Gone International: mobility works

Report on the 2014-15 graduating cohort

go international
All you need to know about study and work abroad

Universities UK International

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ABOUT THE GO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

Universities UK International's Go International programme team implements the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility, which was launched in December 2013 following a sector-wide consultation and review. The team works with universities and colleges, government, sector organisations and students to help tackle the current barriers to UK outward student mobility and to achieve the strategy's main objective: to increase the proportion of UK students with some international experience. For more information about the programme visit www.go.international.ac.uk.

UNIVERSITIES UK INTERNATIONAL

UUKi is the international arm of Universities UK. We help UK universities flourish internationally by representing them and acting in their collective interest. We actively promote universities abroad, provide trusted information for and about them, and create new opportunities for the sector. We aim to: enable universities to develop and deliver strong international strategies; influence the policy and regulatory environment through our ability to represent UK universities; and create diverse opportunities through strategic partnerships.

This research report was produced by the Go International programme based at Universities UK International.

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Executive Summary and Key Findings

This report by Universities UK International compares the academic attainment and employment outcomes of mobile and non-mobile first degree undergraduate students who completed their studies at the end of the 2014–15 academic year[1]. It provides the third annual national outline of who goes abroad, and considers what currently available data can tell us about the outcomes of international experience as part of a UK undergraduate programme. The findings in this report also aim to inform discussions within the sector about increasing participation of underrepresented groups in outward mobility opportunities, by identifying specific outcomes for these groups.

A total of 16,165 UK-domiciled graduates[2] responding to the 2014–15 Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey were reported to have had at least one period abroad as part of their undergraduate first degree. They represent 7.2% of all respondents to the survey. This is the sample surveyed in the present report.

Our analysis of the 2014–15 graduating cohort found that:

- The total percentage of students who had a period of mobility during their studies increased from 5.4% in the 2013–14 graduating cohort to 7.2%.[3] This is promising, but more can be done.
- There is a correlation between outward mobility and improved academic and employment outcomes. Graduates who were mobile during their degree were less likely to be unemployed (3.7% compared to 4.9%), and more likely to have earned a first class or upper second class degree (80.1% compared to 73.6%) and be in further study (15% compared to 14%). Those in work were more likely to be in a graduate level job (76.4% compared to 69.9%) and earn 5% more than their non-mobile peers.

This report outlines:

1. The profiles of UK-domiciled first degree undergraduate students who graduated in 2014–15 and responded to the DLHE, who spent time during their degree programme studying, working or volunteering abroad, and where they went.*
2. The academic attainment, salary and employment outcomes of these students when compared with their non-mobile peers six months after graduation.

*For 2012–13 data the minimum length of mobility captured was four weeks, from 2013–14 onwards it was one week.

- The difference in outcomes between mobile and non-mobile students are particularly pronounced for disadvantaged and black and minority ethnic students, who are underrepresented in mobility. On average, graduates from more disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile during their degree earned 6.1% more, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate level job (80.2% compared to 74.7%) than their non-mobile peers. Black graduates who were mobile were 70% less likely to be unemployed (4.6% compared to 7.8%) than their non-mobile peers. Asian graduates who were mobile earned on average 8% more and were 71% less likely to be unemployed (7.7% compared to 4.5%) than their non-mobile peers.
- One third of students who were mobile studied languages (32.5%), and 87.4% of language students were mobile. However, the improved employment outcomes associated with mobility are not confined to linguists: students across all disciplines – including STEM subjects – were less likely to be unemployed if they were mobile.
- The majority of mobilities were undertaken through organised schemes. Erasmus[4] was the principal source of mobility take-up, followed by provider-led schemes. A majority of mobile language students (76.9%) and more than a third of mobile non-language students (38.4%) went abroad via the Erasmus programme.
- 97.1% of all graduates who are employed full-time six months after graduation work in the UK. However, mobile students are four times more likely than non-mobile students to work outside the UK, contributing to our international connections and global connectivity.

This report echoes many of the findings of the first and second editions of Gone International, which analysed the 2012–13 and 2013–14 graduating cohorts, in particular, the improved employment outcomes for students who had been mobile compared with their non-mobile peers. As with the previous analyses, the present report outlines what mobile students' outcomes were, but it does not seek to imply or demonstrate causation between outward mobility and students' outcomes.

Methodology

Statistics contained within this report are based on an analysis linking together two Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) datasets. These are:

- the Student record, which contains details of the profiles of students registered at universities across the UK, and
- the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which asks graduates what they are doing six months after completing their degree.

This report focuses specifically on graduates of 2014–15 who responded to the DLHE, and these graduates' records have been linked to Student records across three years – 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15. Analysis is limited to UK-domiciled, full-time undergraduate, first degree completers.

From the 2014–15 DLHE data, we can identify which activities these graduates were engaged in six months after graduation, and certain aspects of their profile such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. By linking DLHE respondents back to the Student record to determine whether or not they undertook a period of mobility in 2012–13, 2013–14 or 2014–15, we can identify the characteristics of mobile students, and can compare the outcomes for those who were mobile during their degree against those who were not.

In total, there were 225,880 UK-domiciled first degree completers included in this analysis, of which 16,165 were identified as being mobile at some point during their course. Instances of mobility are identifiable by fields within the Student record stating that they studied, worked or volunteered abroad. The Student record also details the country or countries to which the student travelled during their degree.

In 2013–14, HESA enhanced the way that data on student mobility was captured, so that it now includes: periods of mobility of less than four weeks; the mobility scheme with which a period abroad was associated; and mobility type (i.e. whether the student was studying, working or volunteering overseas). This richer data has therefore been captured for those students who were mobile in either 2013–14 or 2014–15, but the data captured is more limited for those who were mobile in 2012–13.

While this change enriches the information available on UK student mobility, it also means that any comparison between the results detailed in this report and those from the 2016 or 2015 publications should be treated with caution.

A note on students from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds

In this report, we outline differences in outcomes for mobile and non-mobile students from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are many ways to measure the number of students from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. For the purposes of this report we have divided students into 'advantaged' and 'disadvantaged' based on Socioeconomic Classification Codes. The definition of 'disadvantaged' used in this publication differs slightly from the definition used in the 2015 and 2016 reports.

HESA collects socio-economic data through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which it then organises into eight classifications. The data is generated from information students included in their UCAS application forms and reflects the occupation of the student (if they are over the age 21) or of the student's parents or guardians (if under the age of 21). For the purposes of this report, 'students from disadvantaged backgrounds' refers to students whose parents', guardians', or their own occupations fall within the following HESA categories:

- 'small employers and own account workers'
- 'lower supervisory and technical occupations'
- 'semi-routine occupations'
- 'routine occupations'
- 'never worked/long-term unemployed'.

'Advantaged students' refers to students whose parents', guardians', or their own occupations fall within the following HESA categories:

- 'higher managerial and professional occupations'
- 'lower managerial and professional occupations'
- 'intermediate occupations'.

A note on additional data included in the report on type, length and scheme used for mobility

For the first time, this publication includes information on the activities of mobile students during their period abroad (whether they studied, worked or volunteered), the length of their period abroad and the scheme through which they went abroad (Erasmus, provider-led schemes or non-Erasmus sandwich programmes). This data is only available for periods abroad that took place in 2013–14 or 2014–15, which typically corresponds to the final two years of our cohort's degree. The analysis undertaken in these areas focusses only on mobilities taking place in 2013–14.

Limitations to this research

The following limitations to this research should be noted:

1. Not all graduates respond to the DLHE survey. This means that there are some disparities in the sample sizes by discipline.
2. The DLHE data only provides details of the activities graduates are engaged in six months after completing their course.
3. This report refers only to UK-domiciled graduates who completed their undergraduate first degrees in 2014–15 and does not include graduates of other levels of study.
4. Although data captured on mobility has improved in recent years, there might be some instances of mobility not captured by universities within the Student record. Therefore, the results produced here, although fairly comprehensive, are based on incomplete populations.
5. Some of the findings are based on the number of instances of mobility rather than the number of students. This means that students who spent time in more than one country during their studies are counted more than once in some parts of the report.
6. The data analysed in this report represents one graduating cohort. It therefore does not seek to identify trends over time.
7. The HESA dataset did not allow us to disaggregate outcomes by type or by period of mobility. The report therefore cannot draw conclusions about the relationship between the length of time spent abroad or by the type of placement (for example, work or study) and graduates' outcomes. This is because changes to the Student record to include such information only commenced in 2013–14, and the focus of this report covers the period 2012–13 to 2014–15. In addition, as data on type or length of mobility is only available for 2013–14 and this data covers instances of mobility rather than student numbers, it cannot be used to calculate participation rates by activity after graduation.
8. The minimum period of mobility captured by HESA up to and including 2012–13 was four weeks, but from 2013–14 this changed to one week.
9. There are other factors which could influence graduate outcomes which are not possible to capture from the Student record or the DLHE survey, including the academic selectivity of some mobility opportunities.
10. We have performed statistical significance studies where possible and have indicated where differences were or were not statistically significant in the datasets at the 95% confidence level.

This report is a snapshot of the profiles of mobile students who graduated in 2014–15, where they went, and what their outcomes were. It does not seek to identify causal links between students going abroad and particular outcomes, but identifies noteworthy outcomes which can provide a useful evidence base alongside the outcomes for mobile students from other graduating cohorts. It will enable the Go International programme to identify patterns to create a more complete picture of which students go abroad and which groups are under-represented, and the relationships between mobility and outcomes for different kinds of students.

Introduction

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, the UK government has indicated a need for the country to become even more global and internationalist in action and spirit.

Outward mobility can form a key part of this agenda, in enhancing the domestic skills base and making students more globally engaged. The benefits of mobility are many and varied: international experience helps develop critical skills such as intercultural awareness and foreign language competency, and can increase students' employability, helping them to be competitive in the global jobs market. Beyond these private benefits, the international mobility of students can create positive externalities by internationalising campuses, and fostering global networks that can in turn facilitate research, knowledge transfers and university–business engagement. These external benefits also help enhance the UK's soft power and support the UK's trading and diplomatic relationships longer term.

