



Universities UK
International

GONE INTERNATIONAL

RISING ASPIRATIONS: WALES



go international
STANDOUT

INTRODUCTION

Gone International: rising aspirations found that 18,510 UK-domiciled full-time, first-degree, graduates across the UK that responded to the 2016–17 DLHE (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education) survey had experienced at least one period abroad as part of their degree. This equates to 7.8% of the population. The report also found that 1,305 UK graduates of Welsh institutions spent time abroad, representing 9.7% of the graduating population who responded to the DLHE survey. This report looks at students at Welsh institutions: i) who went abroad ii) where they went and what they did, and iii) their graduate outcomes.¹

KEY FINDINGS – WELSH INSTITUTIONS

- 1,305 graduates (9.7%) of the 2016–17 graduating cohort had at least one period abroad as part of their undergraduate first degree.
- Language graduates had a mobility rate of 30.2%, and this rose to 93.2% if linguistics students were excluded.
- The highest mobility rates were for ‘medicine and dentistry’ followed by ‘architecture, building and planning’ and languages.
- 58.7% of mobility activities were in Europe, with 16.0% in North America and 12.5% in Australasia.

- During 2015–16, Erasmus+ mobilities accounted for just under half (43.0%) of all mobility activities.
- Most mobility was for study (82.6%), followed by work (13.0%) and volunteering (4.4%).
- 39.1% of instances were long-term mobilities of 14 weeks or more. 21.5% of instances were medium term mobilities (5–13 weeks), while over a third (39.3%) were short-term mobilities of less than four weeks.
- Mobile graduates were more likely to obtain first-class honours or an upper second-class degree (86.1%) than non-mobile graduates (77.9%).
- Six months after graduating only 2.2% of mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 3.2% of non-mobile graduates.

The most striking finding in this report is that mobile students from Welsh institutions are more likely to participate in short-term mobility programmes than the UK-wide cohort with over a third (39.3%) of students undertaking mobility of four weeks or less compared to a fifth (21.0%) nationally. Students from Welsh institutions were also more likely to go abroad to study (82.6% compared to 75.0%), and more likely to undertake mobility in the Australasia region than the UK-wide cohort.

NOTE ON MOBILITY DATA

Although mobility data capture has improved in recent years, there might be some instances of mobility not captured by universities within the student record. Therefore, the results produced here, although broadly comprehensive, are based on incomplete populations. The report does not attempt to identify causal links between students going abroad and particular outcomes. Instead, it provides a snapshot of the profiles of first degree, UK-domiciled mobile students who graduated in 2016-17 and their outcomes. The analysis in this report is a step taken by UUKi to provide mobility data for the UK nations. However, the populations of students undertaking mobility are low and UUKi encourage readers not to draw hard conclusions from these statistics. This report should be viewed in the context of the UK-wide *Gone International: rising aspirations* report.

Note

¹ Analysis is limited to UK-domiciled, full-time, undergraduate, first degree completers of the DLHE survey. Not all graduates respond to the DLHE survey. This means that there are some disparities in the sample size by nation. In 2016–17, 80% of the full-time, UK-domiciled, graduating cohort replied to the DLHE survey, and for

Wales the response rate was 81%. For full methodology and limitations to this research, please see the full report:

WHO GOES ABROAD?

In total, 1,305 graduates from Welsh Institutions responding to the 2016–17 DLHE survey were reported as having at least one period abroad of one week or longer as part of their full-time, undergraduate first degree. This represents 9.7% of relevant respondents to the DLHE survey.

WHAT DO MOBILE STUDENTS STUDY?²

By subject group, graduates of 'languages' had a mobility rate of 30.2%. The 'languages' subject group includes linguistics, classics and related subjects, for which mobility rates are typically lower.³ When 'linguistics' graduates were removed from the overall 'languages' cohort, the mobility rate for this group rose to 93.2%.

The group with the highest mobility rate was 'medicine and dentistry', followed by 'architecture, building and planning' and 'languages'. The lowest mobility rates were for 'education', 'subjects allied to medicine' and 'computer science' for which mobility participation rates were 4.1% or less.

