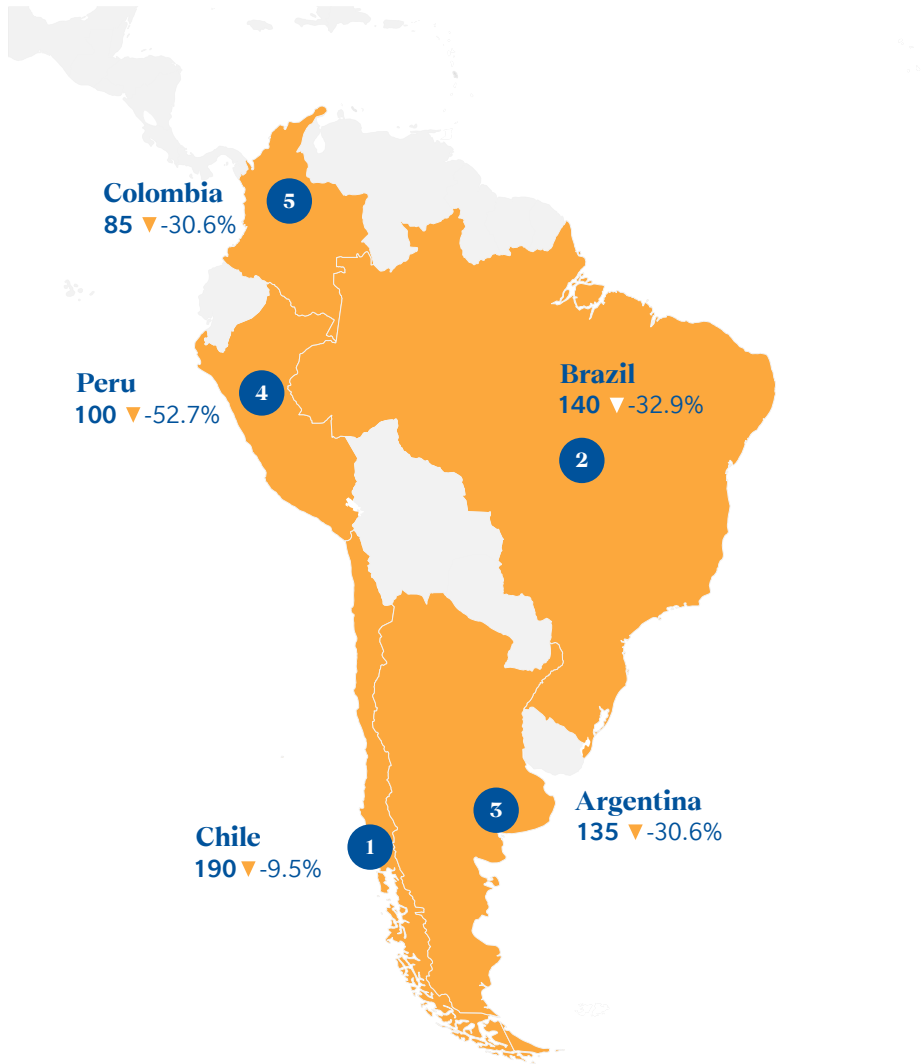
FIGURE 60 · TOP FIVE SOUTH AMERICAN STUDENT DOMICILES IN THE UK, 2019–20

Rank	Nationality	Number of Students	% Change
1	Brazil	1,535	▲ 1.0%
2	Chile	890	▼ -2.7%
3	Colombia	880	▼ -6.9%
4	Peru	580	▲ 20.8%
5	Ecuador	410	▼ -24.1%



Outward mobility

FIGURE 61 · TOP FIVE SOUTH AMERICAN DESTINATIONS FOR MOBILE UK STUDENTS, BY MOBILITY INSTANCES, 2019–20

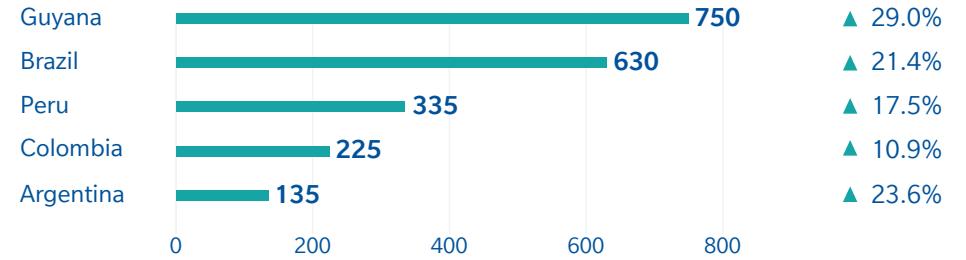


Transnational education

2,515 ▲ +10.6%

Total number of students in UK TNE in South America, 2019–20²⁸

FIGURE 62 · TOP FIVE UK HE TNE HOST COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA, 2019–20