Since the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility was launched in 2013, UK universities have continued to enthusiastically embrace the outward mobility agenda, with many building it into their internationalisation strategies and making bold public statements about what they hope to achieve, including specific participation targets relating to outward mobility. This has enabled the sector to make significant progress in increasing participation in outward mobility schemes nationally.

Much of this growth has been due to increased levels of participation in the EU's Erasmus mobility programme. UK participation in the scheme has increased by more than 50% since 2007–08 and reached record levels in the academic year 2013–14 when 15,610 UK students received Erasmus funding to pursue a work or study placement abroad. In the 2014–15 academic year, Erasmus+ accounted for around 46% of mobilities of one week or more by UK-domiciled students at all levels, and in any year of study[5]. The European Commission's Erasmus Impact Studies have highlighted the employability, soft skills, and language benefits of student participation in this programme, as in many other mobility schemes. Erasmus+ also contains a strong focus on widening participation and other under-represented groups, providing extra support for widening participation and disabled students. Last year's 'Gone International: the value of mobility' report demonstrated that the positive outcome associated with mobility could be particularly pronounced for the employability prospects of students from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The matter of continued UK participation in Erasmus+ post-Brexit will be determined through the UK government's negotiations with the EU. However, the proven benefits of Erasmus+ for participating UK students suggest it is vital that opportunities for outward UK student mobility are protected and enhanced in the longer term, and that the sector continues to reach out to, and find new ways to engage with, traditionally under-represented groups.

The Gone International series of cohort studies help to make the case for mobility going forward. Together with the two previous reports, this study helps to identify which students are going abroad, where they travel, and what their outcomes are six months after graduation. Like the 2016 publication, this report highlights specific outcomes for students from under-represented groups in mobility, of particular interest given the social mobility agenda in higher education.

Who goes abroad?

A total of 16,165 UK-domiciled graduates responding to the 2014–15 DLHE survey were reported as having at least one period abroad of one week or longer as part of their undergraduate first degree. This represents 7.2% of all respondents to the survey.

This participation rate is higher than that identified in previous reports (5.4% in the 2013–14 cohort and 4.5% in the 2012–13 cohort), and is also based on a larger mobile population than considered in those analyses. Part of this increase is likely to have occurred because of the improvements to data capture since 2013–14. As a result, comparisons between data on mobilities that took place before 2013–14 and those taking place in subsequent years are not strictly like-for-like.

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of the 16,165 mobile students in this cohort. It examines their subjects studied, their gender, domicile and a further focus on ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to identify any under-representation in mobility among specific groups of students.

What do mobile students study?

At the broad subject level[6], about a third (5,260) of mobile students identified in the DLHE were language students. However, at the specific subject level, the most common subject studied by mobile students was clinical medicine (1,435). This was followed by French (1,290), business (920) and Spanish (915).

Note: Tables on subjects exclude subjects with fewer than 20 mobile students

Table 1: Top 10 subjects by mobile student numbers

Subject of study	No. mobile students	All students	% mobile
Clinical medicine	1,435	4,955	29.0%
French studies	1,290	1,395	92.4%
Business studies	920	8,545	10.8%
Spanish studies	915	965	94.5%
English studies	555	7,845	7.1%
Others in European languages, literature and related subjects	490	570	85.7%
Politics	455	3,840	11.8%
German studies	450	460	97.1%
Law by area	450	4,055	11.0%
History by period	420	6,415	6.6%

A high proportion of language students go abroad for a period of time during their degree. 35.8% of all students under the HESA category 'languages' were mobile but, underneath this, there are large disparities at the subject level. For example, 97.1% of students of German reported a period of mobility, 96.8% of European studies students and 96.7% of those studying Italian. Meanwhile, English and linguistics students are much less likely to go abroad than many other language students (7.1% and 13.2% respectively).

A relatively high proportion of students in several non-language subjects were mobile too. The highest was in medicine and dentistry, where 25% of all students spent a period abroad as part of their degree (as shown in table 2). Looking in more detail at the specific subjects studied within 'medicine and dentistry', 29% of all clinical and 28.5% of all pre-clinical medicine students were mobile. 15.8% of geology students, 12.3% of planning students and 11.8% of politics students were mobile (see table 4).

Outside of languages and medicine, average rates of mobility by broad subject levels are much lower. All other subject levels have a mobility rate of 7.5% or less, while the participation rate for STEM subjects overall is 5%. The mobility participation rate of non-language students is 5.2%.

Table 2: Top 10 subject groups by mobility rates

Subject group	No. mobile students	All students	% mobile
Languages	5,260	14,695	35.8%
Combined	110	410	27.1%
Medicine and dentistry	1,805	7,215	25.0%
Physical sciences	870	11,640	7.5%
Law	650	8,690	7.5%
Business and administrative studies	1,715	24,700	7.0%
Historical and philosophical studies	715	10,545	6.8%
Social studies	1,240	21,610	5.7%
Architecture, building and planning	225	4,030	5.6%
Engineering and technology	600	12,065	5.0%

Table 3: Top 10 subjects by mobility rates

Subject	No. mobile students	All students	% mobile
German studies	450	460	97.1%
European studies	165	170	96.8%
Italian studies	210	220	96.7%
Spanish studies	915	965	94.5%
French studies	1,290	1,395	92.4%
Broadly-based programmes within languages	215	235	91.6%
Portuguese studies	45	50	90.6%
Japanese studies	95	110	85.7%
Others in European languages, literature and related subjects	490	570	85.7%
Russian and East European studies	125	150	84.2%

Table 4: Top 10 subjects by mobility rates, excluding languages

Subject	No. mobile students	All students	% mobile
Clinical medicine	1,435	4,955	29.0%
Pre-clinical medicine	360	1,265	28.5%
Combined	110	410	27.1%
Geology	175	1,110	15.8%
Planning (urban, rural and regional)	55	435	12.3%
Politics	455	3,840	11.8%
Law by area	445	4,055	11.0%
Business studies	920	8,545	10.8%
Science of aquatic and terrestrial environments	90	820	10.7%
Human and social geography	200	2,010	9.9%

Several broad subject levels have particularly low mobility rates, the lowest being computer science (1.8%), subjects allied to medicine (1.8%) and education (2.1%). In terms of specific subjects, the lowest mobility rates were in clinical dentistry, nursing and social work, which each had mobility rates below 1%, as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Top 10 subjects with lowest mobility rates
(Includes only subjects studied by at least 500 DLHE respondents)

Detailed subject	No. mobile students	All students	% mobile
Clinical dentistry	5	790	0.6%
Nursing	110	13,310	0.8%
Social work	35	4,095	0.9%
Imaginative writing	10	825	1.5%
Sport and exercise science	120	7,050	1.7%
Building	25	1,355	1.7%
Others in subjects allied to medicine	55	3,060	1.8%
Information systems	25	1,435	1.8%
Computer science	115	6,300	1.8%
Animal science	10	635	1.9%

Language students

A high proportion of mobile students study languages. In this cohort, there were 14,695 students enrolled in languages and linguistics courses (6.5% of all students), but they made up a third of all mobile students.

Language courses overall have a higher than average proportion of female students; below average proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) students; and higher proportions of students from more advantaged backgrounds when compared with other courses.

These differences need to be kept in mind when considering the high proportion of language students in the mobile cohort. As a result, this report contains some analysis restricted to, and in some cases excluding, language students.

Table 6: Student profile

Student profile	Languages	All subjects
% female	72%	57%
% BME	11%	20%
Higher socio-economic status	76%	67%
Disadvantaged students	24%	33%

Gender

In this sample, female students were more likely than male students to be mobile: 6.7% (6,410) of all male respondents were mobile, compared with 7.5% (9,755) of female respondents. However, this participation gap can be explained by the fact that a relatively high proportion of language students are female. If only non-language students are considered, participation among female and male students is similar – 5.2% of male non-language students had a period of mobility compared with 5.1% of non-language female students.

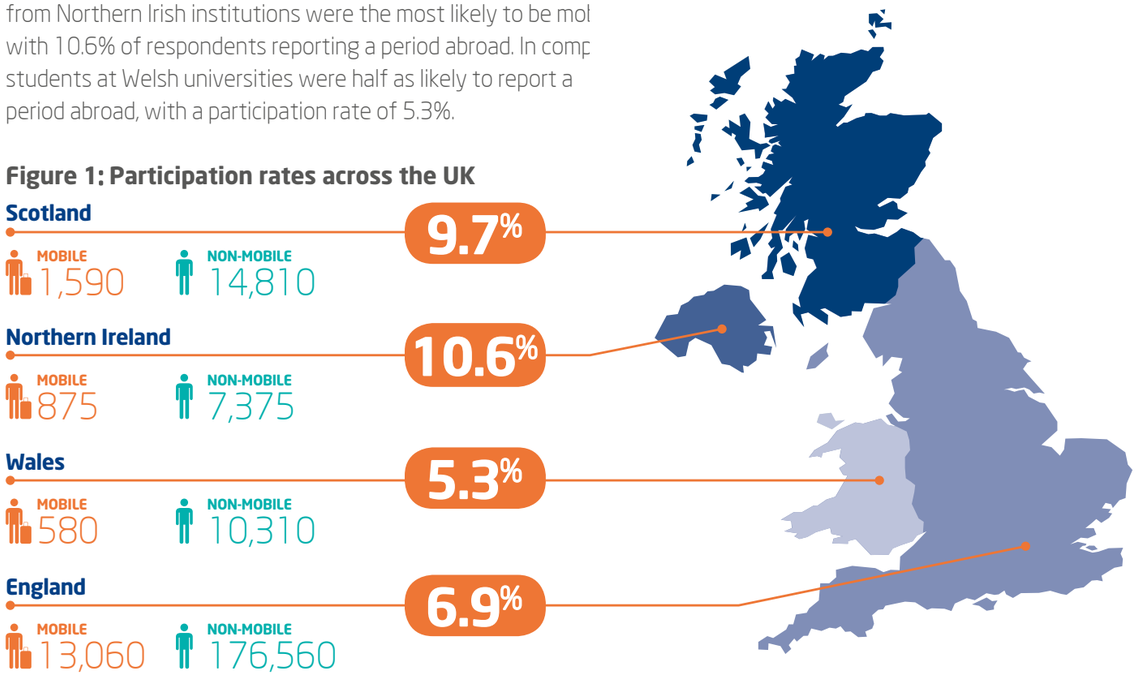
Female
7.5%
9,755
(5.1% Excluding language mobile students)

Male
6.7%
6,410
(5.2% Excluding language mobile students)

Where do they study in the UK?

