Universities UK International

Gone international: a new generation

A study of higher education students who study, work, and volunteer abroad

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Contents

Foreword

This latest report in UUKi's *Gone international* series is set against a backdrop of significant change and uncertainty in the environment for global mobility. The UK's departure from the EU and our exit from Erasmus, the creation of new approaches such as the Turing and Taith schemes, alongside – of course – the impact of the global Covid pandemic means that this is very much a new generation of student mobility.

However, while the context has changed, this new report reaffirms the value of global mobility for students. Those students who are mobile are more likely to be awarded a first-class degree, secure professional-level jobs, and enjoy higher graduate earnings than their non-mobile peers – and these findings hold true across all groups of students, including those from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds, and for each year represented in the five-year study.

Importantly, our research shows that international mobility may also support social mobility and demonstrates that even short periods of study abroad are linked to enhanced academic and employment outcomes.

Collectively, these findings suggest that international mobility is more relevant than ever. In providing a new generation of students with the skills needed for a globalised workforce, mobility fosters new ways of thinking, helps build personal and professional networks, and enhances employability. Providing opportunities for mobility should also be viewed through the lens of intergenerational fairness; the current generation of students has missed out on critical learning, social, and developmental opportunities because of Covid, and mobility experiences may help address these gaps.

This is why every effort must be made to rebuild and grow mobility participation within the new policy and funding landscape. We recognise this is not without significant challenges, but our hope is that this report provides a timely overview of the current mobility landscape, offering insights to institutions and policymakers on the benefits of these opportunities for the next generation of students – and ensuring that mobility continues to become more accessible, impactful, and equitable.

This research would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our research partners. We extend our deepest gratitude to Northern Consortium, for their generous grant to help with producing and disseminating the report, and to Jisc, who very kindly donated the data and supported with their expertise on data analysis. Their contributions have been instrumental in making this study a reality.

Jamie Arrowsmith
Director, Universities UK International

Northern Consortium are proud to fund this research project. Access to higher education and all the significant opportunities it affords is at the very heart of the Northern Consortium charity, which was set up in 1993 through a collaboration of a group of like-minded institutions with the aim to facilitate access to universities in the UK.

We believe that international experience is a fundamental component of a UK higher education, and many would argue it is hugely beneficial not just for successful employment in our globally connected world, but also in developing students' skills, aspirations and capabilities as global citizens.

This report builds on previous work and provides further compelling evidence of the range of important benefits derived from both short and long international mobility experiences. More importantly though, in its analysis of the background of those going abroad, it identifies where targeted growth would have the most beneficial impact with underrepresented groups.

Pleasingly, the report also shows the progress made over the last few years on widening participation in international mobility for some groups and reinforces the previous evidence on the especially positive impact it has on these groups of students.

From the data, it is clear that mobility experiences enhance both academic achievement and employment outcomes (employability and salary), and widening access to these experiences will benefit a large range of students. The evidence presented will help us all to continue to build on the achievements so far and target student mobility activities in the future to maximise the opportunities available and optimise the benefits achieved.

Dr Malcolm Butler
Chair of Trustees, Northern Consortium

Jisc is proud to have collaborated with UUKi on this crucial report, providing valuable survey data, insights and analysis. Partnerships like these are vital in showcasing the power of Graduate Outcomes data, which now carries the accredited official statistics kitemark from the Office for National Statistics – the highest award of data quality.

Expert data collection and analysis from Jisc means that Graduate Outcomes data can be reliably used to track impact and identify emerging themes and trends in UK higher education and employment. This report sees the data come to life with analysis from UUKi and demonstrates the social and economic benefits to the UK of international mobility and the importance of collecting quality data to measure impact.

We welcome more powerful analysis of this kind and look forward to monitoring the impact of this vital sector report.

Heidi Fraser-Krauss
CEO, Jisc

Executive summary

1. Overview

- There has been a significant decline in mobility, with fewer students having an international experience in both absolute and relative terms. This represents a reversal of the progress made before the pandemic in growing outward student mobility.
- The main causes of this fall appear to be the Covid pandemic and new visa requirements for European mobility, post-Brexit.
- Analysis of the impact of the overall reductions suggests a mixed and nuanced picture. For at least some student characteristics, the share of overall mobilities has increased, with notable improvements for disabled students, those from low-participation neighbourhoods, and students from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic backgrounds.
- There is some evidence to suggest that mobility experiences are correlated with better outcomes and that these are particularly notable for some groups of students relative to cohort averages.
- Across the five cohorts, mobile students from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds were **awarded first-class degrees** at higher rates than their non-mobile peers. In particular, the five-year average rates were higher for:
    - Care leavers (34.0% mobile vs 21.4% non-mobile).
    - Disabled students (37.6% mobile vs 29.5% non-mobile).
    - Students from less advantaged backgrounds (36.1% mobile vs 28.2% non-mobile)
    - Students from low-participation neighbourhoods (36.3% mobile vs 27.6% non-mobile).
    - Students whose parents had no higher education qualifications (36.6% mobile vs 29.3% non-mobile).
- Across the five cohorts, mobile students from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds consistently secured **professional-level jobs** at higher rates than their non-mobile peers. In particular, the five-year average rates were higher for:
    - Disabled students (73.0% mobile vs 69.9% non-mobile).
    - Care leavers (69.2% mobile vs 65.8% non-mobile).
    - Mature students (81.2% mobile vs 77.2% non-mobile).
    - Asian students (79.9% mobile vs 71.8% non-mobile).
    - Students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (77.6% mobile vs 71.7% non-mobile).
- Across the five cohorts, in most cases[1] mobile students from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds had higher **graduate earnings** than their non-mobile peers. In particular, the five-year average earnings were higher for:
    - Mature students (£28,987 mobile vs £27,257 non-mobile).
    - Black students (£27,733 mobile vs £27,210 non-mobile).
    - Asian students (£28,688 mobile vs £28,074 non-mobile).
    - Disabled students (£26,584 mobile vs £26,101 non-mobile).

[1] Five-year average earnings were higher for mobile students for nine of the 11 categories of disadvantage and underrepresentation analysed. These include Black, Asian, mature and disabled students, those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, care leavers, those from low-participation neighbourhoods, those whose parents have no higher education qualifications and those from state-funded school backgrounds. The only groups for whom average graduate earnings were lower were part-time students and students from Mixed and Other ethnic backgrounds.

2. Key mobility facts

Overall levels of mobility

Over the five cohorts who graduated between 2017–18 and 2021–22, there were 138,170 instances of mobility at an average rate of 7.2%.

The graduating cohort from 2018–19 represented the peak, with 28,070 mobilities at a rate of 8.8 %, however, the volume of mobilities fell very significantly thereafter, as did the proportion of students benefiting from a period of mobility. By 2021–22 this had fallen to 10,960 mobilities and a mobility rate of 3.5%. There are several underlying causes for this fall, including the impact of the global pandemic, the increased visa and immigration rules following Brexit, and changes in external funding.

There is also wide variation in mobility rates by nation. Over the five-year period, mobility rates by nation were 11.1% for Northern Ireland, 9.7% for Scotland, 8.7% for Wales and 6.7% for England. In the 2021–22 cohort specifically, the mobility rates were 4.8% for Northern Ireland, 4.5% for Scotland, 4.1% for Wales and 3.3% for England.

Where do students go?

Over the five cohorts, the top mobility destinations were Spain, France, the US, Germany and Netherlands. There were some small changes in the top destinations over the five-year period. The top destinations for the 2017–18 cohort were Spain, France, the US, Germany and Australia.

In the 2021–22 cohort, the top destinations were Spain, France, Germany, the US and Italy. Australia, Italy, Canada, China and Ireland round out the top 10 destinations across the five-year period.

Over the five cohorts, the share of mobilities to Europe increased significantly – from 55.3% in 2017–18 to 71.9% in 2021–22. While this may seem counterintuitive given the UK's decision not to participate in the Erasmus+ programme after 2020, the restrictions on global mobility following the pandemic and residual funding from Erasmus+ help to account for this.

What do students do?

Over the five cohorts, 73.9% of mobility experiences were for study, 21.9% for work and 4.2% for volunteering. For the 2021–22 cohort, 69.7% of mobility experiences were for study, 25.7% for work and 4.6% for volunteering. Work abroad grew in popularity from 21.8% of all mobilities in 2017–18, to 25.7% in 2021–22.

Over the five cohorts, 56.3% of mobility experiences were long-term (16+ weeks), with medium-term mobility (four to 15 weeks) accounting for 19.3%, and short-term mobilities (one to three weeks) accounting for 24.4%. For the 2021–22 cohort, 58.8% of mobility experiences were long-term, with medium-term mobility accounting for 18.0% and short-term mobilities for 23.2%.

What kinds of scheme are used?

Over the five cohorts, the schemes that were used most frequently were Erasmus+ and provider-led placements, jointly accounting for 88.1% of mobilities during this period. In the 2017 –18 cohort, provider-led mobilities made up 51.7% of mobilities, and Erasmus+ 37.5%. By 2021–22, the order had reversed, with Erasmus+ making up 43.6% and provider-led placements 42.1% of mobilities.

This highlights the effect of the pandemic in making non-European mobility more difficult. Turing Scheme funding was launched in 2021 and made up only 0.4% of mobilities in the 2021–22 cohort due to the lower levels of mobility among final year students.

3. Student characteristics and patterns of participation

While there has been a fall in the overall proportion of students with a mobility experience, alongside a significant fall in absolute numbers, fostering more equitable access to mobility has long been a priority for universities, mobility professionals and governments. In this report, patterns of participation were analysed for a range of identified student characteristics.

Mobility rates for students from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds

Over the five cohorts, the average mobility rate for all students was 7.2%.

Students with the following characteristics had a five-year average mobility rate that was lower (by 5.0% or more)[2] than the cohort average:

- Students from less advantaged backgrounds (5.3%).
- Asian students (5.0%).
- Black students (4.7%).
- Students from Other ethnic backgrounds (5.3%).
- Disabled students (6.6%).
- Students from low-participation neighbourhoods (4.7%).
- Mature students (3.0%).
- Students whose parents had no higher education qualifications (5.2%).
- Care leavers (4.5%).
- Students with state-funded school backgrounds (6.7%).

Students with the following characteristics had a five-year average mobility rate that was higher (by 5.0% or more) than the cohort average:

- Students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (8.9%).

In 2021–22, the average mobility rate for all students was 3.5%.

Students with the following characteristics had an average mobility rate that was lower (by 5.0% or more) than the cohort average:

- Students with state-funded school backgrounds (3.2%).
- Students from less advantaged backgrounds (2.6%).
- Students whose parents had no higher education qualifications (2.5%).
- Students from Other ethnic backgrounds (2.4%).
- Black students (2.3%).
- Asian students (2.3%).
- Students from low-participation neighbourhoods (2.3%).
- Care leavers (2.1%).
- Mature students (1.2%).
- Part-time students (0.9%).

[2] This is measured as percentage differences, ie the proportion of students from less advantaged and underrepresented groups whose rate of mobility significantly differed from the overall cohort average.

Executive summary

Students with the following characteristics had an average mobility rate that was comparable to (within 4.9% above or below) the cohort average:

- Disabled students (3.4%).

Students with the following characteristics had an average mobility rate that was higher (by 5.0% or more) than the cohort average:

- Students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (4.9%).

Share of total mobilities

Comparing participation rates highlights that, with the exception of disabled students and those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (who participate at rates equal to or higher than the cohort average), disparities remain for other groups. To understand how this picture has changed over time, and to evaluate the extent to which opportunities have become more or less equitable for different groups, we also analysed changes in the share of overall mobility made up by each group.

Changes in the share[3] of overall mobilities between 2017–18 and 2021–22:

- The share of mobility for students from low-participation neighbourhoods ***increased*** (from 7.1% to 7.5%).
- Disabled students' share of mobility ***increased*** (from 13.5% to 19.0%).
- Black students' share of mobility ***increased*** (from 4.3% to 4.8%).
- Asian students' share of mobility ***increased*** (from 8.6% to 9.2%).
- The share of mobility for students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds ***increased*** (from 4.8% to 6.6%).
- The share of mobility for students from Other ethnic backgrounds was ***steady*** (remaining at 1.3% over the period).
- The share of mobility for students from less advantaged backgrounds was ***steady*** (from 23.9% to 23.7%).
- Care leavers' share of mobility was ***steady*** (remaining at 0.5% over the period).
- The share of mobility for students whose parents had no higher education qualifications ***declined*** (from 33.8% to 31.2%).
- The share of mobility for students from a state-funded school background ***declined*** (from 82.7% to 81.2%).

This suggests that some progress has been made for some groups of students in terms of equitable access to mobility opportunities. While the context for this is an overall fall in the number and proportion of students undertaking a period of mobility, this is nevertheless encouraging. It will be important that – as mobility rebuilds – the focus on equitable access continues.

[3] Changes in the share of mobility that are +/- 1.0% are described as increasing/declining. Changes below this threshold are described as remaining steady.

4. Impact of mobility experience on outcomes

There is some evidence to suggest that students with mobility experience have better outcomes in terms of first-class degree awards, rates of unemployment, professional-level employment and higher graduate salaries – although the analysis undertaken here cannot account for the self-selecting nature of mobility and other contextual factors.

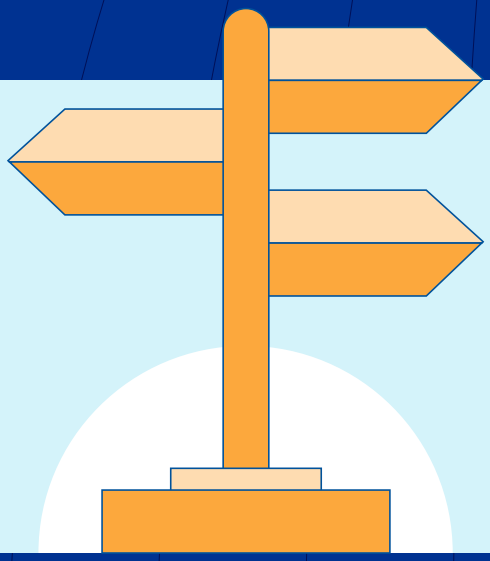
Over the five cohorts (five-year average):

- Students with a mobility experience were awarded first-class degrees at a higher rate – 39.0% for mobile students compared to 30.9% for non-mobile students.
- Students with a mobility experience had a lower unemployment rate – 4.7% compared to 5.1% for non-mobile students.
- Students with a mobility experience had a higher rate of professional-level employment as graduates – 75.9% compared with 72.0% for non-mobile students.
- Average graduate salaries were 1.6% higher for mobile students compared to non-mobile students (£26,932 vs £26,501).

In the 2021–22 cohort:

- Students with a mobility experience were awarded first-class degrees at a higher rate – 43.1% for mobile students compared to 31.1% for non-mobile students.
- Students with a mobility experience had a slightly lower graduate unemployment rate – 5.7% compared to 5.8% for non-mobile students.
- Students with a mobility experience had a higher rate of professional-level employment as graduates – 76.4% compared with 72.7% for non-mobile students.
- Average graduate salaries were 2.2% higher for mobile students compared to non-mobile students (£29,745 vs £29,112).

Recommendations



1 Outward student mobility should be a key component of a refreshed International Education Strategy (IES).

Including outward mobility in the refreshed IES would create a more holistic approach and highlight the benefits of higher education internationalisation for UK students.

Two-way mobility signals reciprocity and adds credibility when discussing the value of inward international student mobility in terms of the benefits to students, and the wider benefits to their host university campuses and local communities.

2 Government should commit to long-term mobility funding, including multi-year programme cycles and funding for short mobilities.

In line with the recommendations of UUK's *Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change,*[4] we ask the government to provide a long-term funding commitment and to consider the case for UK's re-association to the Erasmus programme.

Changes to the Turing Scheme could also enhance its effectiveness. For example, changing the current 12-month programme cycle to a 24-month cycle would give students more assurance and earlier confirmation of funding, helping less advantaged students. In addition, following conversations between UUKi and DfE, funding has now been provided for students undertaking placements of two weeks or more. This should be retained in future Turing Schemes.

3 A more consistent approach to data and reporting is needed along with regular programme evaluation.

Participant feedback should be collected from all Turing Scheme participants and used, alongside feedback from beneficiaries, in regular evaluations of the Turing Scheme to inform its future development.

Higher education institutions should accurately report all mobilities to HESA and further collaborate on best practice for monitoring and evaluating mobility programmes.

4 Widening participation and enhancing outcomes should continue to lie at the heart of the UK's approach to outward mobility.

Widening participation should continue to play a central role in the UK's policy and funding approach to international mobility and within institutional strategies.

Enhanced post-placement support for students, linked into careers and employability provision, can help students to articulate and apply the skills gained from international placements to maximise their value.

[4] Universities UK (2024) Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change, available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2024-09/opportunity-growth-and-partnership-a-blueprint-for-change_0.pdf, accessed 26/02/2025.

Introduction

From 2015 to 2019, UUKi published a series of *Gone international* reports that charted the changing nature of outward student mobility, that is UK-based students who spend a period of time overseas during their studies, whether for study, work, or volunteering. These reports were accompanied by UUKi's *Go International: Stand Out* campaign, which was designed to support the sector in delivering on the UK's national target for student mobility. Progress had been made towards the target of 13%, until the sudden arrival of the Covid pandemic. The UK government's Turing Scheme, launched in 2021 following the UK's withdrawal from the EU's Erasmus+ programme, has also impacted decision-making within institutions.

With conditions for travel and mobility broadly returned to pre-Covid levels, and with the government's Spending Review about to set the parameters for future decision-making, *Gone international: a new generation* provides an updated exploration of outward student mobility, who participates, and what they do. The report analyses trends in outward student mobility and considers the impact of recent changes in the landscape for mobility. Using data from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, the research also provides insight into graduate activities 15 months after course completion in order to understand the impact that mobility experience has on graduate outcomes.

The research covers UK-domiciled, first-degree undergraduates and focuses on the 2021–22 cohort, but – given this is the first time this analysis has been undertaken since 2019 – the research also includes some high-level comparisons to the four preceding cohorts from 2017–18 onwards. In doing so, it provides in-depth analysis of mobility across a number of recent cohorts.

The first section, 'Who goes abroad?', looks at mobility participation rates and changes over time. It goes on to explore what mobile students study, where they are from, where they go, and what kinds of placement they undertake. This includes the duration of placements and funding schemes used. Finally, it looks in detail at participation rates for students from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds and tracks changes over time.

In 'What do they do next?' the report examines mobile students' academic and employment outcomes, including graduate earnings, and compares them to their non-mobile peers. The report examines how mobility impacts outcomes for less advantaged and underrepresented groups of students and disaggregates findings for these cohorts.

The report also looks at short-term mobility and the impact of short placements on academic and employment outcomes. This provides useful evidence to inform the future development of mobility programmes and funding policy.

The report concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations for further action to ensure the UK can recover and regrow mobility activity, making opportunities accessible and equitable for all students.

In this report, the term 'mobilities' is used in two interrelated ways. When discussing student outcomes and characteristics, 'mobilities' refers to numbers of students who have participated in at least one mobility experience. In this context, each student is counted once, regardless of how many mobility experiences they have completed. When examining features of the mobility experience itself – such as duration, location, or type – 'mobilities' refers to periods of mobility undertaken, also referred to as 'instances of mobility' within the report. Under this second usage, if a single student completed two mobility periods to Spain, this would be counted as two mobilities.

Who goes abroad?

This chapter analyses the characteristics of students who go abroad, including subjects studied, nation of home institution, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. This provides an understanding of which students take advantage of mobility opportunities and where gaps in mobility participation rates between more and less advantaged students persist.

Over the five cohorts who graduated between 2017–18 and 2021–22, there were 138,170 instances of mobility at an average rate of 7.2%.[5] The graduating cohort from 2018–19 represented the peak, with 28,070 mobilities at a rate of 8.8%. However, the volume of mobilities fell very significantly thereafter, as did the proportion of students benefiting from a period of mobility. By 2021–22 this had fallen to 10,960 mobilities and a mobility rate of 3.5%.

Figure 1: Mobile student numbers and mobility rates by graduating cohort

2017–18	8.3%	26,210
2018–19	8.8%	28,070
2019–20	8.6%	27,245
2020–21	6.5%	20,865
2021–22	3.5%	10,960
Five-year summary	7.2% average	113,355 total

The fall in mobility participation in recent years was driven largely by the Covid pandemic. As most undergraduate students tend to be mobile in their penultimate year of studies, students graduating in 2021–22 were the most affected by the pandemic, with those in 2020–21 being impacted to a lesser degree.

New visa rules from January 2021 for studying and working in the European Union (EU) and the UK's withdrawal from the Erasmus+ programme may have affected opportunities for the 2021–22 cohort, but this is likely to have been overshadowed by the pandemic. Further data on cohorts who were mobile after the pandemic is needed to fully understand the impact of the changes in visa rules and funding.

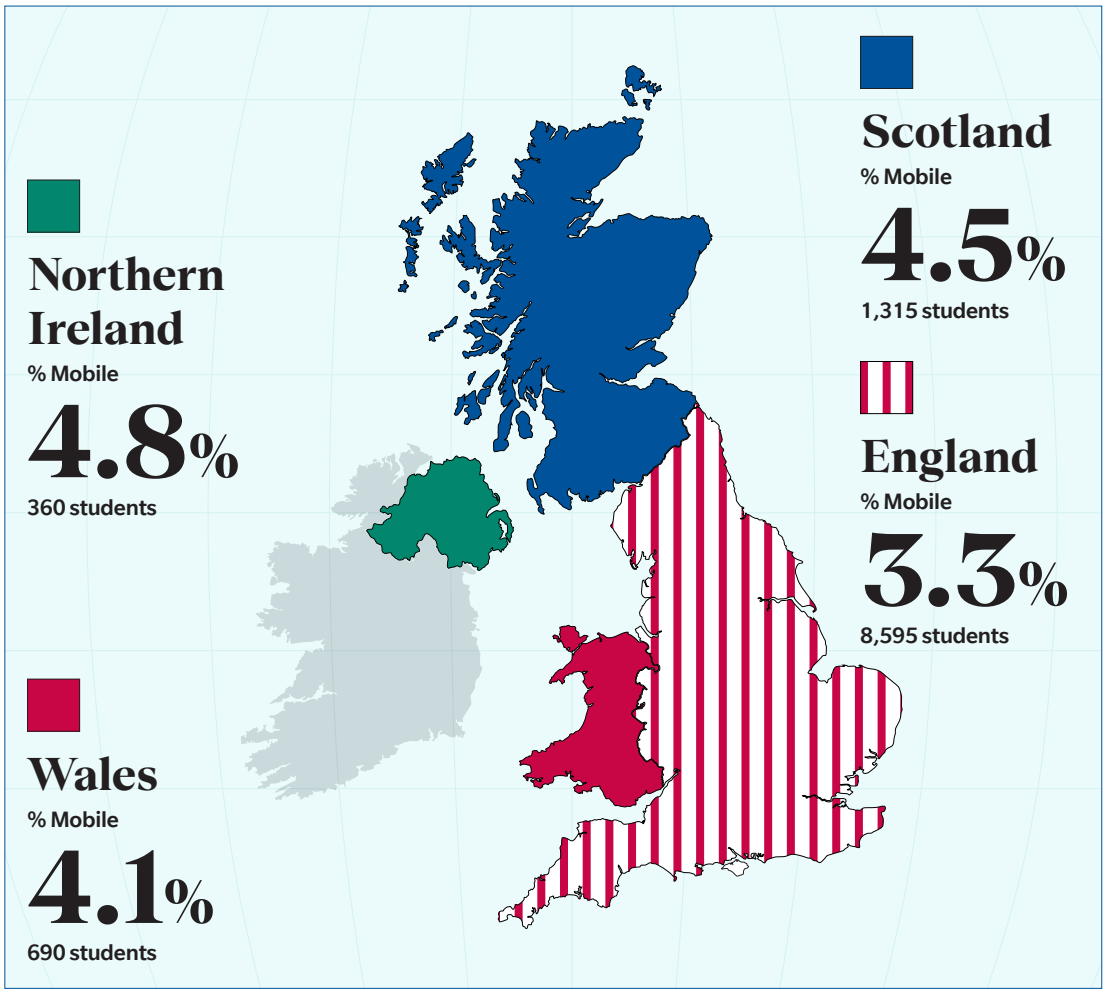
[5] This includes periods of mobility of one week or more. Total student numbers for the overall cohorts and mobile cohorts can be found in Appendix 5, Figure 62.

