



Universities UK
International

SHORT-TERM MOBILITY LONG-TERM IMPACT

**INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES OF LESS THAN
FOUR WEEKS: CURRENT
PARTICIPATION, IMPACT AND
GOOD PRACTICE**





FOREWORD

Traditional ‘years abroad’ are, rightly, an important and integral part of many higher education courses, but they’re not for everyone. Students who aren’t able, or do not wish to spend a long time abroad may be thought to miss out on the benefits of international experiences.

Thanks to the commitment universities across the UK are making to ensure students have access to international experiences, students now have valuable alternatives. This report highlights that even a very short period of mobility can have lasting positive effects.

It’s encouraging to see just how many benefits are listed by students who have taken part in such experiences, and to see the high percentage of students who report increased confidence in their academic ability following their time abroad. On a more personal level, they reported an increased understanding of other cultures and a greater interest in global affairs.

The development of personal skills and competencies like confidence, resilience and adaptability, quite apart from the employability benefits that these experiences lead to, will support the opportunities of graduates in a challenging global environment. As we come to know more about what a ‘Global Britain’ will look like, it will be more important than ever to have graduates with this kind of insight and understanding.

The new Turing Scheme set up by the UK government recognises the positive benefits of shorter periods of mobility, in particular for students from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds, and it’s clear from this report that short-term mobility is inclusive as well as being beneficial to all students. I commend all those higher education institutions who have taken steps to increase the number of these programmes for their students, and look forward to seeing another generation of students take advantage of such opportunities.

Ultimately, universities help to shape individual lives at moments when students’ minds are at their most formative. For those who have travelled abroad, one never forgets the learning opportunities that this provides, opening up new horizons and expanding ways of thinking.

Study placements do not have to be lengthy to provide these moments of inspiration that after all can have an impact of a lifetime. The challenge for us all in the higher education community is ensuring that as many students as possible get to experience these opportunities, and to have an equal chance to share the wonderful and memorable fulfilment, no matter how short, that studying abroad can deliver.

RT HON CHRIS SKIDMORE MP

Former Universities Minister and Co-Chair
of the All Party Group on Universities

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growth in the number of reported instances of short-term mobilities undertaken by UK students. This is partly the result of more robust reporting, but also signals a growing interest in and demand for short-term programmes lasting less than one month.

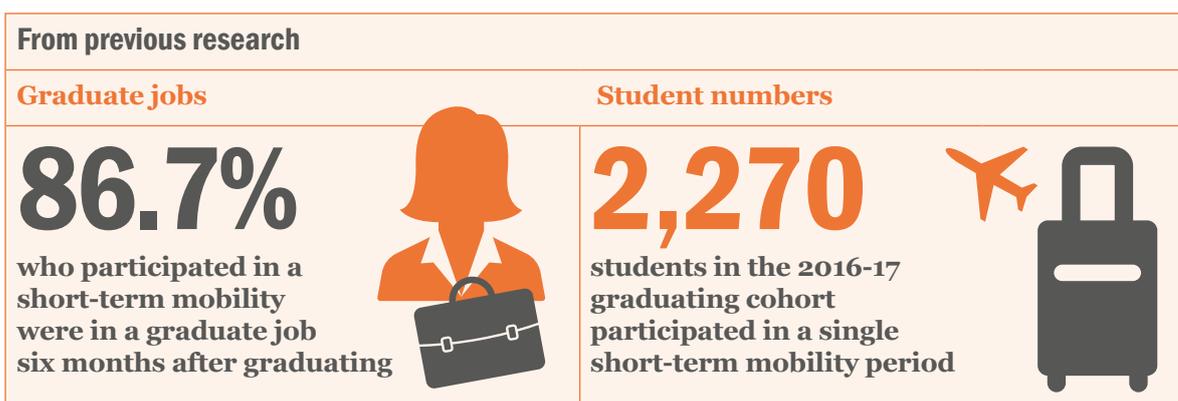
DEFINITION

Experiences abroad which last less than an academic term, typically between **one week** and **two months**, are considered as short-term mobility. This research has specifically looked at mobility experiences of **four weeks** or less. Shorter mobility programmes can be more intensive international experiences. These can be study visits, with a disciplinary focus, led by academic faculty; group-led visits to industry with entrepreneurship themes; international summer schools where students integrate with international and local students, or cultural and academic activities. Often, they are multi-disciplinary, bringing students together from across the university. They may also include volunteering projects and engagement with local communities, organisations and companies.