Mobile students were identified across the UK. In this sample, students from Northern Irish institutions were the most likely to be mol with 10.6% of respondents reporting a period abroad. In comp students at Welsh universities were half as likely to report a period abroad, with a participation rate of 5.3%.

Figure 1: Participation rates across the UK



The subjects that mobile students studied varied across the four nations. While a relatively high proportion of language and business students go abroad from universities in all four nations, some subjects have higher participation rates in certain nations compared with others. For example, business and engineering students make up a large proportion of all mobile students from Scotland compared with the other nations, with language students making up a smaller proportion.

Table 7: Mobile students by country of domicile and subject group

	Domicile			
Subject groups	**England**	**Scotland**	**Wales**	**Northern Ireland**
Languages	35.3%	18.4%	32.7%	16.7%
Business and admininistrative studies	9.9%	18.6%	5.7%	10.2%
Medicine and dentistry	9.7%	13.8%	15.5%	25.6%
Social studies	8.3%	4.3%	5.1%	6.6%
Creative arts and design	5.9%	6.7%	4.9%	2.4%
Physical sciences	5.5%	4.0%	11.1%	3.0%
Historical and philosophical studies	4.9%	2.2%	3.3%	1.7%
Biological sciences	4.9%	3.0%	4.5%	1.5%
Law	3.5%	8.5%	3.0%	5.0%
Engineering and technology	3.0%	9.5%	3.9%	4.0%
Subjects allied to medicine	2.4%	5.7%	2.4%	4.8%
Architecture, building and planning	1.3%	1.6%	3.2%	1.4%
Mass communications and documentation	1.3%	1.8%	0.8%	1.5%
Education	1.2%	0.7%	1.5%	8.3%
Mathematical sciences	1.1%	0.4%	1.2%	0.3%
Computer sciences	0.8%	0.3%	0.7%	5.0%
Combined	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
Veterinary sciences and agriculture	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	1.6%

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Analysis of this cohort shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnic groups were less likely to go abroad than white students and those from more advantaged backgrounds. These findings are consistent with similar analyses of the 2013–14 and 2012–13 cohorts.

Out of eight different socio-economic classifications (SEC), 20% of all DLHE respondents came from the most advantaged SEC group: higher managerial and professional occupations. Students from this background had the highest mobility rates, with around one in ten students (10.3%) identified as mobile.

The lowest mobility rates were among those from the lowest SEC group 'never worked and long-term unemployed' backgrounds, with 1.2% students mobile. Students from a 'higher managerial and professional occupations' background were over eight times more likely to go abroad than students from a 'never worked and long term unemployed' background.

Table 8: Participation rates by socio-economic classification

	Mobile	Not mobile	Total	% mobile
1. Higher managerial and professional occupations	4,580	39,770	44,345	10.3%
2. Lower managerial and professional occupations	4,405	48,175	52,580	8.4%
3. Intermediate occupations	1,635	21,695	23,335	7.0%
4. Small employers and own account workers	780	12,525	13,305	5.9%
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	420	7,965	8,385	5.0%
6. Semi-routine occupations	1,175	23,860	25,035	4.7%
7. Routine occupations	455	10,655	11,105	4.1%
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed	10	675	685	1.2%
9. Not classified	2,540	39,235	41,780	6.1%

Looking more broadly, around one in 12 (8.8%) students from more advantaged backgrounds (SEC groups 1–3) reported a period of mobility as part of their degree. Meanwhile, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds (SEC groups 4–8) were less likely to go abroad, with just one in 20 (4.8%) reporting mobility.

ADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

8.8%

DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

4.8%

Both language and non-language students from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to have a period abroad: 6.3% of non-language students from more advantaged backgrounds were mobile compared with 3.7% of disadvantaged students.

Table 9: Participation rates by socio-economic classification, non-language students only

Socio-economic classification	Mobile	Not mobile
1. Higher managerial and professional occupations	7.4%	92.6%
2. Lower managerial and professional occupations	6.0%	94.0%
3. Intermediate occupations	4.9%	95.1%
4. Small employers and own account workers	4.3%	95.7%
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3.7%	96.3%
6. Semi-routine occupations	3.6%	96.4%
7. Routine occupations	3.1%	96.9%
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed	1.1%	98.9%

Table 10: Participation rates by socio-economic classification and type of subject

Subjects	Socio-economic classification	Mobile	Not mobile
European languages	Advantaged	93.7%	6.3%
	Disadvantaged	90.2%	9.8%
Linguistics	Advantaged	11.2%	88.8%
	Disadvantaged	6.4%	93.6%
Non-European languages	Advantaged	66.4%	33.6%
	Disadvantaged	59.6%	40.4%
All other subjects	Advantaged	6.3%	93.7%
	Disadvantaged	3.7%	96.3%
All subjects	Advantaged	8.8%	91.2%
	Disadvantaged	4.8%	95.2%

The length of mobility and disadvantaged students

The improved mobility data from HESA makes it possible to identify the length of time students spent abroad, in weeks, for mobilities taking place in 2013–14 and 2014–15.

No direct correlation was found between length of mobility and the socio-economic background of students. While non-language students from lower socio-economic groups were slightly more likely to go on short mobilities of one to three weeks, these mobilities only make up a small percentage of all mobilities. For both advantaged and disadvantaged students, most mobilities took place for longer periods of time, between 8 to 26 weeks or 27 to 50 weeks.

Table 11: Mobilities for non-language graduates by SEC groups

Weeks	Advantaged	Disadvantaged
1 to 3	3.4%	5.1%
4 to 7	9.1%	8.8%
8 to 26	26.7%	31.2%
27 to 50	53.0%	44.9%
51 to 52	7.3%	9.6%

Ethnicity

Previous Gone International reports have highlighted that BME students are typically under-represented in mobility. Analysis of the 2014–15 cohort shows a continuation of this trend.

White students were more likely to have had a period abroad than black and Asian students. In the 2014–15 cohort, 7.7% of white students were mobile, compared with 4.4% of Asian students and 3.6% of black students. Meanwhile, students with other ethnicities (including mixed ethnicity) were the most likely to be mobile: 8.4% of students who identified as having an 'other' ethnicity were mobile.

Table 12: Participation rates by ethnicity

	Mobile	Not mobile	All students	% mobile
White	13,670	164,780	178,450	7.7%
Black	460	12,125	12,580	3.6%
Asian	1,030	22,315	23,345	4.4%
Other	840	9,090	9,930	8.4%

Looking at gender and ethnicity together, black male students were the least likely to go abroad, with just 3.2% reported as mobile. White female students were the most likely to go abroad – 8%. This means that a white female student was more than twice as likely as a black male student to report a period of mobility.

Table 13: Participation rates by ethnicity and gender

Ethnicity	Gender	Mobile	Non-mobile	All students	Participation rate	
White	Female	8,245	94,410	102,655	8.0%	7.7%
	Male	5,425	70,355	75,780	7.2%	
Asian	Female	590	12,120	12,710	4.7%	4.4%
	Male	440	10,195	10,630	4.1%	
Black	Female	305	7,565	7,870	3.9%	3.6%
	Male	150	4,560	4,710	3.2%	
Other	Female	530	5,140	5,670	9.4%	8.4%
	Male	305	3,955	4,260	7.2%	

Among non-language students, however, within different ethnic groups males and females have a similar likelihood of going abroad. For example, 4% of Asian female students went abroad, compared with 3.8% of Asian male students. Analysis across this restricted group of students shows that white male students have the highest participation rate among non-language students (5.5%), and black males had the lowest rate (3%).

Table 14: Participation rates by ethnicity and gender, non-language students only

Ethnicity	Gender	Mobile	Not mobile	All students	Participation rate	
White	Female	4,980	88,505	93,485	5.3%	5.4%
	Male	3,995	68,065	72,060	5.5%	
Asian	Female	490	11,680	12,170	4.0%	3.9%
	Male	400	10,100	10,500	3.8%	
Black	Female	240	7,390	7,635	3.1%	3.1%
	Male	140	4,515	4,655	3.0%	
Other	Female	320	4,825	5,145	6.2%	6.0%
	Male	235	3,845	4,080	5.8%	

Ethnicity and socio-economic background

Within each ethnicity group, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds were less likely to have a period of mobility than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds, and the same is true when language students are excluded. Further to this, black students from more advantaged backgrounds were less likely than white students from disadvantaged backgrounds to go abroad (4.9% and 5.2% respectively).

Within this analysis, black students from disadvantaged backgrounds were the least likely to have a period abroad. Of those students who were not studying a language, just 2.3% of disadvantaged black students were mobile. In comparison, advantaged white students were almost three times more likely to go abroad, as shown in table 16.