Where they are from

Over the five cohorts, the five-year average mobility rates by nation were 11.1% for Northern Ireland, 9.7% for Scotland, 8.7% for Wales and 6.7% for England (see Appendix 5, Figure 63).

In the 2021–22 cohort, students in Northern Ireland also had the highest mobility rate (4.8%, 360), followed by Scotland (4.5%, 1,315), and Wales (4.1%, 690), with students in England having the lowest rate (3.3%, 8,595) (see Figure 2). Mobility rates for students studying in England were lower across all five cohorts.

Figure 2: Mobility rate by nation of institution, 2021–22

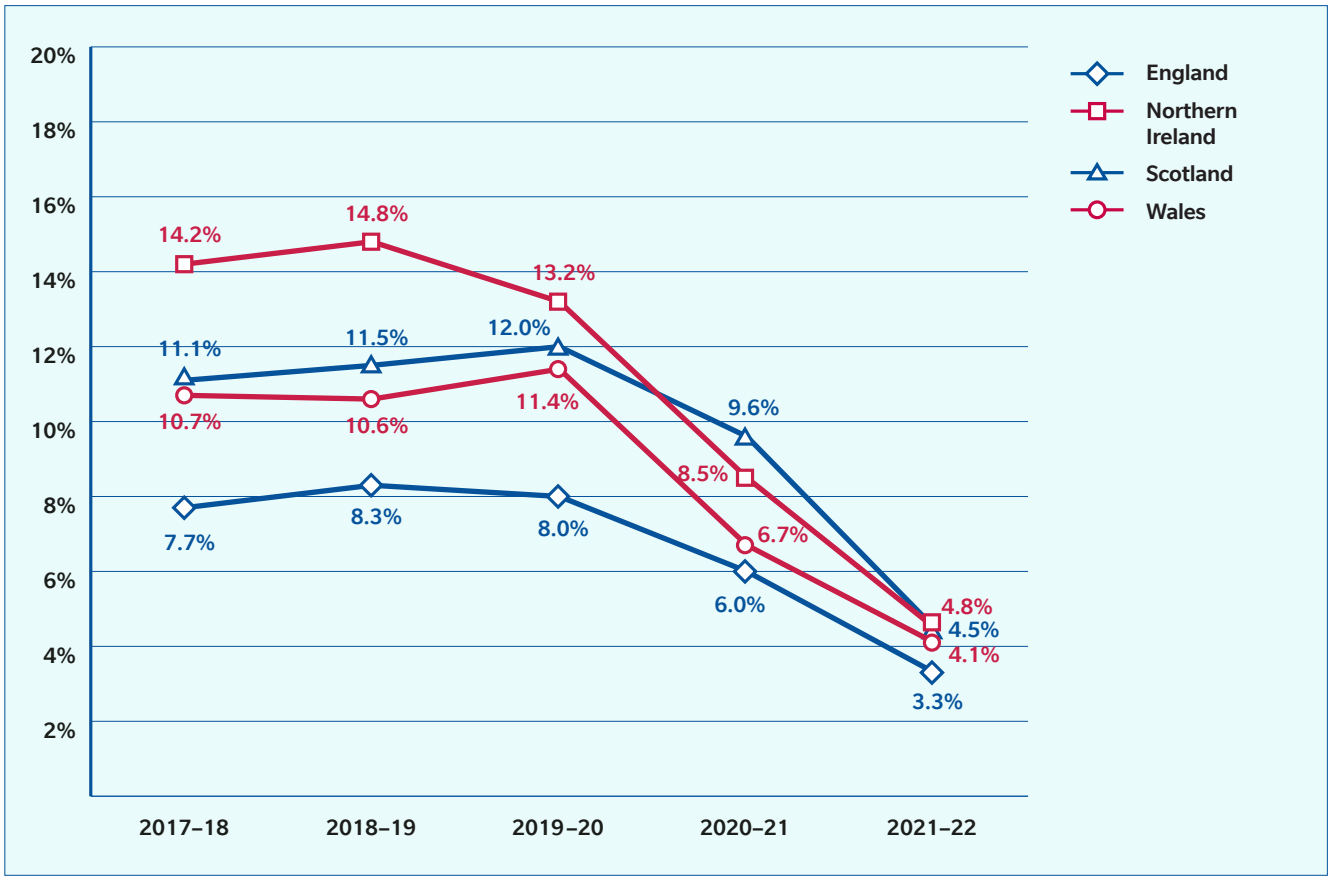


The high cross-border flows from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland (EU) contribute to Northern Ireland's higher mobility rate compared to other UK nations. In 2021–22, 62.2% of Northern Ireland mobilities were to the Republic of Ireland, up from 24.1% in 2017–18.[6] By comparison, the number of mobilities to the Republic of Ireland from other UK nations was far smaller in 2021–22 (1.0% from English providers, 0.8% Scottish, 0.5% Welsh).

[6] In Northern Ireland and Wales, the relatively small number of universities means that any one provider may significantly influence these results.

Mobility rates in all four nations declined steeply between 2018–19 and 2021–22 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Mobility rate by nation of institution 2017–18 to 2021–22



In Scotland, the four-year undergraduate degree and later specialisation may make it easier to go abroad than does the typical three-year degree structure offered in England and Wales. Cultural factors and funding may also play a part; for example, the Scottish government reported that between 2014 and 2018, Scotland sent and received proportionally higher numbers of students through the Erasmus programme than any other UK nation.[7]

[7] Scottish Government (2019) Impact of the European Union in Scotland Examples Factsheet, available at: https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2019/04/impact-of-the-european-union-in-scotland-examples/documents/pdf/pdf/govscot%3Adocument/Impact%2Bof%2BEuropean%2BUnion%2Bin%2BScotland.pdf, accessed 12/03/2025.

Who goes abroad?

Subject area

Figure 4: Mobility rates by subject area

24.1%

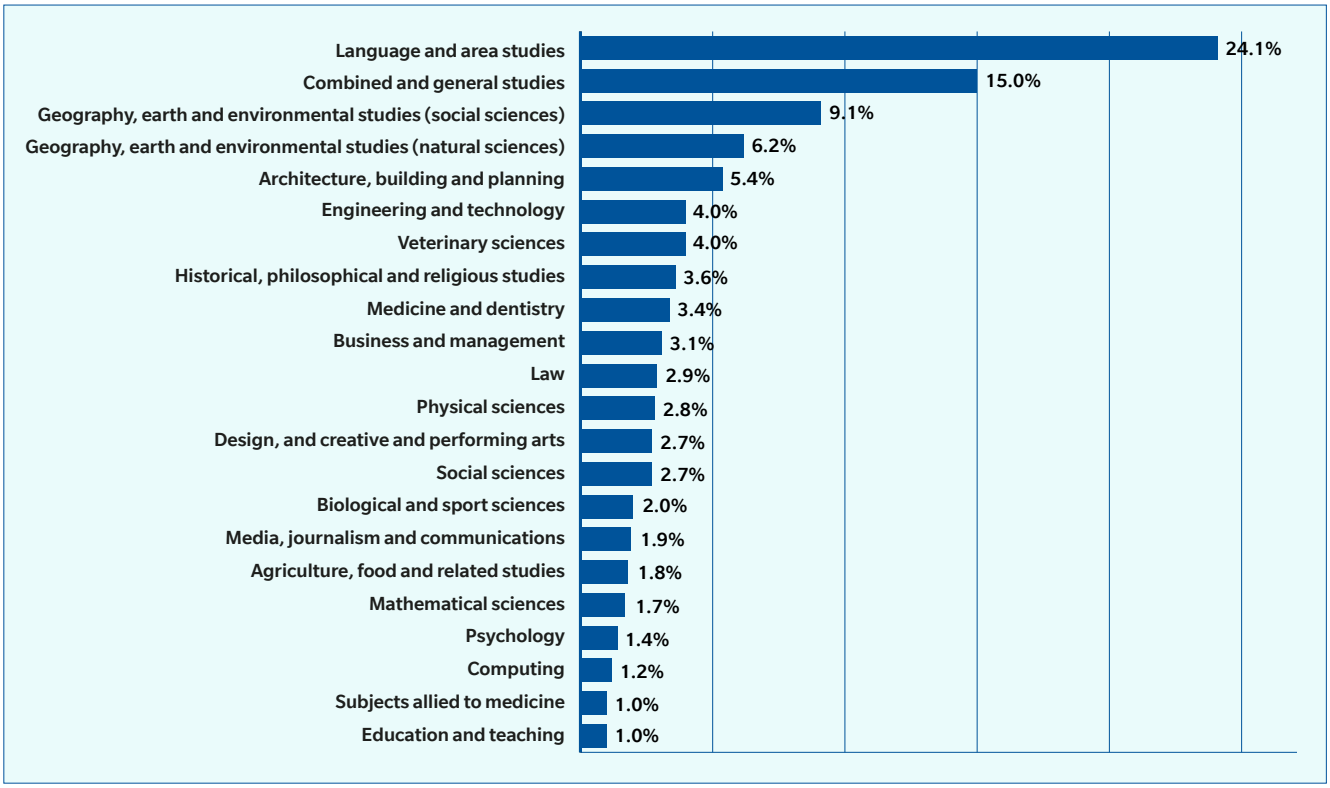
of language and area studies students in the 2021–22 graduating cohort experienced a period of mobility

2.6%

of students studying subjects without languages in the 2021–22 graduating cohort experienced a period of mobility

Language and area studies students[8] had the highest mobility rate of all subject areas at 24.1%, followed by combined and general studies (15.0%), and geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences) (9.1%). The lowest mobility rates (with 20 mobile students or more) were found in education and teaching (1.0%), subjects allied to medicine (1.0%), computing (1.2%) and psychology (1.4%) (see Figure 5).[9]

Figure 5: Mobility rate by subject group, 2021–22



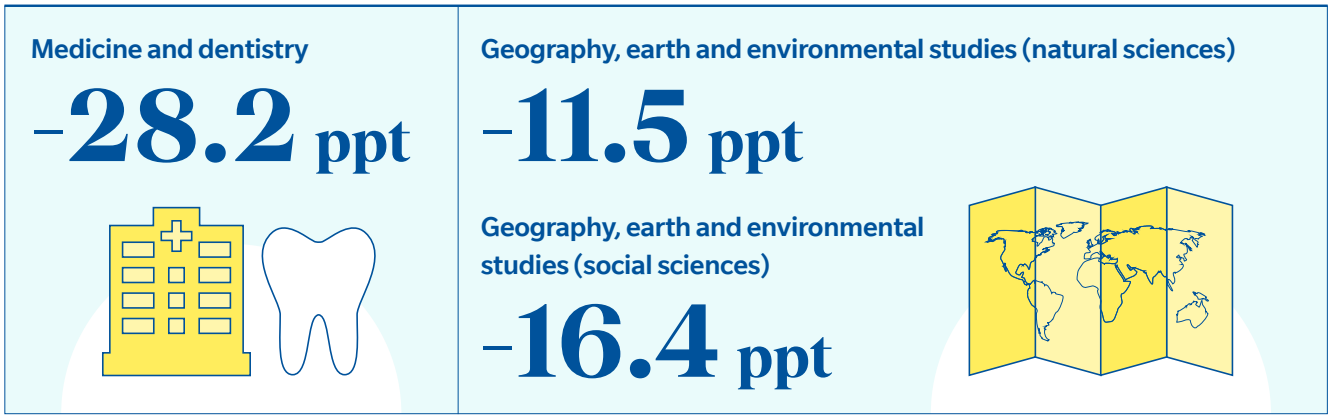
[8] Subjects in this section are categorised by the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) subject group as defined by HESA, such as 'language and area studies' or 'combined and general studies'. Since language students are more likely to go abroad than others, their inclusion can positively influence results. Therefore, there are instances where the analysis excludes students studying language and area studies. This enables comparisons between 'all subjects', 'subjects without languages', and 'language and area studies'. All tables exclude subjects with fewer than 20 mobile students unless otherwise stated.

[9] Lowest numbers of mobile students and overall student population by subject group in 2021–22 can be found in Appendix 5, Figure 64.

Who goes abroad?

The mobility rate for medicine and dentistry students declined from 31.6% in 2017–18 to 3.4% in 2021–22, largely due to the pandemic which severely restricted travel for education and clinical training, particularly to non-EU destinations like Australia.

Figure 6: Subjects with the biggest percentage point (ppt) difference in mobility rates between 2017–18 and 2021–22



Law also had a low mobility rate at 2.9% and was consistently low across the five cohorts (see Figure 7). This is due to the high proportion of compulsory qualifying modules and the specific, non-transferable nature of national legal systems studied.

Mobility rates grew between 2017–18 and 2019–20 in seven of the top 10 subject areas (only medicine and dentistry, veterinary sciences and law saw declines). Between 2020–21 and 2021–22 there were declines in all of the top 10 subject areas (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage point difference in mobility rates 2017–18 to 2021–22 for the top 10 subjects by mobility rate

	% Mobile					
Subject of study	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Ppt difference 2017–18 to 2021–22
Medicine and dentistry	31.6%	30.5%	17.1%	3.9%	3.4%	–28.2 ppt
Geography, earth and environmental studies (social sciences)	22.5%	22.6%	32.0%	16.2%	6.2%	–16.4 ppt
Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences)	20.6%	27.6%	24.2%	14.5%	9.1%	–11.5 ppt
Veterinary sciences	15.1%	16.5%	13.8%	7.9%	4.0%	–11.1 ppt
Combined and general studies	24.4%	27.3%	25.9%	25.0%	15.0%	–9.4 ppt
Architecture, building and planning	14.7%	16.5%	16.8%	11.5%	5.4%	–9.3 ppt
Language and area studies	32.8%	34.3%	34.9%	32.2%	24.1%	–8.7 ppt
Business and management	8.1%	7.9%	8.7%	6.5%	3.1%	–5.0 ppt
Law	7.9%	7.9%	7.2%	6.1%	2.9%	–5.0 ppt
Historical, philosophical and religious studies	7.8%	8.5%	9.4%	7.8%	3.6%	–4.2 ppt

Student characteristics

By gender

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students were mobile at the following rates: 7.1% cis females, 6.1% cis males, 4.2% trans students (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

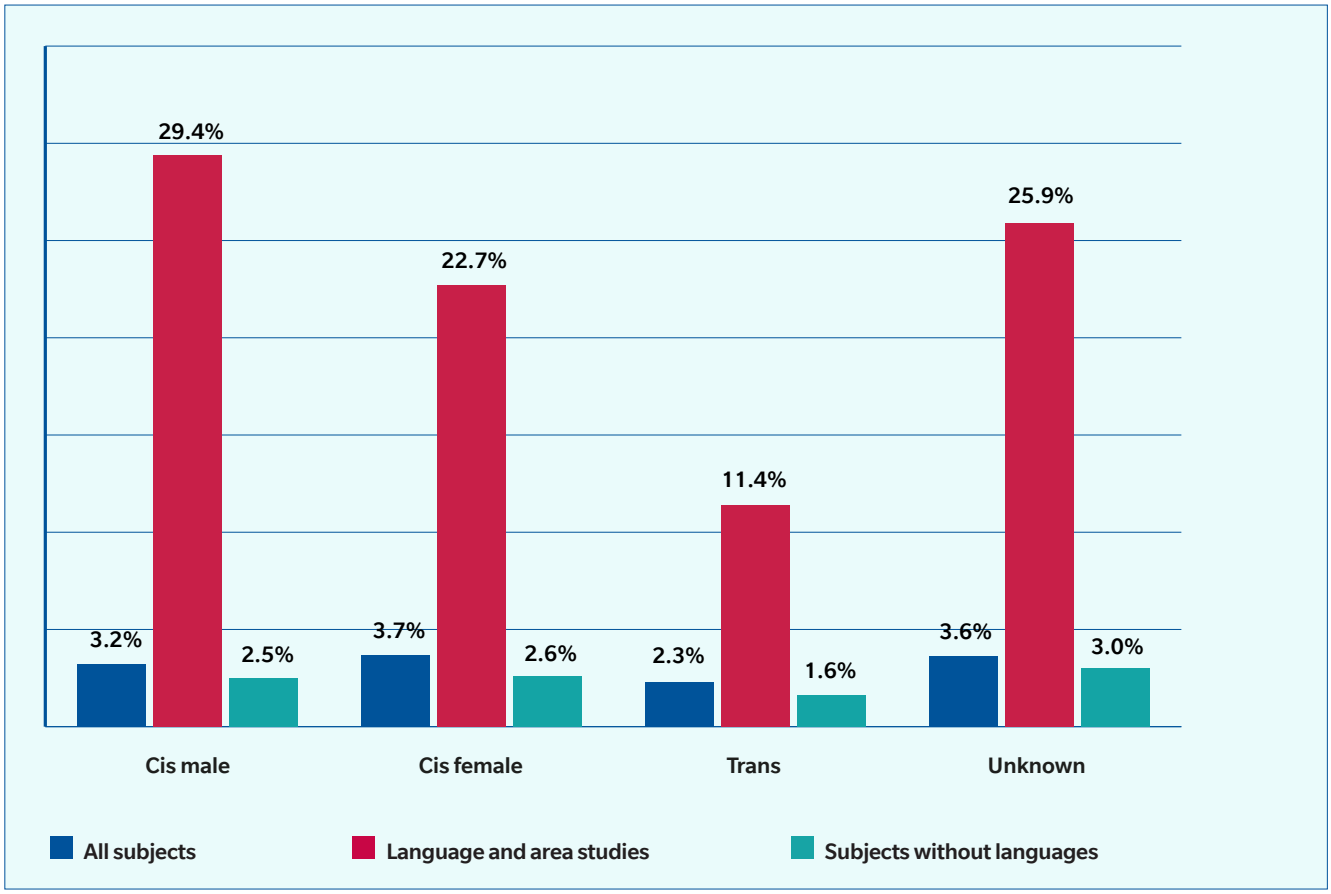
In the 2021–22 cohort, 6,375 cis female students went abroad (58.2% of mobilities) at a rate of 3.7%; 3,710 cis male students went abroad (33.9% of mobilities) at a rate of 3.2%; and 70 trans[10] students went abroad at a rate of 2.3% (see Figure 8).

Within the language and area studies cohort, cis females were disproportionately represented, and more cis females than cis males went abroad (2,150 vs 845 respectively). The mobility rate for cis males was higher (29.4%) than the rate for cis females (22.7%).

Excluding language and area studies (whose high mobility rates can skew results), the mobility rates for cis males and cis females dropped to 2.5% and 2.6% respectively, reducing the gap in participation rates.

Trans students had the lowest participation rates in all subject areas (see Figure 8). The report *Trans and non-binary student experiences in higher education*[11] notes that trans and non-binary people are overrepresented among care leavers and those reporting a disability so may be more likely to experience multiple barriers to mobility.

Figure 8: Mobility rates by subject and gender, 2021–22



[10] HESA records gender through a student's self-reported alignment with their sex assigned at birth. Those who respond 'no' are referred to as 'trans' in the report and may include students of varied gender identities including non-binary and agender students. For more details of the definitions used please see Appendix 1.

[11] Higher Education Policy Institute (2024) Trans and non-binary student experiences in higher education, available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2024/05/23/trans-and-non-binary-student-experiences-in-higher-education/, accessed 12/03/2025.

Widening participation in mobility

Previous UUKi *Gone international* reports have shown that students from less advantaged backgrounds, mature students, part-time students, disabled students and Black and Asian students are less likely to participate in mobility opportunities. The analysis in this section looks at the rates at which less advantaged and underrepresented groups participate in mobility opportunities to understand where disparities persist. The analysis looks at widening participation categories individually while acknowledging that students may have multiple characteristics. We note the role of intersectionality which plays a complex and non-linear role in mobility participation and outcomes. Definitions are included in Appendix 1 for all student characteristics described in this section of the report.

Language and area studies students typically undertake compulsory placements and have a very high mobility rate as a consequence. This can skew results, so on occasion the analysis excludes them in the interests of clarity and fair comparison.

Students from less advantaged backgrounds

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students from less advantaged backgrounds were less mobile (5.3%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and than students from more advantaged backgrounds (8.5%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, students from less advantaged backgrounds were less mobile (2.6%, 2,240) than the mobile average (3.5%) and than students from more advantaged backgrounds (4.2%, 7,215) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Mobility rates for students from less advantaged backgrounds, 2021–22

SEC grouping	Mobility marker	No. of students	% students
More advantaged backgrounds (SEC 1–3)	Mobile	7,215	4.2%
	Non-mobile	163,165	95.8%
Less advantaged backgrounds (SEC 4–8)	Mobile	2,240	2.6%
	Non-mobile	84,970	97.4%

When excluding language and area studies, students from less advantaged backgrounds participated at a rate of 2.0%, compared with 3.1% for students from more advantaged backgrounds.

Figure 10: Comparison of gap in mobility rates between student background, 2021–22 (excluding languages)

2.0% Mobility rates for students from **less advantaged backgrounds** for subjects without languages

3.1% Mobility rates for students from **more advantaged backgrounds** for subjects without languages

Who goes abroad?

Across the five cohorts, mobility rates increased for both more and less advantaged students studying subjects without languages. Mobility among less advantaged students peaked in 2019–20 before falling in 2020–21 and 2021–22. For more advantaged students, mobility reached its highest level in 2018–19 (see Figure 11).

When looking at changes in the share of overall mobility, in the 2017–18 cohort 23.9% of all mobilities were undertaken by less advantaged students, compared with 23.7% of mobilities in 2021–22, so the share of mobility for less advantaged students was stable during this period.[12]

Figure 11: Mobility rates for students from less advantaged backgrounds for subjects without languages, 2017–18 to 2021–22

SEC grouping	Mobility marker	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
More advantaged backgrounds (SEC 1–3)	Mobile	8.0%	8.7%	8.5%	6.1%	3.1%
	Non-mobile	92.0%	91.3%	91.5%	93.9%	96.9%
Less advantaged backgrounds (SEC 4–8)	Mobile	5.2%	5.6%	5.7%	4.1%	2.0%
	Non-mobile	94.8%	94.4%	94.3%	95.9%	98.0%

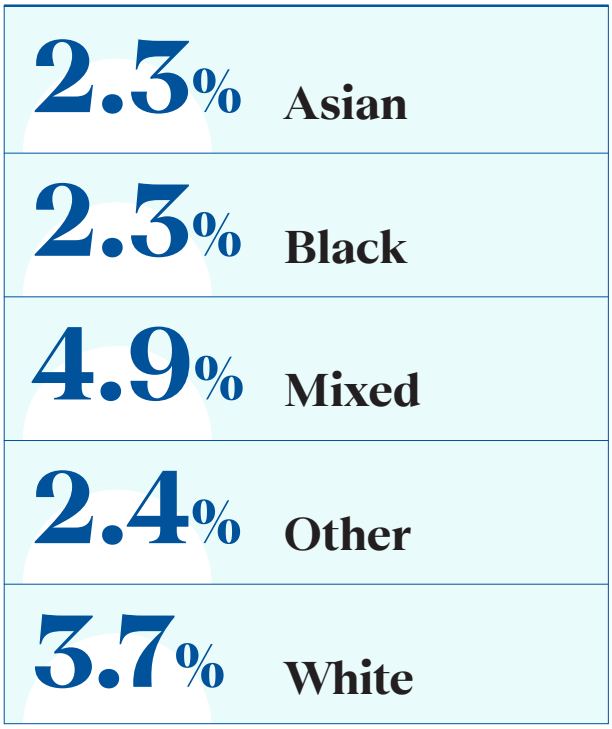
By ethnicity

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students were mobile at the following rates: 8.9% for students from a Mixed ethnic background, 7.7% for White students, 5.3% for students from Other ethnic backgrounds, 5.0% for Asian students, and 4.7% for Black students (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, students with a Mixed ethnic background also had the highest mobility rate (4.9%), followed by White students (3.7%), and those from Other ethnic backgrounds (2.4%). Asian and Black students had the lowest rates (both 2.3%) (see Figure 13).