GENDER

The female mobility rate of the 2016–17 cohort was 10.0% (760 students) while the male mobility rate was 9.4% (545 students). It is worth noting that language graduates, who make up a large percentage of the mobile population, are more likely to be female.

Subject of study (group)	Had a period of mobility	No period of mobility	Total	Mobility rate
Medicine and dentistry	240	130	370	64.9%
Architecture, building and planning	45	75	115	37.8%
Languages	245	565	810	30.2%
Physical sciences	195	710	905	21.7%
Agriculture and related subjects	10	115	125	8.0%
Law	30	380	410	7.5%
Creative arts and design	90	1,265	1,355	6.6%
Historical and philosophical studies	40	620	660	6.2%
Biological sciences	135	2,110	2,250	6.1%
Business and administrative studies	65	1,045	1,110	5.8%
Social studies	75	1,285	1,360	5.5%
Engineering and technology	35	610	645	5.1%
Mass communications and documentation	15	270	285	4.7%
Mathematical sciences	10	225	235	4.1%
Subjects allied to medicine	50	1,415	1,465	3.4%
Education	20	740	760	2.5%
Computer science	10	560	570	1.6%
Veterinary science	..	..	..	..
Combined	..	..	..	..
Total	1,305	12,120	13,430	9.7%

Table 1: All Subject Groups by Mobility Rates

Note

² This section uses two subject definitions: 1. Subject group: the JACS (Joint Academic Coding System) subject group as defined by HESA, for example, 'languages' 2. Detailed subject: the specific subject studied by the student as defined by HESA, for example, 'French studies'. For more information see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs/jacs3-detailed>

³ For the purposes of this report, linguistics graduates include: Q1 Linguistics; Q2 Comparative literary studies; Q3 English studies; Q4 Ancient language studies; Q5 Celtic studies; Q6 Latin studies; Q7 Classical Greek studies Q8 Classical studies; and Q9 Others in classics, linguistics and related subjects

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION⁴

The analysis found that students from less-advantaged backgrounds (SEC groups 4–8) were less likely to spend a period of their degree overseas than students from more advantaged backgrounds (SEC groups 1–3). 12.5% of students from more advantaged backgrounds were mobile, compared to 7.2% of students from less advantaged backgrounds.

Table 2: Mobility Rates by Socio-economic Classification

Socio-economic Classification	Had a period of mobility	No period of mobility	Total	Mobility rate
More advantaged (SEC 1 to 3)	840	5,850	6,690	12.5%
Less advantaged (SEC 4 to 8)	245	3,145	3,390	7.2%
Not classified	220	2,595	2,815	7.8%
Unknown	..	..	..	..
Total	1,305	12,120	13,430	9.7%

ETHNICITY⁵

The mobility rate for white students was 9.4%. For Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students, the mobility rate was 12.3%.

Table 3: Mobility Rates by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Had a period of mobility	No period of mobility	Total	Mobility rate
White	1,145	10,965	12,110	9.4%
BME	145	1,020	1,165	12.3%
Unknown / Not applicable	20	135	150	11.8%
Total	1,305	12,120	13,430	9.7%

Note

⁴ For the purposes of this report, students from 'more-advantaged backgrounds' refers to students whose parents, guardians or their own occupations (if they were over the age of 21 at the start of their course) fall within socio-economic classification (SEC) groups 1–3. Students from 'less-advantaged backgrounds' fall within the SEC groups 4–8. For more information see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/sec>

⁵ Black and minority ethnic (BME) students fall into the following HESA categories: Black, which includes: Black or Black British –

Caribbean; Black or Black British – African; and other Black background. Asian, which includes: Asian or Asian British – Indian; Asian or Asian British – Pakistani; Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi; Chinese; and other Asian background. Other (including mixed), which includes: mixed – White and Black Caribbean; mixed – White and Black African; mixed – White and Asian; other mixed background; Arab; and other ethnic background. Excludes unknown ethnicities. For more information see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/ethnic>

WHERE DO THEY GO, AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

WHERE DO MOBILE STUDENTS STUDY?⁶

Across the three academic years, 58.7% of all mobility instances by students from Welsh institutions took place in Europe, followed by North America with 16.0% of instances and Asia with 12.5% of instances. Spain was the most frequent destination country, (15.8%), followed by France (9.0%) and the United States (6.1%). Almost a third (30.9%) of mobility from Wales is to these three countries. The most frequent non-EU destinations were the United States, Australia (4.1%) and Canada (4.6%).