Main type of TNE provision: Distance, flexible or distributed learning

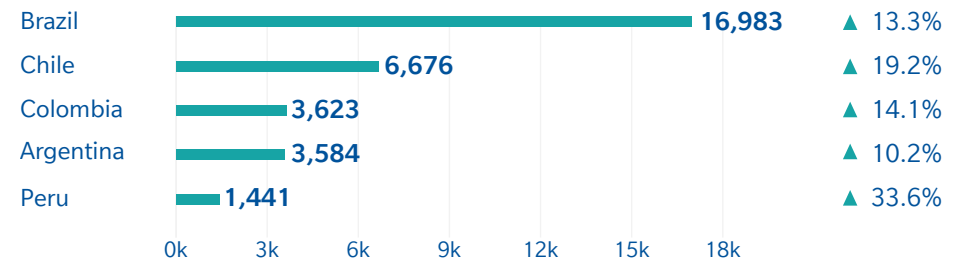
²⁸ Excluding Oxford Brookes University

Co-authored publications

27,911 ▲ +41.4%

Total UK publications with a South American co-author between 2017 and 2020

FIGURE 63 · TOP FIVE TOTAL PUBLICATIONS WITH A SOUTH AMERICAN CO-AUTHOR BY COUNTRY, 2016–2019



Notes on data

In 2019-20, there were 165 higher education institutions in the UK that returned data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This report includes data from these institutions, plus the University of Buckingham. For further information on higher education institutions visit HESA's website: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/providers>. We have continued to disaggregate EU students in the data as in the relevant year they were still treated as Home students.

HESA Student, Staff, Finance and Aggregate Offshore Records are copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited. Neither the Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited nor HESA Services Limited can accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived by third parties from data or other information obtained from Heidi Plus.

All HESA figures quoted in the publication that relate to student, staff, mobility and TNE numbers have been rounded to the nearest five in accordance with HESA data protection protocols. Unknown domiciles and nationalities were excluded from HESA figures and percentages.

All percentages have been calculated using raw figures and rounded, therefore rounded figures may not sum precisely. Due to the nature of this publication, data is collated from a number of sources published on different dates. All data in this publication is correct as per the date it has been accessed.

Glossary

HESA

Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Horizon 2020

The Horizon 2020 programme was established by the European Union (EU) as a collaborative financial instrument that would help secure Europe's global competitiveness in research and innovation. The programme – running from 2014 to 2020 – offers an open, simple structure for accessing funding in order to remove barriers to collaborative innovation, get new projects off the ground quickly and achieve results faster. Funding calls are based on three areas: Excellent science, industrial leadership, societal challenges.

Instances of mobility

Some students have a number of mobility experiences as part of their course outside of the UK. These are counted separately and not aggregated together.

Internationally co-authored publications

A publication on which a UK researcher has collaborated with at least one overseas institution.

Nationality

The country of legal nationality of staff.

Net impact

The net impact (benefits minus costs) is an estimate relating to the on- and off-campus spending of the 2015-16 cohort and their visitors over the entire course of their studies.

OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

Other arrangement

A type of TNE provision. Applies to students studying overseas for an award of the reporting provider in a manner not covered in other TNE types of provision. For example, via multiple UK or international partners delivering a programme, or through a combination of other types of provision.

Overseas Partner Organisation

A type of TNE provision. Students register with an overseas partner organisation in order to study overseas for an award of the reporting UK provider. The majority of teaching is delivered in-country; this arrangement includes validation and franchise arrangements.

Sandwich placement

A sandwich placement is a type of validated work experience, part of a degree course. It usually takes place in the penultimate year of a four-year degree.

SciVal

SciVal is a research information tool that offers easy access to the research performance of 7,500 research institutions and 220 nations worldwide. Produced by Elsevier it uses bibliometric information from the Scopus database from 1996 onwards.

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