

Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility

A picture of participation



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All you need to know about study and work abroad



**Universities UK
International**

Contents

Introduction	1
Executive summary, key findings and recommendations	3
Methodology	8
European context	10
National picture	14
Project institutions	31
Marketing activities	44
Conclusion	46
References	48

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Universities UK International

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Introduction

Across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), governments and higher education institutions are striving towards a collective ambition of 20% of graduates in the EHEA to have undertaken a study or training period abroad by 2020.¹ To meet this goal, many countries have already begun to shift their focus from the numbers of students participating in mobility to the accessibility of these opportunities, exploring who participates and how students from underrepresented groups can be supported.²

The need for work in this area is becoming increasingly clear as our understanding of widening participation in the UK grows. The Universities UK Social Mobility Advisory Group's *Working in partnership: enabling social mobility in higher education* (2016) found that:

graduate outcomes are substantially influenced by student background... [T]here is evidence that students from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to engage in opportunities outside of the curriculum that boost employability for example, internships, extracurricular activities and opportunities to work or study abroad.³

The conversation around widening participation has begun to focus in more depth on student success activities and progression after university. Institutions are increasingly interested in ways to support success by enabling students to engage with extra curricular activities whilst at university.

Outward mobility gives students life-changing experiences and contributes to graduates' skills and collaborative opportunities beyond the traditional academic outcomes a university offers. The sector

has made great strides in widening access, but if the students who come to university from underrepresented groups are to be served well by their institutions they must be able to engage with the full university experience. Students are being encouraged to pursue additional activities within and alongside academic study, so that they can benefit from all the sector can provide. Outward student mobility can be an important opportunity for students, and its benefits are tangible on a personal, academic and employability level.

Why focus on outward student mobility and access for disadvantaged groups?

Our report *Gone International: mobility works* found 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 [on average earned] 5% more than their non-mobile

¹ The Bologna Process is a collective of European countries who work collaboratively to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en

² The Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy commissioned a research project titled *Student mobility in the EHEA. Underrepresentation in student credit mobility and imbalances in degree mobility* (2016).

³ The Social Mobility Advisory Group, *Working in partnership: enabling social mobility in higher education*, (2016).

peers". Our research shows this positive relationship between undertaking mobility and improved academic and employability outcomes for students year-on-year.⁴

The same report found that the benefits for students undertaking mobility are even more prominent for students from underrepresented groups. "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".⁵ The report also found that black graduates who were mobile were 70% less likely to be unemployed than their non-mobile peers and 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.

The analysis in this report shows that there has been an increase in outwardly mobile student numbers across the sector over the last three academic years (2013-16), and that mobility by students from the target demographics has also increased over this period. However, gaps in participation remain: all of the target demographic groups are underrepresented in mobility numbers, and students with overlapping disadvantages have even lower rates of participation. In other words, despite ongoing improvements, students are less likely to participate in mobility if they are from a disadvantaged group.

Graduates face increasing competition when entering the labour market

Employers are looking for more developed skillsets to distinguish between potential candidates with similar levels of academic attainment. This proves a challenge if students are engaging in fewer extra curricular activities

during their studies, especially as these activities can help develop the qualities that make them competitive in the employment market. The British Academy's *Born Global* report found that 70% of the 410 small and medium sized enterprises surveyed believe that "future executives will need foreign language skills and international experiences".⁶ Similarly, the Association of Graduate Recruiters found that employers place the most importance on the "ability to work collaboratively with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries".⁷

The message is similar across Europe. A report by the Swedish Council for Higher Education showed that "students who have studied or conducted work practice abroad increase their possibilities in the job market, as they are considered to develop valuable skills".⁸ Similarly, Finland's Centre for International Mobility found that alongside widely-valued international competences such as language skills, cultural knowledge and tolerance, employers increasingly valued productivity, resilience and curiosity from candidates.⁹ All of these desirable skills can be developed during periods abroad on an outward mobility programme.

There are social, economic, geographical, institutional and cultural obstacles to mobility. We know that students' backgrounds and prior experiences influence their decision to go abroad. We also know that social structures can disadvantage people based on their backgrounds, identities and abilities, and that some students face overlapping disadvantages. We need to fully understand the barriers experienced by students, and work to actively support students through these challenges. The personal and professional benefits offered by outward mobility are clear. The sector must therefore ensure – and signal – that mobility is open to all.

⁴ UUK's *Gone international: mobility works* (2017).

⁵ UUK's *Gone international: mobility works* (2017).

⁶ British Academy *Born Global* (2014).

⁷ The Association of Graduate Recruiters *Global Graduates* (2011).

⁸ Swedish Council for Higher Education *Employers' view on studies abroad* (2012).

⁹ Centre for International Mobility *Hidden Competencies* (2014).

Executive summary, key findings and recommendations

The *Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility* project is delivered by Universities UK International (UUKi), supported by the UK National Agency for Erasmus+, and managed by the UK's Department for Education (DfE). This report represents the first stage of the project to widen participation in outward mobility from UK higher education institutions. The report provides a picture of current mobility participation rates for disadvantaged and underrepresented students and offers some recommendations on how to improve participation rates by adopting a whole-institutional approach to outward mobility.

In addition to this report, the project will develop a toolkit to support universities and further education colleges in developing and implementing effective strategies to increase participation in mobility programmes by students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

The toolkit is intended to help achieve a year-on-year increase in students from widening participation backgrounds engaging with outward mobility programmes. The UK Strategy for Outward Mobility will monitor annual data on higher education students participating in outward mobility beyond the life of the project.

This report is based on an analysis of in-year mobility participation rates of all UK-domiciled, first degree students (regardless of their year of study), across a three year period from 2013 to 2016, drawing on

data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). It also explores successful institutional responses to widening participation in mobility schemes, based on four institutional case studies.

A total of 70,615 UK-domiciled undergraduates undertook mobility between 2013 and 2016.

The project focused on the following five groups that are underrepresented in mobility:

- Students from a low socio-economic background
- Students from low participation neighbourhoods
- Black and minority ethnic students
- Students with a disability
- Students who are care leavers

Key findings

Across all five demographic groups

- All of the target demographic groups are underrepresented in mobility numbers, and students with overlapping disadvantages have even lower rates of participation.
- Short-term mobility (1–4 weeks) is more attractive to the project's target groups.
- The most popular countries for mobility are consistent across all demographics.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds

- In 2015–16, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds were 65% more likely to participate in outward mobility than their peers from lower socio-economic backgrounds (2.5% participation rate compared to 1.5%).

Students from low-participation wards

- In 2015–16 the participation rate was 1.8% for students from areas with high-participation in higher education and 1.0% for students from low-participation areas.

Black and minority ethnic students

- In 2015–16, black and minority ethnic (BME) students represented 22.2% of the student cohort but only 17.6% of the outwardly-mobile group.

- There are different rates of participation within the BME demographic. In 2015–16 only the Asian or Asian British (Indian), Chinese, and Other (including mixed) ethnic groups had participation rates equal to or above the HE sector average of 1.7%. Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi) students and Asian or Asian British (Pakistani) students had the lowest participation rates for the demographic: 0.6% and 0.8% respectively.

Disability

- In 2015–16, 1.5% of students with a disability participated in outward mobility. This was an increase from 1.1% in 2013–14, but still below the HE sector average for the year (1.7%).
- Within the disabled student demographic, we saw variation in participation rates by different groups. Students with two or more conditions were engaging with mobility at the lowest rate (0.9%) compared to their peers, students with a physical impairment or mobility issues had a 1.0% participation rate and blind or visually impaired students were participating at a rate of 1.1%.

Care leavers

- In 2015–16, 75 care leavers participated in outward mobility. This represents a 1.0% participation rate amongst care-leavers in universities, which is below the sector average of 1.7%.

Multiple barriers and overlapping identities

- When looking at BME students from low socio-economic backgrounds, participation rates were lower than their white counterparts from the same socio-economic background. For black students, the participation rate was 1.2% and for Asian students it was 1.0%, compared to 1.6% for their white peers.

Mobility programme

- A growth overall in the number of outwardly mobile students was due to an increase in provider-led programmes. Provider-led mobility has increased by 54% since 2013–14. Institutional programmes have proven particularly popular across all target demographics of this report.
- Over the last three academic years BME students were more likely to undertake a period of mobility as part of a provider-led programme than other schemes.

Mobility type

- Most outward mobility undertaken by students between 2013 and 2016 involved a period of study; on average 3 in every 4 instances of mobility were for study abroad.
- There was a higher level of growth in mobility for work placements across our target demographics compared to their peers, suggesting mobility for work may be more attractive to the target groups than to their peers.

Mobility duration

- Over the period analysed, among those engaging in outward mobility, students from low-participation wards, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, BME students and students with a disability were all more likely to undertake short-term mobility than their peers.
- We have seen substantial growth in one-week mobility since 2013, 222.3% across the sector, but this is even more pronounced for our target demographics with between 243.5%–365.5% growth in one-week mobility dependent on demographic.

Mobility location

- In 2015–16, UK student mobility covered 172 countries. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds visited 125 countries, those from low-participation neighbourhoods visited 97 countries, BME students covered 131 countries and students with a disability visited 113 countries.
- Although the list of countries visited by our target groups is shorter than for the student body as whole, the top nine countries visited is similar across all groups. During the last three academic years, the most popular 9 countries for students are the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and China.

Ten recommendations from the analysis of activities at project institutions

It is crucial that universities and colleges adopt a whole-institutional approach to outward mobility. UUKi has worked with four project institutions to conduct detailed analyses of mobility participation, initiatives and activities. These institutions were chosen because they had all sent high numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds on mobility during the 2014–15 academic year. Our case studies, conducted with these institutions' international offices, show how all four institutions have embedded mobility across their organisations, working collaboratively with other teams on administration, support, funding and marketing.

We found several consistent features underpinning these institutions' success in delivering student mobility. These point the way to some recommendations for other institutions wishing to reproduce their results:

1. Support from leadership: Leaders at all our participating institutions give strategic buy-in and champion outward mobility activities.

Outward mobility should be embedded in a range of institutional strategies, such as the widening participation, international, teaching and learning, and student support and success strategies. This will ensure sustainability of programmes and further expansion of mobility provision.

2. Institutional targets: Our project universities all have numerical targets for mobility.

Targets prioritising mobility as an important area of activity enable institutions to reflect on progress made and evaluate the effectiveness of activities, allowing mobility programmes to adapt according to success measures such as participation levels and student feedback.

Providers should not only introduce an institution-wide target for mobility, but also aim for mobility rates to reflect the makeup of the institution's student body, supporting efforts to close the current participation gap.

3. Academic buy-in: International office staff in our project institutions work closely with colleagues in academic departments to champion mobility.

Findings from the *Student Perspectives* report suggest that academic buy-in is persuasive when students are considering mobility.¹⁰ Examples of good practice in this area include preparing information sheets for personal tutors, assigning 'mobility coordinator' roles within academic departments, speaking at academic events, presenting at staff induction programmes, and circulating tailored newsletters via departmental mailouts.

4. Collaborate: Successful institutions offer an integrated approach to support.

It is essential that outward mobility practitioners work closely with widening participation teams to pinpoint areas of focus at the institutional level and to combine efforts and energies to make the most impact. Collaboration with the disability team enables appropriate support for students on mobility, and colleagues in the careers service can provide expertise on employability skills to be gained from mobility opportunities. Students' unions can also help promote mobility as part of a rich student experience.

¹⁰ UUKi and British Council *Student Perspectives* (2015).

5. Transparency: Our project institutions are very clear with students about what a period of mobility will involve by providing extensive handbooks, delivering pre-departure sessions on specific areas of concern, and working closely with student support services.

It is especially important that students from disadvantaged groups, and in some cases students' families, know what to expect during the mobility period in terms of cost, culture and impact on their degree.¹¹

Managing high expectations, addressing gaps in knowledge and challenging negative assumptions can help with 'culture shock' and homesickness, as well as ensuring students are primed to get the most out of their experiences.

6. Flexible offer: Our project institutions offer a mix of short and long-term mobility programmes for a range of activities, from field trips and summer volunteering to semester internships, PhD research mobility and full year study abroad.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to widening access to mobility, and students' differing circumstances require varying approaches. Diversifying mobility options is key to delivering mobility for all. Traditional outward mobility programmes do not appeal to all students, and some students are unable to leave the UK for extended periods. The sector should be flexible and offer a variety of programmes to suit different needs and aspirations.

7. Widening Participation agreements: Outward student mobility is explicitly featured in agreements with key policy bodies.

Including outward mobility activities in access agreements, outcome agreements and widening access and participation plans helps to ensure that programmes are targeting priority groups for the institution. It also encourages collaboration with

the widening participation teams, and provides sustainability for new initiatives and programmes.

8. Funding information: Our project institutions ensure that information on funding opportunities is easily accessible by students.

Institutions should work to ensure that financial barriers do not stop students from engaging with mobility. Financing mobility can be particularly challenging for disadvantaged groups. Providing clear, easily accessible financial information for students – including upfront costs, living costs, available grants, and other internal and external funding sources – is essential.

9. Scholarships, grants and bursaries: Our project institutions offer ring-fenced financial support for students from disadvantaged groups such as mobility bursaries and travel grants.

Findings from *Student Perspectives* suggests that students often finance their mobility through loans, as grants do not cover all costs.¹² Where there is competition for funding, good practice from our project institutions includes structuring their application processes to focus on establishing the students' passion to study or work abroad, rather than their past academic attainment.

10. Marketing: Our project institutions market extensively through multiple channels, using a variety of activities.

Effective marketing goes beyond traditional media such as flyers, posters and email campaigns and includes social media campaigns, interactive web portals, ambassador programmes and features in student publications, as well as sending speakers to events and supporting student blogs and vlogs. A diverse approach to communications can raise awareness of the value of outward mobility to students across all demographics.

¹¹ Following the Competitions and Markets authority's classification of students as consumers, students are entitled to "no surprises" under the Consumer Rights Act. This means that for outward mobility we need to ensure that requirements are clear to students and that they know what to expect when undertaking a period of mobility abroad.

¹² UUKi and British Council *Student Perspectives* (2015).

Methodology

This report analyses the profiles of UK-domiciled undergraduate degree students in UK higher education institutions who spent a minimum of one week abroad during their programme of study in the 2013–14, 2014–15 or 2015–16 academic years. Statistics contained within this report are based on analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) datasets.