Table 15: Participation rates by ethnicity and socio-economic group

Ethnicity	Socio-economic group	Mobile	Non-mobile
White	Advantaged	9.1%	90.9%
	Disadvantaged	5.2%	94.8%
Asian	Advantaged	6.2%	93.8%
	Disadvantaged	3.2%	96.8%
Black	Advantaged	4.9%	95.1%
	Disadvantaged	2.7%	97.3%
Other (including mixed)	Advantaged	10.2%	89.8%
	Disadvantaged	6.5%	93.5%
All ethnicities	Total	7.5%	92.5%

Mobility participation rates for non-language students

ADVANTAGED WHITE STUDENTS

6.4%

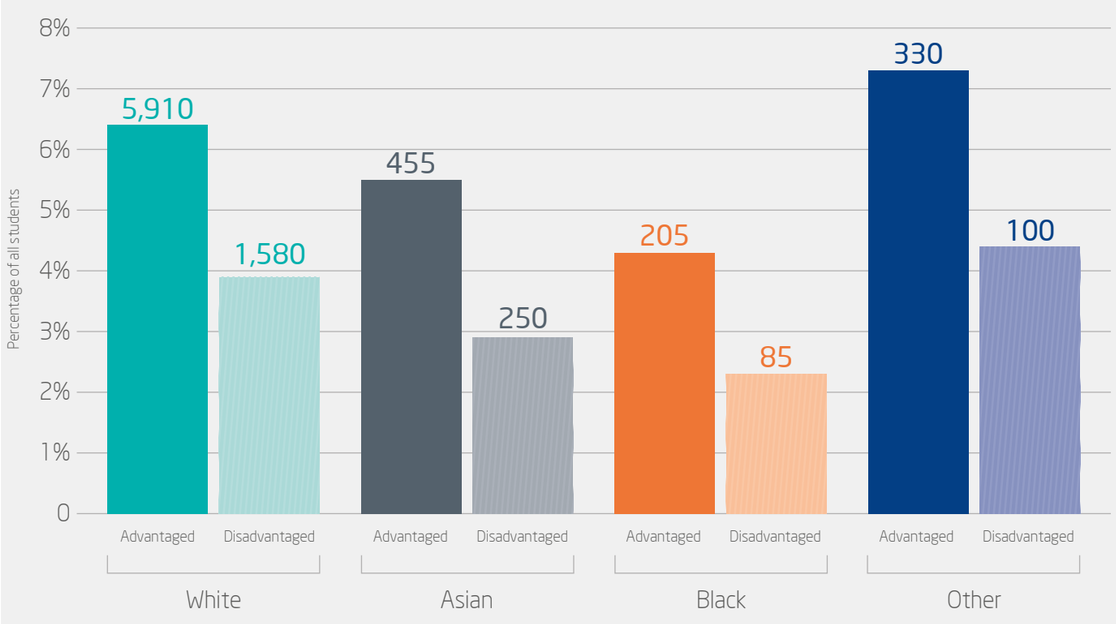
DISADVANTAGED BLACK STUDENTS

2.3%

Table 16: Participation rates by ethnicity and socio-economic group, non-language students only

Ethnicity	Socio-economic group	Mobile	Non-mobile
White	Advantaged	6.4%	93.6%
	Disadvantaged	3.9%	96.1%
Asian	Advantaged	5.5%	94.5%
	Disadvantaged	2.9%	97.1%
Black	Advantaged	4.3%	95.7%
	Disadvantaged	2.3%	97.7%
Other (including mixed)	Advantaged	7.3%	92.7%
	Disadvantaged	4.4%	95.6%

Figure 2: Participation rates by ethnicity and socioeconomic group, non-language students only



Note: The numbers at the top of the bars refer to student numbers in each group.

Where do they go?

The mobile students in this sample have taken advantage of opportunities around the world. In 2013–14, 68.4% of mobile students responding to the DLHE went to another EU country[7]. France was the most popular destination, attracting almost a quarter (23.8%) of all mobile students. Spain was the second most popular destination, attracting one in six (16.5%) mobile students.

Over 15% of mobile students went to North America. The USA was the most popular non-EU destination and the third most popular destination overall. Canada was the second most popular non-EU destination and seventh most popular overall.

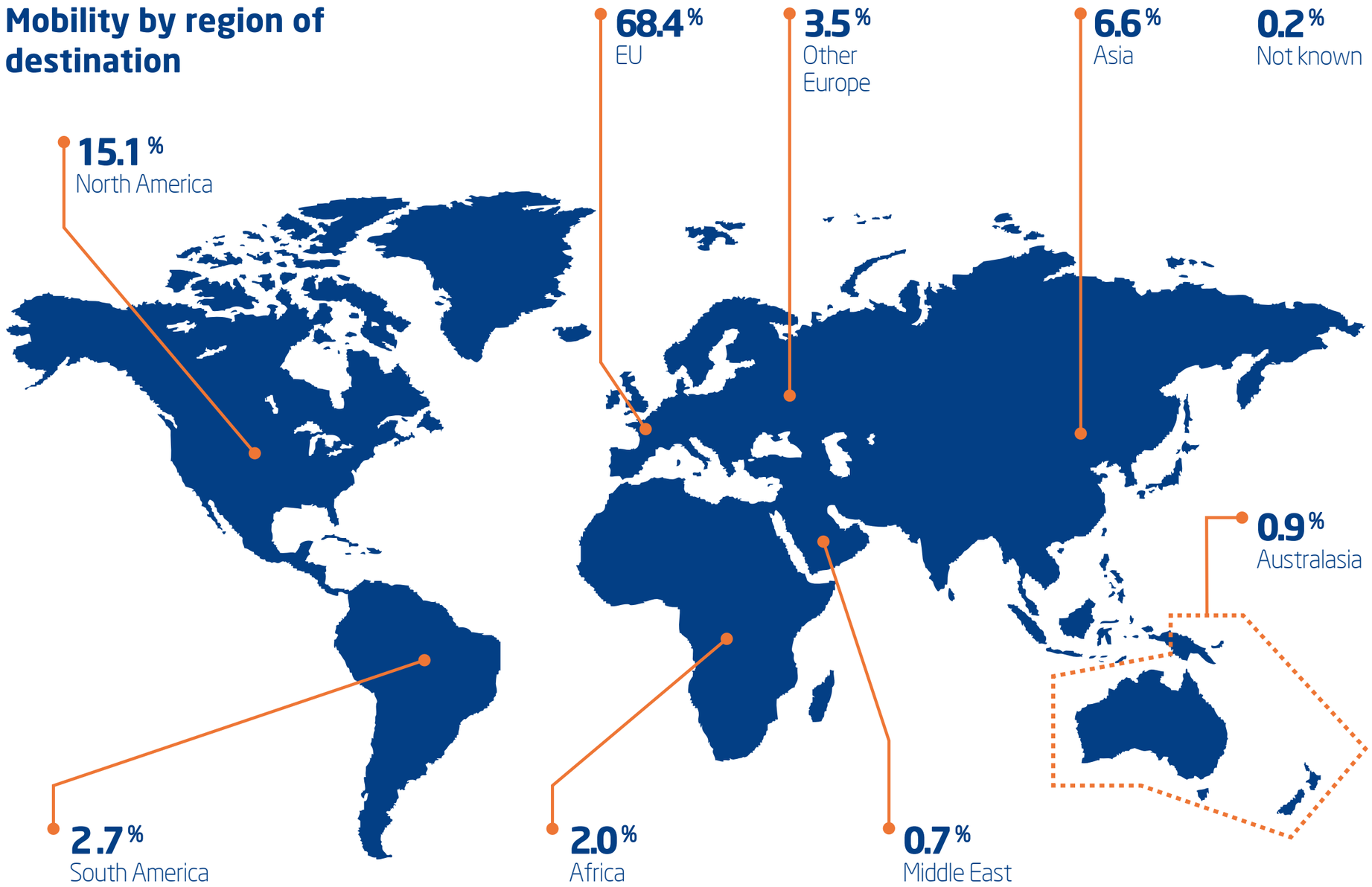
China and Russia were the most popular non-EU, non-English speaking destinations: 2.0% of mobile students went to China, and 1.8% went to Russia.

Table 17: Top 10 destination countries by instances of mobility, 2013–14

Mobility location	Instances of mobility	% of all mobilities
France	5,040	23.8%
Spain	3,500	16.5%
United States	2,075	9.8%
Germany	1,965	9.3%
Italy	1,045	4.9%
Austria	830	3.9%
Canada	790	3.7%
Netherlands	430	2.0%
China	420	2.0%
Russia	385	1.8%

Note: This table includes mobilities of one week or longer.

Mobility by region of destination



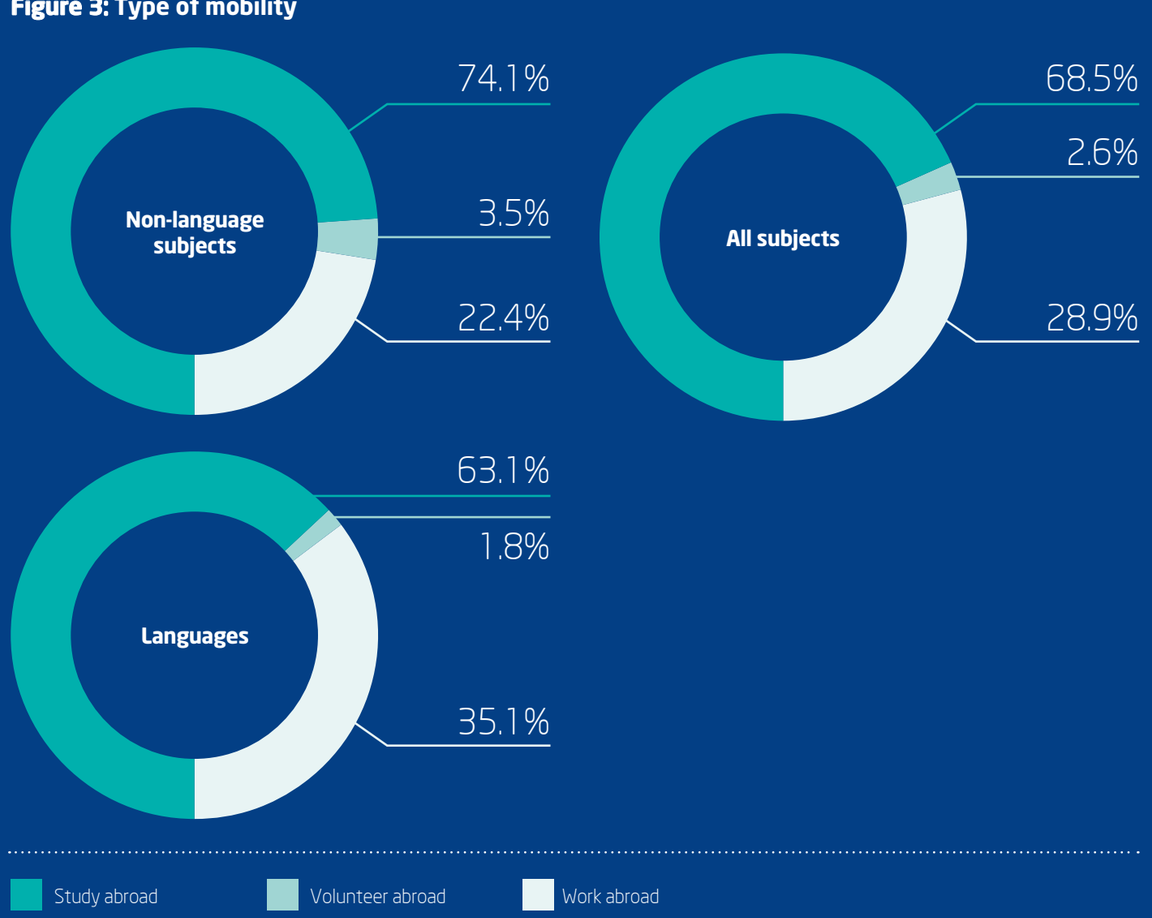
What do they do?