Table 4: Instances of Mobility by Region of Destination, 2014–15 to 2016–17

Region	Instances of mobility	%
European Union	930	54.00%
North America	275	16.00%
Asia	215	12.50%
Australasia	115	6.70%
Africa	85	4.90%
Other Europe	80	4.70%
South America	15	0.90%
Middle East	..	..
Not known	..	..
Total	1,725	100.00%

Note

⁶ This section considers 'instances' of mobility, rather than the number of students who had a period of mobility. For example, if a student had two separate periods of mobility in France, this would be recorded as two instances. As with the other mobility data, instances are only counted where the period abroad lasted at least

Table 5: Top 10 Destinations by Instances of Mobility, 2014–15 to 2016–17

Location	Instances of mobility	%
Spain	270	15.8%
France	155	9.0%
United States	105	6.1%
Germany	100	5.9%
Cyprus (European Union)	85	4.8%
Canada	80	4.6%
Australia	70	4.1%
Italy	70	4.0%
Netherlands	60	3.5%
India	35	2.0%
Total	1,725	100.0%

one week. Overall, in the academic years 2014–15, 2015–16 and 2016–17, the graduate cohort had 22,800 separate instances of mobility (2,100 in 2014–15, 16,210 in 2015–16 and 4,490 in 2016–17). As these numbers suggest, the majority of students who go abroad do so in their second year.

WHAT MOBILITY SCHEMES ARE USED?

The majority of mobility placements for these students took place during the penultimate years of their studies (71.1%). During that year (2015–16), Erasmus+ accounted for just under half (43.0%) of all instances of mobility.

Table 6: Instances of Mobility by Scheme, 2015–16 Only⁷

Scheme	Instances of mobility	%
ERASMUS+	455	43.0%
Provider	540	50.9%
Sandwich placement	35	3.4%
Other scheme	30	2.7%
Total	1,060	100.0%

HOW LONG ARE STUDENT MOBILITIES?

Across the three academic years, (39.1%) of instances were long-term mobilities of 14 weeks or longer. 21.5% were medium-term mobilities (5–13 weeks), while over a third (39.3%) were short-term mobilities of less than four weeks.

Table 8: Instances of Mobility by Duration, 2014–15 to 2016-17

Duration	Instances of mobility	%
Short term (1 to 4 weeks)	680	39.3%
Medium term (5 to 13 weeks)	370	21.5%
Long term (14 weeks plus)	675	39.1%
Total	1,725	100.0%

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MOBILITY?⁸

Across the three academic years, three quarters of instances were undertaken for the purpose of study (82.6%), followed by work (13.0%) and volunteering (4.4%).

Table 7: Instances of Mobility by Type, 2014–15 To 2016-17

Type	Instances of mobility	%
Study only	1,425	82.6%
Volunteering only	75	4.4%
Work only	225	13.0%
Total	1,725	100.0%

Note

⁷HESA collects data on the following mobility schemes: Provider – university-led schemes such as bilateral partnerships that are established, administered and delivered by the UK university. Sandwich placements which meet the criteria set out by funding councils, not including Erasmus+. Erasmus+, the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. Other schemes, such as British Council Teaching Assistants, Generation UK China, Study China, Camp America and IAESTE. For more

information, see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/mobscheme>

⁸ HESA collects data on the following mobility types: Study abroad, Work abroad, used in situations where a student was doing paid work such as an internship, Volunteering, where the student undertook voluntary or other unpaid work. For more information, see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/mobtype>

WHAT DO THEY DO NEXT?