From the HESA data we can identify students' demographic, including economic background, home town, ethnicity, if they have declared a disability and if they are a care leaver. We can also determine whether a student undertook a period of mobility. This allows us to create a picture of current mobility participation rates for students in each of the target demographics and compare their mobility patterns to those of the whole student population.

It is important to note that a high proportion of mobile students study languages. Language courses overall have a higher-than-average proportion of female students, a below-average proportion of BME students, and higher proportions of students from more advantaged backgrounds when compared with other courses.

In 2013–14, HESA enhanced their capture of student mobility data, which now includes periods of mobility of less than four weeks, the mobility scheme with which a period abroad was associated, and mobility type (studying, working or volunteering overseas). Instances of mobility are also reported to HESA by the country or countries to which the student travelled during their degree.

When comparing different groups within a demographic, we removed the 'unknown' groups from the total numbers. For example, when comparing the BME population with the white population, we did not include the 'unknown' demographic in any calculations. Within the socio-economic classification (SEC) indicator, there were a particularly large number of unknown values.

As with UUKi's *Gone International* reports, this report outlines the extent to which mobility was undertaken by students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, but it does not seek to imply or demonstrate causation between students' background and their choice of mobility activity.

A note on in-year analysis

Most mobility happens later in students' programmes, typically during the second or third year of study. The UK Strategy for Outward Student Mobility bases the national target for mobility on the mobility rates of UK-domiciled, first degree, full-time, graduating cohorts. This counts mobility undertaken at any point during a degree by a student and allows the programme to measure progress made on increasing mobility levels across the sector.

This report provides an in-year analysis of mobility participation. It looks at the mobility participation rates of all UK domiciled, first degree students enrolled in institutions in any one academic year. Because the

in-year participation rates include first year and final year students who are less mobile in these academic years, the mobility participation rates are necessarily lower than overall graduating cohort mobility rates.

A note on disadvantaged and underrepresented groups

There are many ways to define demographics that are disadvantaged and underrepresented in higher education. According to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) they include but are not limited to:

- people from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where higher education participation is low
- people from low income backgrounds (currently, OFFA defines 'low income' as up to £42,875 per year household income)
- some ethnic groups or sub-groups, including white males from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- disabled people
- mature and part-time learners
- care leavers
- carers
- people estranged from their families
- people from gypsy and traveller communities
- refugees
- students with mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and/or who are on the autism spectrum.

For the purposes of this report, we have focused on five student demographics: students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students from low participation neighbourhoods, black and minority ethnic students, disabled students and care leavers.

Limitations of this research

The following limitations to this research should be noted:

- This report refers only to UK-domiciled undergraduate students and does not include graduates of other levels of study or international students.
- 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.
- 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. Therefore part of the growth in short term mobility is likely to be the result of improved reporting at institutional level.
- The data analysed in this report covers three academic years. The make-up of student demographics is not consistent year on year, and this report does not seek to identify trends over time.
- Some students' characteristics are unknown, and such students are therefore excluded from parts of this analysis.

European context

The United Kingdom is one of 48 member states that make up the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Members of the EHEA work together to improve their higher education systems. This is achieved through the Bologna Process, the main goal of which is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability. The 2015 Yerevan Communiqué recognised the impact of study abroad on graduate employability and called for greater access to international mobility opportunities for disadvantaged and underrepresented students.

In November 2011, EHEA member states agreed on a collective ambition of 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of vocational education and training students across Europe having spent a period of study or training abroad by 2020.¹³

Member states should “provide disadvantaged learners, who may be deprived of opportunities for learning mobility with targeted information on available programmes and support tailored to their specific needs”.¹⁴

The Mobility Scoreboard was published by Eurydice in 2016.¹⁵ The report provides a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in creating a positive environment for learner mobility. The report identified five thematic areas for monitoring: information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support for students from a low socio-economic background, and recognition of learning outcomes.

Supporting learner mobility

Definitions of disadvantaged students and of socio-economic background vary across education systems

in the EHEA. Common demographics targeted by institutions wishing to provide additional support for disadvantaged groups include students with a disability, ethnic minority students and students from low economic backgrounds.

For the purposes of comparability, the Mobility Scoreboard report focused on low socio-economic background as an indicator of support to disadvantaged students. This was the most common demographic targeted by institutions, with 27 out of 38 education systems using this approach. It defined three main indicators of support:

- the existence of **national targets** regarding the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes
- **comprehensive monitoring** of participation among students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes
- **financial support** in the form of public grants provided to students with low socio-economic background to participate in mobility programmes.

¹³ EHEA 20% outward mobility target.

¹⁴ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on *Youth on the move* – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/4.

¹⁵ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016. *Mobility Scoreboard: Higher Education Background Report*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

National targets

Eurydice suggests that national outward student mobility targets – in particular widening participation in outward student mobility targets – signal: ‘a strong political commitment towards increasing the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes’.¹⁶

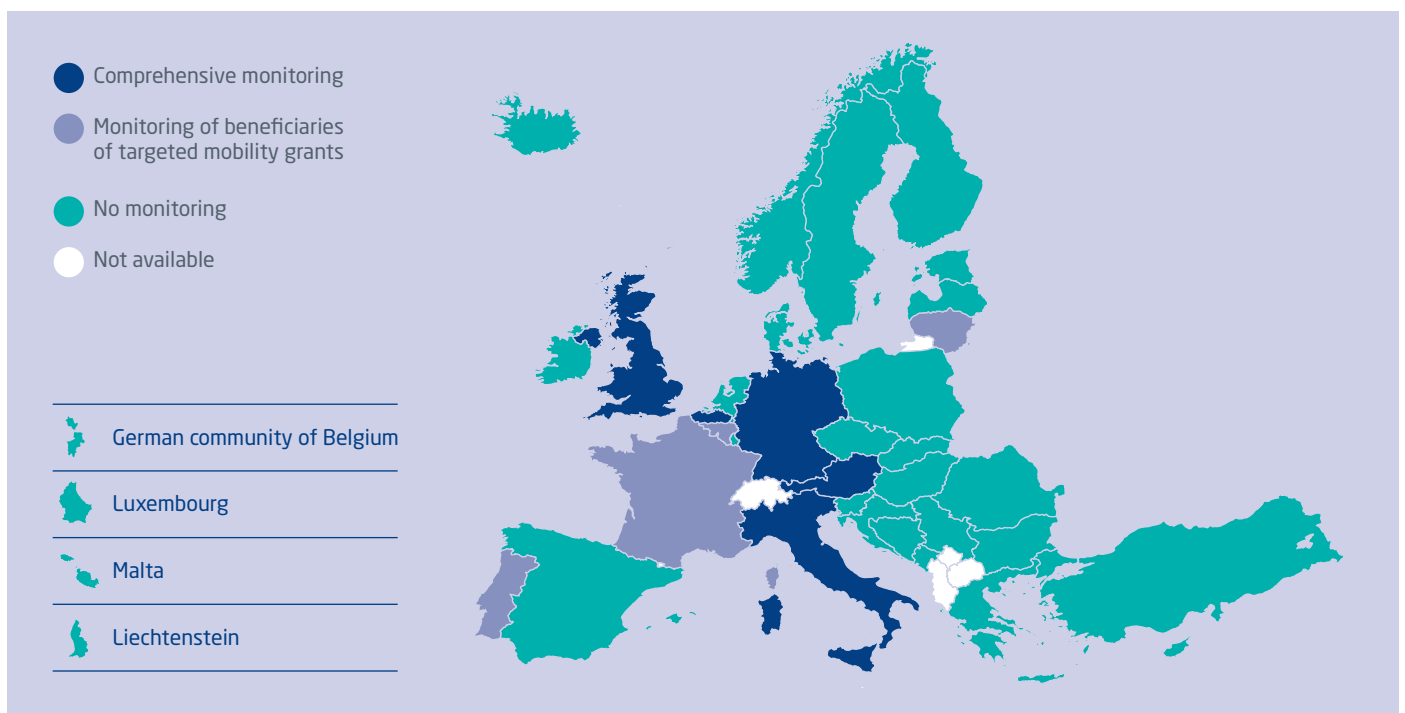
The Flemish-speaking community of Belgium is the only education system with a national student mobility target in place that includes a widening participation requirement. The target aims for 33% of mobile students to come from underrepresented groups by 2020. Belgium defines underrepresented students as students who receive a grant, students who have a job, and students with a disability.

While the UK has its own target focused on increasing student mobility over all, it does not currently have a national target for mobility participation by underrepresented groups

Comprehensive monitoring

Monitoring and reporting on patterns and trends is essential to provide information on which demographics participate in mobility programmes and to what extent. Data on mobility trends can point to gaps in participation, which helps institutions make informed decisions about where to focus resources to help disadvantaged students access mobility opportunities.

Figure 1: Monitoring the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes, 2015-16



Source: Eurydice’s Mobility Scoreboard (2016), reproduced with permission.

¹⁶ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016. *Mobility Scoreboard: Higher Education Background Report*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

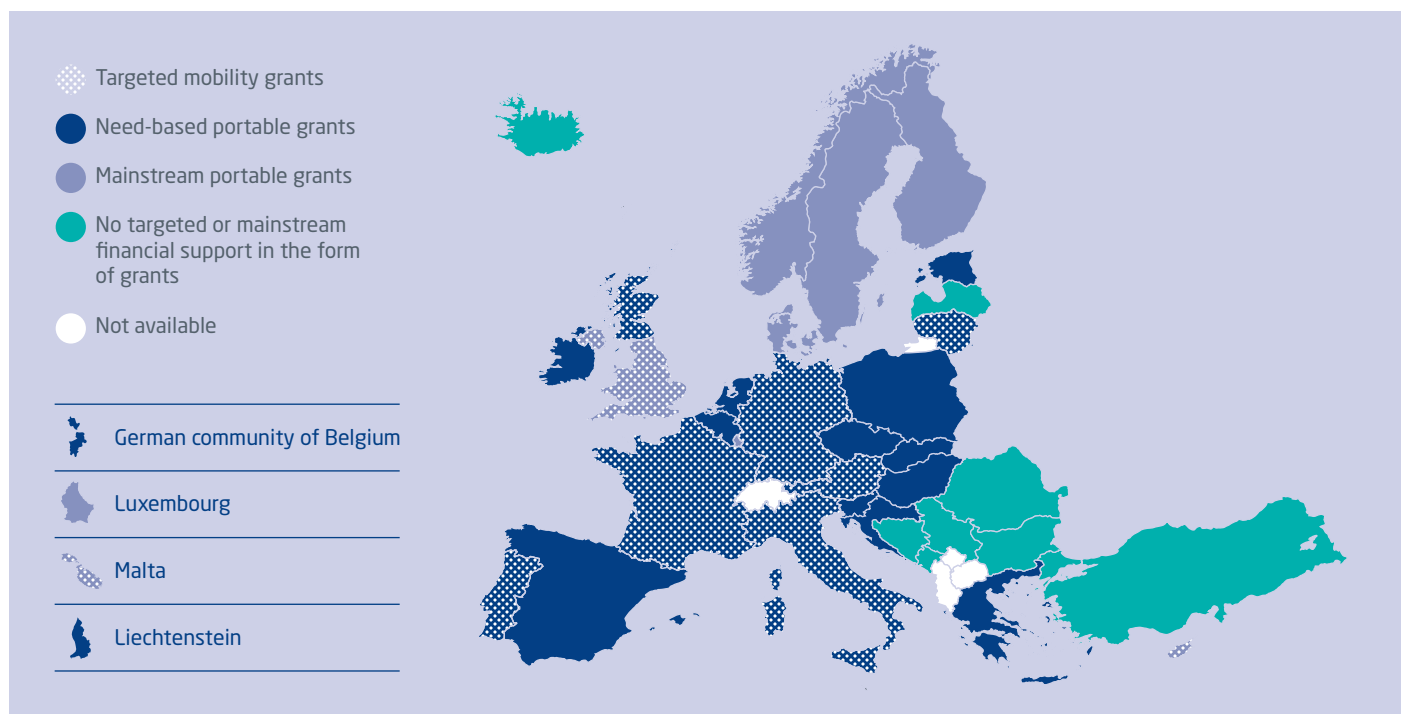
Countries that monitor the overall participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds in mobility programmes are classified as undertaking 'comprehensive monitoring' by Eurydice.¹⁷ These systems aim to create a comprehensive picture of the participation of disadvantaged students in all mobility programmes. The UK is considered to undertake comprehensive monitoring, as information on the demographics of mobile students is included in HESA's annual data collection system.

Financial support

Financial issues can be a barrier to participation in outward mobility, and this may be felt even more strongly among certain socio-economic groups.

Eurydice's analysis of financial support is limited to non-repayable public support, such as public grants. This includes both targeted support for specific demographics and a mainstream approach to grants where grants are available to all students. The UK provides financial support to mobile students from low socio-economic backgrounds via targeted mobility grants on top of mainstream portable grants.

Figure 2: Financial support in the form of public grants provided to students with low socio-economic background for mobility purposes, 2015-16



Source: Eurydice's Mobility Scoreboard (2016), reproduced with permission.