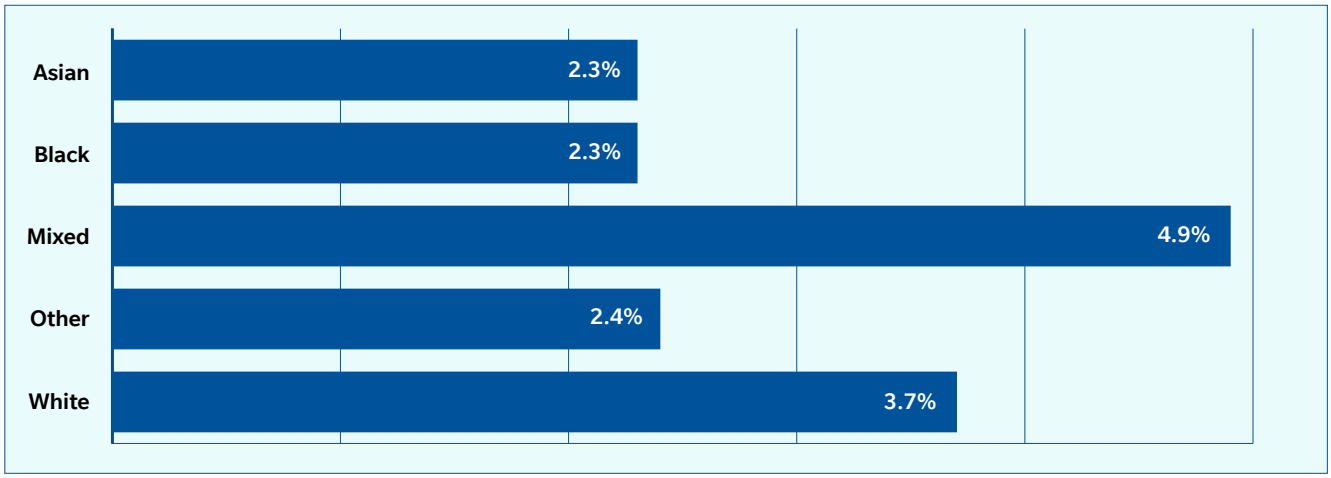
Asian and Black students have historically been underrepresented in mobility, but the data show that mobilities for Asian and Black students, and those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds, have been increasing as a proportion of overall mobility (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67). This indicates progress in making opportunities more equitable for these groups. The share of mobility for students from Other ethnic backgrounds was steady (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67).

Figure 12: Mobility rates by ethnicity, 2021–22



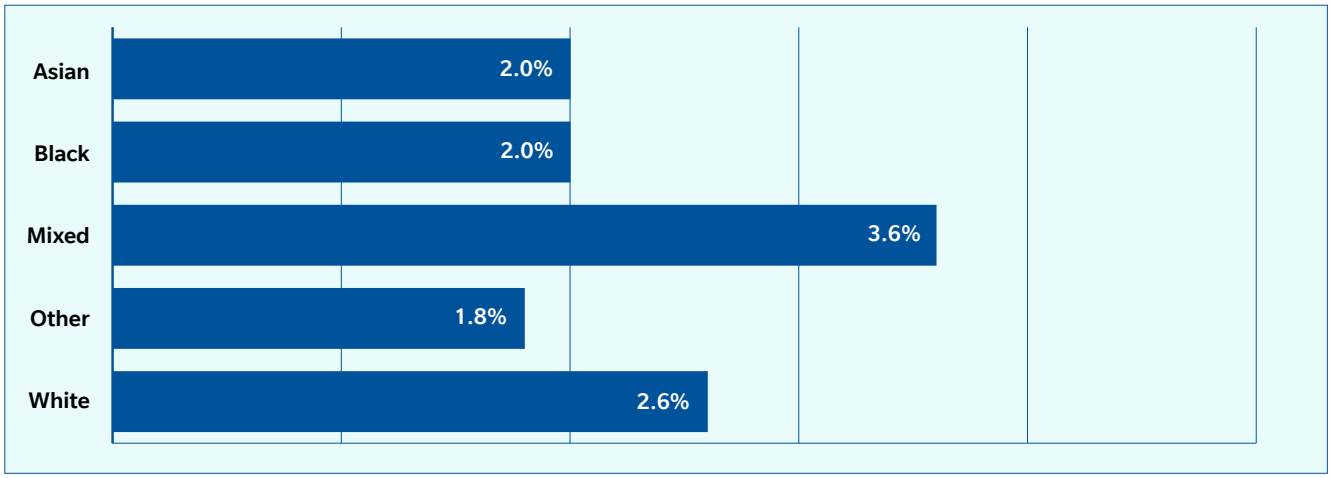
[12] Looking at percentage point (ppt) differences in the rates of mobility participation for different groups can highlight where disparities exist in terms of access to opportunities in any given year. Since changes in ppt differences over time are impacted by changes in the size of the underlying population, this is less useful as a measure of progress in widening access. For this reason, we have used changes in the proportion of mobility that is less advantaged student mobility to evaluate the extent to which mobility opportunities have become more or less equitable for different groups. Changes in share that are +/- 1.0% or more are described as increasing/declining, and changes below this threshold are described as remaining steady. For details of the share of mobilities by ethnicity see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67.

Figure 13: Mobility rates by ethnicity, 2021–22



Excluding language and areas studies, students with a Mixed ethnic background had the highest mobility rate (3.6%), followed by White students (2.6%). This was followed by Asian and Black students (both 2.0%), with students from Other ethnic backgrounds having the lowest mobility rates (1.8%) (see Figure 14).[13]
This pattern was consistent over the five-year period.

Figure 14: Mobility rates by ethnicity for subjects without languages, 2021–22



[13] For details of the share of mobilities by ethnicity excluding language and area studies, see Appendix 5, Figure 68.

Who goes abroad?

Disabled students

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, disabled students were less mobile (6.6%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and than non-disabled students (7.3%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, 3.4% (2,085) of disabled students were mobile, just 0.1ppt lower than non-disabled students (3.5%, 8,880). Disabled students' participation is now almost level with those without a disability, highlighting real progress in widening access (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Mobility rates by known disability, 2021–22

Students from low-participation neighbourhoods

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students from low-participation neighbourhoods (LPN) were less mobile (4.7%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and non-LPN students (7.5%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, LPN students were less mobile (2.3%, 825) than the mobile average (3.5%, 10,960) and non-LPN students (3.6%, 10,110) (see Figure 16).

When looking at changes in the share of overall mobility over time, the share of mobility increased for LPN students from 7.1% of all mobilities in 2017–18 to 7.5% in 2021–22 (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67).

Figure 16: Mobility rates for students by neighbourhood, 2021–22

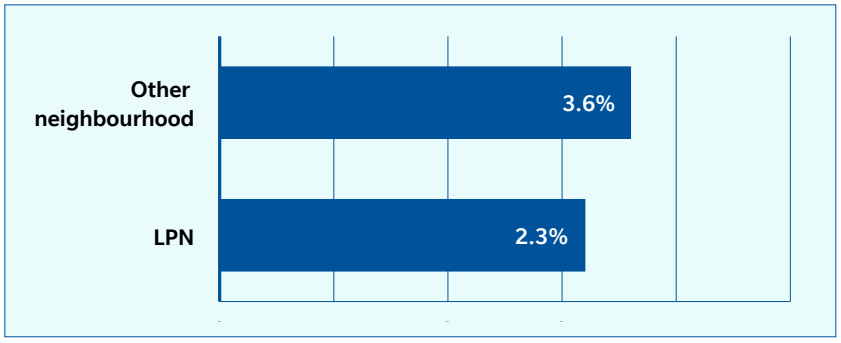


Figure 17: Mobility rates for low-participation neighbourhoods

5.7% 2018–19

2.3% 2021–22

Part-time students

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, part-time students were less mobile (1.0%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and full-time students (7.2%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, part-time students were less mobile (0.9%, 250 students) than the cohort average (3.5%, 10,960 students) and full-time students (3.5%, 10,960)[14] (see Figure 18).

In 2021–22, 73.4% of part-time students were mature students[15] and part-time students are more likely than full-time students to have work and caring responsibilities[16] that make it more difficult to spend time abroad.

Over the five-year period, part-time students' participation increased slightly, from 0.8% in 2017–18 to 0.9% in 2021–22. It peaked at 1.6% in 2019–20 (see Figure 19). The cost-of-living crisis in the UK may have made working students more reluctant to incur the loss of earnings and additional costs of going abroad. Recent research[17] shows an increase in the number of full-time students who work, and so consideration should be given to ways of mitigating these financial barriers.

Figure 18: Mobility rates by mode of study, 2021–22

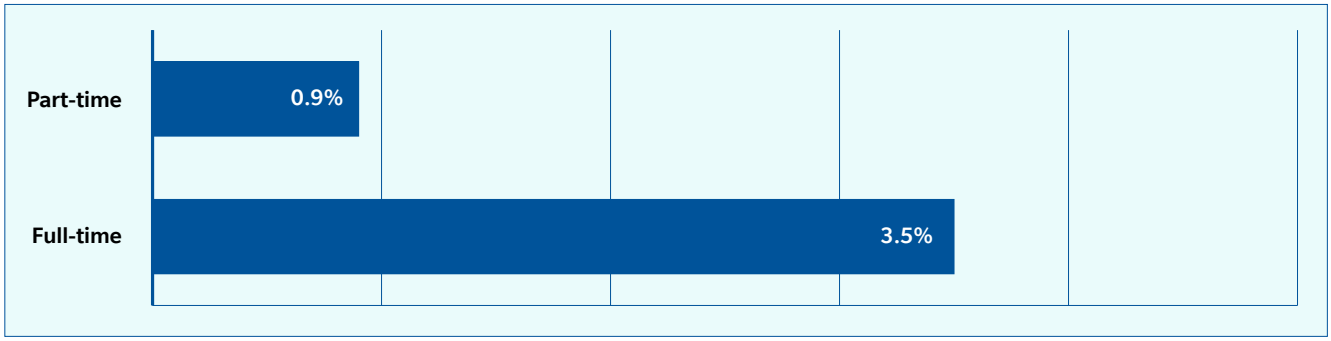
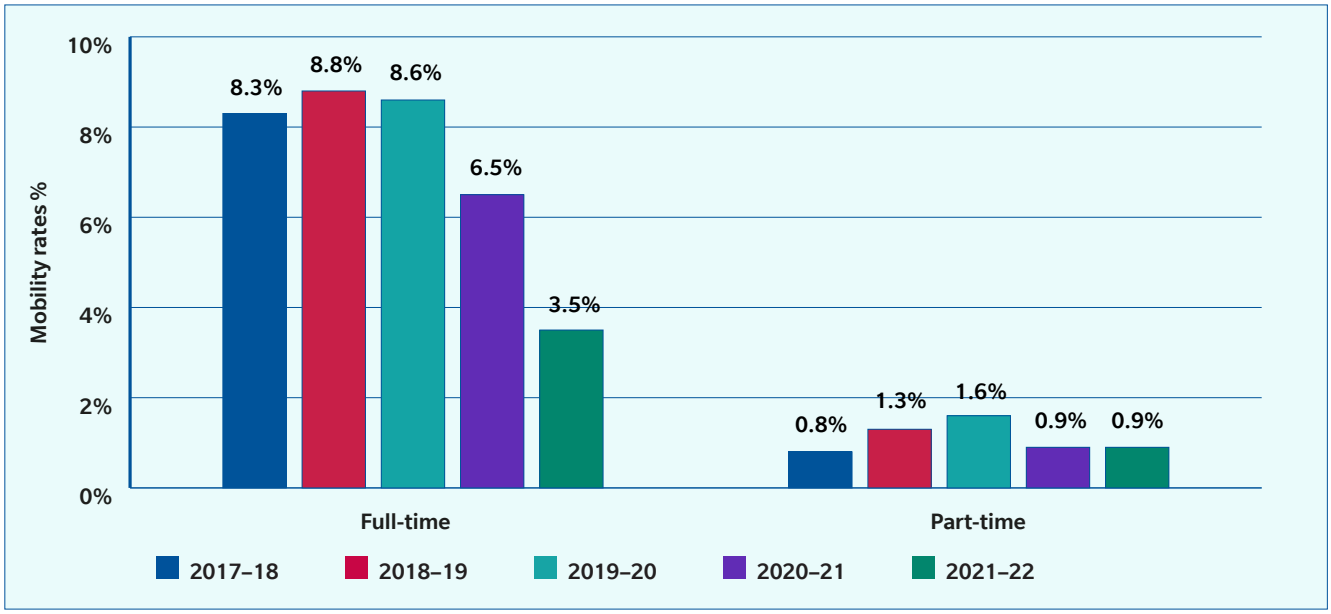


Figure 19: Mobility rates by mode of study, 2017–18 to 2021–22

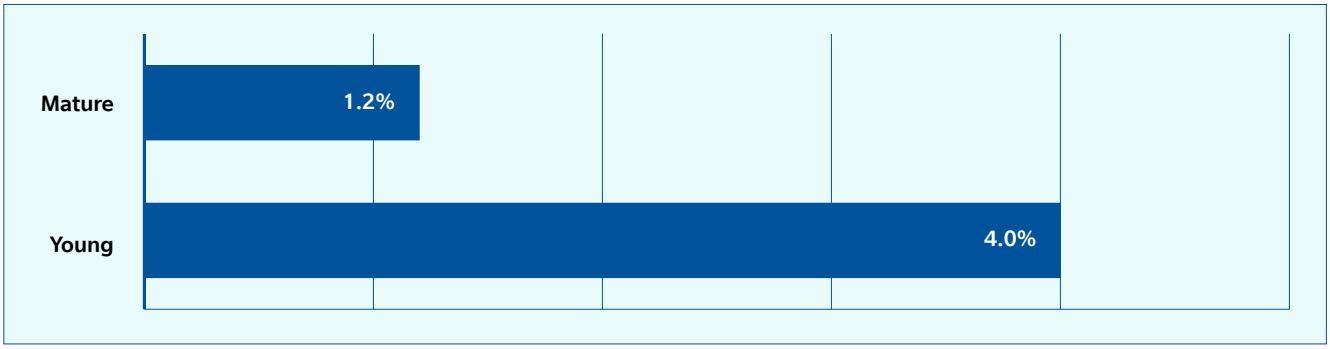


[14] Cohort average throughout the report looks at full-time, undergraduate, first-degree students.
[15] Data on young and mature student populations by mode of study can be found in Appendix 5, Figure 69.
[16] House of Commons Library (2022) Part-time undergraduate students in England, available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7966/CBP-7966.pdf, accessed 17/02/2025.
[17] Higher Education Policy Institute (2023) Student Academic Experience Survey 2023, available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-2023.pdf, accessed 26/02/2025.

Mature students

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, mature students were less mobile (3.0%) than the mobile average (7.2%), and than young students (8.1%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65). In the 2021–22 cohort, 1.2% (755) of mature students were mobile, compared to the cohort average of 3.5%, and 4.0% for young students (10,210) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Mobility rates by age, 2021–22



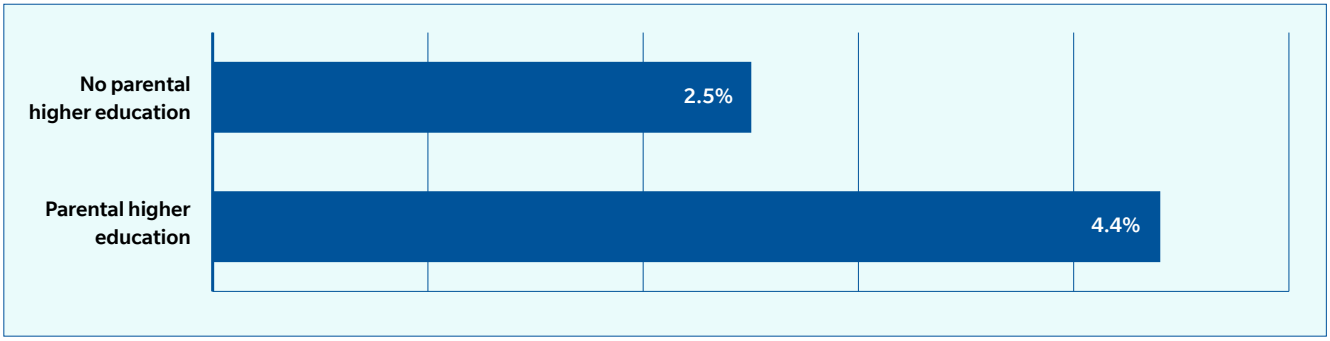
Parental higher education

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students whose parents did not have higher education qualifications were less mobile (5.2%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and those whose parents had higher education qualifications (9.0%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, students whose parents did not have higher education qualifications were less mobile (2.5%, 3,000) than the cohort average (3.5%) and students whose parents had higher education qualifications (4.4%, 6,610) (see Figure 21).

When looking at changes in the share of mobility over time, in 2017–18, 33.8% of all mobilities were undertaken by students whose parents had no higher education qualifications. This declined to 31.2% of mobilities in 2021–22 (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67).

Figure 21: Mobility rates by parental higher education, 2021–22



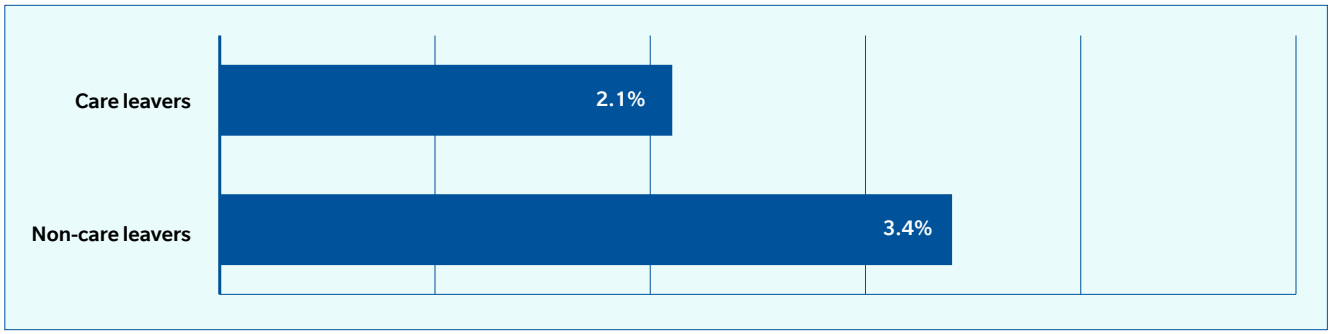
Care leavers

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, care leavers were less mobile (4.5%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and non-care leavers (7.1%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, care leavers were less mobile (2.1%, 45 students) than both the cohort average (3.5%) and non-care leavers (3.4%, 9,325) (see Figure 22).[18]

The share of mobility by care leavers as a proportion of overall mobility has remained steady at 0.5% of mobilities over the five-year period (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67).

Figure 22: Mobility rates for care leavers, 2021–22



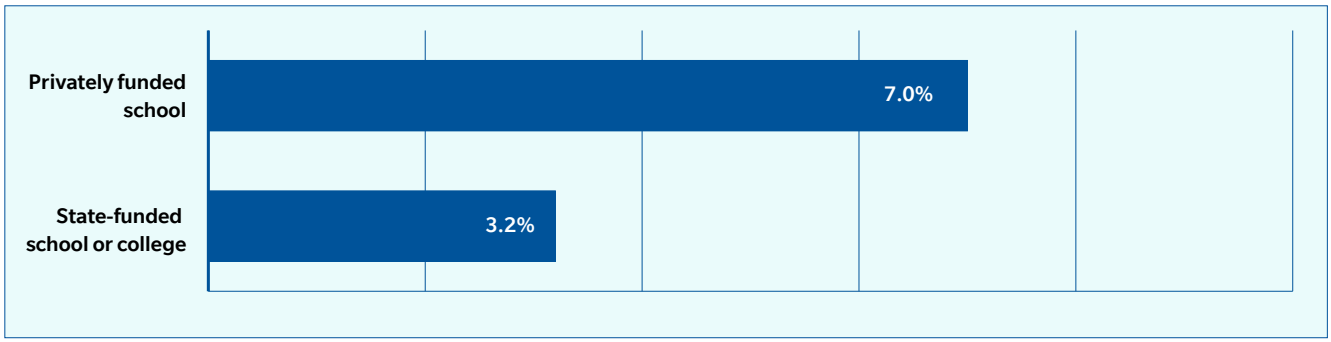
State-funded school or college background

As a five-year average across the five cohorts, students with a state-funded school or college background were less mobile (6.7%) than the mobile average (7.2%) and those with a privately funded school background (12.7%) (see Appendix 5, Figure 65).

In the 2021–22 cohort, students with a state-funded school background were less mobile (3.2%, 8,635) than the cohort average (3.5%) and those from privately funded schools (7.0%, 1,995) (see Figure 23).

When looking at changes in the share of mobility over time, in 2017–18, 82.7% of all mobilities were undertaken by students with a state-funded school or college background. This declined slightly to 81.2% of mobilities in 2021–22 (see Appendix 5, Figures 66 and 67).

Figure 23: Mobility rates for students from state-funded school or college backgrounds, 2021–22



[18] Disclosing care leaver status is not compulsory for HESA reporting. As a result, 38,920 students have an unknown status, with a mobility rate of 4.1%.

Who goes abroad?

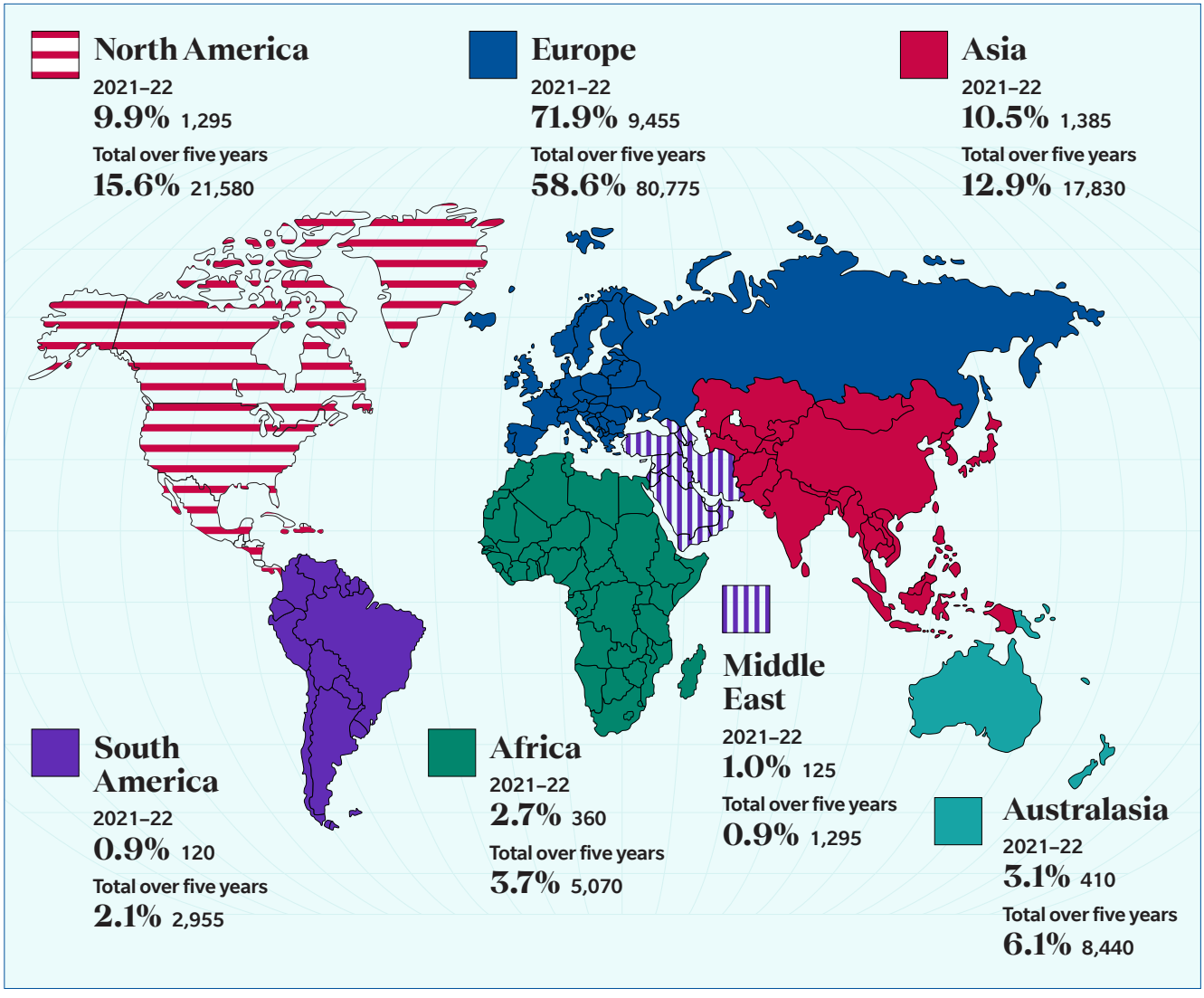
Where they go

This section looks at mobility destinations first by region, and then by country. In total, over the five cohorts, there were 138,170 instances of mobility.[19]

The share of mobilities to continental Europe increased significantly over the five cohorts – from 55.3% (17,810) in 2017–18 to 71.9% (9,455) in 2021–22. While this may seem counterintuitive given the UK's decision not to participate in the Erasmus+ programme after 2020, the restrictions on global mobility following the pandemic and residual funding from Erasmus+ help to account for this.