Improved data enables an analysis of the types of mobility activity students undertake, how much time they spend abroad, and whether they go abroad through organised schemes.

The following analysis relates only to mobilities taking place in 2013–14. Most mobilities reported by this cohort were undertaken this year, which for the majority of respondents (79%) was their second year of a three-year programme of study, or third year of a four-year programme.

Of all students who went abroad in 2013–14, most (69%) went abroad to study. Language students were more likely than non-language students to work abroad, with 35% working and 63% studying. Among non-language students, 74% studied, 22% worked and 4% volunteered abroad.

Figure 3: Type of mobility

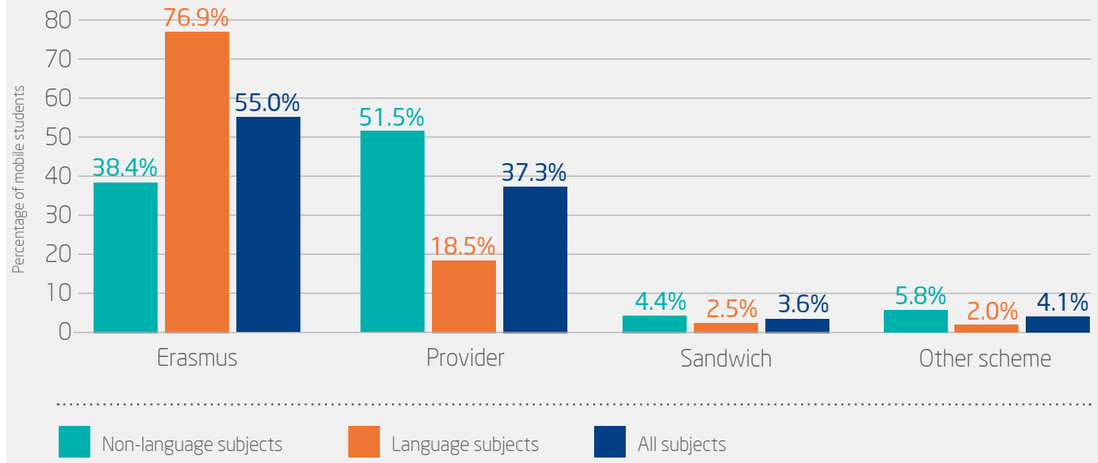


Mobility programmes

The Erasmus programme accounts for more than half of mobilities in this sample (55%[8]). The majority (76.9%) of mobile language students and more than a third (38.4%) of non-language students went abroad via the EU's Erasmus programme.

The second most popular arrangement for going abroad was through a provider-led scheme – 51.5% of non-language students went abroad through a programme set up by their provider, as did 18.5% of language students.

Figure 4: Mobility programme, language and non-language students



Note: Due to data availability, information on mobility programmes is only available for mobilities that took in 2013–14 and 2014–15 for this cohort of students.

Location by mobility programme

There are substantial differences between the most popular destination countries among students using Erasmus and those going abroad through a provider-led scheme. The top 10 countries that Erasmus students went to are all situated in Europe. The most common destinations among Erasmus students was France, followed by Spain and Germany. These three countries alone accounted for three-quarters of Erasmus mobility.

Students who went abroad through provider-led programmes were likely to go further afield. The most common destination for students going abroad through provider-led programmes was the USA, followed by Canada, Australia and China, collectively accounting for more than half of all provider-led mobility. Some students used non-Erasmus, provider-led schemes to go to EU countries. France was the most popular EU destination in this sense, and the seventh most popular destination overall.

Figure 5: Top ten countries for provider-led mobilities taking place in 2013–14 from the 2014–15 cohort of graduates

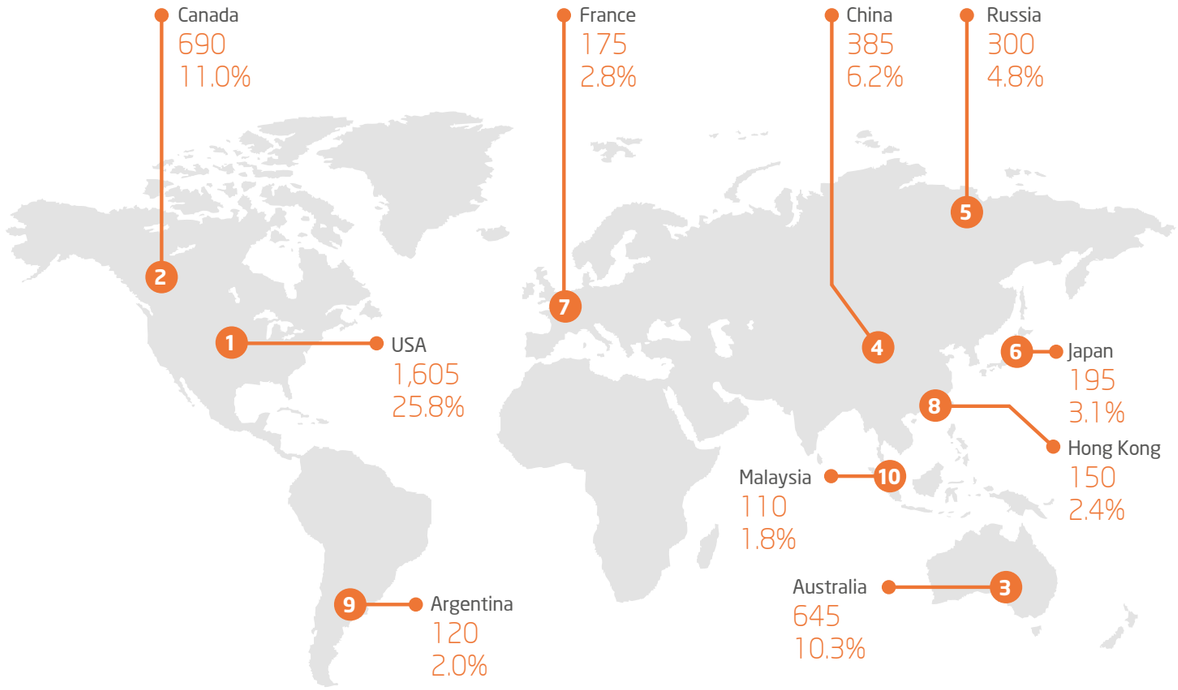
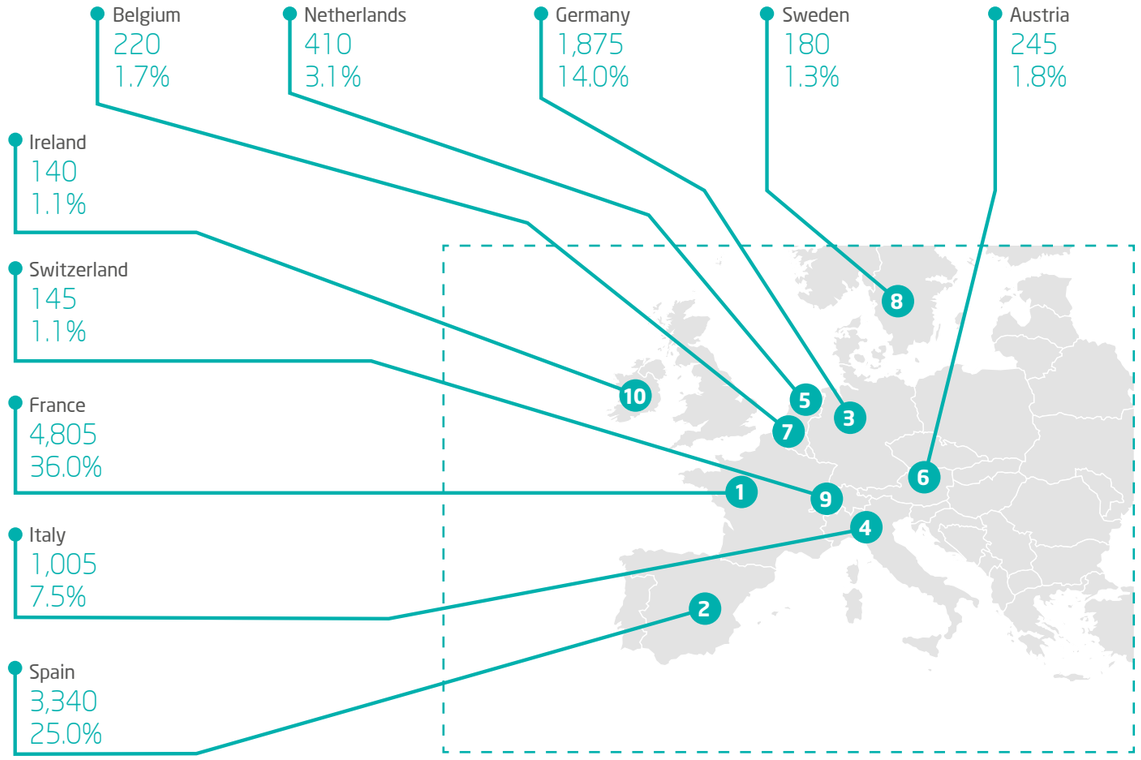


Figure 6: Top ten countries for Erasmus mobilities taking place in 2013–14 from the 2014–15 cohort of graduates



Subjects by mobility programme

Across a range of subject areas, a high proportion of students went abroad through the Erasmus programme. For example, 86% of all European languages' students who went abroad did so through Erasmus. Erasmus was also the most popular scheme among students studying law, linguistics, computer science, art and design, and business , amongst others.