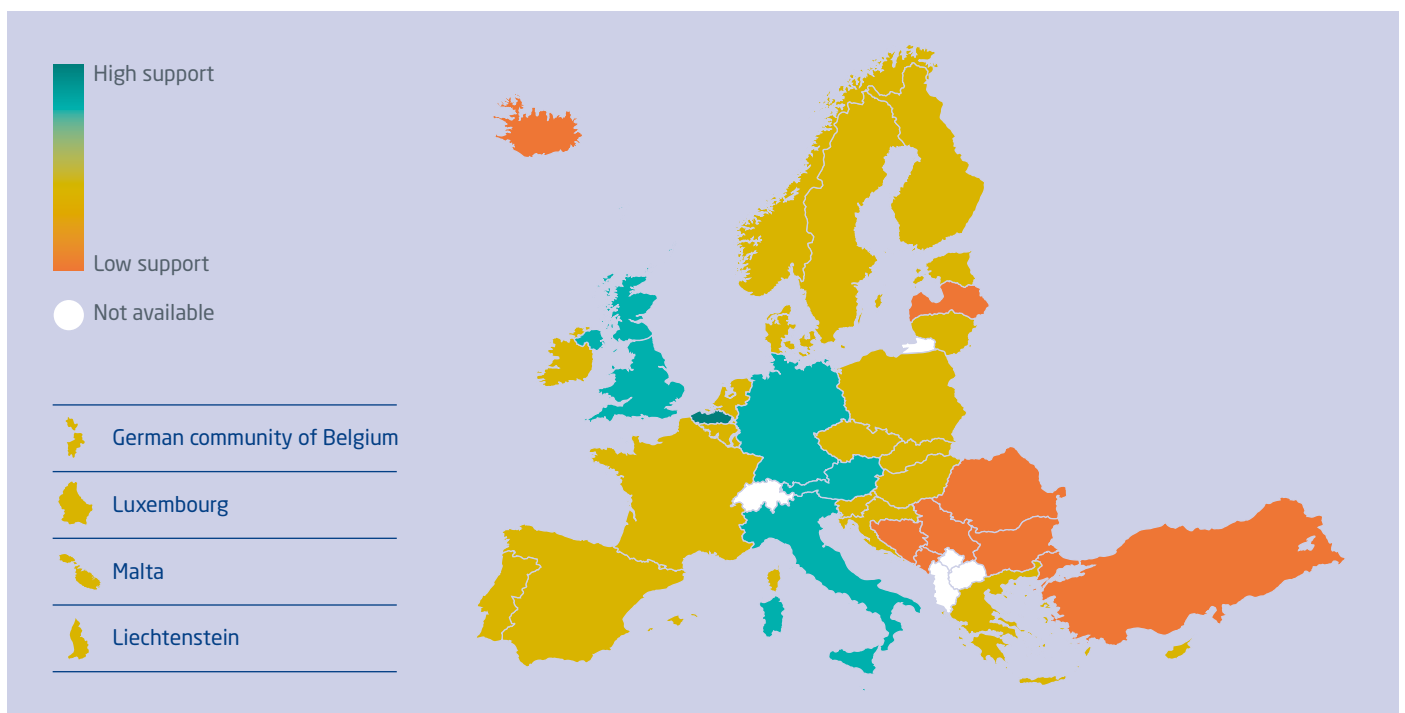
¹⁷ This analysis does not include the monitoring of Erasmus+ mobility as this is a requirement of the programme. Instead it looks at the monitoring of programmes outside Erasmus+ which countries have elected to report on at a national level.

The Eurydice Mobility Scoreboard

Eurydice compiled an indicator scoreboard to create a picture of current support provided to disadvantaged learners across Europe. The disadvantaged learner’s scoreboard indicates a scale between high level and low level support. High support level countries have a defined national mobility target for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, comprehensive monitoring of participation among students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and financial support given to such students, through either targeted support or the mainstream model. Currently the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium is the only region that meets these criteria. The UK comprehensively monitors mobility participation and provides financial support to students from low socio-economic backgrounds, which puts it in the light green group on the mobility scoreboard, along with Germany, Austria and Italy.¹⁸

In 2015-16, 45% of all UK mobility of more than one week - for UK-domiciled students in all cycles and years - was through the Erasmus+ programme. 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 underrepresented groups.

Figure 3: Mobility support provided to students with low socio-economic background, 2015-16



Source: Eurydice, reproduced with permission.

¹⁸ For more comparative analyses across Europe, see <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard>

National picture

This chapter compares the mobility periods of students from different demographics. It aims to create a picture of mobility participation by disadvantaged and underrepresented students. The statistics quoted in this report are taken from the HESA dataset for UK-domiciled students who went on a period of mobility during the 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16 academic years. The analysis shows where the gaps in participation are greatest for outward student mobility. These are the groups that institutions might look to enhance their support offer for to ensure that mobility opportunities reach all students.

Section A reports the total student numbers engaging with outward mobility for each of the target demographics included in this report. **Section B** contains analysis of the mobility data by examining participation on different programmes, the type of mobility activity undertaken, the duration of the mobility periods, and the location of mobile destinations.

Section A: Students

Socio-economic background

Participation in outward mobility in 2015–16 was dominated by those from higher socio-economic backgrounds: Participation rates are highest among those from a ‘higher managerial & professional occupation’ background (2.9%), who were more than twice as likely to go abroad as those from a ‘routine occupations’ background (1.3%). In 2015–16, students from more advantaged backgrounds were 60% more likely to participate in outward mobility than students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. 2.5% of more advantaged undergraduate students went abroad in 2015–16, compared to 1.5% of less advantaged students. Since 2013–14, participation rates have increased for those from both advantaged and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. However, the one percentage point gap in participation rates between students from more advantaged and more disadvantaged backgrounds persists.

HESA collects data on the socio-economic (SEC) background of students aged 21 and over at the start of their course, or, for students under 21, the socio-economic background of their parent, step-parent or guardian who earns the most. It is based on occupation, and if the parent or guardian is retired or unemployed, it is based on their most recent occupation. In our analysis, an ‘advantaged background’ refers to students who fall within the SEC 1-3 classification. A ‘disadvantaged background’ refers to students who fall within the SEC 4-8 classification. A sizeable group of undergraduate students (17.2%) whose socioeconomic background is unknown are excluded from this analysis.

Table 1: Mobile students and participation rates by socioeconomic status, 2015-16

Socio-economic status	Number of mobile students	Participation rate
1 – Higher managerial & professional occupations	6,845	2.9%
2 – Lower managerial & professional occupations	6,820	2.4%
3 – Intermediate occupations	2,485	1.8%
4 – Small employers & own account workers	1,420	1.9%
5 – Lower supervisory & technical occupations	795	1.7%
6 – Semi-routine occupations	2,165	1.4%
7 – Routine occupations	935	1.3%
8 – Never worked & long-term unemployed	10	–
9 – Unknown	4,545	–
Grand Total	26,025	1.7%

Table 2: Mobile students and participation rates for advantaged and disadvantaged students compared

Socio-economic status	2015-16	Participation Rate	2013-14	Participation Rate
NS-SEC 1-3	16,155	2.5%	13,750	2.2%
NS-SEC 4-8	5,325	1.5%	3,955	1.2%
Unknown	4,545	0.9%	3,680	0.7%
Grand Total	26,025	1.7%	21,385	1.4%

For the 2015-16 year, the makeup of students on mobility did not reflect that of the full home student cohort. Students from the SEC 1-3 group represented 65.1% of the total student population and yet 75.2%

of the students on mobility were from this group. The SEC 4-8 group, which made up 34.9% of the total home student cohort, represented 24.8% of mobile students.

Students from low-participation neighbourhoods

The POLAR3 classification categorises neighbourhoods on the likelihood of people aged 18 between 2005 and 2009 entering UK higher or further education between 2005-06 and 2010-11. These groups range from quintile 1 areas with the lowest participation (most disadvantaged), up to quintile 5 areas with the highest rates of participation (most advantaged). The charts below show all mobility for the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years split by POLAR3 classification.

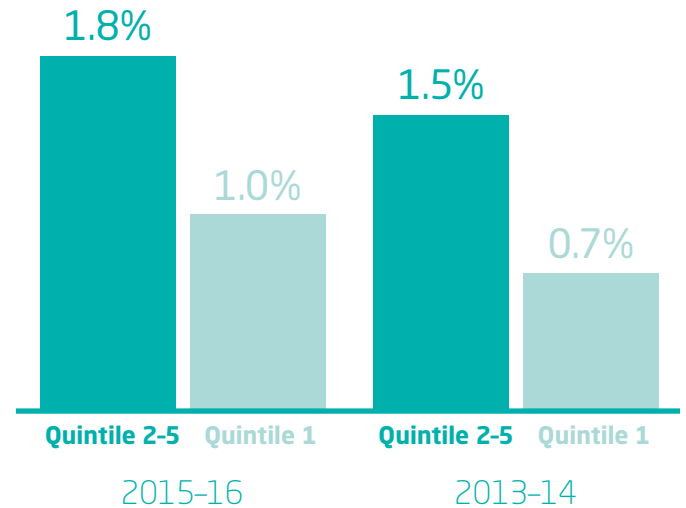
Outward mobility is overwhelmingly undertaken by students from higher participation neighbourhoods. Students from quintile 5 represented 40.6% of the outward mobility for 2015-16 while students from quintile 1 represented only 6.8%. The number of students going abroad from quintile 1 has risen since 2013-14, when students in quintile 1 represented just 6.0% of mobilities.

In 2013-14 the participation rate for students from quintiles 2-5 was 1.5%, but only 0.7% for students from quintile 1. In 2015-16 the participation rates had grown for both groups. However, the gap remains with 1.8% of students from higher participation neighbourhoods (Q2-5) going abroad, compared to 1.0% of students from wards with the lowest participation rates. On average, students from quintiles 2-5 were 80% more likely to take part in mobility compared to students from quintile 1.

Table 3: Mobile students and participation rates by POLAR 3 classification, 2015-16

POLAR 3 classification	Number of mobile students	Participation rate
Quintile 5	10,515	2.4%
Quintile 4	6,270	1.8%
Quintile 3	4,400	1.5%
Quintile 2	2,930	1.2%
Quintile 1	1,775	1.0%
Unknown	135	1.6%
Grand Total	26,025	1.7%

Figure 4: Participation rates by POLAR3 classification



Black and minority ethnic (BME) students

We analysed HESA data on reported mobility for students split by ethnicity. The data reported to HESA on student ethnicity is based on students' own self-assessment.

Participation in outward mobility by BME students is generally lower than it is for white students. In 2015-16, 77.6% of the undergraduate home student cohort was white, yet white students represented 82.4% of the outwardly mobile group. BME students represented 22.2% of the student cohort but only

17.6% of the outwardly mobile group. In 2015-16 the gap in participation between BME students and white students was 4.6%. This gap was 4.0% in 2014-15 and 5.3% in the 2013-14 academic year.

The participation rate for BME students over the last three academic years has been consistently lower than the participation rate for white students. However, within the BME demographic there is further variation in participation rates between different ethnic groups.

Table 4: Participation rates in outward mobility among white and BME students compared¹⁹

Ethnicity	2015-16	Participation Rate	2013-14	Participation Rate
BME	4,560	1.4%	3,245	1.0%
White	21,265	1.8%	17,905	1.5%
Grand Total	26,025	1.7%	21,386	1.4%

¹⁹ Total includes 200 students with unknown ethnicity for 2015-16 academic year and 235 students with unknown ethnicity for 2013-14 academic year.

Table 5: Participation rates in outward mobility by ethnicity²⁰

Ethnicity²¹	2015-16 Participation Rate	2013-14 Participation Rate
Arab	1.2%	0.5%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0.6%	0.4%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1.8%	1.2%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0.8%	0.7%
Black or Black British – African	1.0%	0.7%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1.2%	0.8%
Chinese	2.5%	1.8%
Other (including mixed)	2.0%	1.8%
Other Asian background	1.4%	0.8%
Other Black background	1.0%	1.1%
White	1.8%	1.5%
Grand Total	1.7%	1.4%

Although we have seen growth in absolute numbers of BME students going abroad, there remains a gap in participation rates. In 2015-16 only the Asian or Asian British (Indian), Chinese and Other (including mixed) ethnic groups had participation rates equal to or

above the sector average. In the same year, all other BME demographics had lower participation rates, with Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi), Asian or Asian British (Pakistani) both twice as unlikely to participate in outward mobility as their white counterparts.

Disabled students

Table 6: Trends in the participation rates of disabled students

2015-16			2014-15			2013-14		
Cohort	Number of mobile students	Participation rate	Cohort	Number of mobile students	Participation rate	Cohort	Number of mobile students	Participation rate
207,675	3,050	1.5%	194,400	2,475	1.3%	186,755	2,015	1.1%

²⁰ Although we have seen increases in participation rates for most ethnic groups, total student numbers going on mobility remain low. There were under 100 mobile students in the Arab demographic, the Bangladeshi demographic and the Other Black Background (2013) demographic in 2013. In 2015 there were under 100 mobile students in the Arab demographic and the Other Black background demographic.

²¹ In this table we have included participation rates by ethnic group. Due to small sample size issues, the remainder of this report will report only Black, Asian, Other ethnic minority and White.

The data reported to HESA on student disability is based on students' own self-assessment.

In 2015-16, disabled students' participation rate in mobility was 1.5%. While this is an increase from 2013-14 (1.1%) it is still below the sector average for the year of 1.7%.

Within the disabled student demographic there were varying levels of participation by students. The lowest participation rate was by students with two or more conditions (0.9%). However, students listed as having specific learning difficulties participated at the average overall rate for that year.

Table 7: Participation rates by disability

2015-16	Participation rate
Specific learning difficulty	1.7%
Long-standing illness or health condition	1.6%
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	1.5%
Another disability, impairment or medical condition	1.5%
Mental health condition	1.3%
Social communication/Autistic spectrum disorder	1.2%
Blind or a serious visual impairment	1.1%
A physical impairment or mobility issues	1.0%
Two or more conditions	0.9%
All	1.5%

Care leavers, care-experienced and estranged students

Care leavers are one of the most underrepresented student groups in higher education. The total number of UK-domiciled students reported as care leavers to HESA was 2,635 in the 2013-14 year, 3,645 in the 2014-15 year and 7,305 in 2015-16. In the 2015-16 academic year 75 students with the care leaver marker were reported as undertaking a period of mobility, representing a 1.0% participation rate for this group. The number of students undertaking mobility is too small to breakdown any further, or even to draw comparisons to previous years. Unfortunately, we do not have mobility data for care experienced or estranged students but we do know that these groups also face barriers when accessing mobility opportunities.

- A **Care leaver** is a student who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age (16 in the UK).
- **Care experienced** students are students who were formally looked after by a local authority, either in the family home (with support from social services) or accommodated elsewhere, for example, in foster care.
- **Estranged students** are students who are irreconcilably estranged from both of their biological or adoptive parents or their only living parent.