For the 2021–22 cohort, following Europe, the second most common regional destination was Asia (10.5%, 1,385), followed by North America with 9.9% of mobilities (1,295) (see Figure 24). Asia overtook North America which had been in second place for the previous cohort in 2020–21.

Figure 24: Instances of mobility by region of destination, 2021–22



[19] This section considers 'instances' of mobility rather than the number of students who had a period of mobility. For example, if a student undertook two separate mobilities in Spain, this would be counted twice.

Europe's share of mobility grew year on year across the five years (see Figure 25). At the country level, 17.7% of all mobilities (2,325) took place in Spain in 2021–22. Among country destinations, Spain hosted the most mobilities across the five years (13.8%, 19,075), closely followed by France (11.2%, 15,430) (see Figure 26).

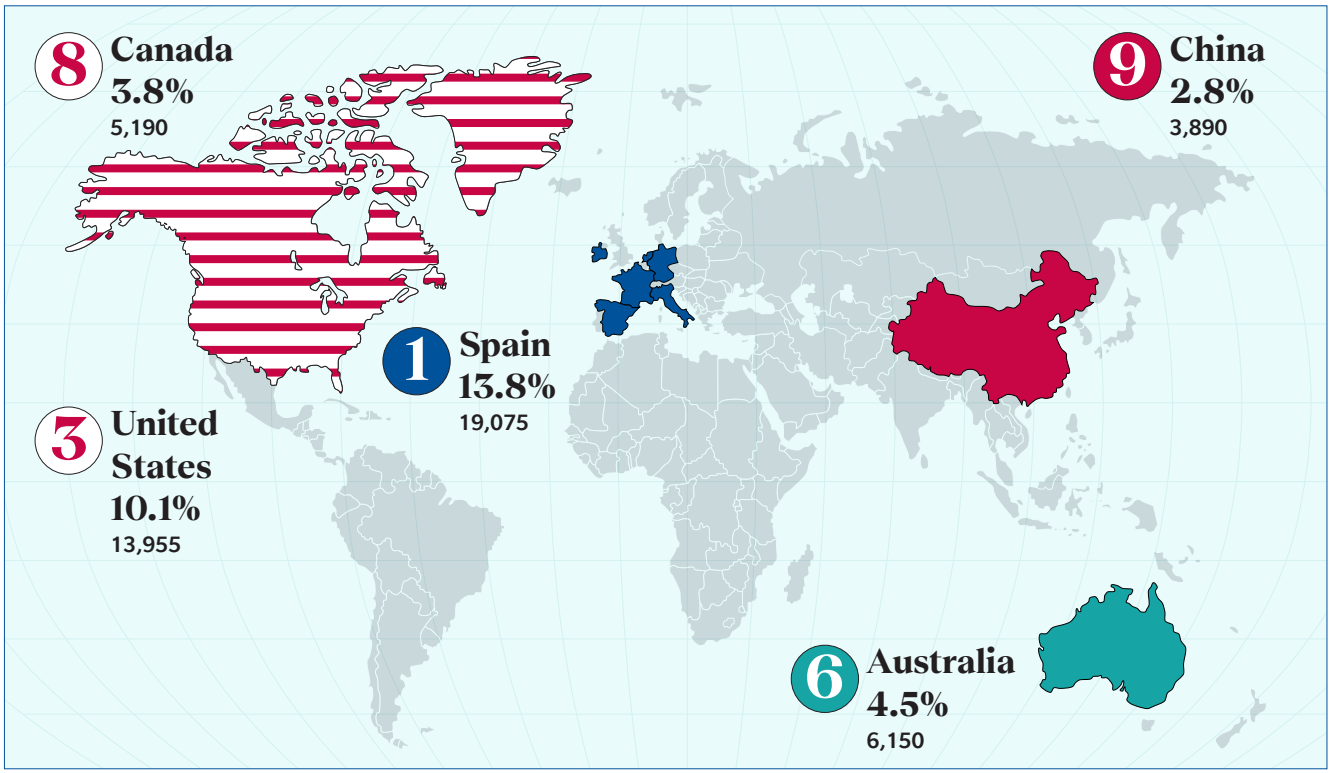
Figure 25: Instances of mobility by destination region, 2017–18 to 2021–22

Destination region	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Five-year average
Africa	**4.4%** 1,405	**4.2%** 1,470	**3.9%** 1,315	**2.5%** 640	**2.7%** 360	**3.7%** 5,070
Asia	**13.2%** 4,255	**13.9%** 4,840	**13.5%** 4,555	**12.0%** 3,030	**10.5%** 1,385	**12.9%** 17,830
Australasia	**7.1%** 2,280	**6.3%** 2,205	**6.1%** 2,055	**6.3%** 1,575	**3.1%** 410	**6.1%** 8,440
Europe	**55.3%** 17,810	**56.7%** 19,785	**57.2%** 19,365	**60.2%** 15,130	**71.9%** 9,455	**58.6%** 80,775
Middle East	**1.0%** 310	**0.9%** 310	**0.9%** 300	**1.0%** 255	**1.0%** 125	**0.9%** 1,295
North America	**16.6%** 5,365	**15.6%** 5,465	**16.3%** 5,520	**16.0%** 4,035	**9.9%** 1,295	**15.6%** 21,580
South America	**2.5%** 795	**2.4%** 850	**2.2%** 745	**1.9%** 480	**0.9%** 120	**2.1%** 2,955

Who goes abroad?

The most common non-EU country destination was the United States (US), with 13,955 mobilities across the five cohorts (10.1% of mobilities) (see Figure 26). The US's share declined from 10.6% (2,670) in 2020–21 to 6.5% (850) in 2021–22, which was due to border closures and paused exchange partnerships during the pandemic. Australia, Malaysia and Hong Kong all saw significant declines over the five-year period.[20]

Figure 26: Top 10 country destinations by instances of mobility, 2017–18 to 2021–22



2 **France** 11.2% 15,430

4 **Germany** 7.7% 10,665

5 **Netherlands** 4.7% 6,460

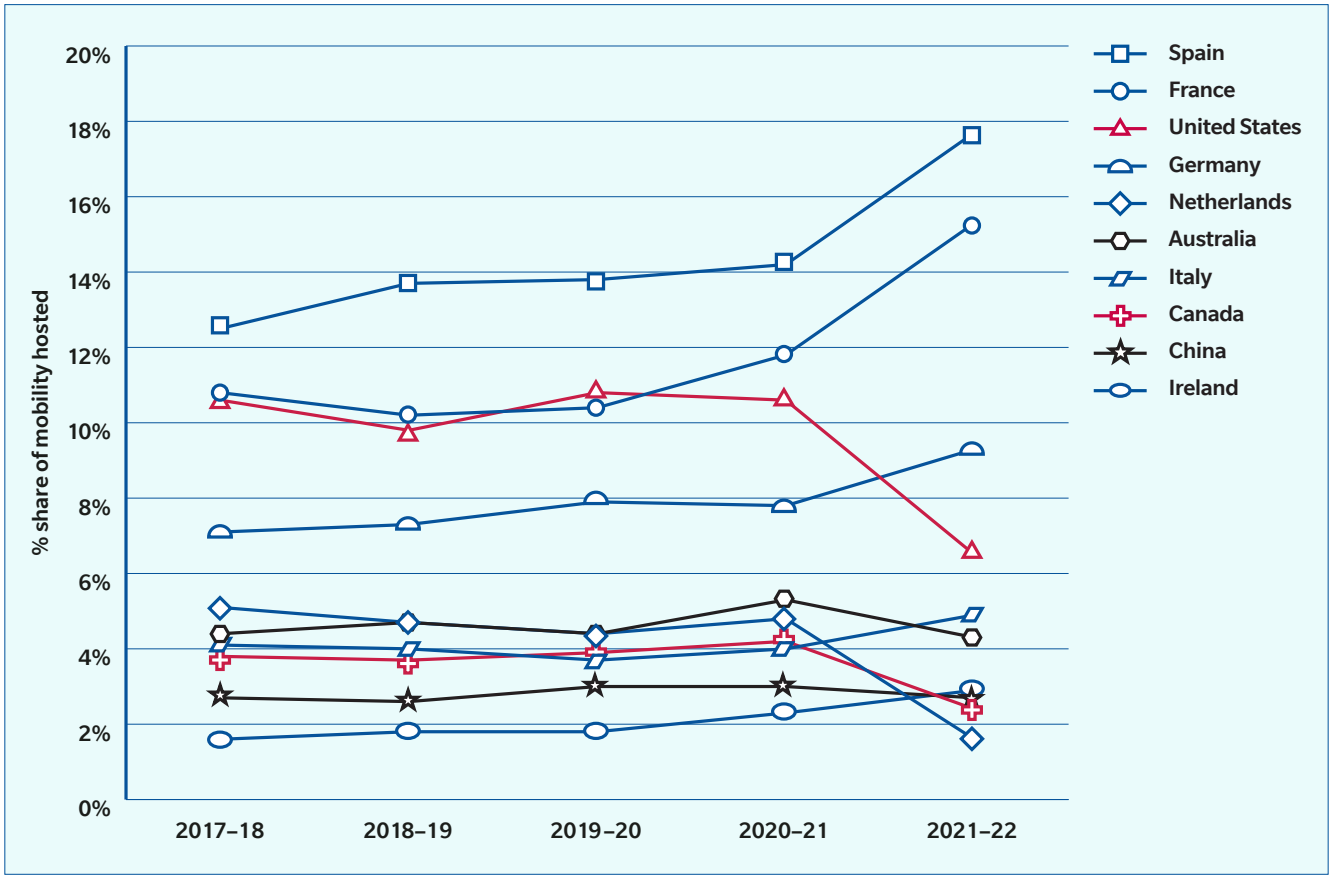
7 **Italy** 4.0% 5,580

10 **Ireland** 2.0% 2,705

[20] An expanded list of instances of mobility by country, and top mobility destinations by instances of mobility and changes in country ranking, over 2017–18 to 2021–22 can be found in Appendix 5, Figures 70 and 71.

In the five cohorts between 2017–18 and 2021–22, the United States, Australia and Canada were the most popular non-EU destinations. However, their popularity dropped in 2021–22 (see Figure 27). As with the US, Australia and Canada also experienced border closures during the pandemic. Among the six EU destinations in the top 10, all saw an increase in share between 2020–21 and 2021–22 except the Netherlands (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Instances of mobility by country destination, 2017–18 to 2021–22



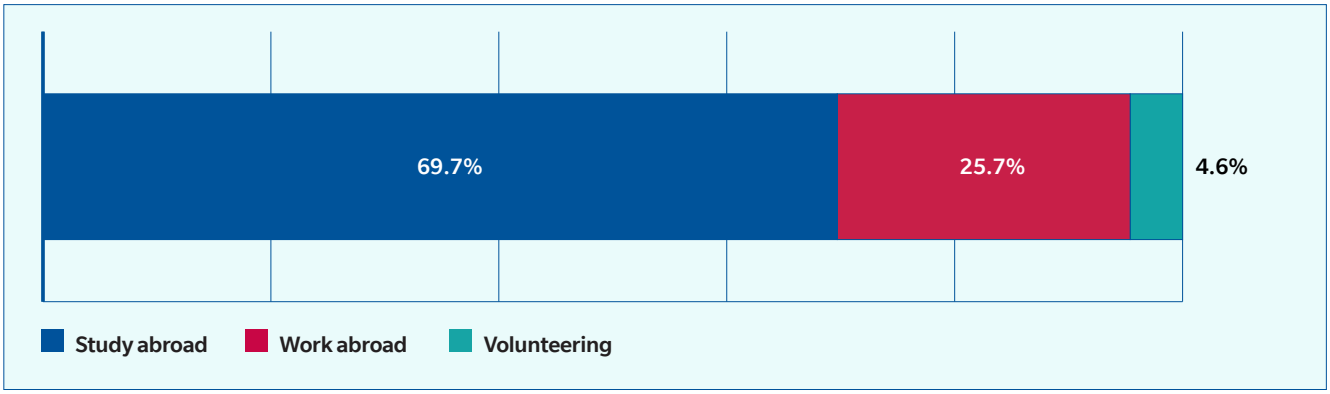
Type of mobility

HESA gathers data on the following types of mobility:

- Study abroad – where a student undertakes a period of study abroad.
- Work abroad – where a student undertakes paid work.
- Volunteering – where a student undertakes voluntary or unpaid work.

This enables us to understand what kinds of activities students undertake, and where.

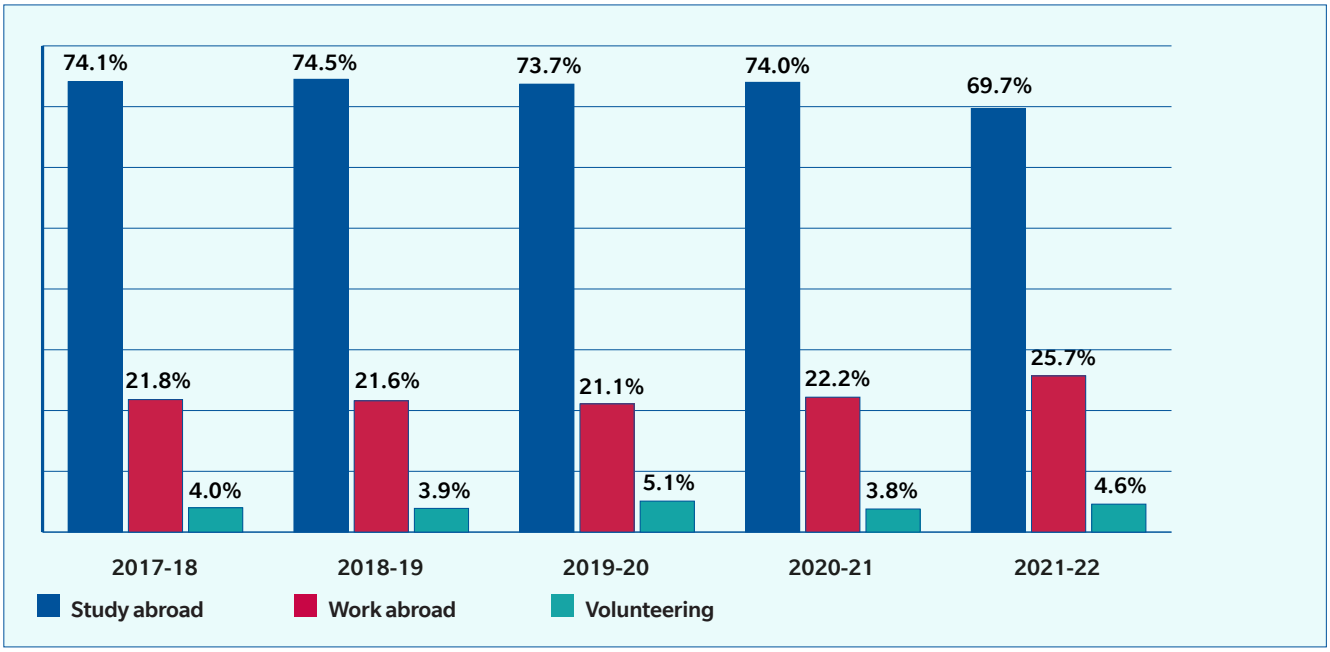
Figure 28: Instances of mobility by mobility type, 2021–21



As a five-year average across the five cohorts, 73.9% of mobility was for study, 21.9% was for work and 4.2% was for volunteering (see Appendix 5, Figure 72).

In the 2021–22 cohort, 69.7% of mobility was for study (9,205), 25.7% was for work (3,385), and 4.6% for volunteering (610). Work abroad has grown in popularity, rising from 21.8% of all mobilities in 2017–18 to 25.7% in 2021–22 (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Instances of mobility by mobility type, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Who goes abroad?

In 2021–22, Spain, France and Fiji had the largest global shares of mobility for study, work and volunteering respectively.

Figure 30: Top county destinations by mobility type, 2021–22

Study abroad	Work abroad	Volunteering
Spain	France	Fiji
17.0%	23.0%	21.3%

Over the five-year period, Europe and East Asia increased in popularity for study abroad, while the US, Australia and Canada declined in popularity.

Across the five years, five of the top 10 study destinations, and eight of the top 10 work destinations, were in the EU (see Figures 31 and 32). At the same time, there were declines in ranking for the US, Canada and Australia, suggesting that border closures in these countries during Covid reduced inward mobility for both study and work (see Figures 31 and 32).

No top 10 EU country destination suffered a fall in average ranking over the five-year period for any type of mobility, likely due to the greater ease of obtaining work and study visas compared to many non-EU countries.

Figure 31: Top 10 country destinations for study-related mobilities 2021–22, and change in ranking between 2017–18 and 2021–22

Destination country	% share of mobility globally	Instances of mobility	Rank in 2021–22	Rank change since 2017–18
Spain	17.0%	1,565	1	▲ 1
France	13.0%	1,195	2	▲ 1
Germany	8.7%	805	3	▲ 1
United States	7.8%	720	4	▼ -3
Italy	5.1%	470	5	▲ 3
Netherlands	5.0%	460	6	■ 0
China	3.6%	330	7	▲ 2
Canada	3.2%	295	8	▼ -1
Portugal	2.4%	220	9	▲ 3
Japan	2.2%	205	10	▲ 1

Figure 32: Top 10 country destinations for work-related mobilities 2021–22 and change in ranking between 2017–18 and 2021–22

Destination country	% share of mobility globally	Instances of mobility	Rank in 2021–22	Rank change since 2017–18
France	23.0%	780	1	■ 0
Spain	19.8%	670	2	■ 0
Germany	11.7%	395	3	■ 0
Ireland	8.6%	290	4	▲ 1
Italy	4.5%	155	5	▲ 1
United States	3.2%	110	6	▼ -2
Netherlands	2.7%	90	7	■ 0
Austria	1.9%	65	8	▲ 4
Belgium	1.6%	55	9	■ 0
Portugal	1.3%	45	10	▲ 14

Among the top 10 volunteering destinations across the five cohorts, two were in Europe, while the remaining eight were in Asia, North America, Oceania, and Africa (see Figure 33). Since volunteering often does not require a visa, unlike those travelling for work or study, it may be easier to volunteer in a wider range of countries.

Figure 33: Top 10 country destinations for volunteer-related mobilities 2021–22 and change in ranking between 2017–18 and 2021–22

Destination country	% share of mobility globally	Instances of mobility	Rank in 2021–22	Rank change since 2017–18
Fiji	21.3%	130	1	▲ 5
Spain	15.3%	95	2	■ 0
France	5.7%	35	3	▲ 4
Italy	4.1%	25	4	▲ 7
Germany	3.6%	20	5	▲ 7
United States	3.4%	20	6	▼ -1
India	3.1%	20	7	▲ 3
Nepal	2.8%	15	8	▲ 1
Uganda	2.3%	15	9	▲ 5
Thailand	1.8%	10	10	▲ 6

Duration of mobility

For the purposes of this report, mobility durations have been grouped into three categories:

- Short-term programmes – between one and three weeks.
- Medium-term programmes – between four and 15 weeks.
- Long-term programmes – 16 weeks or more.

Figure 34: Proportion of short-term mobility, five-year average

24.4%

Actual mobility durations may vary, but these categories were based on where UUKi analysis found peaks in recorded durations.

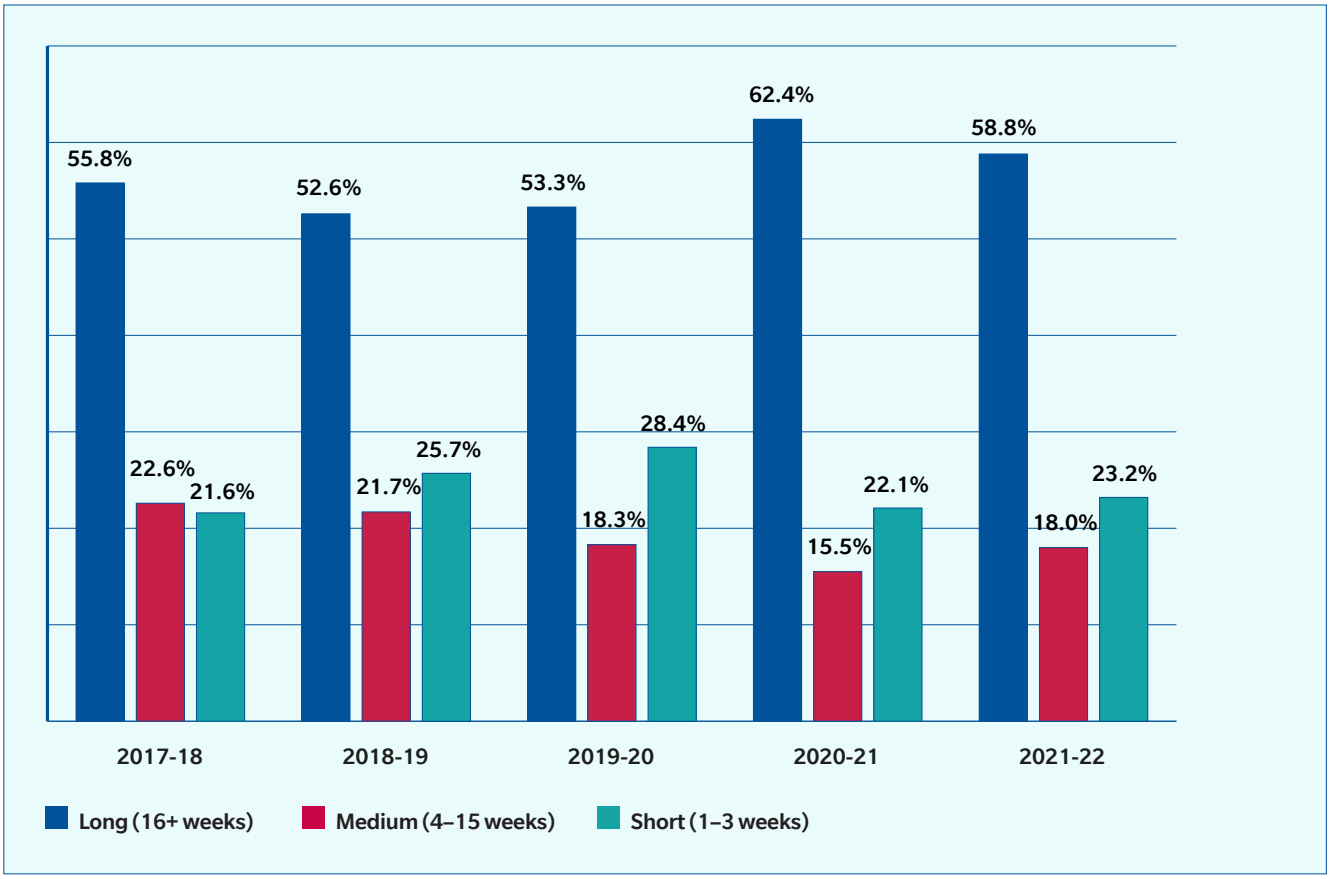
As a five-year average across the five cohorts, 56.3% of mobility was long-term, 19.3% was medium-term and 24.4% was short-term (see Appendix 5, Figure 73). Similarly, in the 2021–22 cohort, most mobility (58.8%) was long-term, followed by short-term mobility (23.2%) and medium-term mobility (18.0%).