In 2018, the Universities UK International (UUKi) Mobility management survey¹ found that short-term mobility was a growth area for universities and a key priority. While some mobility specialists and others in the higher education sector have occasionally been sceptical about the benefits of short-term mobility, research by the British Council and UUKi² found that students 'reported valuable outcomes for very short and short-term mobility programmes'. This view is further supported by a survey from the Institute of International Education (IIE) which found that several of the skills gained by students during a period abroad were similar, irrespective of the length of their stay. Furthermore, the study found that teamwork skills were actually most strongly developed through short-term mobilities.³

UUKi took a first step to expand the evidence base in this area by publishing findings in *Gone international: rising aspirations*⁴ which found that:

- Short-term options of four weeks or less now account for one in five (**21.0%**) of all reported mobility, compared with **15.3%** for the previous year's cohort.
- **2,270** students in the 2016-17 graduating cohort were reported to have taken a single short-term mobility period.
- Graduates who participated in short-term mobility programmes had an unemployment rate of **2.3%** compared with **4.2%** for non-mobile peers.
- **86.7%** of students who participated in a short-term mobility were in a graduate job six months after graduating, compared to **73.2%** of non-mobile graduates.



1 UUKi (2018) *The Management of Outward Student Mobility Programmes in the UK*

2 UUKi (2015) and the British Council 'Student Perspectives on going international'

3 IIE (2017) *Gaining an Employment Edge: The impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects in the United States*

4 UUKi (2019) *Gone International: Rising Aspirations*



The rapid rise in short-term mobility highlights a pressing need to understand short-term mobility better

It is clear that a closer investigation of the aims, trends, participation patterns, experiences and outcomes of short-term mobilities is needed, in order to identify and share good practice across the sector. It is also crucial to understand the specific impacts and benefits of these programmes – including their potential to encourage participation from unrepresented groups – so that they can be further developed as part of the overall outward mobility offer for students.

We know from previous studies that outward mobility is highly beneficial. *UUKi's Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility*⁶ report found that:

- Outward mobility gives students **life-changing experiences** and contributes to graduates' skills and collaborative opportunities beyond the traditional academic outcomes a university offers.
- It can be an **important opportunity** for students, and its benefits are tangible on a personal, academic and employability level.
- Short-term mobility can act as a taster to encourage **longer-duration mobility** in the future.⁶

The *Gone International* report found that, while there had been an increase in outwardly mobile students across the sector, the overall number of students accessing these opportunities remained very small, with only **7.8%** of UK-domiciled undergraduates studying abroad in 2016–17.⁷ In particular, according to the Widening Participation report, students from less advantaged backgrounds were still underrepresented in mobility numbers despite the fact that they accrue even greater benefits from mobility than their more advantaged peers. Graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile during their degree earned **6.1%** more than their non-mobile peers, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate-level job (**80.2%** compared to **74.7%**).⁸

The recent Social Inclusion & Engagement in Mobility (SIEM) report⁹ cited a number of barriers to mobility in general (not just short-term), including 'insufficient funding, a lack of practical support or information, finding accommodation abroad and on return to home country, being isolated while abroad [and] impact on academic attainment.'

The widening participation agenda is at the heart of higher education. Institutional strategies for a more inclusive university experience should focus on the barriers that students from underrepresented groups encounter in accessing international mobility opportunities.

5 UUKi (2017) *Widening participation in UK outward student mobility: A picture of participation*

6 UUKi (2017) *Widening participation in UK outward student mobility: A picture of participation*

7 UUKi (2019) *Gone international: rising aspirations*

8 UUKi (2017) *Widening participation in UK outward student mobility: A picture of participation*

9 SIEM (2021) *Maybe it will be different abroad: Student and Staff Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion in student exchanges*

Given the proven benefits of outward mobility, and the knowledge that short-term programmes are often more accessible for students from disadvantaged backgrounds,¹⁰ it is important that universities create more opportunities for such students to engage.

The government recently announced the introduction of a new UK student mobility programme. The Turing Scheme ‘aims to improve social mobility, targeting students from disadvantaged backgrounds [and] making life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country’.¹¹ It provides funding for study or traineeship placements lasting between four weeks and 12 months and encourages institutions to expand their portfolio of mobilities, including offering mobility programmes of shorter lengths.

This is, therefore, a pivotal moment in which to seek a better understanding of short-term programmes, to ensure that their growth is sustained, that they will be considered by the government for future funding initiatives, and that they are fully incorporated as a valued and integral option within the overall mobility offer across the sector.



¹⁰ UUKi (2017) *Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility: A picture of participation*

¹¹ Department for Education (2021) Turing scheme to open up global study and work opportunities, available at www.gov.uk/government/news/turing-scheme-to-open-up-global-study-and-work-opportunities

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Short-term Mobility, Long-term Impact* report is delivered by Universities UK International (UUKi), with guidance from a Steering Group, chaired by Professor Alex Hughes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement and Employability at the University of Westminster. Members of the Steering Group include representatives from Universities UK (UUK) and from the co-funders of the report, the Northern Consortium and the British Council, along with other higher education experts.