Multiple barriers and overlapping identities

The analysis within this report reviews the data for each of our target demographics in isolation. However, it is important to acknowledge that some students have overlapping disadvantaged identities and therefore may face compounded barriers to mobility. In 1989, Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of intersectionality to the mainstream. It is defined as:

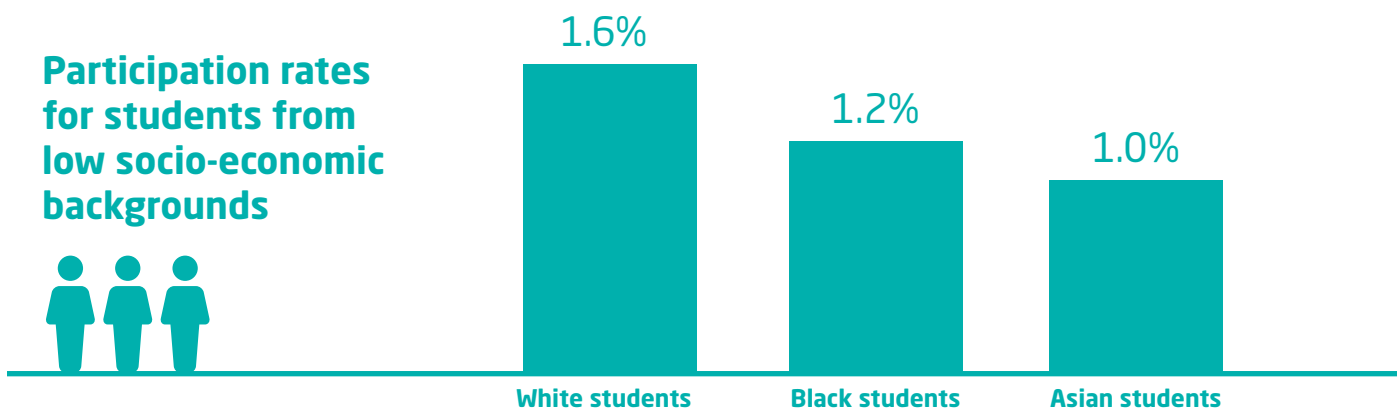
“the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”²²

In 2014, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) analysed the link between geography and disadvantage for entrants to higher education.²³ The report found that the POLAR3 classification correlates with other measures of disadvantage. While there are some exceptions to this pattern, such as in wards in London, the report suggests that students from low participation neighbourhoods often face other forms of disadvantage.

UUKi’s most recent *Gone International* report (2017) looked at the relationship between gender and ethnicity when students were undertaking mobility and found that “a white female student was more than twice as likely as a black male student to report a period of mobility”.²⁴ Analysis of gender is outside the scope of this project, however when analysing the 2015–16 mobility data for students who have two or more of the specified characteristics of our target demographics, we found that students with overlapping identities have lower rates of participation than their peers.²⁵

In 2015–16, participation rates for BME students from low socio-economic backgrounds were lower than their white counterparts from the same socio-economic background. For black students, the participation rate was 1.2% and for Asian students it was 1.0%, compared to 1.6% for their white peers.

It is essential that institutions provide an appropriate scale of support for students who face multiple barriers to mobility, as these students are likely to face compounded challenges which may lead to even wider gaps in participation.



²² <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/intersectionality>

²³ HEFCE *Further information on POLAR3: An analysis of geography, disadvantage and entrants to higher education*.

²⁴ UUKi *Gone international: mobility works* (2017).

²⁵ There are limitations to this analysis as the numbers are low, causing challenges of statistical significance when pointing to trends and patterns. We are also unable to analyse disabled student data with other protected characteristics.

Section B: Mobility activities

This section reports on the various types of mobility activity undertaken by students from the target demographics, analysing participation by programme, type, duration and location of mobility. Due to the nature of HESA student mobility data, in which one individual

student may have several instances of mobility reported during a single academic year, it is not possible to offer breakdowns based on the total number of students, only on the total number of mobilities, which may be higher than the number of mobile individual students.

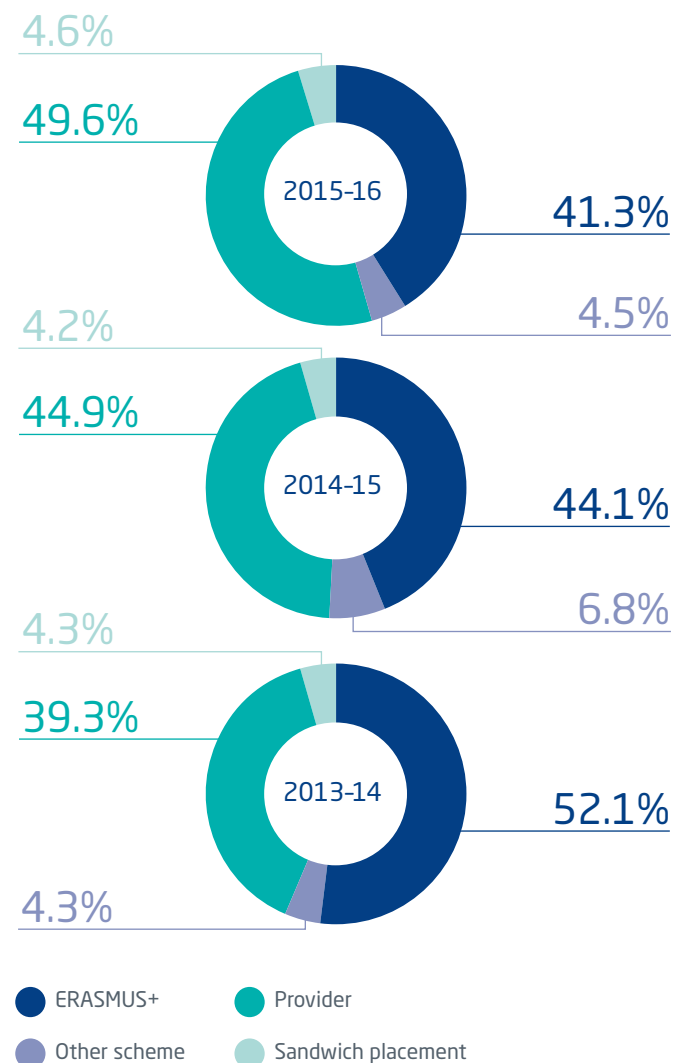
Programme

Types of mobility programme

- **Provider** - includes anything organised by the institution, for example, work placements, field work, summer schools, student exchange, volunteering
- **Erasmus+** - includes all programmes delivered by Erasmus+ including Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus programmes
- **Other Scheme** - includes all other formal programmes, for example Generation UK China and India
- **Sandwich placement** - where a mobility experience counts as a student's sandwich placement

Analysis by programme helps us to understand the choices made by the more disadvantaged students who do go abroad, and how these may differ from those made by students from more advantaged backgrounds. The pie charts opposite provide a baseline detailing all mobility instances undertaken in the 2015-16, 2014-15 and 2013-14 academic years, split by programme.

Figure 5: Instances of mobility by programme type



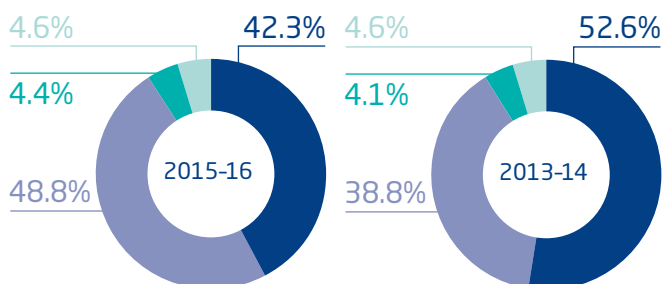
For all three years, the majority of mobility was undertaken by students via either the Erasmus+ programme or through a provider-led programme. There has been a growth of 54.6% in participation in provider-led programmes, while Erasmus+ mobility has stayed at a consistently high level, with an average of 11,975 mobility instances each year.

Socio-economic background

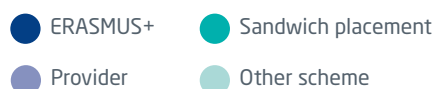
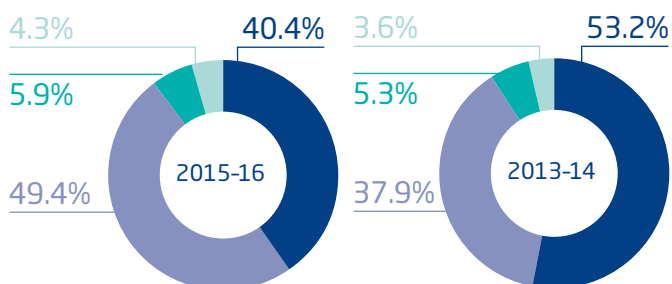
Splitting the data by socio-economic background reveals an overall pattern of participation similar to that at the national level, with most students in each group taking part in either Erasmus+ or provider-led programmes.

Figure 6: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme and SEC

SEC 1-3



SEC 4-8



The growth in numbers for both SEC groups was via an increase in provider-led mobility. However this was particularly pronounced for the SEC 4-8 group, whose participation grew by 75.3% since 2013-14 compared to a 48.9% increase for the SEC 1-3 group over the same period.

Although sandwich placements account for a small part of overall mobilities these were more popular among SEC 4-8 students, whose participation rate (5.9%) was higher than the SEC 1-3 students (4.4%) and the national average (5.0%) in 2015-16.

Low-participation neighbourhoods

When analysing instances of mobility split by neighbourhood, we again see that the majority of students from all quintiles took part in either Erasmus+ or a provider-led programme.

Table 8: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme and neighbourhood

Quintile 1	2015-16	2013-14
ERASMUS+	40.0%	53.5%
Provider	49.4%	36.1%
Sandwich placement	5.6%	4.5%
Other scheme	5.1%	5.9%
Quintile 2-5	2015-16	2013-14
ERASMUS+	41.4%	48.5%
Provider	49.7%	36.8%
Sandwich placement	4.5%	4.0%
Other scheme	4.5%	3.9%

Students from low-participation neighbourhoods saw a greater growth in provider-led programmes than their peers: 87.1% compared to 52.9%. Similarly to the socio-economic data, we can see a higher participation in sandwich placements among quintile 1 students.

Black and minority ethnic students

When mobility instances are split by ethnicity there is a slightly different pattern. While the national pattern of mobility shows that, overall, Erasmus+ and provider-led programmes remain the most popular options for students over the last three years, BME students have consistently favoured provider-led throughout this time period, under-participating in Erasmus+ by approximately ten percentage points below the national average, and engaging in provider-led courses at around 8.5 to 10.5 percentage points above the national average.

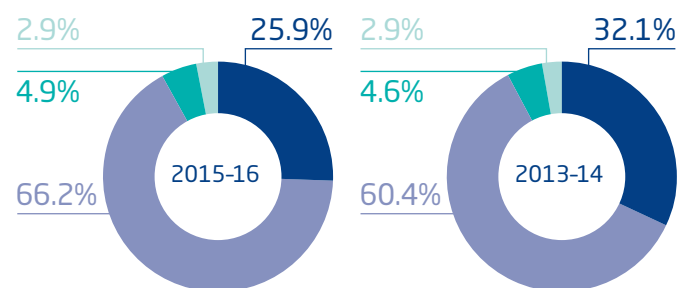
Table 9: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme, comparing white and BME students

White students	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
ERASMUS+	43.3%	46.2%	53.8%
Provider	47.5%	42.9%	37.4%
Sandwich placement	4.5%	4.2%	4.2%
Other scheme	4.8%	6.7%	4.6%
BME students	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
ERASMUS+	31.9%	34.0%	42.7%
Provider	60.0%	53.6%	49.4%
Sandwich placement	4.8%	4.6%	4.8%
Other scheme	3.3%	7.7%	3.1%

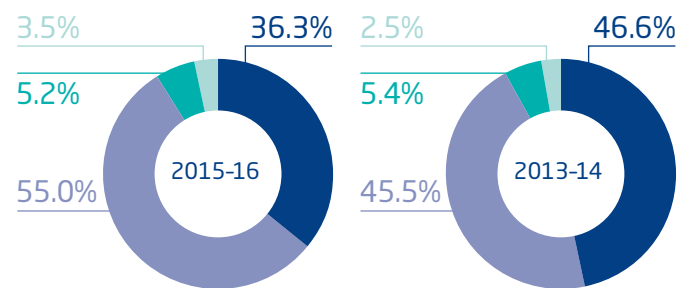
When we break down the BME demographic a little further we see that Asian students have consistently engaged mostly with provider-led programmes: 66.2% of mobility by Asian students in 2015-16 was via a provider-led programme, with 55% for black students and 56.9% for other minority ethnic students.

Figure 7: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme Asian and black students

Asian students



Black students



● ERASMUS+ ● Sandwich placement
● Provider ● Other scheme

Sandwich placements were also more popular than the national average among both groups, with the difference more pronounced among black students.

In 2015-16, looking at instances of mobility for eight weeks or more in duration (the minimum length of an Erasmus+ mobility) we found that BME students were more likely to undertake mobility via Erasmus+ (46%) than a provider-led programme (43%).

Disabled Students

The data for disabled student mobility points to an increase in uptake of provider-led mobility opportunities, with absolute numbers doubling since 2013-14, and participation generally slightly higher than the national average. While there has been an increase of 19.7% in Erasmus+ mobility in terms of absolute numbers since 2013-14, participation has decreased relative to provider-led opportunities, and participation among disabled students has consistently been slightly lower than the national average.