Comparatively, provider-led schemes were most commonly used to facilitate mobilities among medicine and dentistry students (accounting for 93% of mobilities). A high proportion of mobile non-European language, physical science, biological science and architecture students also used provider-led programmes to go abroad.

Figure 7: Proportion of mobile students in each mobility scheme, by subject group

Subject groups	European languages	Law	Combined	Linguistics and classical studies	Computer sciences	Art and design	Business and administrative studies	Education	History
Erasmus	86%	74%	68%	66%	58%	56%	55%	55%	51%
Provider	11%	22%	29%	25%	12%	33%	33%	21%	42%

Subject groups	Social studies	Mathematical sciences	Engineering and technology	Subjects allied to medicine	Mass communication	Architecture, building, planning	Biological sciences	Physical sciences	Non-European languages	Medicine and dentistry
Erasmus	48%	44%	40%	40%	35%	31%	28%	26%	12%	3%
Provider	43%	43%	48%	50%	57%	63%	51%	59%	79%	93%

Note: This table contains mobilities taking place in 2013–14 and 2014–15, excluding veterinary sciences and agriculture due to small numbers (below 20).

What do they do next?

The DLHE provides information on what graduates are doing six months after completing their degree. The vast majority of the UK's graduates are either in work or further study after graduating.

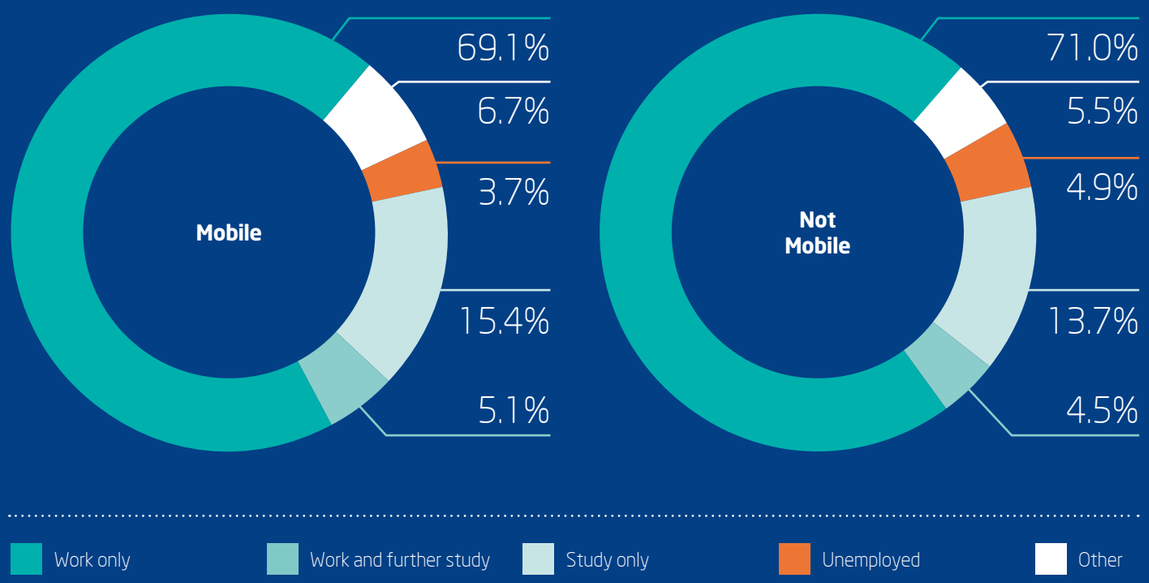
This section compares the outcomes of mobile and non-mobile students in the 2014–15 cohort. It also compares outcomes for particular groups of students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnicities.

Employment and further study

Most DLHE respondents were in work six months after graduating. When comparing mobile and non-mobile students, mobile students were slightly less likely to be in work, but more likely to be in further study. However, mobile students were also less likely to be unemployed than non-mobile respondents: 4.9% of non-mobile students were unemployed six months after graduation, compared with 3.7% of mobile students.

A higher proportion of mobile students were engaged in 'other activities' six months after graduating than non-mobile students (6.7% compared with 5.5%).*

Figure 8: Outcomes for mobile and non-mobile graduates



*'Other activities' mean when students have taken time out for various reasons. This might include time not working or studying due to ill-health or caring responsibilities.

Employment outcomes

A significantly lower proportion of mobile graduates were unemployed (3.7%) compared with those who had not been mobile (4.9%).

Table 18: Activity by mobile status

Activity (HESA DLHE groups)	Mobile	Non-mobile	All students
Work only	69.1%	71.0%	70.9%
Work and further study	5.1%	4.5%	4.9%
Study only	15.4%	13.7%	13.8%
Unemployed	3.7%	4.9%	4.8%
Other activities	6.7%	5.5%	5.6%

Due to the specific characteristics of language students highlighted earlier in this report, it is useful to consider non-language students separately. Among non-language students alone, the same trend can be observed: mobile students had significantly lower unemployment rates than non-mobile students, and were also more likely to be in further study.

Table 19: Activity by mobile status, non-language students only

Activity (HESA DLHE groups)	Mobile	Non-mobile
Work only	70.7%	71.5%
Work and further study	5.1%	4.8%
Study only	14.6%	13.3%
Unemployed	3.3%	4.9%
Other activities	6.3%	5.4%

Degree classification

Mobile students are more likely to have obtained a first- or upper second-class degree than their non-mobile peers: 80.1% of mobile students obtained a first- or upper second-class degree, compared with 73.6% of non-mobile students.

Because mobile students are more likely to have obtained a high degree classification and those with a high degree classification are less likely to be unemployed, it is useful to control for this variable. One way of doing this is by only looking at students who obtained a first- or upper second-class degree.

Among just those non-language students who received a first-class or upper second-class degree, mobile students had a significantly lower unemployment rate than non-mobile students (3.7% of mobile students compared with 4.2% of non-mobile students).

Table 20: Outcomes of non-language students with first-class honours or upper second-class degrees only

Activity (HESA DLHE groups)	Mobile	Non-mobile
Work only	64.4%	69.7%
Work and further study	6.0%	5.3%
Study only	18.2%	15.4%
Unemployed	3.7%	4.2%
Other activities	7.6%	5.4%

Location of work

In total, 97.1% of graduates employed full-time six months after graduation work in the UK. However, those who were mobile during their degree are four times more likely than non-mobile students to work outside the UK: 5.7% of mobile students worked in an EU country and 4.2% in a non-EU country. In comparison, 0.9% of non-mobile students worked in another EU country and 1.4% in a non-EU country.

Table 21: Location of work by mobility status

	Mobile	Non-Mobile
UK	90.1%	97.7%
EU	5.7%	0.9%
Non-EU	4.2%	1.4%

How much do students earn?

On average, mobile graduates in this cohort who are in employment had a higher salary than their non-mobile peers. Graduates who had been mobile and were working in the UK earned an average of £22,688 compared with £21,619 for non-mobile students. This means that on average in this sample, employed mobile graduates in the UK earned 5% more than their non-mobile peers.

Table 22: Average salaries by location of work

	Mobile	Non-mobile
UK	£22,688	£21,619
EU	£17,224	£14,771
Non-EU	£23,220	£23,552
Total	£22,629	£21,604

What type of jobs do graduates do?

This section examines the types of jobs that those graduates working full time after graduation are doing, using Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. Typically, jobs classified as being within SOC groups 1–3 are considered graduate-level jobs[9], including managers, directors and senior officials; professional occupations; and associate professional and technical occupations. SOC groups 4–9 are not typically considered graduate jobs.

Of all graduates in this sample who were in work, 76.4% secured a graduate job within six months of graduating, compared with 69.9% of non-mobile graduates. Mobile graduates who were in work with both language and non-language degrees were more likely than non-mobile graduates to find a graduate job.

Table 23: Type of job, non-language students only

SOC	Mobile	Non-mobile	All students
SOC 1–3	85.5%	78.3%	78.7%
SOC 4–9	14.5%	21.7%	21.3%

The types of jobs secured by graduates vary slightly by the subject studied. However, across all subject categories analysed[10] – STEM, business and administrative studies, languages and others – mobile students who were in work were more likely than non-mobile students to be in a graduate job six months after graduation[11].

Table 24: Classification of job by area of subject studied

		SOC 1–3	SOC 4–9
STEM excl. medicine	Mobile	85.5%	14.5%
	Non-mobile	84.4%	15.6%
Medicine and dentistry	Mobile	100.0%	0.0%
	Non-mobile	99.9%	0.1%
Business and administrative studies	Mobile	79.1%	20.9%
	Non-mobile	72.9%	27.1%
Languages	Mobile	74.9%	25.1%
	Non-mobile	62.3%	37.7%
All other	Mobile	76.6%	23.4%
	Non-mobile	70.0%	30.0%
All subjects	Total	78.1%	21.9%

In general, students who achieve a first- or upper second-class degree are more likely to be in a graduate job than those with other degree classifications. However, even when just those students who achieve a first- or upper second-class degree are considered, mobile students are still more likely to be in a graduate job across all subject groups than non-mobile students (see table 25). This is particularly true of language students: 76.1% of mobile language students with a first-class or upper second-class degree were in graduate jobs, compared to 64.3% of their non-mobile peers.