Short-term mobility overtook medium-term mobility as the second most common duration in 2018–19 and remained the second most common duration thereafter.

Short-term mobility has grown to account for over one in four mobilities, rising from 21.6% of all mobility in 2017–18 to 28.4% in 2019–20 (see Figure 35). This increase may be due to higher demand from students, and providers expanding short-term provision in order to widen access.

However, share of short-term mobility declined between 2019–20 and 2021–22, from 28.4% to 22.1%, possibly influenced by the pandemic. Medium- and long-term placements, often compulsory or integrated learning, are more difficult to cancel or postpone than shorter placements and may have been more insulated from the pandemic's effects.

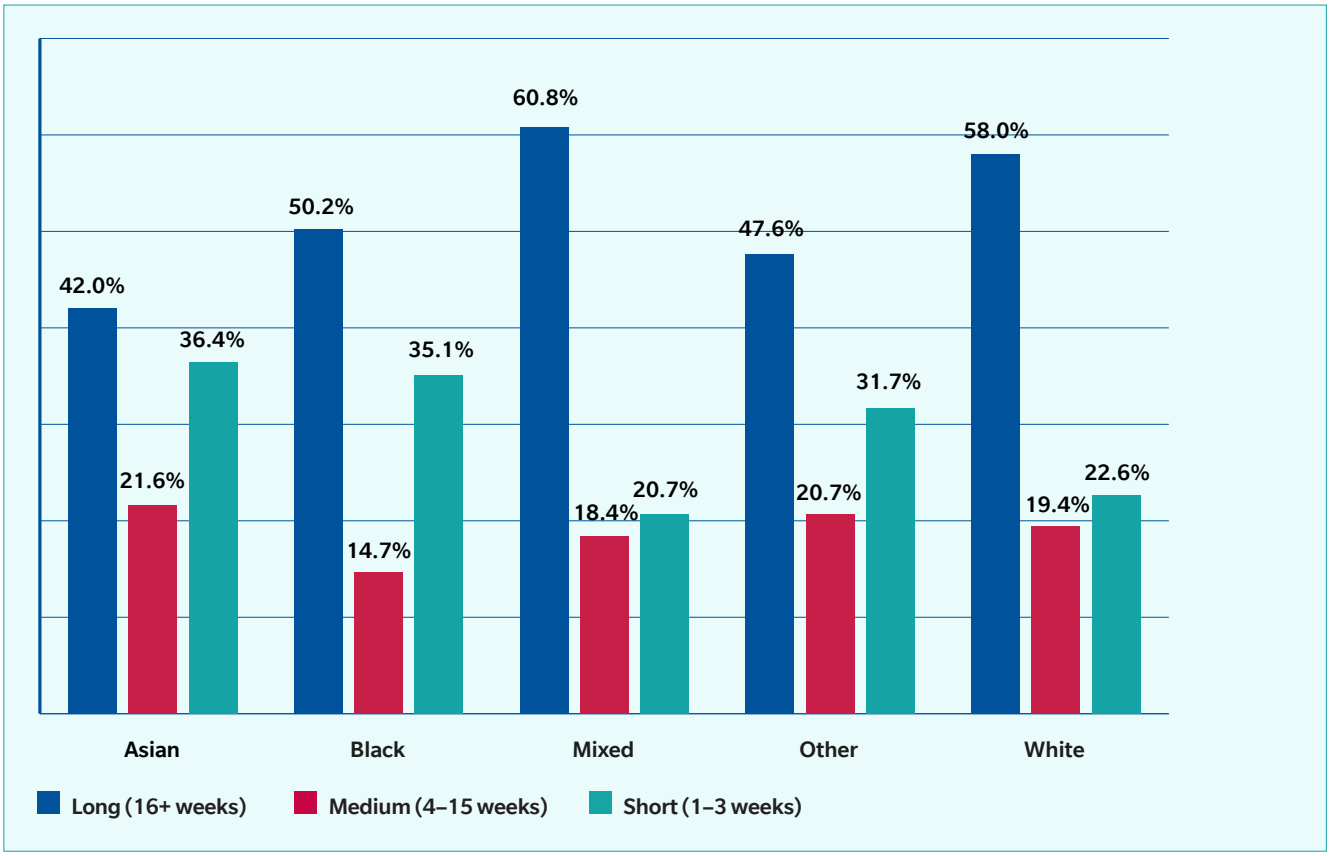
Figure 35: Instances of mobility by duration, 2017–18 to 2021–22



When looking at mobility duration by ethnicity across all five years, long-term mobility was the most common, followed by short-term mobility, and medium-term mobility the least common (see Figure 36). This ordering was consistent across all ethnic groups, except for students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds for whom medium-term mobility was slightly more common than short-term mobility in 2021–22.

Among students from Asian, Black and Other ethnic backgrounds, whilst long-term mobility was still the most common form, short-term mobility made up more than 30.0% of mobilities compared with 23.2% for the cohort overall (see Figure 36).

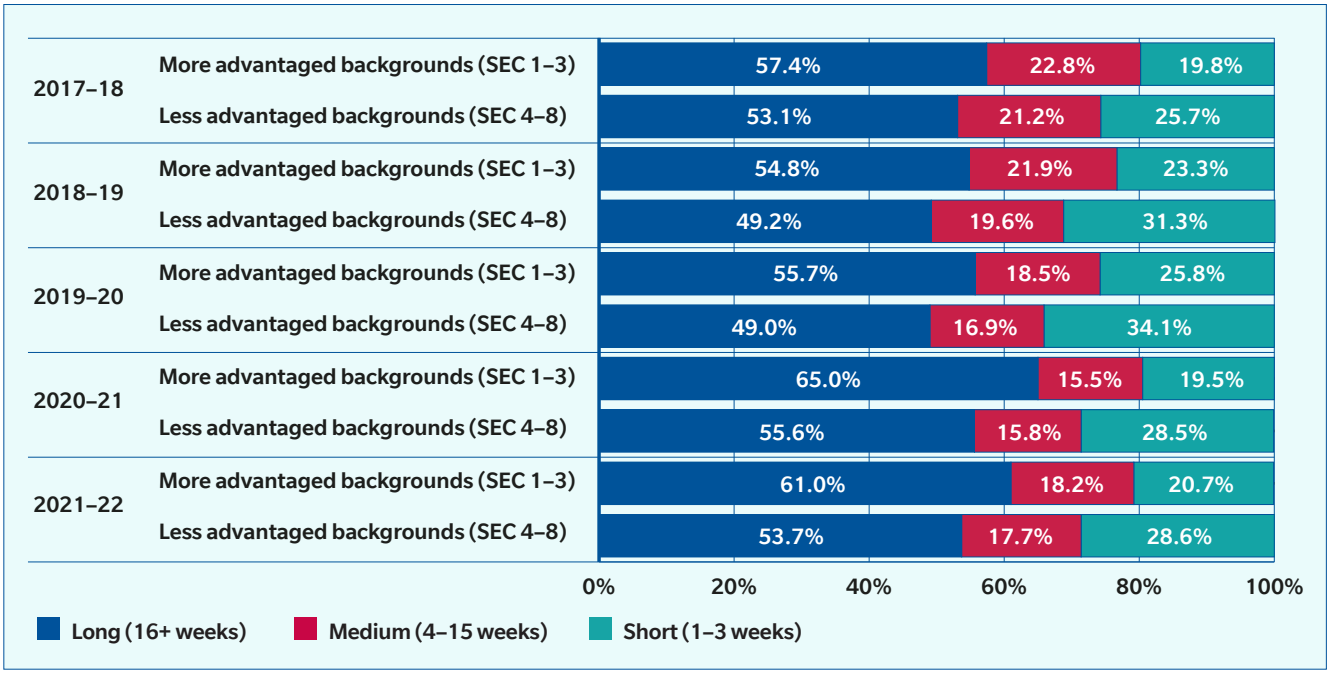
Figure 36: Instances of mobility by ethnicity and mobility duration, five-year average from 2017–18 to 2021–22



In all five years, short-term placements were more common among students from less advantaged backgrounds when compared with their more advantaged peers (see Figure 37). This highlights the positive role of short-term mobility in widening access to opportunities.

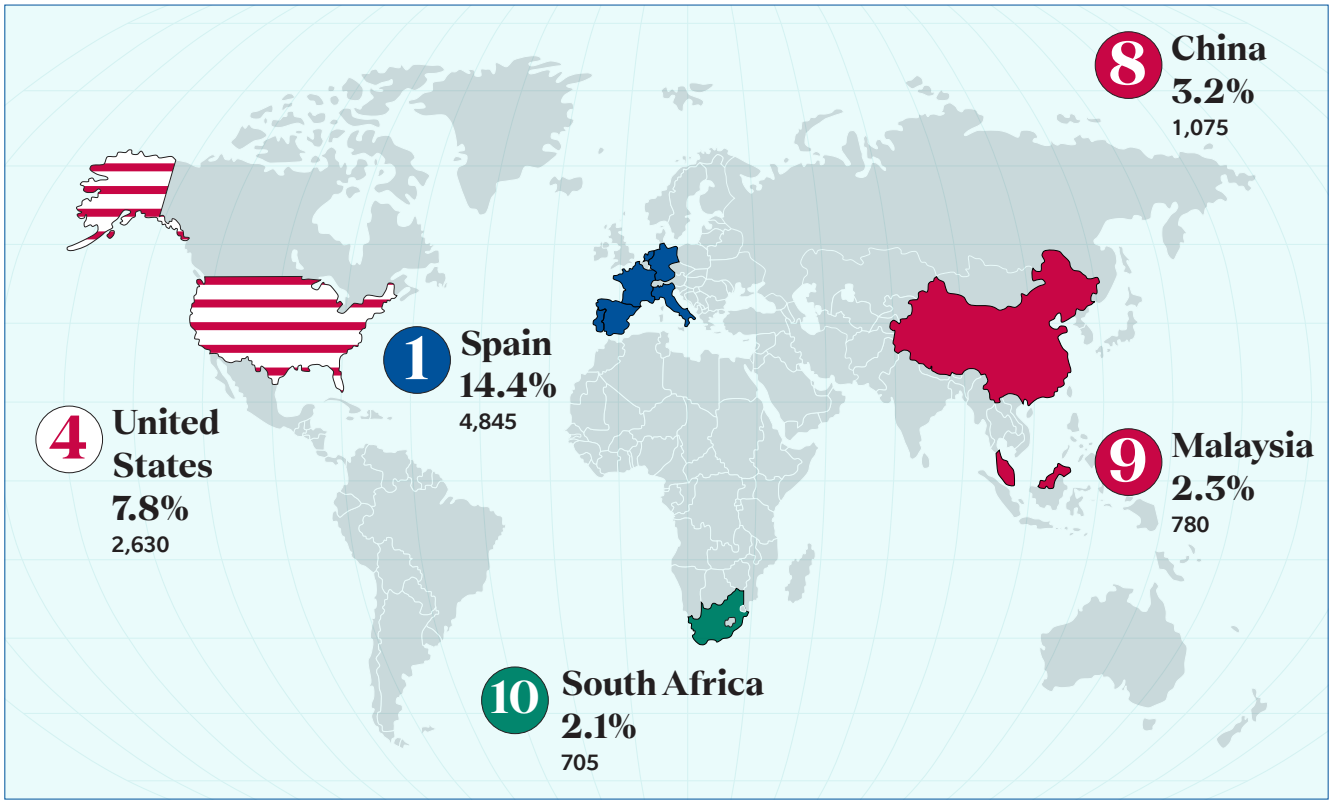
As well as expanding access, short-term placements can also function as a pathway into longer placements. This is important since students from less advantaged backgrounds were less likely to participate in long-term mobility than those from more advantaged backgrounds in all five years. This suggests that there are still barriers for less advantaged students in accessing long-term opportunities.

Figure 37: Instances of mobility by background and duration, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Among the top 10 destinations for short-term mobility, six were within Europe, along with the US, China, Malaysia and South Africa (see Figure 38).

Figure 38: Top 10 country destinations for short-term mobility by instances of mobility, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Spain was the most common destination for short-term mobility, hosting 4,845 students between 2018–19 and 2021–22. At its peak, in 2018–19, Spain accounted for 20.0% of all short-term mobilities, falling to 16.1% in 2021–22 while remaining the leading destination. In 2021–22, Spain was followed by Germany, the Netherlands and the US. Over the same five-year period, China hosted over a thousand short-term mobilities (3.2%).

Some destinations saw declining shares. South Africa hosted 3.1% of short-term mobilities in 2017–18, falling to 0.8% in 2021–22. Similarly, Malaysia fell from a peak of 3.7% in 2019–20 to 1.2% in 2021–22.

Mobility schemes used

HESA gathers data on the following mobility schemes:

- Provider placements, which are established, administered and delivered by the UK higher education provider and which may or may not be funded.
- Sandwich placements, which meet the criteria set out by funding councils, not including Erasmus+.
- Erasmus+ placements that are funded by the Erasmus+ programme.
- Turing Scheme placements that are funded by the UK Turing Scheme which began to fund mobilities in the academic year 2021–22.
- Other schemes, such as British Council language assistants and Generation UK China.

Over the five cohorts, the most common schemes were Erasmus + and provider placements, jointly making up 88.1% of all mobilities, with provider placements making up 50.5% and Erasmus+ placements 37.6%.

Provider placements were the most common type in each year, except in 2021–22, when Erasmus+ placements slightly surpassed them (43.6% Erasmus+ vs 42.1% provider-led).

The Turing Scheme was launched in 2021, providing funding for students to study, work and volunteer abroad, and accounted for 4.0% of mobilities (525 students) in the 2021–22 cohort (see Figure 39).

The Welsh Taith[21] programme provides funding for students in Wales to study, work and volunteer abroad. The programme was launched in 2022 and therefore no Taith mobilities appear in these data, but it would be important to include these students in any future research.

[21] More details on the Taith programme can be found on their website, available at: https://www.taith.wales/, accessed 12/03/2025.

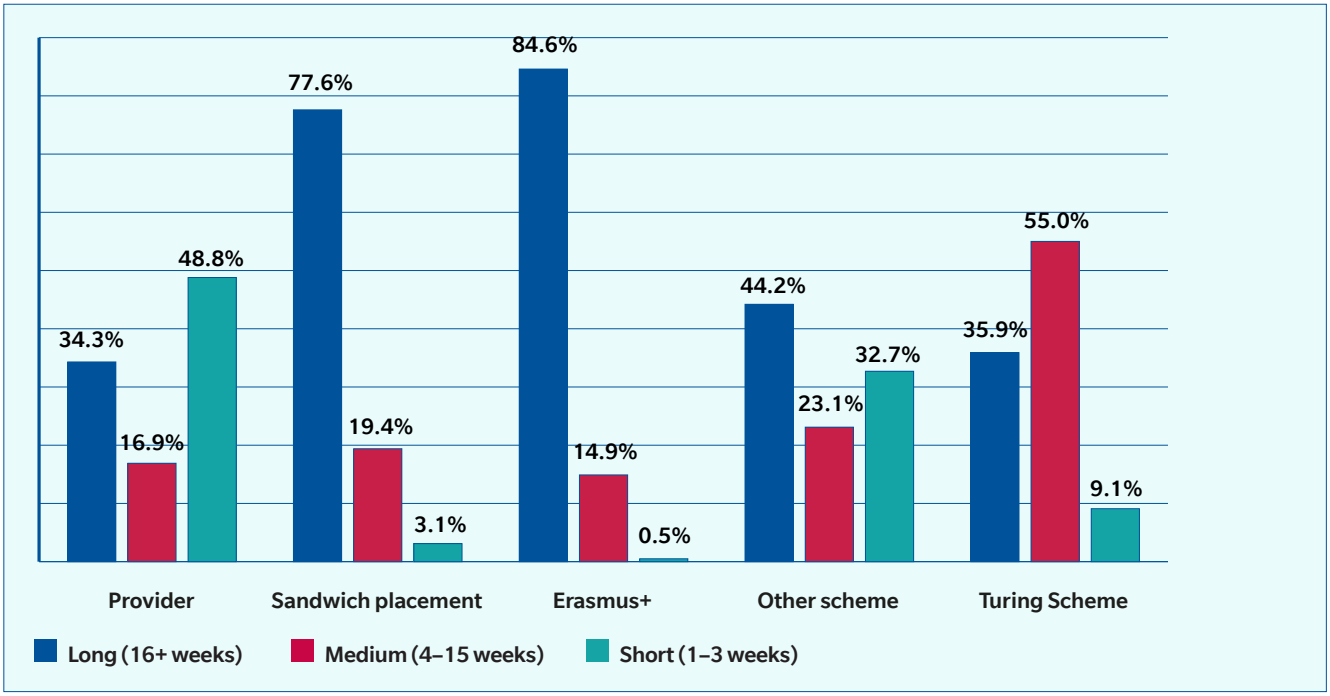
Figure 39: Total and percentage breakdown of instances of mobility by mobility scheme, 2017–18 to 2021–22

Mobility scheme	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Five-year average
Provider	51.7% 16,670	53.3% 18,665	53.3% 18,065	46.9% 11,800	42.1% 5,560	50.5% 69,810
Sandwich placement [22]	4.4% 1,420	4.4% 1,545	5.2% 1,750	5.8% 1,455	4.2% 555	4.9% 6,720
Erasmus+	37.5% 12,090	35.4% 12,385	34.6% 11,720	40.9% 10,285	43.6% 5,760	37.6% 51,955
Other scheme	6.4% 2,080	6.9% 2,420	6.9% 2,350	6.4% 1,610	6.0% 795	6.6% 9,160
Turing Scheme [23]	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 5	4.0% 525	0.4% 525
Total	100% 32,255	100% 35,015	100% 33,885	100% 25,155	100% 13,200	100% 138,170

Across the five cohorts, 36.8% of provider placements were long-term (16 weeks or more), 20.3% were medium-term (four to 15 weeks), and the largest share, 42.9%, were short-term (one to three weeks). In the 2021–22 cohort, almost half (48.8%) of provider placements were short-term (see Figure 40).

Across the five cohorts, 83.5% of Erasmus+ placements were long-term (16 weeks or more), 15.9% were medium-term (four to 15 weeks), and 0.6% were short-term (one to three weeks). In the 2021–22 cohort, the most popular length of mobility was long-term (see Figure 40).

Figure 40: Instances of mobility by mobility scheme and mobility duration, 2021–22



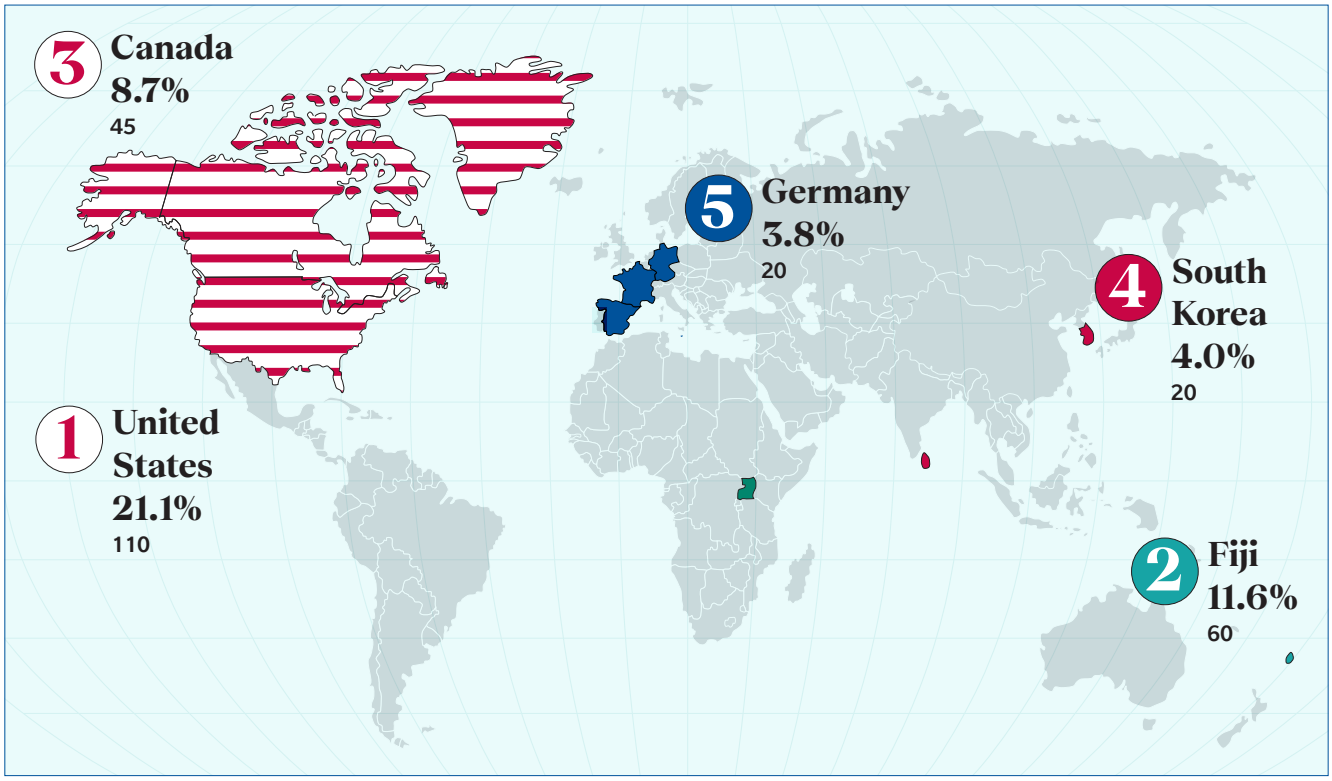
The 2020 Erasmus+ funding call was the last one in which the UK participated. Since projects were funded for 24 and 36 months, there was a period of dual funding following the launch of the Turing Scheme in 2021–22. Additionally, the volume of Turing mobilities among the 2021–22 cohort was relatively small, as fewer students go abroad in their final year. These factors make it difficult to assess the impact of moving from Erasmus+ to Turing funding, and more data from 2022–23 onwards would be needed to evaluate the impact of the change in funding sources.

[22] As defined by criteria set out by funding councils, not Erasmus+.
[23] The Turing Scheme was launched in 2021.

Who goes abroad?

2021–22 was the first year of Turing Scheme mobilities. Six of the top 10 destinations for Turing Scheme placements were outside Europe (see Figure 41). Despite the small numbers (525 mobilities in the 2021–22 cohort), Turing Scheme mobility is spread across a wide range of destinations. One of the key features of the Turing Scheme is that it enables mobility to any country in the world.