Table 10: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme among disabled students

Mobility scheme	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
ERASMUS+	39.3%	40.5%	50.2%
Provider	51.6%	47.4%	39.4%
Sandwich placement	4.4%	5.2%	5.0%
Other scheme	4.6%	7.1%	5.2%

In 2015-16 there was variation in participation between Erasmus+ and provider-led schemes within the disabled student demographic. Students with social communication conditions or who were on the autism spectrum were more likely to undertake mobility via Erasmus+ (56% of total mobility for that year) while students with learning difficulties and students who were deaf or had a serious hearing impairment were more likely to undertake mobility via a provider-led programme. (55.5% and 52.2% respectively).²⁶

Table 11: Instances of mobility by programme type (provider or Erasmus+) and disability type, 2015-16²⁷

Disability	Mobility scheme	Proportion of mobility
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	Provider	52.2%
	ERASMUS+	40.3%
A physical impairment or mobility issues	Provider	45.5%
	ERASMUS+	45.5%
Mental health condition	Provider	46.2%
	ERASMUS+	46.5%
A long-standing illness or health condition	Provider	50.3%
	ERASMUS+	41.5%
Two or more conditions	Provider	50.5%
	ERASMUS+	38.8%
Social communication/autistic spectrum disorder	Provider	36.0%
	ERASMUS+	56.0%
Specific learning difficulty	Provider	55.5%
	ERASMUS+	34.8%
Another disability, impairment or medical condition	Provider	49.5%
	ERASMUS+	44.2%

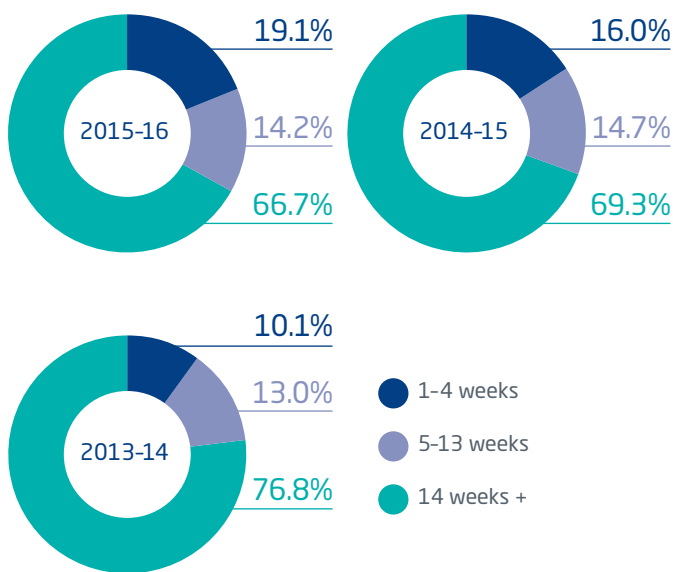
²⁶ Although we have seen increases in participation rates for most disabled groups, total student numbers going on mobility remain low. There were under 100 mobile students in each of the following disabled student demographics: blind or a serious visual impairment; deaf or a serious hearing impairment; physical impairment or mobility issues; social communication/autistic spectrum disorder.

²⁷ For some groups within the disability demographic the numbers of mobile students are too small to analyse further.

Duration

In the following tables, we have grouped the instances of mobility by short-term mobility (1–4 weeks), semester mobility (5–13 weeks) and long-term mobility (14 weeks or more).

Figure 8: Instances of mobility by duration



We have seen an increase in the reported instances of short-term mobility since this was introduced as a reportable field in the HESA return in 2013. There has been a 131.5% increase in mobility of 1–4 weeks since 2013–14. Indeed, the growth in one week mobilities is most striking, with a growth of 222.3% in reported instances. Short-term mobility is becoming an important part the mobility offer, with 10.2% of all reported mobility in 2015–16 for periods of one week and 19.1% of mobility for instances of 1–4 weeks.

Socio-economic background

Table 12: Instances of mobility by duration and SEC group, 2015-16

2015-16	SEC 1-3 ²⁸	SEC 4-8
1-4 weeks	17.0%	22.8%
5-13 weeks	14.7%	12.4%
14 weeks +	68.3%	64.8%
2013-14	SEC 1-3	SEC 4-8
1-4 weeks	9.1%	12.3%
5-13 weeks	12.9%	12.0%
14 weeks +	78.0%	75.7%

Over the last three academic years, students from a more advantaged background were more likely to undertake long-term mobility than students from a disadvantaged background. For more advantaged students in 2015–16, 17% of mobility instances were short-term, compared to 22.8% for students from more disadvantaged groups. The SEC 4–8 group saw a growth of 150.4% in short-term mobility, with 243.5% increase for mobilities lasting one week.

²⁸ Percentages exclude 3,220 instances of mobility undertaken by students of unknown socio-economic background.

Low-participation neighbourhoods

When looking at students from low-participation neighbourhoods, we have seen that short-term mobility for the quintile 1 group has grown by 166.3% since 2013-14 with one week mobility growth at 271.3% for the same period. In 2015-16, 25.3% of reported instances of mobility for students from a low-participation neighbourhood were for short-term mobility. This compares to 18.7% for the higher participation group.

Table 13: Instances of mobility by duration and POLAR3 classification, 2015-16²⁹

2015-16	Q1	Q2-4
1-4 weeks	25.3%	18.7%
5-13 weeks	12.2%	14.4%
14 weeks +	62.5%	66.9%
2013-14	Q1	Q2-4
1-4 weeks	13.1%	9.9%
5-13 weeks	11.1%	13.1%
14 weeks +	75.8%	76.9%

Black and minority ethnic students

In 2015-16, 25.5% of reported instances of mobility for BME students were short-term, compared to 17.8% for white students. BME students were less likely to undertake long-term mobility (58.9%) than their white counterparts (68.3%). Again, there has been growth in short-term mobility uptake among BME students, with a 149.3% increase since 2013-14 for BME short-term mobility and 282% growth for one week mobility.

Table 14: Instances of mobility by duration and ethnicity, 2015-16

2015-16	BME	White
1-4 weeks	25.5%	17.8%
5-13 weeks	15.6%	13.9%
14 weeks +	58.9%	68.3%
2013-14	BME	White
1-4 weeks	14.5%	9.4%
5-13 weeks	15.6%	12.6%
14 weeks +	69.9%	78.1%

Disabled students

Short-term mobility for disabled students has grown by 219.5% since 2013-14 with one week mobility growth at 365.5% for the same period. In 2015-16, 20.8% of reported instances of mobility for disabled students were for short-term mobility.

Table 15: Instances of mobility by duration and disabled students

Disabled Students	2015-16	%	2013-14	%
1-4 weeks	705	20.8%	220	10.0%
5-13 weeks	480	14.3%	315	14.2%
14 weeks +	2,195	65.0%	1,675	75.9%

There was diversity within the disabled demographic in the take up of short-term mobility opportunities. Among students with a mental health condition, short-term mobility uptake was 15.4%. For students with two or more conditions, short-term mobility uptake was 24.8%, and 25.0% of mobility instances by students on the autism spectrum were short-term.

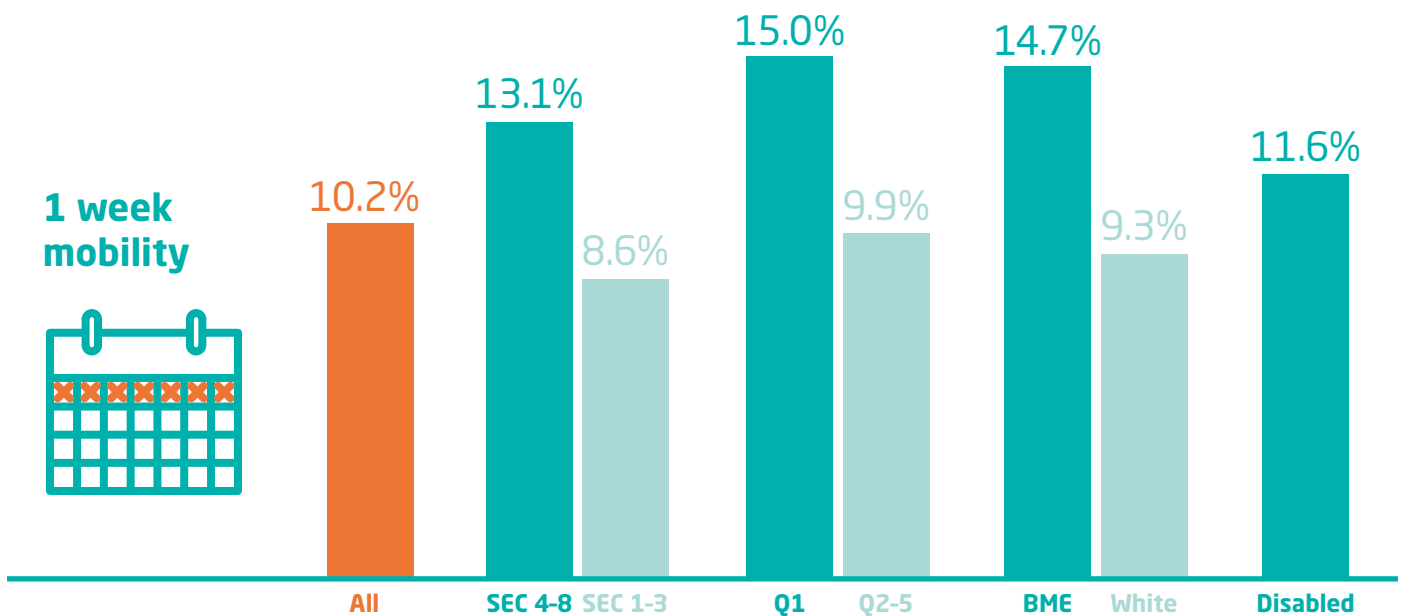
²⁹ This table excludes 10 instances of mobility undertaken by students of unknown POLAR classification.

One-week mobility

When considering short-term mobility, we found that the more disadvantaged demographics have a higher proportion of mobility instances for one week than the sector average and their counterparts. During the last three academic years across all the disadvantaged

and under represented groups we saw a higher percentage of mobility being undertaken for a week compared to the cohort average. When analysing the BME demographic, we found that 16.1% of all Asian student mobility in 2015-16 was for one week and 18.6% of all black student mobility was for one week.

Figure 9: Summary data on one week mobilities, 2015-16



Location

Undergraduate students from the UK went on outward mobility placements to 170 countries across the world in 2013-14, to 164 countries in 2014-15, and to 172 in 2015-16.

In 2015-16, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds visited 125 countries (72.7% of all mobility locations), students from low-participation neighbourhoods visited 97 countries (56.4% of all mobility locations), BME students went on mobility to 131 countries (76.2% of all mobility locations) and disabled students visited 123 countries (71.1% of all mobility locations).

By contrast, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds visited 162 countries (94.1% of all mobility locations), students from high-participation neighbourhoods visited 168 countries (97.6% of all mobility locations), and white students went on mobility to 166 countries (96.5% of all mobility locations).

While the total number of countries visited by students is fewer for each of our target groups the top 9 countries visited by students is the same across all demographics.

Figure 10: Instances of mobility by location, 2015-16

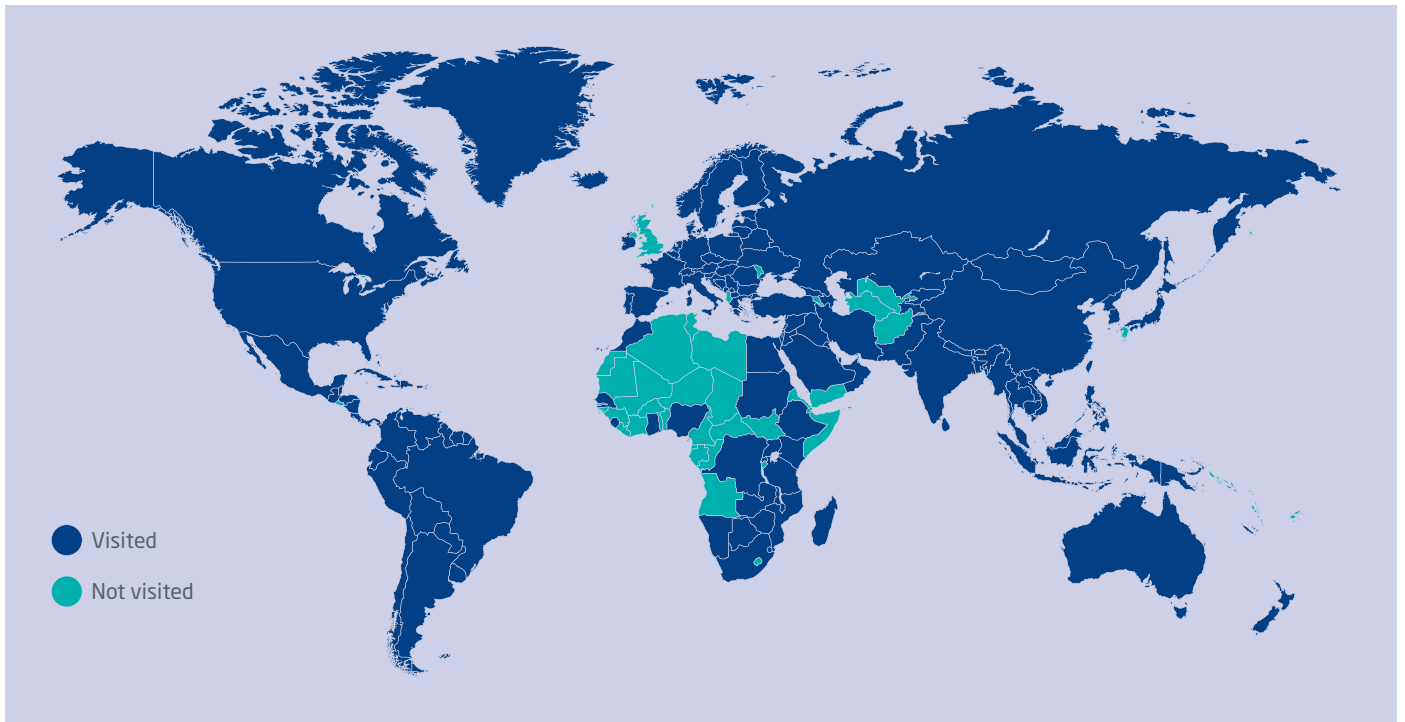
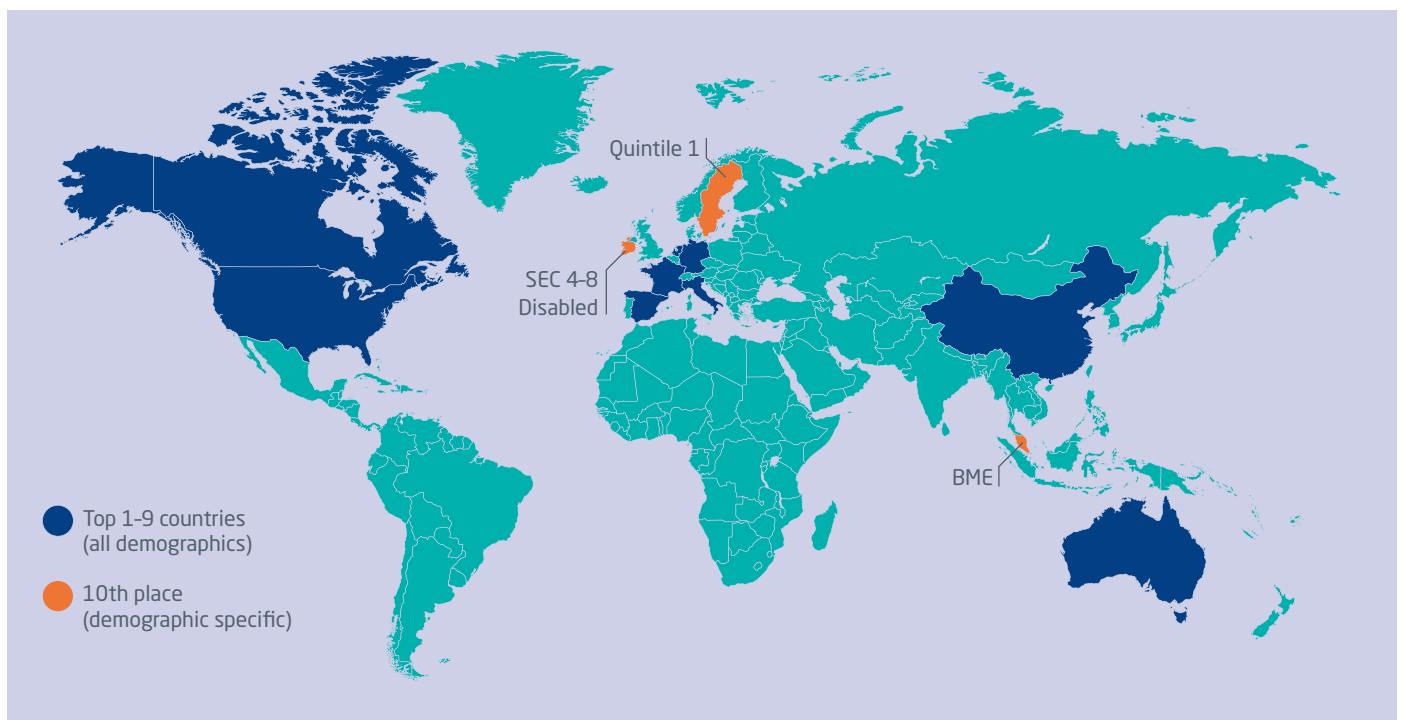