Table 25: Type of job by subject categories, first-class and upper second-class degree only

		SOC 1–3	SOC 4–9
STEM excl. medicine	Mobile	86.7%	13.3%
	Non-mobile	86.2%	13.8%
Medicine and dentistry	Mobile	100.0%	0.0%
	Non-mobile	100.0%	0.0%
Business and administrative studies	Mobile	81.2%	18.8%
	Non-mobile	77.0%	23.0%
Languages	Mobile	76.1%	23.9%
	Non-mobile	64.3%	35.7%
All other	Mobile	78.0%	22.0%
	Non-mobile	73.6%	26.4%
All subjects	Total	79.4%	20.6%

Across the SOC groups, the differences in the average salaries of mobile and non-mobile students vary. It is notable, however, that mobile students in graduate jobs have a higher average starting salary than non-mobile students in graduate jobs. This was also true when degree attainment was controlled for. Among just those students who achieve a first-class degree, mobile students in graduate jobs earned higher average salaries than non-mobile students in graduate jobs (see table 27). Some of these salary differentials were particularly pronounced. For example, first-class degree holders in skilled-trade occupations earned, on average, 11.9% if they had been mobile.

Table 26: Salaries by SOC group

SOC groups	Mobile	Not mobile	Percentage difference
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	£24,907	£24,396	2.1%
2. Professional occupations	£25,279	£23,735	6.5%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	£21,957	£21,370	2.7%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	£18,025	£18,965	-5.0%
5. Skilled trades occupations	£18,167	£18,929	-4.0%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	£15,542	£15,365	1.2%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	£16,429	£15,604	5.3%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	£17,533	£17,553	-0.1%
9. Elementary occupations	£14,701	£14,983	-1.9%
All occupations	£21,610	£21,610	4.7%

Table 27: Salaries by SOC group, first-class degree holders only

SOC groups	Mobile	Not mobile	Percentage difference
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	£27,902	£26,755	4.3%
2. Professional occupations	£24,446	£24,179	1.1%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	£23,586	£22,517	4.7%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	£18,514	£18,397	0.6%
5. Skilled trades occupations	£21,000	£18,775	11.9%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	£16,199	£15,315	5.8%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	£16,837	£15,666	7.5%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	£15,500	£16,592	-6.6%
9. Elementary occupations	£12,757	£14,434	-11.6%
All occupations	£23,406	£22,855	2.4%

Outcomes by mobility programme

Unemployment rates among mobile students from Erasmus as well as provider-led schemes are lower than the unemployment rates of non-mobile students. Nearly 5% of non-language students who were not mobile during their degree were unemployed six months after graduation, compared with 3.7% of non-language mobile students who went on an Erasmus exchange, and 3.4% of non-language students who went abroad through a provider led-scheme.

There is a small amount of variation in the outcomes of mobile students by mobility scheme. In particular, students who were mobile through Erasmus and provider-led schemes - the great majority of students - were less likely to be unemployed than mobile students who had undertaken a non-Erasmus sandwich year[12]. This trend was true for both language students and students of other subjects.

Table 28: Mobile graduates: outcomes by mobility scheme[13]

Subject groups	Mobility scheme 2013-14	Unemployed	Work only	Work and studying	Study only	Other answer
Non-language subjects	Erasmus	3.7%	65.9%	5.8%	17.0%	7.6%
	Provider	3.4%	70.6%	5.3%	14.5%	6.2%
	Sandwich (excl. Erasmus)	4.5%	70.9%	5.6%	11.3%	7.6%
	Other scheme	2.7%	61.5%	10.0%	18.0%	7.8%
	Total for non-language subjects	3.5%	67.9%	5.8%	15.7%	7.1%
Languages	Erasmus	4.0%	67.0%	5.1%	16.5%	7.4%
	Provider	3.7%	65.1%	4.7%	16.6%	9.9%
	Sandwich (excl. Erasmus)	5.1%	71.0%	2.9%	14.3%	6.6%
	Other scheme	7.3%	53.0%	7.3%	23.7%	8.7%
	Total for languages	4.0%	66.5%	5.0%	16.6%	7.8%
All subjects	Total for all subjects	3.8%	67.2%	5.4%	16.2%	7.5%

Employment outcomes of disadvantaged students compared

Unemployment rates among mobile students from all socio-economic backgrounds were lower than their non-mobile equivalents. This was the case among language and non-language students alike, except amongst language students in 'routine occupations'. Further, the difference in unemployment rates between mobile and non-mobile graduates is greater among non-language graduates compared to language graduates across almost all SEC groups. More generally, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds from any subject had, on average, lower unemployment rates if they had been mobile (4.2% compared with 5.4% if they had not been mobile).

Disadvantaged students unemployment rates

DISADVANTAGED MOBILE STUDENTS

DISADVANTAGED NON-MOBILE STUDENTS

This analysis of unemployment rates was tested for statistical significance. Overall, the difference in unemployment rates between mobile and non-mobile students was found to be statistically significant for both language and non-language students.

Table 29: Unemployment rates by socio-economic classification

	Non-language subjects		Languages	
Socio-economic classification	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**
1. Higher managerial and professional occupations	2.4%	4.2%	3.8%	4.5%
2. Lower managerial and professional occupations	3.1%	4.3%	4.6%	5.7%
3. Intermediate occupations	3.8%	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%
4. Small employers and own account workers	3.9%	5.3%	4.3%	5.2%
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	2.3%	4.7%	5.0%	8.4%
6. Semi-routine occupations	4.6%	5.3%	3.4%	4.5%
7. Routine occupations	5.3%	6.1%	5.3%	4.7%
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed	–	9.9%	–	2.1%
All socio-economic classifications	3.3%	4.9%	4.4%	5.3%

Even when controlling for degree attainment by just examining those students who obtained a first- or upper second-class degree, unemployment rates among mobile students were typically lower than for non-mobile students.

Table 30: Unemployment rates by socio-economic classification and language or non-language degree, first-class and upper second-class degree only

Advantaged	Languages	Mobile	4.0%
		Not mobile	4.8%
	Non-language subjects	Mobile	3.4%
		Not mobile	3.8%
Disadvantaged	Languages	Mobile	3.9%
		Not mobile	4.9%
	Non-language subjects	Mobile	4.2%
		Not mobile	4.6%
All socio-economic groups	All subjects	All students	4.1%

Mobile graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who were working full time were more likely to be in a graduate job than their non-mobile equivalents: 80.2% of mobile students in work from disadvantaged backgrounds were in a graduate job, compared with 74.7% of non-mobile students.

Table 31: Standard occupational classification of disadvantaged students in full-time work

SOC group	Mobile	Not mobile
SOC 1–3	80.2%	74.7%
SOC 4–9	19.8%	25.3%

As highlighted earlier in this report, on average, starting salaries of mobile graduates are higher than starting salaries of non-mobile graduates. The difference is even more pronounced for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. On average, mobile graduates from an advantaged background earned 3.4% more than advantaged graduates who had not been mobile. The difference was even greater for those from disadvantaged backgrounds - these graduates earned 6.1% more than disadvantaged non-mobile graduates.

Table 32: Starting salary by socio-economic background

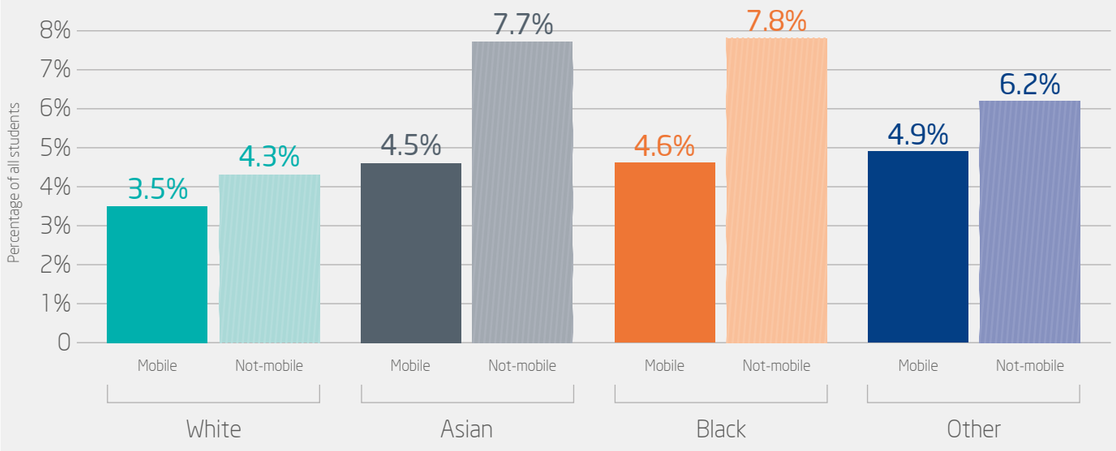
Socio-economic group	Mobile	Not mobile	Percentage difference
Advantaged	£22,745	£21,989	3.4%
Disadvantaged	£22,001	£20,729	6.1%
All socio-economic groups	£22,595	£21,569	4.8%

Employment outcomes of BME students compared

Mobile students from all ethnicities were less likely than non-mobile students to be unemployed. The difference in the average unemployment rate between mobile and non-mobile students was particularly pronounced among black and Asian students.

A significantly lower proportion of mobile graduates with white, black or Asian ethnicity were unemployed compared with those who did not have a period of mobility.

Figure 9: Unemployment rate by ethnicity and mobility status



Mobile BME graduates were still less likely to be unemployed than BME graduates who had not been mobile. While a period of mobility is correlated with a lower unemployment rate of graduates of any ethnicity and whether or not they studied languages or something else, there was a significant difference for black graduates who had studied non-language degrees (4.7% versus 7.8%), as well as black graduates who had studied language degrees (3.9% versus 7.7%).

Table 33: Unemployment rate by ethnicity, mobility status and subject type

	Non-language subjects			Languages		
Ethnicity	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**	**Percentage difference**	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**	**Percentage difference**
White	3.1%	4.2%	1.1%	4.2%	5.0%	0.8%
Asian	4.2%	7.8%	3.6%	6.1%	6.4%	0.3%
Black	4.7%	7.8%	3.1%	3.9%	7.7%	3.8%
Other (incl. mixed)	4.1%	6.1%	2.0%	6.4%	7.0%	0.6%

Note: Numbers of unemployed students who studied language-related subjects are especially low for those who had a period of mobility.