Figure 41: Top 10 countries for Turing Scheme instances of mobility, 2021–22



6 France 3.6% 20

7 Spain 3.6% 20

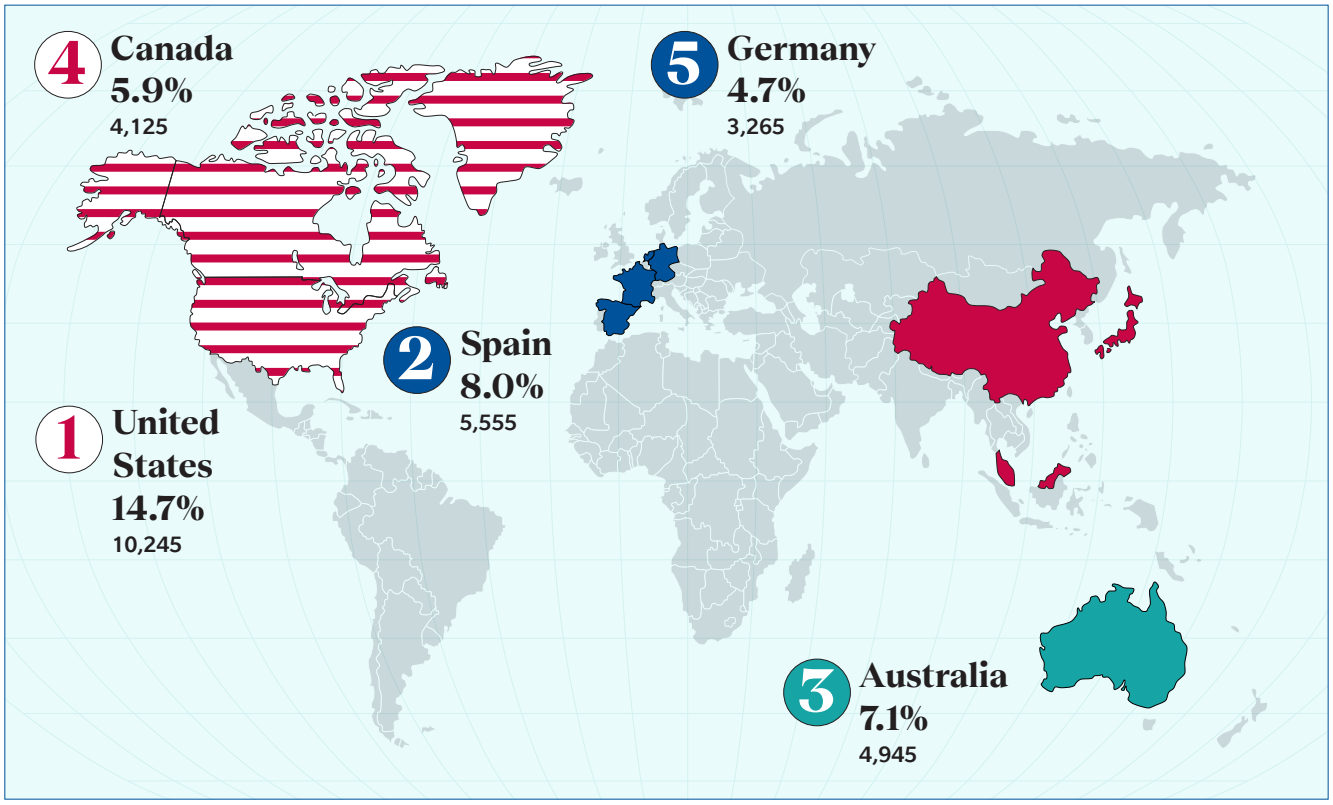
8 Sri Lanka 2.5% 15

9 Uganda 2.5% 15

10 Malta 2.3% 10

Provider-led mobilities are similarly diverse, with the top 10 destinations including the US, Australia, Canada, three East Asian countries, and four European countries (see Figure 42).

Figure 42: Top 10 countries for provider-led instances of mobility, 2017–18 to 2021–22



6 China
4.3%
2,985

7 Netherlands
4.1%
2,865

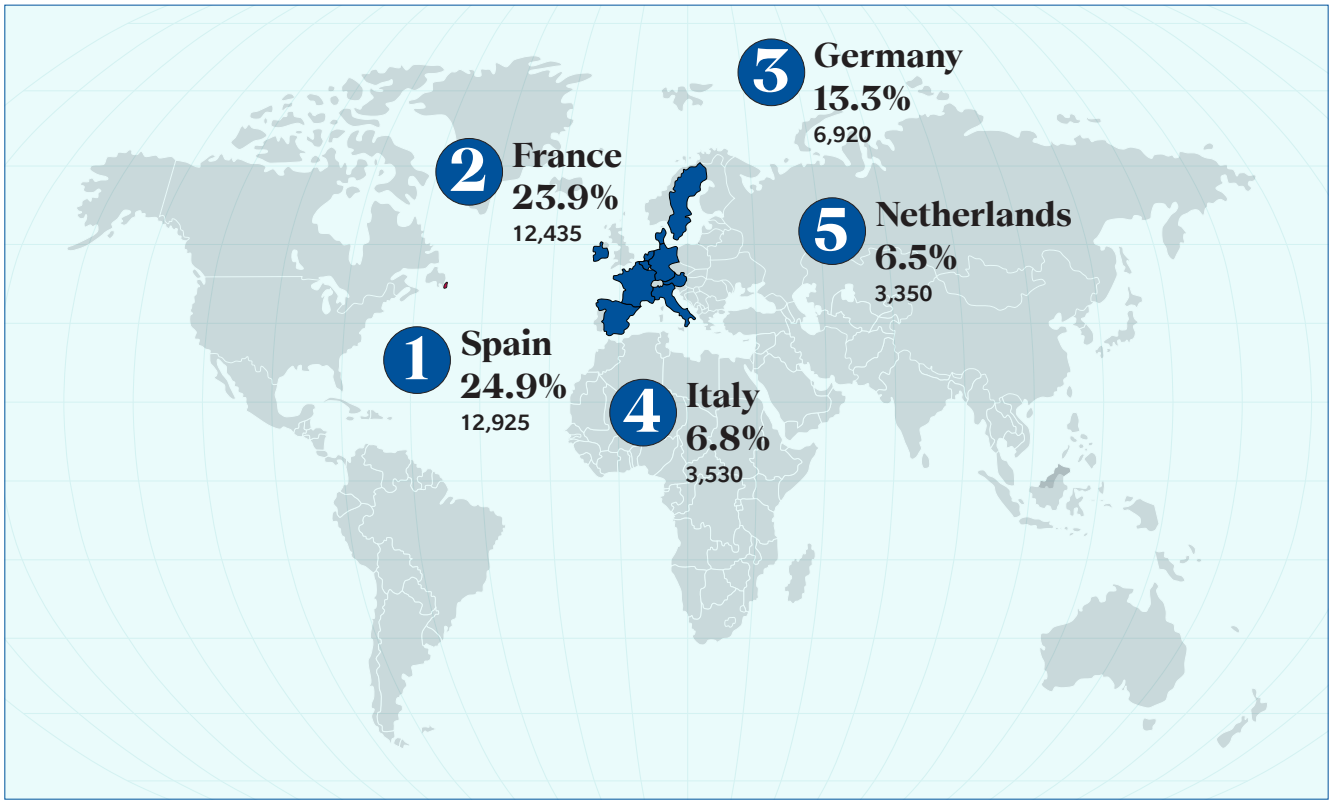
8 France
3.6%
2,515

9 Japan
2.7%
1,905

10 Malaysia
2.5%
1,770

The top 10 Erasmus+ destinations were all in Europe (see Figure 43). Spain was the most popular, with one in four students going there. France was a close second with 23.9% of students, and Germany third with 13.3%.

Figure 43: Top 10 countries for Erasmus+ instances of mobility, 2017–18 to 2021–22



6 **Sweden** 2.7% 1,410

7 **Ireland** 3.3% 1,730

8 **Denmark** 2.3% 1,195

9 **Austria** 2.2% 1,120

10 **Belgium** 2.0% 1,020

What do they do next?

Academic outcomes

Figure 44: Percentage of students who are awarded a first-class degree, 2021–22 and five-year average

2021–22	43.1% Mobile	31.1% Non-mobile
Five-year average	39.0% Mobile	30.9% Non-mobile

In all five cohorts, students who were mobile were awarded first-class degrees at higher rates than their non-mobile peers. As a five-year average, 39.0% of mobile students were awarded a first-class degree compared with 30.9% of non-mobile students.

In the 2021–22 cohort, 43.1% of mobile students were awarded a first-class degree, compared with 31.1% of non-mobile students (see Figure 45). Excluding language and area studies, 43.3% of mobile students were awarded a first-class degree compared with 31.1% of non-mobile students (see Figure 46).

When combining both first and upper second-class degree awards, in the 2021–22 cohort 87.1% of mobile students were awarded these results compared to 76.1% of non-mobile students (see Figure 45). Additionally, mobile students were 2.2ppt less likely to be awarded a third-class degree. Excluding language and area studies, mobile students were awarded first-class and upper second-class degrees at a rate of 84.3% compared with 75.8% of non-mobile students and were 1.9ppt less likely to be awarded a third-class degree (see Figure 46).

Figure 45: Classification of degrees, 2021–22

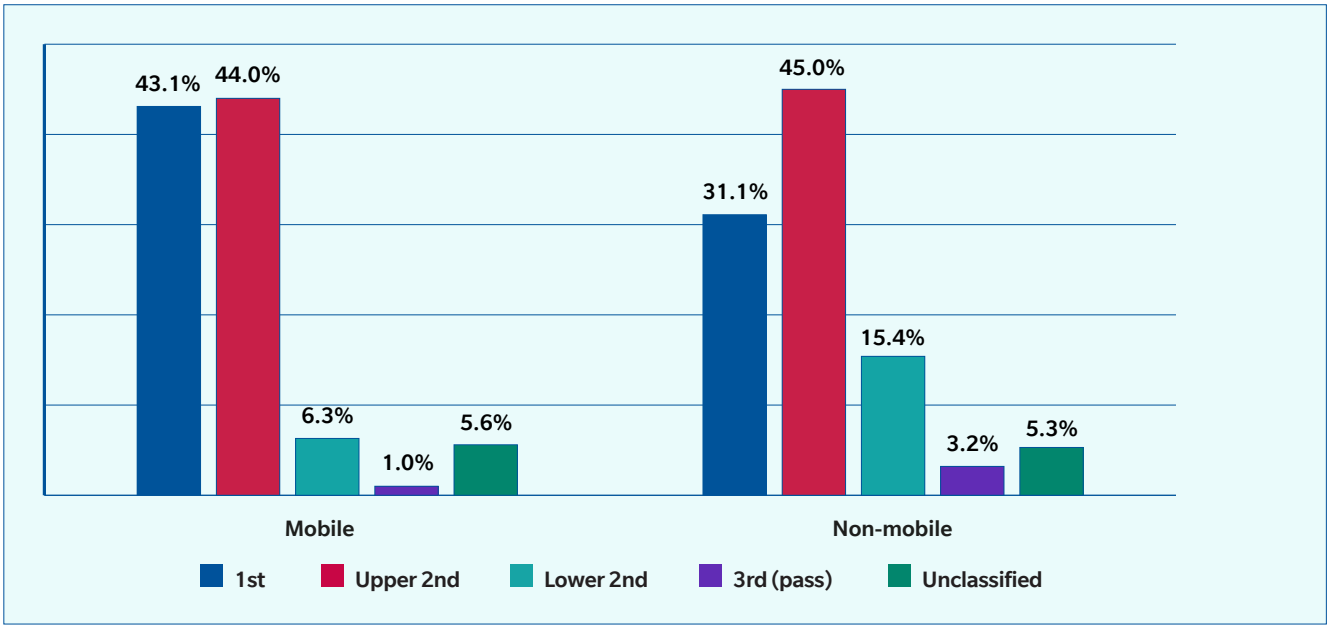
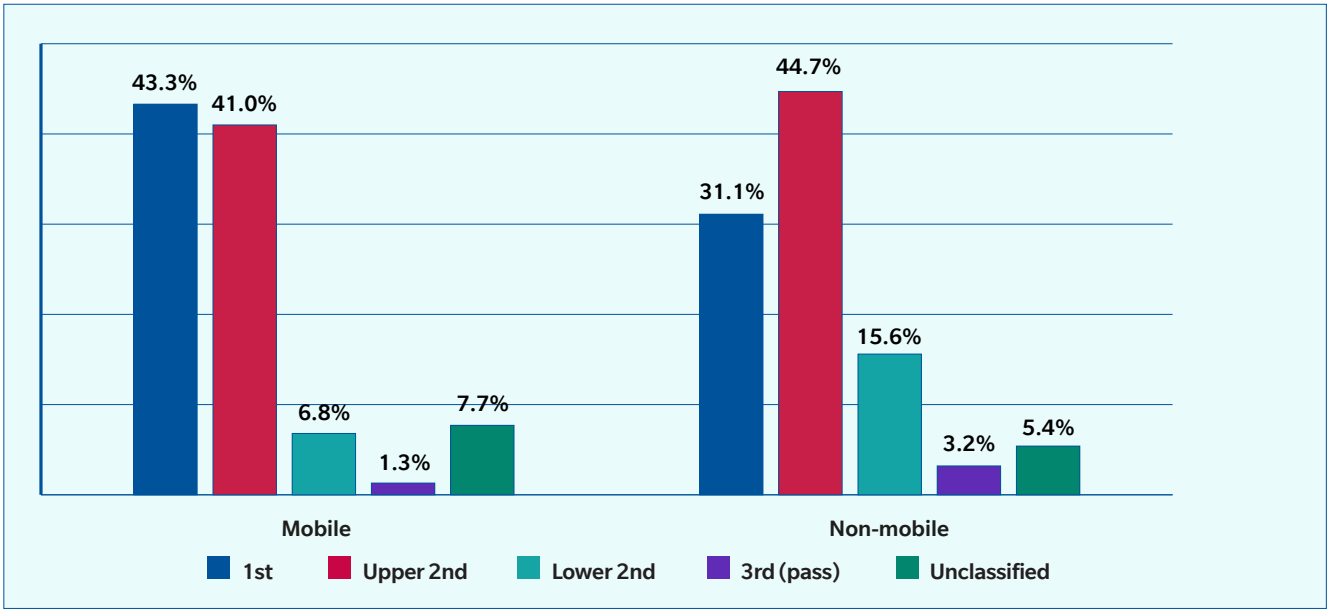


Figure 46: Classification of degrees for subjects without languages, 2021–22



Graduate outcomes

In this section of the report, we compare the graduate outcomes of students who were mobile during their degree to those who were not mobile. This includes analysis of their graduate activity, rates of professional-level employment and earnings.

All outcomes described relate to data from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, collected 15 months after students complete their studies. For the 2021–22 cohort, 5,830 respondents had undertaken a period of mobility during their degree.

Employment status

Graduates who had been mobile during their degree had lower rates of unemployment than their non-mobile peers in all five years. The five-year average unemployment rate for graduates who had been mobile during their degree was 4.7% compared to 5.1% for non-mobile students (see Figure 47).

Graduates who had been mobile as students were slightly more likely to be studying and engaged in other activities (including travel and volunteering), but slightly less likely to be in employment,[24] including employment and study, than their non-mobile peers[25] (see Figure 47).

[24] Includes full-time, part-time and voluntary employment.

[25] All graduate outcomes in this section relate to self-reported employment status of respondents at the time of surveying 15 months after course completion.

Figure 47: Graduate activity, 2017–18 to 2021–22 and five-year average

		% of students						No. of students					
Mobility marker	Graduate activity	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Five-year average	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Five-year average
Mobile	Other	6.8%	5.4%	5.4%	5.1%	5.8%	5.7%	1,050	940	875	610	340	3,815
	Study only	9.8%	10.4%	11.0%	9.6%	8.2%	10.1%	1,525	1,795	1,805	1,160	480	6,765
	Unemployment	3.4%	6.0%	4.0%	4.9%	5.7%	4.7%	535	1,030	645	590	335	3,135
	Work	70.6%	67.4%	68.2%	70.3%	70.9%	69.2%	10,970	11,635	11,145	8,490	4,120	46,355
	Work and study	9.4%	10.8%	11.4%	10.1%	9.3%	10.4%	1,465	1,870	1,865	1,225	540	6,960
Non-mobile	Other	6.2%	6.0%	5.7%	4.8%	5.7%	5.7%	10,010	9,905	9,275	8,000	9,260	46,455
	Study only	8.6%	9.0%	9.4%	8.1%	7.0%	8.4%	13,975	14,915	15,345	13,330	11,330	68,895
	Unemployment	4.1%	6.3%	4.3%	5.2%	5.8%	5.1%	6,595	10,430	7,020	8,555	9,380	41,980
	Work	71.6%	68.0%	69.9%	71.7%	70.9%	70.4%	115,755	112,660	113,885	118,620	114,265	575,190
	Work and study	9.5%	10.7%	10.7%	10.3%	10.5%	10.3%	15,345	17,655	17,360	17,025	16,975	84,365

Mobile graduates in science and non-science subjects (both subjects without languages) had higher employment rates and lower unemployment rates than their non-mobile peers, whereas mobile graduates in language and area studies had higher unemployment rates. Mobile graduates of non-science subjects, excluding language and area studies, had the highest employment rates (73.3%) compared to other subject types (see Figure 48).

Figure 48: Graduate activity by subject type, 2021–22

Subject of study	Mobility marker	Work	Work and study	Study only	Unemployment	Other
Science subjects	Mobile	72.5%	8.9%	8.2%	4.5%	5.9%
	Non-mobile	71.3%	10.2%	7.9%	5.1%	5.5%
Non-science subjects (excluding language and area studies)	Mobile	73.3%	9.1%	7.2%	5.5%	4.8%
	Non-mobile	71.0%	10.7%	5.8%	6.4%	6.0%
Language and area studies	Mobile	65.6%	10.0%	9.7%	7.5%	7.2%
	Non-mobile	64.1%	11.7%	10.6%	7.1%	6.6%

What do they do next?

Professional-level employment

Graduates who had been mobile during their degree were more likely to be employed in a professional-level job than their non-mobile peers in all five cohorts (see Figure 49). On average, across the five cohorts, the rate of professional-level employment for mobile graduates was higher (75.9%) than non-mobile graduates (72.0%).

Among the 2021–22 graduating cohort, 76.4% of mobile graduates who were working were in a professional-level job, compared to 72.7% of their non-mobile peers (see Figure 49).

Figure 49: Professional-level jobs, 2017–18 to 2021–22

Mobility marker	Job type	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Mobile	Professional-level jobs	78.3%	74.5%	74.3%	76.6%	76.4%
	Non-professional-level jobs	21.7%	25.5%	25.7%	23.4%	23.6%
Non-mobile	Professional-level jobs	72.1%	69.8%	71.2%	74.2%	72.7%
	Non-professional-level jobs	27.9%	30.2%	28.8%	25.8%	27.3%

Figure 50: Professional-level jobs, 2021–22 and five-year average

2021–22	76.4% Mobile	72.7% Non-mobile
Five-year average	75.9% Mobile	72.0% Non-mobile

Salaries

Graduates who had been mobile during their degree and were in full-time, paid employment had higher average earnings than non-mobile graduates in all five cohorts. As a five-year average across the five cohorts, salaries of mobile graduates were 1.6.% higher than non-mobile graduates (£26,932 vs £26,501) (see Figure 51).

Mobile graduates in the 2021–22 cohort had an average salary of £29,745. This was 2.2% higher than the average salary of non-mobile graduates (£29,112).

Figure 51: Average salaries, 2017–18 to 2021–22

Mobility scheme	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Five-year average
Mobile	£26,363	£26,216	£26,301	£28,000	£29,745	£26,932
Non-mobile	£24,651	£24,945	£25,959	£27,704	£29,112	£26,501

Short-term mobilities

The 2021 UUKi report *Short-term mobility, long-term impact*[26] highlights the importance of short-term mobility in widening access to mobility. Short-term mobility provides greater choice and flexibility for students and removes some of the barriers associated with longer placements. It can also function as a stepping stone and pathway to long-term mobility.

Gone international: a new generation shows that short mobilities (one to three weeks) grew from around one fifth of all mobilities to more than a quarter of mobilities between 2017–18 and 2019–20. Although the proportion dropped in 2020–21 due to the pandemic, it rose again to 23.2% in 2021–22.

The data indicate that even short periods of mobility are linked to enhanced academic and employment outcomes. Students who participated in at least one period of short-term mobility during their degree were more likely to be awarded a first-class degree, less likely to be unemployed, more likely to be working in a professional-level job, and had higher average earnings than those who were not mobile. Since the Turing Scheme funds short-term mobilities these findings are particularly relevant.

Across the five cohorts, the five-year average rate at which short-term mobile students were awarded first-class degrees was 35.9% compared with 30.9% for non-mobile students (see Appendix 4, Figure 72). In the 2021–22 cohort, 40.7% of short-term mobile students were awarded a first-class degree compared to 31.1% of non-mobile students.

Figure 52: First-class degree outcomes, short-term mobility, 2021–22

2021–22	40.7% Short-term mobile	31.1% Non-mobile
Five-year average	35.9% Short-term mobile	30.9% Non-mobile

In the 2021–22 cohort, short-term mobile students were less likely to be unemployed (5.7%) than their non-mobile peers (5.8%). This trend was observed in four out of the five years (see Figure 53).

Across the five cohorts, the five-year average rate of professional-level employment was higher for short-term mobile students (73.6%) than those who were not mobile (72.0%) (see Figure 53). In the 2021–22 cohort, short-term mobile students were employed in professional-level jobs at a higher rate (77.3%) than both the mobile average (76.4%) and those who were not mobile (72.7%) (see Figure 53).

Figure 53: Professional-level job rates and unemployment rates for short-term mobilities, 2021–22 and five-year average

		Mobile	Non-mobile
Professional-level job rates	2021–22	77.3%	72.7%
	Five-year average	73.6%	72.0%
Unemployment rates	2021–22	5.7%	5.8%
	Five-year average	4.8%	5.1%

HESA reporting is compulsory for mobilities lasting four weeks or more, so not all short-term mobility instances are recorded in the Student Record. Since short-term mobilities are key for widening access, it is vital that providers report all mobility instances to HESA to ensure comprehensive data.

[26] Universities UK International (2021) Short-term mobility, long-term impact, available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/short-term-mobility-long-term-impact, accessed 12/03/2025.

Conclusion

***Gone international: a new generation* shows that students who are mobile consistently achieve better academic outcomes, secure more professional-level jobs and earn higher salaries than their non-mobile peers. The evidence suggests that international experiences can benefit both students and society and highlights the need to rebuild mobility activity, increasing the numbers of students who participate in international experiences. This should be a priority at the institutional level and a key part of the UK's refreshed International Education Strategy.**

The increase in participation of students from some disadvantaged and underrepresented groups is positive, but disparities remain. It underscores the importance of continued support and encouragement from higher education providers and policymakers to widen access to mobility opportunities. The data show that international experiences are linked to better academic and employment outcomes for all students. This provides evidence in support of the value of mobility, yet there is more that can be done.

To maximise the benefits of mobility for all students, and facilitate sustainable strategic partnerships, it is crucial to secure stable, long-term funding, including support for short-term placements and multi-year projects. Accurate data reporting and consistent evaluation are essential for understanding and enhancing the scale and impact of mobility programmes. Additionally, providing pre- and post-placement support can help students leverage their international experiences for future career success and maximise the benefit for the least advantaged students.

While this research focuses on physical mobility, it is important to recognise that Internationalisation at Home (IaH) also plays an important and complementary role in expanding opportunities for students, allowing those unable to go abroad to gain valuable skills and competencies. By integrating these elements into institutional strategies and government policies, we can empower a new generation of globally minded graduates.

We wish to record our gratitude to Northern Consortium for funding this vital work, and Jisc for providing data from the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey. Without these partners, this work would not have been possible.

Appendix 1: Definitions

The report examines differences in mobility participation rates and graduate outcomes for socioeconomically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups. These groups are identified using markers within the HESA Student Record. Definitions are outlined below and applied to both students and graduates.

Ethnicity

Students and graduates are grouped into the following (HESA) ethnicity groupings:

- **Black:** Caribbean, African, and other Black backgrounds.
- **Asian:** Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Filipino, and other Asian backgrounds.
- **Mixed:** combinations of White and other ethnic groups, such as Black African or Asian, and any other mixed or multiple ethnic background.
- **Other:** includes Arab and other ethnic backgrounds.
- **White:** includes British, Irish, Polish, Roma, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Showman/Showwoman, and other White backgrounds.

Disabled students

Referred to as 'disabled students', this group includes individuals within the HESA Student Record declaring a disability such as:

- Visual or hearing impairments, physical or mobility issues, and long-standing health conditions.
- Mental health conditions, autism spectrum disorders, and specific learning difficulties.
- Two or more conditions, or other impairments.

Care leavers

Care leavers are students who have been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, or at school-leaving age (16 years old in the UK).

Students from low-participation neighbourhoods

HESA uses the POLAR4 classification, which groups Census areas into five categories based on higher education participation rates. Students are classified based on their home postcode. HESA defines students from low-participation neighbourhoods as those who are in the lowest quintile (quintile one).

Less advantaged backgrounds

HESA categorises students into one of seven bands based on parental occupation, derived from the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). Students are classed into one of these classifications based on their answer to the following question:

'If you are under 21, please give the occupation of your parent, step-parent or guardian who earns the most. If he or she is retired or unemployed, give their most recent occupation. If you are 21 or over, please give your own occupation.'

These seven classifications are then split into two groups:

- **More advantaged:** higher and lower managerial/professional or intermediate occupations (NS-SEC 1–3).
- **Less advantaged:** small employers, technical, semi-routine, or routine occupations (NS-SEC 4–7).

Mature students

HESA classifies undergraduates as mature if they are 21 years old or over when they commence their degree.

Notes on parental education

Students whose parents (including adoptive parents, step-parents and guardians) do not hold any higher education qualification(s) are counted within this grouping.