Figure 11: Top 10 destinations among students, 2015-16



During the last three academic years, the most popular nine countries for students were consistent across all demographics. The United States, Canada and Australia feature in the top 10 destinations among all target demographics (including low SEC, low participation neighbourhoods, BME and disabled students), while France, Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands were the most popular European countries. China

was the most popular Asian destination, again among the 10 most popular among all demographics.

The final country to make up the top 10 was changeable from year to year, and also dependent on how we cut the data, but the following countries were all highlighted as contenders: Ireland, Sweden, Japan, Russia, Malaysia, Belgium, Hong Kong, India, Bangladesh, Switzerland and Jordan.

Type of mobility

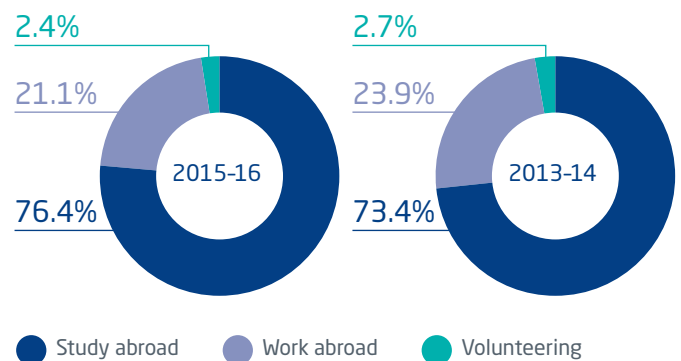
Outward student mobility can involve study, work or volunteering. When a student undertakes a mobility experience that covers more than one type of activity, for example a placement which includes both work and study, this field is reported for both activity types.

- **Study** - mobility abroad where a student is studying for both credit and non-credit bearing courses
- **Work** - mobility abroad where a student is doing paid work, such as an internship
- **Volunteering** - mobility abroad where a student is undertaking voluntary or other unpaid work

The majority of outward mobility undertaken in 2015-16 involved a period of study (76.4%). 21.1% of placements involved work, and 2.4% of mobility placements were for volunteering. We have seen growth across all types of mobility, but the greatest area of growth has been in mobility for study, which has increased by 27.5% since 2013-14, compared to 9% growth for volunteering and 8.2% growth for work abroad.

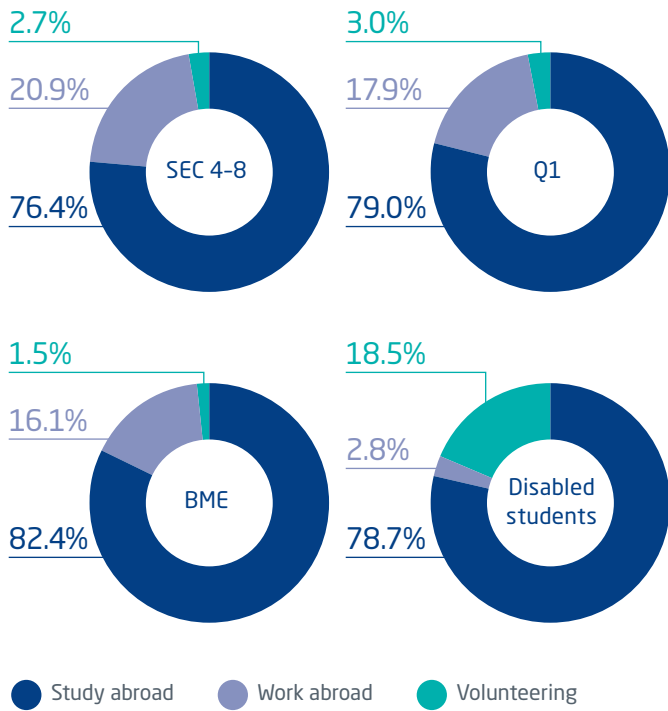
The breakdown of mobility by type saw the least variation between the different demographics - with each group reporting over 75% of instances of mobility as being for study in 2015-16.

Figure 12: Instances of mobility by type



Since 2013-14, there has been a 39.9% growth in mobility for study for students from a low socio-economic background, a 49.9% increase for students from low participation neighbourhoods, 49.1% growth for BME students and 61.6% growth for disabled students, all of which are far above the national picture of 27.5% growth.

Figure 13: Type of mobility undertaken by disadvantaged demographic (2015-16)



Our target demographics also saw larger growth for work abroad compared to their more-advantaged peers. There was 21.8% growth in mobility for work for the low-SEC group compared to 4.2% for their higher-SEC counterparts. There was a 29.5% growth in work-based mobility within the BME group, compared to 6.3% for the white demographic.

These findings suggest the appetite for study and work-based mobility is growing faster among our target demographics.

Project institutions

UUKi worked with four institutions to conduct detailed analyses of mobility participation, initiatives and activities. These institutions were chosen to participate in the project because they had sent high numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds on mobility during the 2014–15 academic year. We have summarised the institutions' outward mobility activities, highlighting where specific efforts have been made to support students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups onto mobility programmes.

Cardiff University



Cardiff University has a diverse student population that benefits from research-led teaching across the institution. The university is divided into three colleges: the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences; and the College of Physical Sciences and Engineering.

In 2015–16, Cardiff University had 30,675 students enrolled: 21,905 undergraduates and 8,775 postgraduates. 3,100 students identified as black or minority ethnic, 2,565 students declared a disability, and 45 students were recorded as care leavers.


Mobility programmes

Cardiff University offers mobility opportunities to students via the Erasmus+ programme and a range of other institutional programmes covering all mobility lengths. Since 2013 they have expanded their summer mobility programme, with 555 students taking part in short-term mobility during the 2016 summer term.

 Erasmus+ (study)	 Erasmus+ (work)
 Erasmus+ (other)	 Summer school abroad
 Work placement (non-Erasmus+)	 Study abroad (non-Erasmus+)
 Internship abroad	 Field trip abroad
 Training abroad	 Volunteering
 Event attendance abroad	 Research abroad

Structure

The president and vice-chancellor set the university's first target for outward mobility in 2012. It states that by 2017, 17% of home students should have studied, worked or volunteered abroad for at least a month during their time at Cardiff University.³⁰ By 2015-16, 18% of students at Cardiff University had taken up an outward mobility opportunity.³¹ The pro-vice chancellor, international and Europe, has overall responsibility for delivering student mobility with support from the international deans in all three colleges. Outward mobility features in the university's international and Europe strategy. The global opportunities team work collaboratively with departments across the institution to deliver mobility:

-  **WIDENING PARTICIPATION TEAM:** promote opportunities to students; attend targeted events.
-  **CARE LEAVER SUPPORT:** individual case support for students.
-  **DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA SERVICE:** publish guidance for disabled students and information on funding; assess information from host institutions; offer guidance on application forms and processes; provide individual case support.
-  **ADVICE AND MONEY TEAM:** advise on principles for the outward mobility bursary scheme; provide guidance on funding; deliver talks in schools; develop funding worksheets; advise on drafting letters to student finance; attend pre-departure events.
-  **COUNSELLING AND WELLBEING:** provide specific guidance for caring for students' wellbeing while abroad, attend pre-departure events, offer online counselling via webcam,

email and instant messaging, provide case support including during placement.

-  **CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY:** signpost opportunities; participate in placement network (network for university staff involved in delivering placement activity); promote global opportunities at events and workshops; advertise opportunities through the employment database; educate advisors about opportunities; attend pre-departure events; run post-mobility events focused on making the most of the experience.
-  **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE:** Equality impact assessment; guidance on supporting students with protected characteristics; guidance on host institutions' equality statements; support with data analysis.
-  **HEALTH AND SAFETY:** develop risk assessment documentation and processes; collaborate on crisis management plan; provide health and safety training on student placements for staff.
-  **INSURANCE TEAM:** provide information on coverage; facilitate insurance claims.
-  **ACADEMIC REGISTRY:** streamline processes for academic programmes to allow a period abroad; create grade conversion policy; collate student data; quality assurance.
-  **COMMUNICATIONS AND PR:** engage with open days; write features for university publications; circulate newsletters; engage in university-wide social media activities.
-  **STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING:** work with director of student support when incidents occur with students abroad; developed the significant international incident protocol.³²

³⁰ Professor Colin Riordan is a champion of mobility. He led the 2012 Riordan Review, the principal recommendation of which was a UK Strategy for Outward Mobility.

³¹ The target includes all undergraduate home students on mobility for four weeks or more.

³² How to respond when a significant incident (e.g. terrorist attack, natural disaster) happens abroad.



LANGUAGES FOR ALL: promote opportunities; develop language and cultural programmes for students.



DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS: currently developing a programme where international alumni create internships; work with Santander funding for outward mobility; run fundraising activities to support outward mobility.

Figure 14: From 2013 to 2016, the following students participated in a mobility opportunity

Students from a low socio-economic background: 735



Students from a low participation neighbourhood: 675



Black and minority ethnic students: 980



Disabled students: 640



Funding

Cardiff University runs a universal outward mobility bursary scheme for undergraduate students, which includes additional support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and those with a disability. This bursary can be used for:

- short-term, non-credit bearing mobility
- international exchange
- low or unpaid professional training abroad

The bursary scheme is aimed at offsetting additional costs and the lump sum it awards can be spent on what the student prioritises as necessary support for their time abroad.

Funding is awarded to the university's three academic colleges to develop curriculum related non-credit bearing, short-term mobility opportunities. Programmes introduced from this bursary include an opportunity for occupational therapy students to volunteer in Malawi and research placements for social science students at the Murphy Institute, City University of New York.

Support

Cardiff University delivers an extensive pre-departure programme, created collaboratively by teams across the institution. They provide tailored guidance for students with a disability and black and minority ethnic students in the diversity abroad chapters of their *International Summer Programmes Pre-departure Guide* and on the institutional intranet. Erasmus+ organisational support funding is partly used for academic staff to visit students on placements, and international office staff also visit students abroad where possible. Students receive periodic emails from staff in the global opportunities office while they are abroad, and Facebook groups are started for group programmes. Students are provided with emergency contact details in the departure guides, during briefings, and on an emergency support card. The global opportunities team manage a central database of all students on international placements, including their emergency contacts.

Students are required to complete a risk-awareness profile, giving them the opportunity to review and consider the risks, both cultural and individual, involved in their mobility period. The university asks partner institutions for details of support available to students with a disability, a named disability contact, a link to the host institution's equality and diversity policy, and information on pastoral care and general student support.

Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Riordan says:

"Increasing outward student mobility is a key feature of Cardiff University's international strategy. We recognise the very significant benefits for our students, the University, the wider economy and society.

We are committed to an inclusive approach to developing placements abroad and have created a generously funded bursary scheme as well as the necessary support structures to ensure that the programmes are accessible to all.

Our global opportunities team continues to work closely with academic colleagues in developing a wide range of opportunities, in terms of length, location and type of activity, appropriate for, and appealing to, our diverse student population.

We promote the benefits of outward mobility across the institution and aim to remove previously perceived barriers. We were delighted to take part in this important project, recognising that our inclusive approach is having a positive effect on widening participation in these programmes."

Cardiff University students on mobility



Kingston University

Kingston University London offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses for UK and international students. The institution is divided into five faculties: the Kingston School of Art; the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; Kingston Business School; the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education; and the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing. Kingston University's commitment to widening participation has seen it named University of the Year in the prestigious National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) awards.

In 2015–16, Kingston University had 19,920 students enrolled, of which 16,090 were undergraduate and 3,825 were postgraduate. 54% of the population identified as BME, 2,135 students declared a disability, and 140 students were recorded as care leavers or young people estranged from their families.

Mobility programmes



Erasmus+
(study)



Erasmus+
(work)



Field trip
abroad



Summer
school abroad



Work placement
(non-Erasmus+)



Study abroad
(non-Erasmus+)



Training
abroad



Volunteering



Internship
abroad

Kingston University offers mobility opportunities to students via the Erasmus+ programme and a range of

other institutional programmes covering all mobility lengths. The university sent over 1,000 students on short-term mobility during the summer term of 2017.