Mobile students with white, Asian or 'other' ethnicity had a higher average salary than non-mobile students. White mobile graduates earned 5% more than non-mobile white graduates, Asian mobile graduates earned 8% more, and graduates with 'other' ethnicities earned 2% more. However, the average salary of black mobile students was slightly lower than that of black non-mobile students.

Table 34: Salaries by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Mobile	Not mobile	All students	Percentage difference
White	£22,525	£21,458	£21,536	5.0%
Asian	£24,215	£22,411	£22,496	8.0%
Black	£21,842	£21,943	£21,939	-0.5%
Other (including mixed)	£22,688	£22,166	£22,211	2.4%
All ethnicities	£22,621	£21,602	£21,673	4.7%

Among students obtaining a first- or upper second-class degree, the average UK starting salary of mobile students is higher than the average UK starting salary of non-mobile students. This is true for students of all ethnicities, with the exception of black and 'other' ethnicity non-language students.

Table 35: Starting salaries for first-class and upper second-class graduates by ethnicity and mobility status working in the UK

	Non-language subjects		Languages	
Ethnicity	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**	**Mobile**	**Not mobile**
White	£21,995	£21,527	£20,776	£18,741
Asian	£24,081	£22,445	£22,315	£19,558
Black	£21,271	£22,465	£22,855	£19,152
Other (including mixed)	£21,584	£22,151	£20,880	£20,161
All ethnicities	£22,062	£21,667	£20,848	£18,838

Conclusion

Gone International looks at the profiles, activities, destinations and outcomes of the 2014–2015 UK-domiciled graduating cohort who responded to the DLHE and undertook a period of mobility abroad.

While this publication forms the third in Universities UK International's series of Gone International cohort studies, not all of its findings are directly comparable with the 2016 or 2015 publications. Rather, this report provides us with a snapshot of one cohort's mobility, without seeking to identify trends over time.

This is in part because of incomplete populations, as not all students respond to the DLHE, and not all mobility is recorded in the Student record. It is also in part because the fields used to collect this data by HESA were changed in 2013–14, enabling more and better data to be collected for two of the three years of study examined in this report.

Broadly, this study highlights some key features of mobility in the 2014–15 cohort. It finds that mobile students were characterised by a large population of language students[14] and an under-representation of disadvantaged and BME students. Mobile students were most likely to travel to other EU countries, thanks in large part to the Erasmus exchange programme, with a quarter going to France as their destination of choice. Six months after graduation mobile students were less likely to be unemployed and more likely to have had obtained a first- or upper second-class degree, be in a graduate level position, or to be working abroad.

Readers may find this picture familiar. Our previous two Gone International reports paint similar pictures of the profiles, destinations and outcomes of mobile students from the previous two cohorts. Each report has found a correlation between mobility and improved outcomes. However, they also provide some cause for concern by highlighting ongoing issues: most starkly, the current inequality in the take-up of mobility opportunities and the popularity of European mobility at a time when the future of the UK's participation in the Erasmus programme is uncertain. In its work implementing the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility, the Go International programme team, based at Universities UK International, works collaboratively with the UK higher education sector to highlight and address such challenges. Universities UK is working more widely with its members and the sector to address the variety of implications for universities, staff, and students of the vote to leave the EU, and urging the government to protect and enhance students' access to vital global opportunities. At the same time, UK universities continue to strengthen their partnerships with universities in Europe and beyond. Outside of the Erasmus programme, independent 'provider-led' arrangements already account for a high proportion of mobility including over 50% of non-language student mobility.

This year's report includes new elements, drawing on a larger pool of mobile students than in previous years. The larger sample size and the higher percentage of mobile students in this cohort allow us to be more sophisticated in our analysis, controlling more often for variables such as language studies or academic attainment. This year we also benefit from a richer dataset, thanks to two years' worth of data collected through HESA's new and improved mobility fields. The data available for 2013–14 and 2014–15 allows us to look, for the first time in the Gone International series, at the type, length and scheme of mobility.[15]

We were able to show how study abroad opportunities dominated over work and volunteering abroad, with over two-thirds of all mobilities being study placements. Language students preferred study options, but were more likely to do a work placement abroad than non-language students. Universities may find the analysis of mobility lengths to be of interest, given the proliferation of summer schools and other short-term opportunities in recent years. While no direct correlation was found between length of mobility and the socio-economic background of students, we did find that non-language students from lower socio-economic groups were slightly more likely to go on short mobilities of one to three weeks, as compared with students from higher socio-economic groups. This is consistent with findings in Go International and the British Council's 'Student Perspectives' research that suggest that short-term mobility is particularly attractive to widening participation students, who might otherwise be deterred from longer-term mobility by prohibitive costs, by personal, familial or work commitments, or by lack of support from parents or peers[16]. The same research found that short-term mobilities could act as 'taster' travel, prompting longer-term mobility further down the line. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that short-term mobility might be of particular appeal to students from externally accredited programmes who could otherwise find it difficult to incorporate mobility into their course.

With last year's vote to leave the EU, and the current uncertainty around the UK sector's continued access to the Erasmus programme, there has been a spotlight on European mobility within the UK higher education community. The data available to us on mobility schemes helps to highlight the currently substantial contribution of the Erasmus programme to the overall outward mobility landscape for the UK, with Erasmus accounting for over 50% of student mobility, and nearly 77% of our language student mobility in this cohort alone. We found that Erasmus mobility was important not only for linguists, but also supports mobility for students across a wide variety of subject groups, as the mobility of choice, for example, of computer scientists, educators, and students of art and design, and business.

Like last year's report, this study also sends a clear message about the value of mobility for under-represented groups. Less likely to participate in the first place, these students in some ways have the most to gain from mobility. For example, while mobile students in general were more likely to earn a higher salary, this was particularly true of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Likewise, graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who worked full time were more likely to be in a graduate job than their non-mobile peers. Meanwhile, black and Asian students benefited from a significantly lower unemployment rate if they had been mobile – a difference that was more pronounced than their white colleagues. Non-language students, another under-represented group, had a significantly lower unemployment rate if they had been mobile, even when degree outcomes were controlled for. The difference in unemployment rates between mobile and non-mobile students was more pronounced among non-language graduates than language graduates across almost all socio-economic backgrounds.

The positive correlation between mobility and improved academic and employment outcomes, particularly for students from underrepresented groups in this report, strengthens the case for mobility. International opportunities should be accessible to all students, not only those who make up the largest proportion of mobile students, namely language, socio-economically advantaged and white students. The importance of the participation of under-represented groups is also recognised and championed through the UK's Strategy for Outward Mobility. Beyond the significant benefits they can encounter, it is these groups that will ultimately drive up our overall mobility numbers and help us to achieve our collective goal, to increase the number of higher education students who gain an international experience as part of their UK higher education programme.

Definition of selected JACS subject groups:

STEM excluding medicine
Architecture, building and planning
Biological sciences
Computer sciences
Engineering and technology
Mathematical sciences
Physical sciences
Subjects allied to medicine
Veterinary sciences and agriculture

Medicine and dentistry
Medicine and dentistry

Business and administrative studies
Business and administrative studies

Languages
Languages

All other
Combined
Creative arts and design
Education
Historical and philosophical studies
Law
Mass communications and documentation
Social studies

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010)

Major group	SOC groups
Group 1	Managers, directors and senior officials
Group 2	Professional occupations
Group 3	Associate professional and technical occupations
Group 4	Administrative and secretarial occupations
Group 5	Skilled trades occupations
Group 6	Caring, leisure and other service occupations
Group 7	Sales and customer service occupations
Group 8	Process, plant and machine operatives
Group 9	Elementary occupations

References

1. For the purposes of this report, the data collected includes graduates who completed their studies in the summer of 2015.
2. This report only considers the outcomes for UK-domiciled students as the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility aims to increase the proportion of these students working, studying or volunteering abroad.
3. This comparison is not like-for-like, as it is not comparing full graduating cohorts; rather the graduates who responded to the DLHE each year. It also does not take into account that the minimum length of mobility captured up until 2012–13 was 4 weeks, and from 2013–14 onwards was just one week. The majority of data in previous Gone International reports only included mobility periods of 4 weeks or more.
4. In 2014, the Lifelong Learning Programme, of which the Erasmus programme was a part, became the new Erasmus+ programme. We refer to Erasmus rather than Erasmus+ in the body of this report because the data we analyse under 'scheme' is from 2013–14, and these mobilities therefore took place under the old Erasmus programme.
5. This percentage is different from the 55% we find in the report, because it includes periods of mobility in the 2014–2015 academic year undertaken by students at any level or year of study.
6. By 'broad subject level' we mean the JACS subject areas as defined by HESA, for example, 'engineering and technology' as opposed to specific subject levels such as 'civil engineering'.
7. This analysis is based on mobilities undertaken in 2013–14 by the cohort covered in this report, for whom 2013–14 is their second year of study.
8. This percentage was calculated based on data from the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 academic years. Data on mobility by scheme was not available in 2012–2013.
9. See definition on page 38.
10. The subjects are based on JACS subject groups. More detail is on page 38.
11. For this analysis, medicine and dentistry, and business and administrative studies have been reported separately, as both areas have a high number of mobile students.
12. The unemployment rate for Erasmus students was 0.3% higher than for provider-led for both language and non-language students, which is very slight (and still lower than non-mobile student unemployment rates). This difference could be because provider-led schemes are more selective. These schemes can often include academic requirements, have limited places, and be for competitive destinations outside of Europe, like the United States.
13. Percentages are calculated based on instances of mobility, not student numbers, as students can take part in more than one mobility programme, such as Erasmus and provider-led.
14. Unsurprisingly, given that the majority of single honours language programmes contain a mandatory mobility element.
15. While we have not been able to disaggregate outcomes by type or length of mobility in this year's report, due to limitations in the available data, we look forward to being able to do so in our next Gone International report, drawing on three years of comparable data collected under HESA's new reporting fields.
16. Read 'Student Perspectives on Going International' on the Go International website at: http://www.go.international.ac.uk/programme-research

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