CLASSIFICATION OF FIRST DEGREE⁹

Mobile graduates from Welsh institutions were more likely to obtain a first-class honours or upper second-class degree (86.1%) than non-mobile graduates from Welsh institutions (77.9%). Proportions of students with first honours were 31.9% for mobile students and 27.6% for non-mobile students. Mobile students are also more likely to have higher degree classifications when 'language' graduates are excluded from the population.

Table 9: Classification of First Degree, All Degree Subjects

Mobility marker	First class	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class /Pass	Total
Had a period of mobility	31.9%	54.2%	13.5%	0.4%	1,065
No period of mobility	27.6%	50.3%	19.2%	2.9%	11,985
Total	28.0%	50.6%	18.7%	2.7%	13,050

Table 10: Classification of First Degree, Non-Language Students Only

Mobility marker	First class	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class/Pass	Total
Had a period of mobility	34.4%	51.8%	13.4%	0.4%	820
No period of mobility	27.8%	50.0%	19.2%	3.0%	11,420
Total	28.3%	50.1%	18.8%	2.8%	12,240

Note

⁹ Some first-degree level qualifications are not subject to classification. These unclassified degrees are not included in percentage calculations for class of degree.

ACTIVITY

Graduate outcomes data from the DLHE survey revealed that a smaller percentage of mobile graduates were unemployed six months after completing their studies, compared to non-mobile graduates. 2.2% of mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 3.2% of non-mobile graduates¹⁰

Table 11: Activity, All Degree Subjects

Mobility marker	Work only	Work and further study	Study only	Unemployed	Other activities
Had a period of mobility	65.8%	4.7%	22.3%	2.2%	5.0%
No period of mobility	65.4%	5.4%	20.7%	3.2%	5.3%
Total	65.5%	5.3%	20.8%	3.1%	5.3%

Note: 1,305 students had a period of mobility. 12,120 students had no period of mobility.

¹⁰ 'Other' activities might include taking time out to travel. Graduates who selected 'due to start work' have also been included in the 'other' activities group.

CONCLUSION

Gone International: Rising Aspirations finds that students who go abroad get better degrees and better jobs

Conclusions for the UK

Mobile students across the UK are more likely to gain a first-class degree, less likely to be unemployed and, if in work, more likely to be in a graduate job. Just six months after graduating, mobile students earned higher average salaries:

- Mobile graduates were more likely to obtain first-class honours or an upper second-class degree (91.6%) than non-mobile graduates (80%).
- Six months after graduating only 3.1% of mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 4.2% of non-mobile graduates.
- Mobile graduates who were working in full-time, paid employment had an average salary of £23,482, compared to an average salary of £22,256 for non-graduates (a difference of 5.5%) six months after graduating.
- Of all working, mobile graduates in the 2016–17 cohort, 78.3% secured a 'graduate-level' job within six months of graduating, compared to 73.2% of non-mobile graduates.

This year's report shows that more students are going abroad than ever before, and there has been an increase in reported participation by students from less advantaged backgrounds. However, a participation gap remains with more advantaged groups still the most likely to go abroad while enrolled on a UK degree programme.

Conclusions for Wales

In Wales, the data shows that 9.7% of the 2016–17 graduating cohort – 1,305 students – had at least one period abroad as part of their undergraduate first degree. Language graduates had a mobility rate of 93.2%. The highest mobility rate was for 'medical and dentistry' followed by 'physical sciences', and 'architecture, building and planning'. 58.7% of mobility activities were in Europe, with 16.0% in North America and 12.5% in Australasia. During 2015–16, Erasmus+ mobilities accounted for almost half (43.0%) of all mobility activities. Most mobility was for study (82.6%), followed by work (13.0%) and volunteering (4.4%).

The analysis also found that mobile graduates from Welsh institutions experienced more positive outcomes upon graduation than those students who did not go abroad. Mobile students were more likely to obtain first-class honours or an upper second-class degree (86.1%) than non-mobile graduates (77.9%) and just six months after graduating only 2.2% of mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 3.2% of non-mobile graduates.

Note

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