Figure 15: From 2013 to 2016, the following students participated in a mobility opportunity

Semester students abroad: 705



Widening participation students: 210



BME students: 210



The most popular destination for mobility for students is the United States, which accounts for around 40% of all mobility from the institution. France, Germany and Australia are the next most popular countries. On average, 90% of outward mobility participation is by undergraduate students.

Kingston University does not offer language degrees and there is no compulsory mobility as part of any programmes on offer at the institution. All mobility at the university is optional, and mobility programmes are open to all students. 54% of undergraduate mobile students opt for outward mobility as part of their second year of study. 46% of mobile students add a year to their degree programme, so that they can still access a full three years of study at Kingston. The university's recent internal study of their mobility programmes revealed a pattern of improvement in degree attainment following a period of mobility.³³ Outward mobility is recognised formally through its inclusion in students' Higher Education Achievement Reports. Kingston operate an institution-wide grade transfer policy.

³³ Carbonell, Joan-Anton *A path is made by walking: Analysis of UK outward student mobility in 2013–14 and 2014–15* (2017).

Figure 16: Semester mobility 2013-16 - Students from Kingston University went to 27 countries in semester mobility programmes between 2013 and 2016

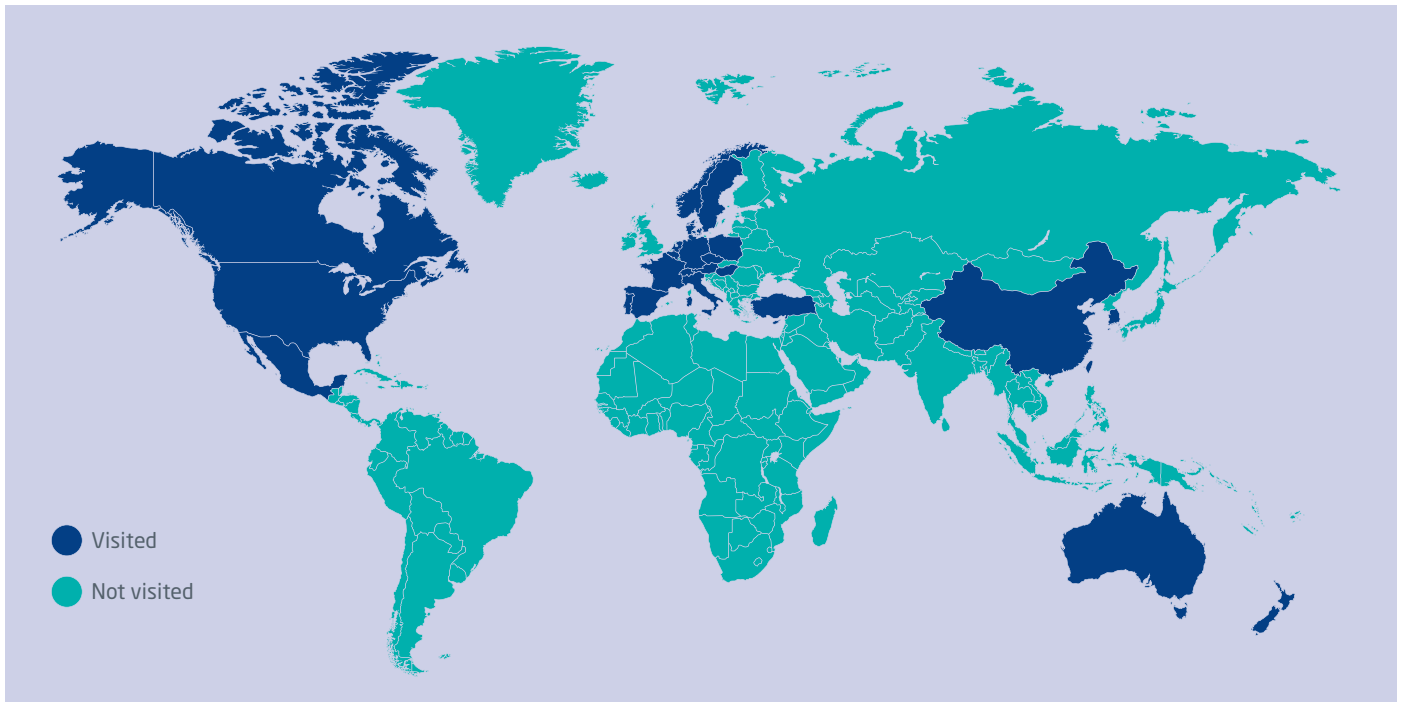
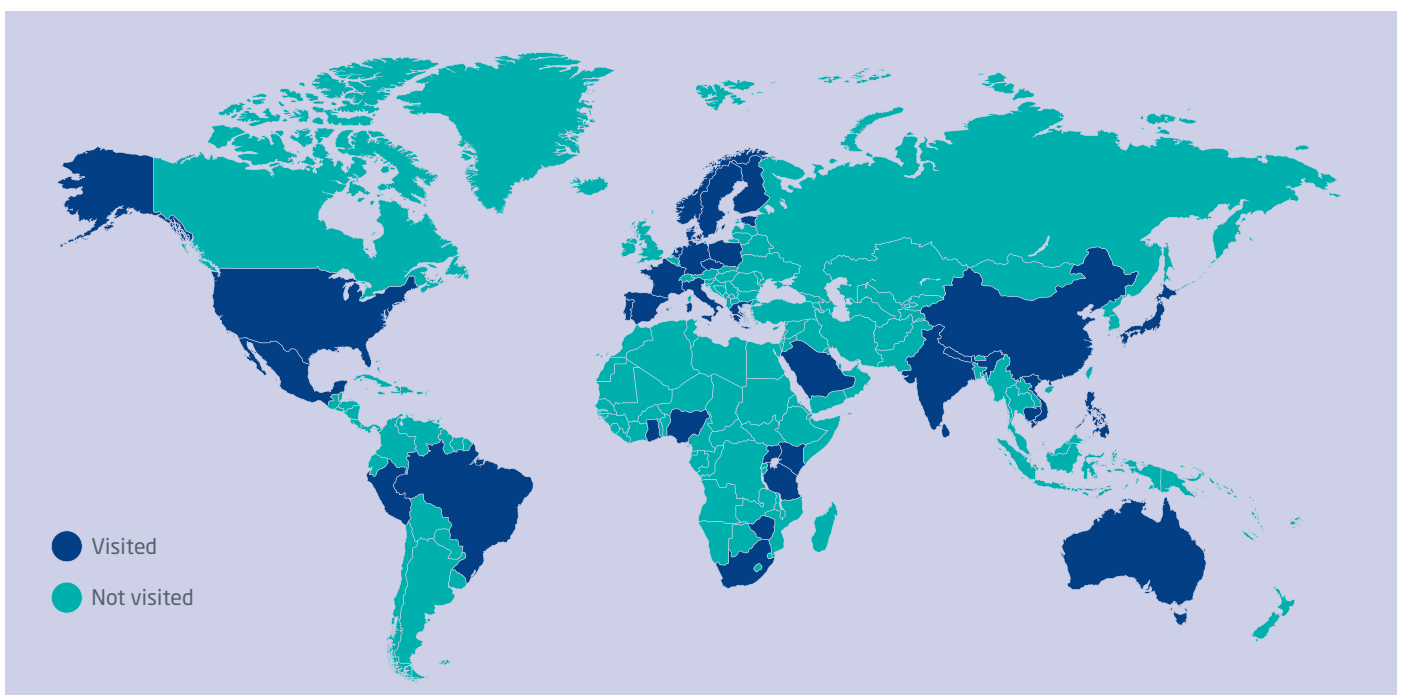


Figure 17: Short-term mobility 2013-16 - Kingston University students visited 38 countries on short-term mobility programmes between 2013 and 2016³⁴



³⁴ Kingston University defines 'short-term mobility' as any mobility period between one week and three months for study periods, or between one week and two months for work placements.

Structure

The Kingston University Study Abroad International Learning Strategy 2015-2020 includes two targets related to student mobility: i) 15% of students should graduate with an international experience during their degree by 2020,³⁵ and ii) the diversity of the students who engage in international programmes must reflect that of the student body.

The deputy vice-chancellor (international) is responsible for all student mobility. Kingston University's Study Abroad International Learning (SAIL) office has overall responsibility for outward mobility although some programmes are organised at the faculty and departmental levels. The SAIL Office works in partnership with other teams across the organisation, including the widening participation services for students (which covers disability, health and safety, student funding, student engagement) and the Union of Kingston Students.

Funding

The SAIL office has secured £50,000 annually via its access agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). This money is allocated to the Kingston International Travel Bursary fund and is spent on flights and visa fees for students from low-socio economic backgrounds going on both long-term and short-term mobility. The application process is not competitive and all eligible students can apply.

Kingston University provides extensive information on funding in its annual *Outgoing Student Handbook*. It has sections on budgeting, how to calculate student loan entitlement, and information on funding sources, such as the Kingston International Travel Bursary, the Kingston Study Abroad Bursary, Erasmus+ grants and external scholarships. It also provides guidance on costs for insurance, passport and visa fees. The university intranet hosts an interactive tool which allows students to compare the cost of living in different countries

Support

The SAIL office hosts extensive pre-departure briefings. A compulsory session for all exchange students is run several times, and covers academic aspects, fees, funding, insurance, accommodation, cultural shock and safety while abroad.

Students are given a contact at Kingston who they can get in touch with if they have any problems while on a mobility placement. Where possible, Kingston University arranges for staff to visit students while abroad. There is also periodic email contact to all students on mobility.

Care leaver students continue to receive enhanced financial and pastoral support through the KU Cares programme while studying abroad, and where possible a designated point of contact is identified in the host institution.

Support for mobile students is provided primarily by SAIL office staff, who collaborate with support services to ensure a cohesive approach. For example, the SAIL office works with the disability team to secure extra funding and specific support for Erasmus students, complete risk assessments, and ensure that all students are covered by a learning agreement regardless of their destination.

³⁵ The target includes all undergraduate students on mobility for one week or more.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Martyn Jones says ensuring all students felt the opportunity to study abroad was open to them reflected the University's commitment to putting widening access at the heart of all its activity.

"Widening participation doesn't end with encouraging under-represented groups to move on to higher education. Breaking down barriers that may prevent students from applying to study abroad – through promoting these opportunities and the support available – is a key part of that process.

Our study abroad and widening participation teams work closely to ensure students are made fully aware of our mobility programmes from the earliest possible stage. That includes hearing from student ambassadors from similar backgrounds who talk to them about how they have benefited from such opportunities.

Kingston University prides itself on encouraging and enabling students from all backgrounds to take advantage of the life-changing experiences studying abroad can provide."

Kingston University students on mobility



North West Regional College



The North West Regional College (NWRC) delivers an extensive range of teaching and career opportunities to thousands of learners, including full-time and part-time study programmes in a range of vocational and non-vocational areas.

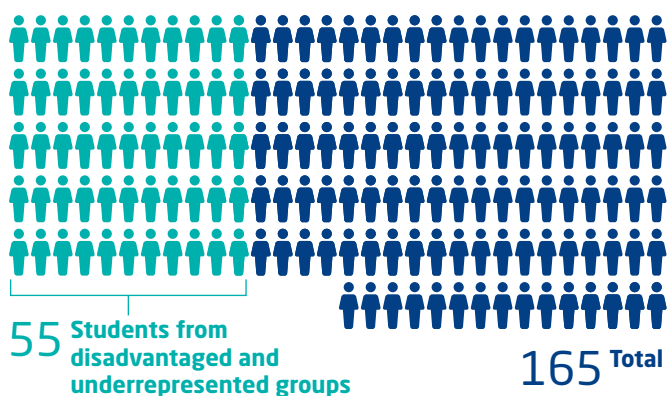
In 2015–16, NWRC had 18,670 students enrolled, of which 1,500 were from a low-income background and 10,025 were from low-participation neighbourhoods. 155 students identified as BME, and 15.36% of students declared a disability. There were 240 students with the care leaver marker enrolled at the college in 2015–16.

Mobility programmes

NWRC offers mobility opportunities to students via Erasmus+ work and study programmes, StudyUSA, and the European Youth Capital programme. Opportunities are open to students on higher education courses and vocational education and training (VET) programmes. Students have visited countries across Europe including Finland, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, and Estonia.

A high percentage of students at the college are classed as coming from low socio-economic backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.

Figure 18: From 2014 to 2017, the following students participated in a mobility opportunity



Structure

The chief executive principal is in favour of outward mobility participation for all staff and students. NWRC's strategic development plan calls for the college to be internationally connected and to operate internationally, creating an outward- and forward-looking college through embedded international engagement for staff and students. It also states that the college will continue to contribute to social inclusion and social cohesion by encouraging and enabling participation in education.

NWRC encourages all students to apply for the opportunity to undertake a mobility period. The selection process is based on criteria set by the staff involved in organising the mobilities, and rather than focusing solely on academic attainment includes sections on students' attendance, motivation levels and engagement with the college.

Funding

The college has scholarships, bursaries, grants and hardship funds available for students who require additional support. These funds can be made available while a student is on a mobility programme. Each student mobility is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the support is means tested, with the college making extra funds available where needed.

Financial support is extremely important, and the college and student finance team engage with students throughout the academic year with activities such as talks with specific classes and a 'Finance Week'. Students receive information about extra support during their induction programme, from the downloadable Student Services App, from the college intranet, on the Student Union's Facebook page, on the web-text system, and on display screens situated throughout the campus. During selection and preparation processes for mobility, the team make sure to remind students of the extra financial support that is available to them.

Student support through the mobility journey

Communication between the college and host organisations is vital. When a new organisation has been identified to host mobility programmes, an 'approved prior visit' is undertaken. NWRC staff either visit the host or undertake their own training mobility with the host to ensure that the services offered are suitable for students.

The college is committed to providing a positive mobility experience for students. The outward mobility team collaborates with student services to ensure that support is in place for all mobility programmes, and also works closely with colleagues from finance, student finance, human resources, health and well-being, the career's academy, and the safeguarding and learning service.

All students are supported during the recruitment and selection process, when preparing for mobility, and throughout the mobility period itself. Students undertaking mobility are required to sign a code of conduct and a learning agreement, to obtain parental/guardian consent where needed and to attend preparation sessions. At these sessions students are provided with relevant information, including timetables, event commitments, host university information and available financial support. Flights, airport transfers and accommodation are sourced and booked by the college.