Graduate outcomes measures

- **Employment status:** graduates are categorised as working, studying, working and studying, unemployed, or engaged in other activities (e.g. travel, volunteering).
- **Job type:** professional-level jobs are defined as those within SOC codes 1–3, while non-graduate jobs fall under codes 4–9.
- **Salary:** salary figures represent annual salaries reported for each group.

Gender

HESA records gender through self-reported alignment with sex assigned at birth, categorised as:

- **Yes:** same gender as assigned at birth.
- **No:** not the same gender as assigned at birth (which may include students of diverse gender identities including trans women, trans men, and non-binary and agender students).
- **Unknown:** includes 'information refused', 'prefer not to say' and 'not available'.

Students who do not identify with either 'male' or 'female' could fall into either the 'no' or 'unknown' categories. For all results to the response 'yes', this data has been matched to the sex data, either as 'male' or 'female' for participation rates.

In the report, we refer to students who responded 'yes' as cis male or cis female. 'No' responses are referred to as 'trans' in the report (trans being used as an umbrella term covering trans, non-binary, gender fluid and gender non-conforming people). 'Unknown' is referred to as unknown. It is worth noting that intersex people may fall into any of these categories.

Appendix 1: Definitions

References:

AdvanceHE defines cisgender as 'a term used to describe people who are not transgender'. They also define trans or transgender as 'inclusive umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex (male or female) they were assigned at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, trans men and women, non-binary people and dual role people. Not all people that can be included in the term will associate with it.' https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/Trans_staff%20and%20students_HE_guidance_1655287866.pdf

UUK defined trans or transgender in 2016: 'These terms are often used interchangeably as umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex, regardless of whether they undergo gender reassignment hormonal treatment or surgery.' https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/changing-the-culture.pdf

Additionally, the LGBTQ+ charity Stonewall has a glossary of terms on their website where they define trans as a 'term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Stonewall uses 'trans' as an umbrella term including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, agender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine and trans feminine.' https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/list-lgbtq-terms

(all links were accessed 12/3/2025)

Professional-level job

Where we reference a 'professional-level job' this is based on the Standard Occupational Coding (SOC) system which was developed by the Office for National statistics (ONS) and used in official statistics. We define professional-level jobs as those belonging to SOC codes one to three. These include:

(1) Managers, directors and senior officials.

(2) Professional occupations.

(3) Associate professional occupations.

The remaining codes are non-professional-level jobs. Not applicable and unknowns are excluded.

Provider-led mobility

Provider-led mobility includes all mobilities that are arranged by the university at which the student is registered, and which are not funded by the Erasmus+ or Turing Schemes. Students may, or may not, receive funding from the university (or other sources).

Appendix 2: Methodology and notes on the data

Methodology

This report uses data from two HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) datasets provided by Jisc:

- The Student Record.
- The Graduate Outcomes survey.

Both records have Official Statistics Accreditation from the Office for Statistics Regulation.

The analysis focuses on the 2021–22 graduating cohort, with high-level trends drawn from five years of data on previous graduating cohorts (2017–18 to 2021–22). For this research we linked the Graduate Outcomes data to that of the Student Record, allowing comparisons between mobile and non-mobile students based on participation rates, destinations, and graduate outcomes.

The report focuses on UK-domiciled, full-time, undergraduate, first-degree completers of the Graduate Outcomes survey, with limited analysis of part-time students. In 2021–22, 54% of the full-time, UK-domiciled graduating cohort responded to the Graduate Outcomes survey.

The Graduate Outcomes survey data allow us to identify:

- What respondents were doing 15 months after graduating, including whether they were in work or further study.
- Student characteristics, including gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

The Student Record data allow us to identify:

- Whether the student undertook a period of mobility as part of their degree.
- Whether the student travelled during their degree.
- The mobility scheme with which the period abroad was associated.
- Whether those that were mobile were volunteering, studying or working abroad.

Linking the Graduate Outcomes survey and the Student Record data allows us to identify the characteristics and outcomes of mobile students and to compare their outcomes with those of students who did not undertake a period of mobility.

A total of 888,145 UK-domiciled, undergraduate, first-degree Graduate Outcomes survey completers are included in this analysis, of which 67,300 were identified as being mobile for a period of one week or more.

As per HESA's rounding methodology, all student numbers presented in the report have been rounded to the nearest five. Calculations have been completed on actual figures.

Notes on the data

1. Previous UUKi reports in the *Gone international* series use data from the HESA Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey to analyse outcomes, where this report uses the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey which replaced DLHE in 2018. Direct comparisons between *Gone international* reports should be avoided as the surveys are different, including where the point of survey is 15 months after course completion for Graduate Outcomes and six months for DLHE.
2. The research focuses on UK-domiciled, undergraduate, full-time, first-degree students. Postgraduates and non-UK-domiciled students are not in scope.
3. Some findings in this report are based on the number of instances of mobility rather than the number of students. This means that students who spent time in more than one country during their studies are counted more than once in some parts of the report. We state where this applies. Note that in this report, there were 113,355 students who had a period of mobility, and 138,170 instances in total.
4. HESA data on gender are captured by two fields: sex (male, female, other), and if an individual's gender identity is the same as their sex (yes, no, unknown, information refused). 'Other' is a broad category that includes students who are intersex and students for whom information is not available but also gender identities such as gender fluid and polygender. This report includes a breakdown of sex data only where the student's gender matches their sex registered at birth. Although combining these fields provides a better understanding of an individual's gender, it does not encompass all gender identities. The gender identity question was optional to all students until 2020–21.
5. The ethnicity data provided by HESA is grouped into five broad categories 'Asian', 'Black', 'White', 'Mixed', and 'Other' which limits analysis of how graduate outcomes vary across specific ethnic identities.
6. HESA's POLAR4 methodology was updated for the 2018–19 cohort onwards. Additionally, POLAR4 data exclude data for Scotland (both country of provider and student domicile). For this reason, when comparing LPN trends over time, 2018–19 is used as the earliest comparison point instead of 2017–18.
7. Where Student Record data is presented, a minimum threshold is applied to ensure accurate representation and reliability. Data related to student characteristics (e.g. disabled) is included only when there are at least 30 Full Person Equivalents and is calculated as an average. For data that does not involve personal data or protected characteristics, the threshold is 20 Full Person Equivalents. However, these students are still included in the overall student and graduate cohort analysis.

Appendix 2: Methodology and notes on the data

8. As per HESA's standard reporting terms, where the Graduate Outcomes response rate is below 30 Full Person Equivalent and data is calculated as an average, or below 50 and calculated as a percentage, the sample size is considered too small to be representative or provide reliable outcomes analysis. As an example, fewer than 30 students who were mobile care leavers in 2021–22 responded to the Graduate Outcomes survey, so care leavers have not been looked at in isolation in the 'Where did they go next?' section, but they have been included in mobility participation rates and in the overall graduate averages in each cohort. It is noted in the relevant sections of the report where the sample size has been too small to present.
9. Due to lower overall numbers of mobility in 2021–22, some student cohorts were too small to draw a fair conclusion. It has been indicated in the report where this is the case.
10. HESA reporting is compulsory for mobilities with a combined duration of four weeks or more. Consequently, not all instances of mobility under four weeks were reported and captured within the Student Record. A Covid concession which allowed mobilities of two weeks or more to be funded by the Turing Scheme in 2021–22 means that there are likely to be some Turing Scheme mobilities within this group. The resulting analysis is based on available data for mobile student populations.
11. The data analysed in this report focus on the most recent cohort for whom we have Graduate Outcomes data, with some reference to the previous four years. The report does not seek to identify all long-term mobility trends.
12. The Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted travel for the 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22 academic years, limiting physical mobility. Under a Covid concession some students undertook mobilities remotely (or blended). Some types of mobility may have been disproportionately affected.
13. The report does not attempt to identify causal links between the experience of going abroad and graduate outcomes but compares the profiles of mobile students with the graduate outcomes for relevant cohorts.
14. For data protection purposes, student numbers and instances of mobility are rounded to the nearest five as per HESA's standard rounding methodology.

Appendix 3: Outcomes by gender

This appendix looks at academic and graduate outcomes broken down by gender. It compares the outcomes of mobile students with those of their non-mobile peers for the 2021–22 cohort, and as a five-year average of the five cohorts.

Some sample sizes in the 2021–22 cohort fell below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data) and have been excluded and noted where relevant. The data are included within the five-year averages.

Academic outcomes

Mobile students of all genders analysed were awarded first-class degrees at higher rates than their non-mobile peers (see Figure 54).

In the 2021–22 cohort, the rates were as follows:

- **Cis females:** 45.0% mobile vs 32.5% non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** 40.7% mobile vs 30.0% non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** 38.9% mobile vs 25.8% non-mobile.

The 2021–22 respondent sample sizes for trans students were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).

The five-year average rates were as follows:

- **Cis females:** 41.1% mobile vs 32.5% non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** 37.9% mobile vs 30.6% non-mobile.
- **Trans students:** 40.3% mobile vs 27.7% non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** 36.8% mobile vs 28.5% non-mobile.

Graduate outcomes

Professional-level employment

Mobile graduates of all genders analysed were in professional-level employment at higher rates than their non-mobile peers (see Figure 54).

In the 2021–22 cohort, the rates were as follows:

- **Cis females:** 73.6% mobile vs 71.4% non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** 81.5% mobile vs 80.3% non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** 73.8% mobile vs 73.1% non-mobile.

The 2021–22 respondent sample sizes for trans students were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).

Five-year average rates:

- **Cis females:** 75.1% mobile vs 70.5% non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** 80.3% mobile vs 74.3% non-mobile.
- **Trans students:** 69.3% mobile vs 66.8% non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** 73.7% mobile vs 72.4% non-mobile.

Salaries

In the 2021–22 cohort, salaries were higher for mobile cis male and female graduates, but lower for graduates of unknown gender compared with their non-mobile peers:

- **Cis females:** £28,851 mobile vs £27,987 non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** £31,499 mobile vs £30,816 non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** £27,942 mobile vs £28,647 non-mobile.

The 2021–22 respondent sample sizes for trans students were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).

As a five-year average, salaries were higher for mobile graduates of all genders compared with their non-mobile peers (see Figure 54):

- **Cis females:** £26,600 mobile vs £25,756 non-mobile.
- **Cis males:** £28,962 mobile vs £28,379 non-mobile.
- **Trans students:** £24,771 mobile vs £23,880 non-mobile.
- **Students of unknown gender:** £25,783 mobile vs £25,759 non-mobile.

Appendix 3: Outcomes by gender

Graduate activity

The graduate activity data present a more mixed picture. Unemployment rates were lower for mobile graduates of all genders as a five-year average, but in 2021–22 the rates for cis female and trans graduates were higher (see Figure 54).

All mobile graduates except trans graduates were slightly less likely to be only working than their non-mobile peers.

All graduates who were mobile except trans graduates were more likely to be studying than their non-mobile peers. Mobile trans graduates were more likely to be in work and further study.

Figure 54: Academic and graduate outcomes by gender, 2021–22 and five-year average

			Cis female		Cis male		Trans		Unknown	
			2021–22	Five-year average	2021–22	Five-year average	2021–22	Five-year average	2021–22	Five-year average
First-class degree award		Mobile	45.0%	41.1%	40.7%	37.9%	Sample size too small	40.3%	38.9%	36.8%
		Non-mobile	32.5%	32.5%	30.0%	30.6%		27.7%	25.8%	28.5%
Graduate activity	Other	Mobile	6.1%	5.7%	5.0%	5.6%		5.2%	7.2%	5.7%
		Non-mobile	6.2%	5.9%	5.1%	5.2%		6.2%	5.9%	5.8%
	Study only	Mobile	8.5%	9.9%	8.3%	10.7%		7.0%	5.2%	9.9%
		Non-mobile	7.1%	8.1%	7.2%	8.7%		8.3%	4.9%	8.6%
	Unemployment	Mobile	5.9%	4.3%	5.6%	5.2%		4.8%	5.0%	4.8%
		Non-mobile	5.3%	4.6%	6.5%	6.0%		5.0%	6.0%	5.0%
	Work	Mobile	70.3%	69.9%	72.0%	67.8%		71.7%	72.8%	69.1%
		Non-mobile	71.4%	71.2%	70.0%	69.3%		70.5%	73.1%	70.4%
	Work and study	Mobile	9.2%	10.2%	9.2%	10.6%		11.4%	9.7%	10.4%
		Non-mobile	10.0%	10.1%	11.3%	10.7%		10.1%	10.1%	10.2%
Professional-level jobs		Mobile	73.6%	75.1%	81.5%	74.8%		69.3%	73.8%	73.7%
		Non-mobile	71.4%	70.5%	80.3%	74.3%		66.8%	73.1%	72.4%
Salary		Mobile	£28,851	£26,600	£31,499	£28,962		£24,771	£27,942	£25,783
		Non-mobile	£27,987	£25,756	£30,816	£28,379		£23,880	£28,647	£25,759

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

This appendix looks at the academic and graduate outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students. It compares the outcomes of mobile students with those of their non-mobile peers for the 2021–22 cohort (see Appendix 4, Figure 55), and as a five-year average of the five cohorts (see Appendix 5, Figure 56).

Some respondent sample sizes in the 2021–22 cohort fell below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data) and have been excluded and noted where relevant. The data are included within the five-year averages.

Academic outcomes

Ethnicity

In the 2021–22 cohort:

- 41.2% of mobile students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds were awarded a first-class degree, **11.1ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (30.1%).
- 35.6% of mobile Asian students were awarded a first-class degree, **9.7ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (25.9%).
- 28.6% of mobile Black students were awarded a first-class degree, **11.1ppt** higher than their non-mobile peers (17.4%).

Sample sizes for the 2021–22 cohort of students from Other ethnic backgrounds were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).

As a five-year average of the five cohorts:

- 37.8% of mobile students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds were awarded a first-class degree, **8.4ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (29.4%).
- 29.2% of mobile Asian students were awarded a first-class degree, **2.9ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (26.3%).
- 23.7% of mobile Black students were awarded a first-class degree, **6.4ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (17.3%).
- 28.4% of students from Other ethnic backgrounds were awarded a first-class degree, **3.4ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (25.0%).

Disabled students

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 39.9% of disabled students who were mobile during their studies were awarded a first-class degree. This was **9.0ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (30.9%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 37.6% of mobile disabled students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **8.1ppt higher** than for non-mobile disabled students (29.5%).

Parental education

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 38.9% of mobile students whose parents did not have higher education qualifications were awarded a first-class degree. This was **9.8ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (29.1%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 36.6% of mobile students whose parents did not have higher education qualifications were awarded a first-class degree. This was **7.3ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (29.3%).

Low-participation neighbourhoods (LPN)

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 35.7% of mobile LPN students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **8.3ppt higher** than their non-mobile (LPN) peers (27.4%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 36.3% of mobile LPN students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **8.7ppt higher** than their non-mobile peers (27.6%).

State-funded school background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 42.8% of mobile students who attended a state-funded school were awarded a first-class degree. This was **12.0ppt higher** than their non-mobile (state-funded school) peers (30.8%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 39.2% of mobile students with a state-funded school background were awarded a first-class degree. This was **8.5ppt higher** than non-mobile students from a state-funded school background (30.7%).

Less advantaged background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 36.9% of mobile students from less advantaged backgrounds were awarded a first-class degree. This was **9.0ppt higher** than non-mobile students from less advantaged backgrounds (27.9%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 36.1% of mobile students from less advantaged backgrounds were awarded a first-class degree. This was **7.9ppt higher** than non-mobile students from less advantaged backgrounds (28.2%).

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Mature students

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 38.7% of mobile mature students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **8.0ppt higher** than their mature, non-mobile peers (30.7%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 33.9% of mobile mature students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **3.6ppt higher** than non-mobile mature students (30.3%).

Part-time students

- In the 2021–22 cohort, 21.4% of mobile part-time students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **6.4ppt lower** than their part-time, non-mobile peers (27.8%).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 18.3% of mobile part-time students were awarded a first-class degree. This was **5.3ppt lower** than non-mobile part-time students (23.6%).

Care leavers

- Sample sizes for the 2021–22 cohort were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).
- As an average across the five cohorts, 34.0% of mobile care leavers were awarded a first-class degree. This was **12.6ppt higher** than non-mobile care leavers (21.4%).

Figure 55: First-class degree award rates, 2021–22

		Mobile	Non-mobile
All students		43.1%	31.1%
Less advantaged backgrounds		36.9%	27.9%
Ethnicity	Asian	35.6%	25.9%
	Black	28.6%	17.4%
	Mixed	41.2%	30.1%
	Other	Sample size too small	
	White	46.3%	34.3%
Known disability		39.9%	30.9%
Low-participation neighbourhood		35.7%	27.4%
Part-time		21.4%	27.8%
Mature students		38.7%	30.7%
Care leaver		Sample size too small	
No parental higher education		38.9%	29.1%
State-funded school or college		42.8%	30.8%

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Figure 56: Five-year average of first-class degree award rates

		Mobile	Non-mobile
All students		39.0%	30.9%
Less advantaged backgrounds		36.1%	28.2%
Ethnicity	Asian	29.2%	26.3%
	Black	23.7%	17.3%
	Mixed	37.8%	29.4%
	Other	28.4%	25.0%
	White	41.3%	33.4%
Disability		37.6%	29.5%
Low-participation neighbourhood		36.3%	27.6%
Part-time		18.3%	23.6%
Mature students		33.9%	30.3%
No parental higher education		36.6%	29.3%
Care leavers		34.0%	21.4%
State-funded school or college		39.2%	30.7%
Gender	Trans	40.3%	27.7%
	Unknown	36.8%	28.5%
	Cis male	37.9%	30.6%
	Cis female	41.1%	32.5%

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Graduate outcomes

This section looks at graduate employment and earnings for less advantaged and underrepresented students. It compares the graduate outcomes of mobile and non-mobile students in the most recent, 2021–22 cohort, and the five-year averages across the five cohorts.

Professional-level jobs

In this section we compare the rates of professional-level employment for graduates from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds who were mobile during their degree with those of their non-mobile peers. We compare outcomes for the 2021–22 graduating cohort (see Appendix 4, Figure 57) and using five-year averages of the five cohorts (see Appendix 4, Figure 58).

Ethnicity

In the 2021–22 cohort:

- Asian graduates who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (80.3% mobile vs 72.1% non-mobile).
- Black graduates who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (72.0% mobile vs 69.0% non-mobile).
- Graduates from Mixed ethnic backgrounds who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (82.0% mobile vs 72.2% non-mobile).

Sample sizes for students from Other ethnic backgrounds were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).

As a five-year average:

- Asian graduates who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (79.9% mobile vs 71.8% non-mobile).
- Black graduates who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (71.7% mobile vs 68.0% non-mobile).
- Graduates from Mixed ethnic backgrounds who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (77.6% mobile vs 71.7% non-mobile).
- Graduates from Other ethnic backgrounds who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (74.7% mobile vs 71.2% non-mobile).

Disabled graduates

- In the 2021–22 cohort, disabled graduates who were mobile during their degree had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (73.1% mobile vs 70.5% non-mobile).
- Disabled graduates who were mobile during their degree had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (73.0% mobile vs 69.9% non-mobile).

Parental higher education

- In the 2021–22 cohort, graduates whose parents did not have higher education qualifications and who were mobile during their degree had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (72.9% mobile vs 70.8% non-mobile).
- Graduates whose parents did not have higher education qualifications and who were mobile during their degree had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (72.3% mobile vs 69.8% non-mobile).

Low-participation neighbourhood (LPN)

- In the 2021–22 cohort, graduates from low-participation neighborhoods (LPN) who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (72.3% mobile vs 70.3% non-mobile).
- LPN graduates who were mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (69.4% mobile vs 68.3%).

State-funded school or college background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, graduates with a state-funded school background who were mobile had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (75.3% mobile vs 72.1% non-mobile).
- Graduates with state-funded school backgrounds who were mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (74.3% mobile vs 71.1% non-mobile).

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Less advantaged background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, mobile less advantaged graduates had a **higher** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (70.1% mobile vs 69.1% non-mobile).
- Graduates from less advantaged backgrounds who were mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (70.2% mobile vs 68.3%).

Mature

- In the 2021–22 cohort, graduates who had been mature students and mobile had a **lower** rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (72.9% mobile vs 76.7% non-mobile).
- Graduates who had been mature students and mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (81.2% mobile vs 77.2% non-mobile).

Part-time

- Sample sizes for the 2021–22 cohort were below the threshold and have been excluded (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).
- Graduates who were part-time students and mobile had a **lower** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (74.3% mobile vs 79.4% non-mobile).

Care leavers

- Sample sizes for the 2021–22 cohort of care leavers were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).
- Graduate care leavers who were mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (69.2% mobile vs 65.8% non-mobile).

Figure 57: Professional-level job rate by student background summary, 2021–22

		Mobile	Non-mobile
All students		76.4%	72.7%
Less advantaged backgrounds		70.1%	69.1%
Ethnicity	Asian	80.3%	72.2%
	Black	72.0%	69.0%
	Mixed	82.0%	72.1%
	Other	Sample size too small	
	White	75.7%	73.2%
Known disability		73.1%	70.5%
Low-participation neighbourhood		72.3%	70.3%
Part-time		Sample size too small	
Mature students		72.9%	76.7%
Care leaver		Sample size too small	
No parental higher education		72.9%	70.8%
State-funded school or college		75.3%	72.1%

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Figure 58: Five-year average rate of professional-level jobs

		Mobile	Non-mobile
All students		75.9%	72.0%
Less advantaged backgrounds		70.2%	68.3%
Ethnicity	Asian	79.9%	71.8%
	Black	71.7%	68.0%
	Mixed	77.6%	71.7%
	Other	74.7%	71.2%
	White	75.5%	72.4%
Disability		73.0%	69.9%
Low-participation neighbourhood		69.4%	68.3%
Part-time		74.3%	79.4%
Mature students		81.2%	77.2%
No parental higher education		69.2%	65.8%
Care leavers		72.3%	69.8%
State-funded school or college		74.3%	71.1%
Gender	Trans	69.3%	66.8%
	Unknown	73.7%	72.4%
	Cis male	80.3%	74.3%
	Cis female	75.1%	70.5%

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Salaries

In this section we compare the average salaries of graduates from less advantaged and underrepresented backgrounds who were mobile during their degree, with those of their non-mobile peers. We compare outcomes for the 2021–22 graduating cohort (see Appendix 4, Figure 59) and present five-year averages of the five cohorts (see Appendix 4, Figure 60).

Ethnicity

In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of:

- Asian mobile graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£30,851 mobile vs £30,462 non-mobile).
- Black mobile graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£30,803 mobile vs £29,539 non-mobile)
- Mobile graduates from Mixed ethnic backgrounds was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£29,635 mobile vs £29,401 non-mobile).
- Mobile graduates from Other ethnic backgrounds was **lower** than that of their non-mobile peers (£29,447 vs £30,547).

As a five-year average, the salary of:

- Asian graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£28,688 mobile vs £28,074 non-mobile).
- Black mobile graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£27,733 mobile vs £27,210 non-mobile).
- Graduates from Mixed ethnic backgrounds was **lower** than that of their non-mobile peers (£27,262 mobile vs £27,290 non-mobile).
- Graduates from Other ethnic backgrounds was **lower** than that of their non-mobile peers (£27,883 mobile vs £28,345 non-mobile).

Disabled graduates

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of disabled graduates who were mobile during their degree was **higher** than those of their non-mobile peers (£29,992 mobile vs £28,511 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary of disabled graduates who were mobile during their degree was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£26,584 mobile vs £26,101 non-mobile).

Parental education

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile graduates whose parents did not have higher education qualifications was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£28,486 mobile vs £28,281 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary for mobile graduates whose parents did not have higher education qualifications was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£25,999 mobile vs £25,720 non-mobile).

Low-participation neighbourhoods (LPN)

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile LPN graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£27,996 mobile vs £27,484 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary of mobile LPN graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£25,114 mobile vs £25,091 non-mobile).

State-funded school background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile graduates with a state-funded school background was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£28,974 mobile vs £28,646 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary of mobile graduates with a state-funded school background was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£26,368 mobile vs £26,051 non-mobile).

Less advantaged background

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile graduates from less advantaged backgrounds was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£28,552 mobile vs £27,937 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary of mobile graduates from less advantaged backgrounds was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£25,689 mobile vs £25,507 non-mobile).