While a student is on placement, they are supported through a variety of practical measures including:

Short-term mobilities

- Key contact at the host college, including emergency contact number
- Accompanying staff daily catch up meetings
- Messaging (e.g. WhatsApp) with accompanying staff
- Email/phone communication with NWRC's mobility co-ordinator

Long-term mobilities

- Key contact at the host college, including emergency contact number
- Regular meetings with host organisation/mentor/supervisor
- Regular check-in sessions via email/messaging with NWRC's mobility co-ordinator
- Scheduled Skype meetings with the college's mobility co-ordinator

Students are encouraged to complete reflective diaries during their mobility or to complete workbooks, as assigned by the teaching staff. They are also asked to complete the mobility tool feedback and Europass documents. This gives participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience and consider how it might factor into future applications for employment or further study.

Leo Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive at NWRC says:

"NWRC aspires to have a strong focus on international and global activities for our students giving them a wider educational experience by availing of international mobility opportunities. These opportunities equip our students for the world of work, help them to improve their life chances and empower them to become active and responsible citizens.

The College operates in a region that is challenged, economically, socially and geographically; many of our target demographic may be reluctant to take up such an opportunity however it is encouraging to see, based on the success of past projects,

that interest in mobility opportunities is building significantly across all campuses and departments. The College recognises that international mobility projects provide 'added value' to its own in house programmes, projects, training and initiatives, which deliver an innovative programme in a positive environment for all its participants.

Projects like 'EXCISE' show students that regardless of their special needs, disabilities or personal circumstances, opportunities are open to them. We have just secured around €800,000 in funding for a new Erasmus+ mobility project, 'GO TrAVELS Eu' and will be encouraging SEN students and those with fewer opportunities to participate in the project."

NWRC students on mobility



Glasgow Caledonian University



Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) has over 20,000 students across campuses in Glasgow, London and New York, and delivers programmes in Oman, Bangladesh, Mauritius and South Africa. As a globally networked University, it aims to extend its global reach and impact, engaging in new ways with learners, partners and communities at home and overseas. This includes promoting cultural diversity and access through summer schools, a range of scholarships and articulation agreements, international exchanges and study and cultural trips. As the top modern university in Scotland for research power, GCU addresses three societal challenges: to build inclusive societies; lead healthy lives and develop sustainable environments.

Mobility programmes

GCU offers mobility opportunities to students via the Erasmus+ programme and a range of other institutional programmes. The majority of opportunities last between 20 and 40 weeks and are credit bearing. Mobility is offered across Europe, the United States, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong and Australia, and is open to all undergraduate students. The six most popular destination countries in 2016-17 were Spain, France, USA, Germany, Netherlands and Canada.



Erasmus+
(study)



Erasmus+
(work)



Study abroad
(non-Erasmus+)



Summer
school abroad



Traineeship

Structure

Outward mobility activities are overseen by the pro vice-chancellor international, and are highlighted as a key activity in the university's international strategy. 'Goal Four: Engaging Globally' of GCU's Strategy 2020 is to:

Deliver a globally relevant curriculum and student experience, harnessing our global networks to increase international exchanges and study and cultural trips and equipping our graduates with international perspectives to enable them to succeed in local and global contexts.

GCU is aiming for 20% of its students to be undertaking an international experience as part of their degree by 2020,³⁶ and outward mobility will play a key role in this. The exchange and study abroad team, within the international partnerships office, has primary responsibility for outward mobility at the institution.

Disabled student support

The outward mobility team works closely with the disability team in cases where prospective or confirmed, inward or outwardly mobile students require information about services, assistance and facilities available to students during their exchange. When a student with a disability expresses interest in mobility, GCU will review the prospective host institution to confirm the suitability of the campus and facilities, as well as the accommodation and other support services available to the student. Pre-mobility discussions take place between the GCU mobility and disability teams, the student undertaking mobility and the host institution. This approach ensures that the student plays a key role in any decisions about the support which will be made available during their mobility period. It also ensures that the student is fully aware of what to expect during their period abroad.

³⁶ The target includes all students on campus in the UK on mobility for five days or more.

Funding

GCU places a strong emphasis on giving all students the opportunity to undertake a mobile experience. Financial awards are available and widely advertised across the institution. GCU offers mobility funding through multiple targeted institutional bursaries. Financial support is means tested and assessments are based on student statements rather than their academic attainment.

AWARD: SIR ALEX FERGUSON TRAVEL BURSARY

About: The fund was established in September 2015 and enables students to experience life-changing opportunities, including work placements, charity work and public service commitments overseas.

Amount: Awards of up to £1,000.

Eligibility: UK-domicile students, all levels.

Assessment: GCU confirms if student is in receipt of a SAAS/SFE bursary payment, indicating they are from a low-income background.



AWARD: SANTANDER TRAVEL BURSARY

About: This scholarship is for staff or students spending a period of time at another university within the Santander network. Alternatively it can be used for a work-related research project with a commercial partner.

Amount: Awards of up to £1,000.

Eligibility: Staff and students, all levels.

Assessment: GCU confirms if student is in receipt of a SAAS/SFE bursary payment, indicating they are for a low-income background.



AWARD: AFRICAN LEADERSHIP COLLEGE (ALC) MAURITIUS TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

About: An opportunity for undergraduate students to visit GCU's partner college, the African Leadership College in Mauritius, for one week. Students attend classes and a variety of social activities.

Amount: Flights and accommodation.

Eligibility: Students from low-income backgrounds.

Assessment: Students complete an application form focusing on their motivations for undertaking the mobility.



AWARD: MOFFAT SCHOLARSHIP

About: The award supports students pursuing a career in the travel, tourism or events industries.

Amount: £3,600 per year.

Eligibility: Students studying related disciplines.

Assessment: GCU confirms if student is in receipt of a SAAS/SFE bursary payment, indicating they are for a low-income background.



AWARD: GILLIAN PURVIS TRAVEL BURSARY

About: Award is available for third- and fourth-year International Fashion students planning to take part in an overseas exchange programme.

Amount: £1,000 to assist with travel and living costs.

Eligibility: Students studying International Fashion Business or Branding.

Assessment: Students complete an application focusing on motivations for undertaking the mobility.



Mark Majewsky, Director, The Europe Office at GCU says:

"Our University's commitment to its social mission is clearly defined through our motto 'For the Common Good'. As core priorities within our 2020 Strategy, we aspire to transform lives through education whilst also engaging globally. As such, we are always striving to improve our widening access agenda and ensure that mobility opportunities are open to all students whatever their background."

Marketing activities

Effective marketing goes beyond traditional channels and activities such as flyers, posters and email campaigns – although these can of course be very powerful promotional methods. Our project institutions market mobility opportunities extensively across departments, through multiple channels, using a variety of activities, and undertake both generic and targeted marketing. There is no one best marketing model: practice differs across the sector and should be tailored to the university and its students.

On deciding to whether to go abroad
“(Students) reported that key factors for them included the type of information provided, the channels used (e.g. website, posters, lectures, seminars) and timing. Given the time required to organise an overseas placement, many participants suggested that the earlier you find out about the opportunities available, the better.”

Student perspectives on going international (2015), UUKi and British Council

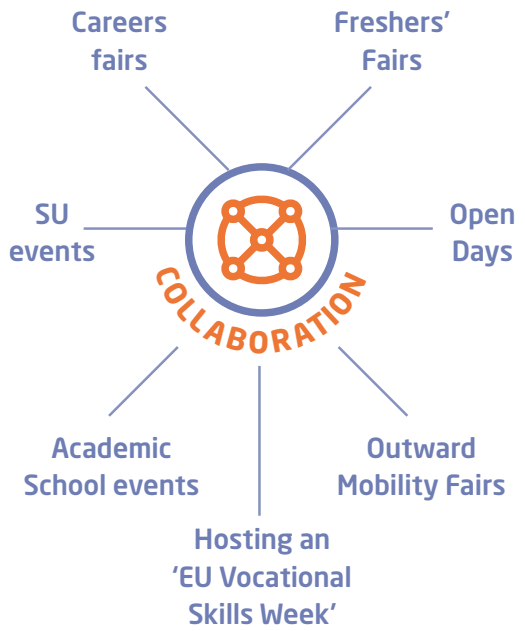
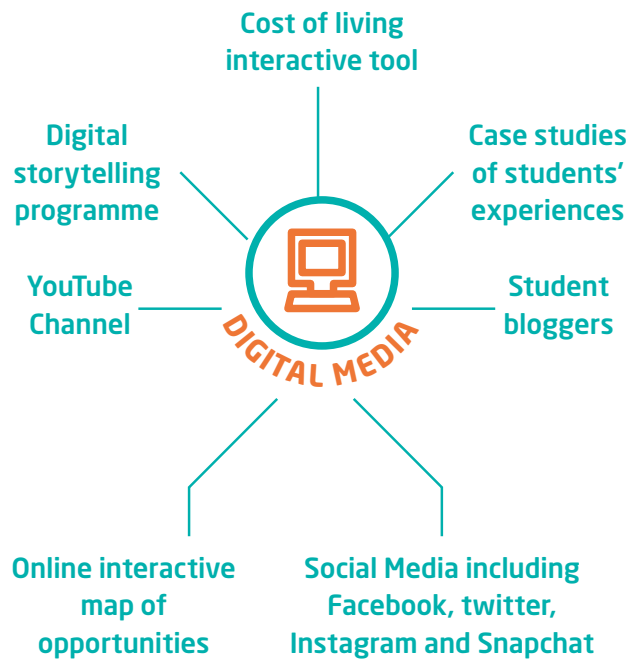
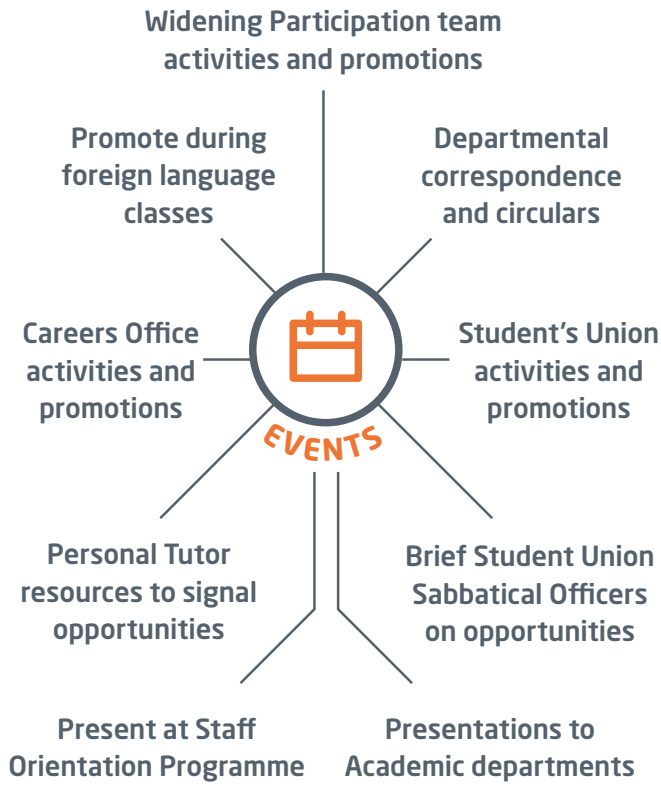
“It is critical to engage all academic staff in outward mobility since they design and deliver courses and have the most exposure to students. They therefore need to foster and value outward mobility opportunities and understand how they can tailor a programme of study to encourage participation.”

Academic perspectives on the outcomes of outward student mobility (2015), UUKi and British Council

Students from Cardiff University on mobility



Our project institutions promoted outward mobility through the following channels:



These are examples and not exhaustive lists of activities or recommendations of best practice.

Conclusion

Since 2013–14, outward student mobility rates have risen. However, gaps in participation between groups continue, with those students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds still being least likely to work, study or volunteer overseas during their studies.

Outward student mobility leads to students increasing their cultural agility. At a philosophical level it expands world views, and at a practical level it develops life skills. Students who study abroad take on more responsibility and work through challenges without as much access to familiar support structures. These skills show intercultural awareness and self-sufficiency, and are attractive to employers.

Unfortunately, not all students have – or perceive they have – the same opportunity to take up these challenges, and this plays out in participation. This report looked at the take-up of outward student mobility for disadvantaged groups, and highlighted certain preferences among the students from those groups who were mobile.

From 2013–14 to 2015–16, students across the disadvantaged and underrepresented groups we looked at engaged more with week-long mobility schemes than their peers. This is important: *Student Perspectives* found that students believed the experience of being mobile has intrinsic value regardless of its duration. It also acts as a taster for future, longer mobility periods. Offering more short-term study opportunities abroad could benefit students who face barriers to longer-term mobility including cost, responsibilities at home such as caring duties or paid work, and less flexibility in the length of their degree programme.

The same student groups tended toward mobility options with work placements, more so than cohorts

from more advantaged socio-economic groups. While the predominance of mobility for study applies across all groups, the growth of work-related mobility suggests an appetite for related opportunities among our target demographics. This area would benefit from further exploration by universities and colleges.

Disadvantaged and underrepresented groups engaged with mobility schemes which are provider-led. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are attracted to similar locations as their more advantaged peers, with the most popular countries for mobility being mostly consistent across all demographics.

To ensure wide and open access to mobility, institutions should think about the needs of different groups and tailor their support to reflect those requirements.

Student from Cardiff University on mobility



Increasing participation in outward student mobility is not as simple as stating that one type of mobility suits one demographic. The data shows patterns, but it also tells us that one size does not fit all. Universities and colleges should continue to offer a range of mobility options, recognising that students require different levels and types of support, particularly those with more than one of the target characteristics this report looks at. Students from low-income families may require additional information on funding, students who are first in their family to attend university may need support getting parental buy-in, students who have religious faith may need advice on local places of worship. It is

important that these targeted conversations take place early so that they give students enough time to make informed decisions about the type of mobility that is right for them.

It is not enough to understand that multiple mobility offers are needed to engage students as individuals. Consistently across the institutional features, successful growth in participation in mobility involves senior staff buy-in and the inclusion of strategic targets to support mobility activities. Our international strategies must tie in with our local strategies to achieve the social cohesion we are aiming for and to produce outward-looking and globally-aware graduates.

Students from North West Regional College on a work placement



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