Mature graduates

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile mature graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£30,771 mobile vs £29,840 non-mobile).
- As a five-year average, the average salary of mobile mature graduates was **higher** than that of their non-mobile peers (£28,987 mobile vs £27,257).

Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Part-time graduates

- In the 2021–22 cohort, the average salary of mobile part-time graduates was **lower** than that of their non-mobile peers (£31,073 mobile vs £37,274 non-mobile).[27]
- As a five-year average, the average salary of mobile part-time graduates was **lower** than that of their non-mobile peers (£29,359 mobile vs £34,487 non-mobile).

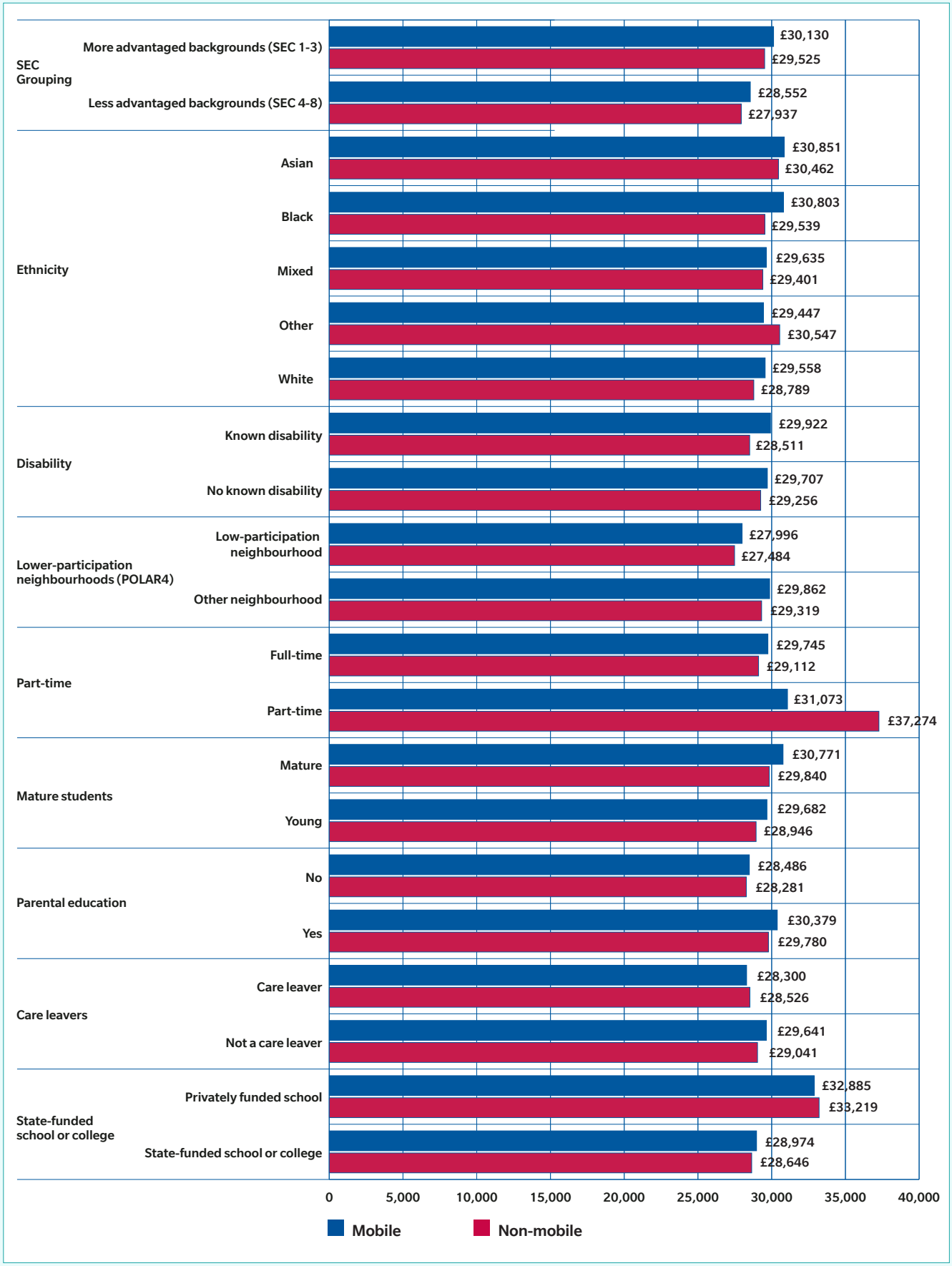
Care leavers

- Sample sizes for the 2021–22 cohort of care leavers were below the threshold (see Appendix 2, Notes on the data).
- Graduate care leavers who were mobile had a **higher** five-year average rate of professional-level employment than their non-mobile peers (£26,158 mobile vs £25,984 non-mobile).

[27] The professional-level employment and salary outcomes of graduates who were part-time students departs from the overall trend. The professional employment rate and salaries for both mobile and non-mobile part-time graduates are much higher than the cohort average which suggests that the kinds of work that part-time students do alongside their studies and where they are in their career is an important factor. It may be more difficult to combine a period of mobility with a full-time job on top of part-time studies for example. This may explain the discrepancy in outcomes for mobile and non-mobile part-time graduates. This could be an area for further analysis.

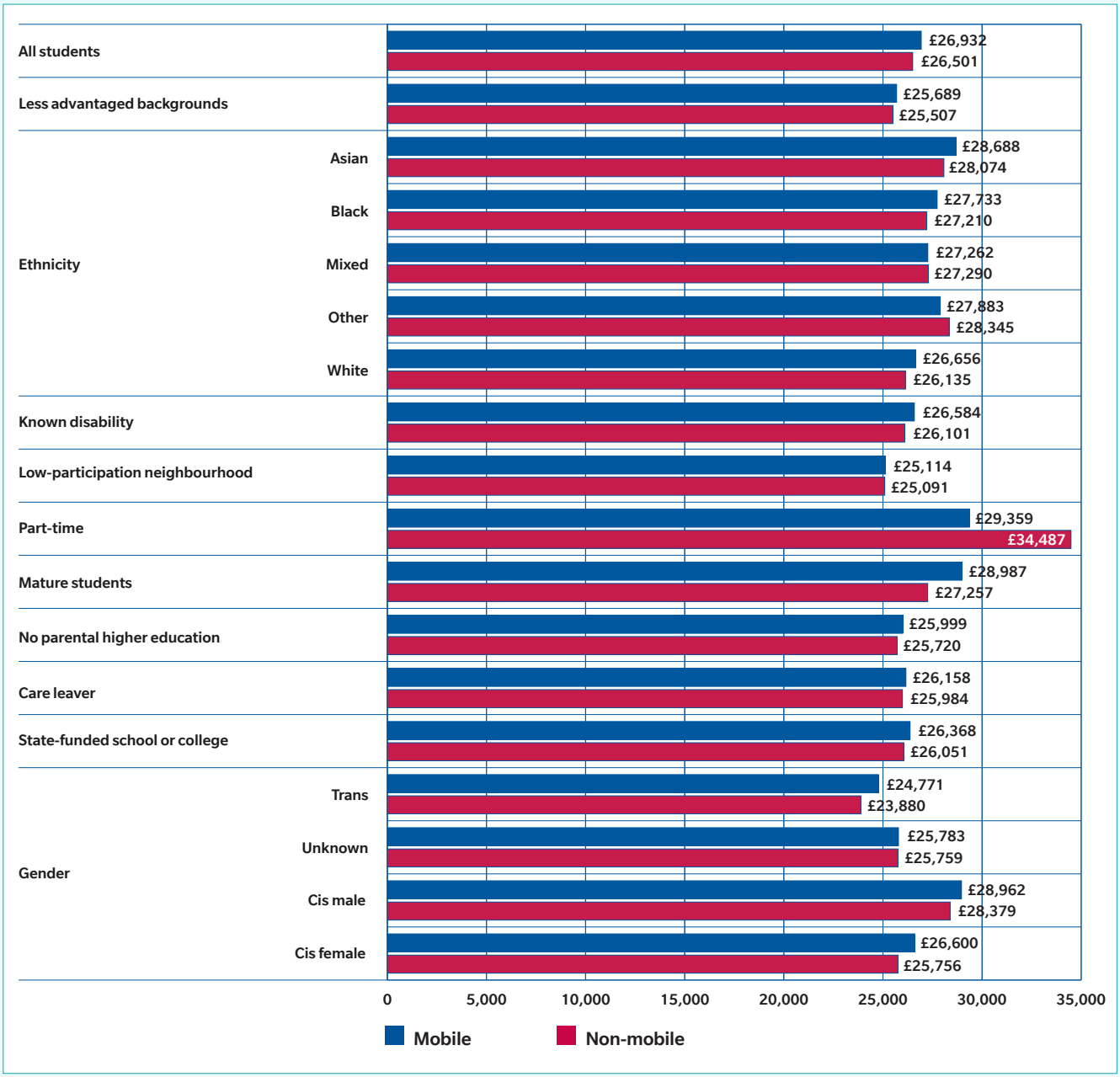
Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Figure 59: Average salary by student background summary, 2021–22



Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Figure 60: Five-year average of graduate salaries



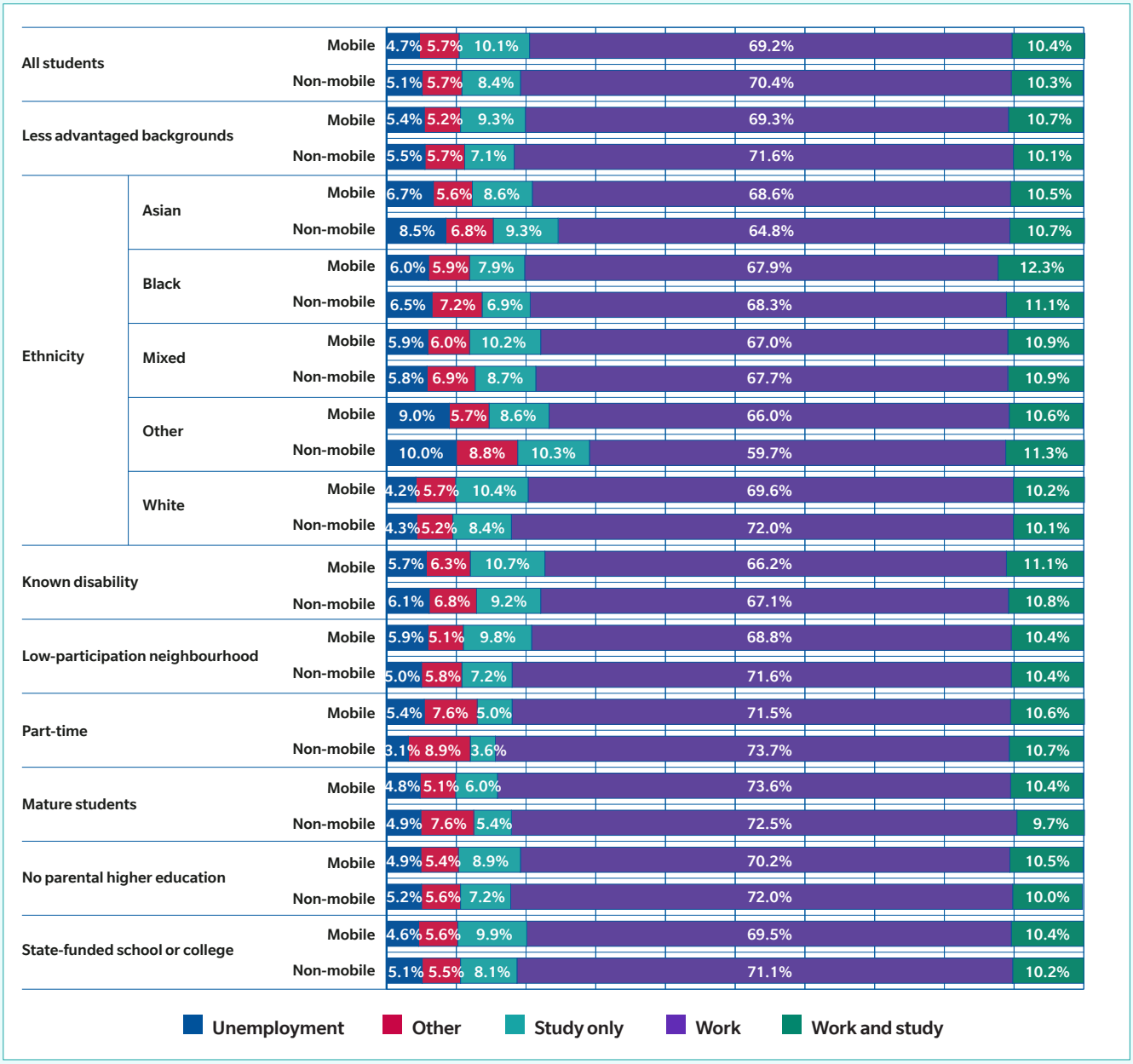
Appendix 4: Outcomes of less advantaged and underrepresented students

Graduate outcomes

We looked at the kinds of activity that graduates were engaged in, including employment and further study to compare the outcomes of mobile students with their non-mobile peers. As the differences were fairly marginal and some cohorts were below the threshold sample size in the 2021–22 data, we only used the five-year averages for this analysis (see Figure 61).

Mobile graduates from most cohorts were slightly less likely to be unemployed than their non-mobile peers. This was true for all cohorts except part-time students, LPN students, and those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds. Mobile graduates were also slightly less likely to be only working than their non-mobile peers (with mature students and Asian students being the exceptions), but slightly more likely to be only studying, with graduates from Asian and Other ethnic backgrounds being the exceptions.

Figure 61: Graduate activity by student backgrounds summary, five-year averages



Appendix 5: Tables and data

Figure 62: Outward mobility, 2017–18 to 2021–22

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Mobile students	26,210	28,070	27,245	20,865	10,960
Total student cohort	314,220	317,280	315,705	323,275	313,815

Figure 63: Five-year average mobility rate by nation

Nation	Five-year average mobility rate
England	6.7%
Northern Ireland	11.1%
Scotland	9.7%
Wales	8.7%

Figure 64: Lowest mobility rates by HESA subject group, 2021–22

	2021–22		
Subject group	No. of students	No. of mobile students	% Mobile
Education and teaching	10,350	100	1.0%
Subjects allied to medicine	42,285	420	1.0%
Computing	14,865	175	1.2%
Psychology	16,095	220	1.4%
Mathematical sciences	6,110	105	1.7%
Agriculture, food and related studies	1,550	30	1.8%
Media, journalism and communications	6,655	130	1.9%
Biological and sport sciences	18,955	375	2.0%
Design, and creative and performing arts	30,000	815	2.7%
Social sciences	35,980	970	2.7%
Physical sciences	9,295	260	2.8%

Appendix 5: Tables and data

Figure 65: Five-year average mobility rate by student background summary		Five-year average mobility rate
All students		7.2%
Less advantaged backgrounds		5.3%
Ethnicity	Asian	5.0%
	Black	4.7%
	Mixed	8.9%
	Other	5.3%
	White	7.7%
Disability		6.6%
Low-participation neighbourhood		4.7%
Part-time		1.0%
Mature students		3.0%
No parental higher education		5.2%
Care leavers		4.5%
State-funded school or college		6.7%
Gender	Trans	4.2%
	Unknown	8.5%
	Cis male	6.1%
	Cis female	7.1%

Appendix 5: Tables and data

Figure 66: Mobility rate by widening participation group, 2017–18 to 2021–22

		Student numbers						% of total students				
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	Total	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
SEC (4–8)	Mobile	5,230	5,630	5,590	4,310	2,240	23,000	6.1%	6.5%	6.5%	4.9%	2.6%
	Non-mobile	81,115	81,215	80,940	84,415	84,970	412,650	93.9%	93.5%	93.5%	95.1%	97.4%
Ethnicity - Asian	Mobile	2,225	2,520	2,290	1,635	955	9,630	6.3%	6.8%	6.0%	4.1%	2.3%
	Non-mobile	32,910	34,525	35,930	38,640	39,785	181,790	93.7%	93.2%	94.0%	95.9%	97.7%
Ethnicity - Black	Mobile	1,105	1,160	1,185	945	505	4,900	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	4.3%	2.3%
	Non-mobile	18,515	19,395	20,005	21,130	21,130	100,170	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	95.7%	97.7%
Ethnicity - Mixed	Mobile	1,250	1,375	1,440	1,220	690	5,970	10.2%	10.5%	10.8%	8.5%	4.9%
	Non-mobile	11,065	11,690	11,915	13,160	13,315	61,145	89.8%	89.5%	89.2%	91.5%	95.1%
Ethnicity - Other	Mobile	335	325	305	235	135	1,330	7.8%	7.1%	6.2%	4.3%	2.4%
	Non-mobile	3,950	4,280	4,610	5,195	5,530	23,565	92.2%	92.9%	93.8%	95.7%	97.6%
Known disability	Mobile	3,535	4,150	4,670	3,850	2,085	18,285	7.3%	7.9%	8.3%	6.4%	3.4%
	Non-mobile	44,580	48,295	51,795	56,215	59,710	260,595	92.7%	92.1%	91.7%	93.6%	96.6%
Low-participation neighbour-hood	Mobile	1,845	1,985	2,080	1,515	825	8,250	5.4%	5.7%	6.0%	4.3%	2.3%
	Non-mobile	32,495	32,720	32,615	33,990	34,720	166,545	94.6%	94.3%	94.0%	95.7%	97.7%
No parental higher eduation	Mobile	7,745	8,155	7,900	5,920	3,000	32,725	6.2%	6.5%	6.3%	4.7%	2.5%
	Non-mobile	118,020	118,130	116,700	120,875	119,195	592,915	93.8%	93.5%	93.7%	95.3%	97.5%
Care leavers	Mobile	95	85	105	90	45	420	6.1%	4.9%	5.8%	4.3%	2.1%
	Non-mobile	1,455	1,620	1,725	1,960	2,160	8,920	93.9%	95.1%	94.2%	95.7%	97.9%
State-funded school or college	Mobile	20,705	22,585	22,130	16,635	8,635	90,690	7.7%	8.2%	8.1%	6.0%	3.2%
	Non-mobile	248,280	251,500	249,500	259,500	259,185	1,267,965	92.3%	91.8%	91.9%	94.0%	96.8%

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Figure 67: Proportion of mobility by widening participation group

	Proportion of all student mobilities					
	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	% change 2017–18 vs 2021–22
SEC	23.9%	23.3%	23.7%	23.8%	23.7%	-0.2%
Ethnicity - Asian	8.6%	9.1%	8.5%	8.0%	9.2%	+0.6%
Ethnicity - Black	4.3%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.8%	+0.6%
Ethnicity - Mixed	4.8%	5.0%	5.4%	6.0%	6.6%	+1.8%
Ethnicity - Other	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	0.0%
Known disability	13.5%	14.8%	17.1%	18.5%	19.0%	+5.5%
Low-participation neighbourhood	7.1%	7.1%	7.7%	7.3%	7.5%	+0.5%
No parental higher eduation	33.9%	33.1%	32.9%	32.2%	31.2%	-2.6%
Care leavers	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
State-funded school or college	82.7%	83.2%	83.8%	82.3%	81.3%	-1.5%

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Figure 68: Proportion of mobility by ethnicity, without languages

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Ethnicity - Asian	9.9%	10.3%	9.5%	9.0%	11.1%
Ethnicity - Black	4.9%	4.6%	4.9%	5.3%	5.7%
Ethnicity - Mixed	4.7%	4.7%	5.2%	5.8%	6.5%
Ethnicity - Other	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%
Ethnicity - White	79.2%	79.2%	79.3%	78.7%	75.3%

Figure 69: Percentage of students by mode of study and age, 2017–18 to 2021–22

		% of students					No. of students						
Mode of qualification	Young/ mature	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2017–18 to 2021–22	2017–18 to 2021–22
Full-time	Mature	18.6%	18.5%	18.5%	18.6%	19.7%	58,545	58,690	58,255	60,050	61,700	18.8%	297,245
	Young	81.4%	81.5%	81.5%	81.4%	80.3%	255,670	258,590	257,445	263,225	252,115	81.2%	1,287,045
Part-time	Mature	79.1%	77.7%	71.8%	79.3%	73.4%	20,520	19,770	12,875	25,560	20,720	76.6%	99,440
	Young	20.9%	22.3%	28.2%	20.7%	26.6%	5,405	5,680	5,055	6,680	7,505	23.4%	30,325

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Figure 70: Instances of mobility by country destination, 2017–18 to 2021–22

						Instances of mobility				
Destination country	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Spain	12.5%	13.7%	13.8%	14.2%	17.7%	4,030	4,775	4,660	3,560	2,325
France	10.8%	10.2%	10.4%	11.8%	15.3%	3,470	3,545	3,520	2,970	2,010
United States	10.6%	9.8%	10.8%	10.6%	6.5%	3,400	3,405	3,660	2,670	850
Germany	7.1%	7.3%	7.9%	7.8%	9.3%	2,295	2,560	2,670	1,960	1,220
Netherlands	4.4%	4.7%	4.4%	5.3%	4.3%	1,430	1,655	1,505	1,335	560
Australia	5.1%	4.7%	4.4%	4.8%	1.6%	1,655	1,630	1,475	1,210	205
Italy	4.1%	4.0%	3.7%	4.0%	4.9%	1,315	1,410	1,235	995	650
Canada	3.8%	3.7%	3.9%	4.2%	2.4%	1,235	1,285	1,305	1,055	320
China	2.7%	2.6%	3.0%	3.0%	2.7%	880	895	1,020	755	360
Ireland	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	2.3%	2.9%	520	640	595	575	380
Japan	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1.7%	455	560	580	560	225
Portugal	1.5%	1.3%	1.8%	2.1%	2.0%	480	460	605	525	270
Malaysia	1.5%	1.8%	2.0%	1.4%	1.1%	485	620	675	350	145
Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China)	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%	0.6%	465	465	475	325	75
Sweden	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	440	455	415	295	180
Denmark	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%	375	445	390	355	200
Belgium	1.0%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%	335	465	435	300	180
Russia	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	355	335	370	330	170
Switzerland	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.8%	295	355	310	260	235
Austria	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	315	305	345	270	155

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Figure 71: Top 20 country destinations by instances of mobility and change in ranking between 2017–18 and 2021–22

Destination country	% share of mobility globally	No. instances of mobility	Rank in 2021–22	Rank change since 2017–18
Spain	17.7%	2,325	1	■ 0
France	15.3%	2,010	2	■ 0
Germany	9.3%	1,220	3	▲ 1
United States	6.5%	850	4	▼ -1
Italy	4.9%	650	5	▲ 2
Netherlands	4.3%	560	6	■ 0
Ireland	2.9%	380	7	▲ 3
China	2.7%	360	8	▲ 1
Canada	2.4%	320	9	▼ -1
Portugal	2.0%	270	10	▲ 2
Switzerland	1.8%	235	11	▲ 13
Japan	1.7%	225	12	▲ 2
Australia	1.6%	205	13	▼ -8
Korea (South)	1.6%	205	14	▲ 17
Denmark	1.5%	200	15	▲ 3
Sweden	1.4%	180	16	▼ -1
Belgium	1.4%	180	17	▲ 5
Czech Republic	1.4%	180	18	▲ 7
Russia	1.3%	170	19	▲ 2
Fiji	1.3%	165	20	▲ 24

Appendix 5: Tables and data

Figure 72: Five-year average rate of mobility types

Mobility type	Total instances 2017–18 to 2021–22	Five-year average %
Study abroad	102,050	73.9%
Work abroad	30,295	21.9%
Volunteering	5,830	4.2%

Figure 73: Five-year average rate of mobility durations

Mobility duration	Total instances 2017–18 to 2021–22	Five-year average %
Long (16+ weeks)	77,815	56.3%
Medium (4–15 weeks)	26,690	19.3%
Short (1–3 Weeks)	33,670	24.4%

Universities UK
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Northern Consortium is a charity which exists to support the advancement of education. To do this we provide funding for educational projects and programmes being delivered by other charities and organisations, which align with our aims and objectives. We also fund research into areas which support our strategic aims of facilitating access to international education, promoting the benefits of international education and enabling educational engagement particularly for students from disadvantaged groups. You can find out more about us and the organisations and programmes we have supported on our website at **www.nccharity.org.uk**.

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