The report:

- sets out what attracts students to short-term international mobility
- identifies existing barriers to participation
- generates ideas to increase participation in mobility activities
- makes recommendations to support universities in developing and implementing effective strategies and best practice for short-term programmes

The analysis is based primarily on information obtained through student focus groups and surveys, along with institutional data used to map current participation and impacts. In addition, the report presents institutional perspectives on short-term mobility through a series of 16 case studies, sharing good practice and lessons learned.

It focuses on three discrete areas:

1. the impact of short-term mobility on students
2. student progression following short-term to long-term mobility activities
3. good practice for delivering short-term programmes



2.1 KEY FINDINGS

MOTIVATIONS OF STUDENTS

- The majority of respondents (**80%**) went abroad to experience something new overseas.
- Just under two-thirds (**62%**) wanted to improve their intercultural awareness.
- Over half (**55%**) wanted to improve their confidence, followed by **51%** wanting to enhance their academic skills and enrich their studies.
- Focus group respondents felt that university-run short-term mobility was very attractive, making the visit more impactful and immersive and enabling them to learn more.
- Students enjoyed the shared experience of going abroad in a group, and felt it provided some security.
- While some respondents were motivated by a specific country with a strikingly ‘different culture’, others reported that the opportunity to travel was more important than the location.
- Most students surveyed were keen to ‘study something different’ from their degree and were attracted to programmes that provided a combination of classes.

Motivations for taking part

80%

went abroad to experience something new

55%

wanted to improve their confidence

DURATION

- Students viewed short-duration programmes very positively, as a ‘really busy schedule’ allowed them to immerse themselves and to experience a lot in a short period.
- Short mobilities allowed students to schedule the programme around their academic curriculum and commitments at home, including caring responsibilities and part-time jobs.
- Some respondents noted that a short-term opportunity made the programme feel like less of a big commitment.

SUPPORT

- Bursaries for short-term visits were important to all students and described as a ‘very good incentive to go’.
- However, students highlighted the need for better communication and clarity about the availability of funding and the eligibility criteria.
- Support ahead of the mobility was highlighted as important by many students, to ensure they felt prepared and to alleviate any nervousness about the experience. Students found it useful to meet with group leaders, other participating students and participants from previous years. Pre-sessional basic language and cultural learning also made students feel ‘more prepared’.
- Knowing about crisis support in the country they were visiting gave students confidence that things would be fine.

Bursaries were reported by those in the focus groups as a **very good incentive to go**



IMPACT



- **Academic:** Most respondents reported that their short-term mobility programme had a positive impact on their academic experience, providing an international dimension to their subject (78%), increasing their confidence in their academic ability (69%) and broadening their understanding of their degree (66%). For almost half (44%), the programme directly inspired the topic of a dissertation, essay or presentation in their formal degree programme. Interestingly, some students reported that they found the experience 'life-changing' and enriching even when not directly linked to their academic studies.



- **Employment:** All focus group respondents felt that the mobility would positively impact their employment prospects, due to the skills and experience gained. Some reported that the time abroad had helped them to secure another job or placement afterwards. Students also commented that the programme had a direct impact on their future career ambitions and direction and had 'opened up a lot of opportunities'. Many felt the experience enhanced their CVs and gave them something to speak about in a job interview.



- **Soft skills:** The majority of respondents (93%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they had improved their adaptability. The same proportion (93%) agreed they had improved their communication skills while abroad, with over half (53%) strongly agreeing. Almost nine out of ten (89%) agreed they had developed their intercultural skills and interpersonal skills.



- **Personal development:** There was general consensus that positive personal development was one of the main impacts of the programme. The majority (93%) agreed they were now more eager to learn about different cultures and that their understanding of different cultures had increased. 88% said they felt more self-confident following the mobility, and 85% felt more confident to travel overseas independently due to improved self-confidence, soft skills, intercultural understanding and empathy. Students reported that they now have networks and friends 'across the world'.



- **Catalyst for participation in future international activities:** The majority of respondents (94%) said they were interested in further travel following their mobility period. 82% were more likely to consider working in another country after graduation, and two-thirds (69%) were interested in doing an internship abroad. Students also engaged more with activities on their home campus following their short-term programme: three-quarters (74%) agreed they would be more likely to engage with international students on campus, with 43% strongly agreeing, and 72% were more likely to take part in international opportunities on campus.

2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the student focus groups, student surveys and institutional case studies, a number of consistent features in the successful delivery of short-term mobilities emerged. These point the way to recommendations to ensure the continued growth of such programmes.

PLANNING

Provide financial support

This can include bursaries and grants, discounts on programmes and targeted funding for underrepresented groups. To secure funding, align your activity with the strategy of internal and external funding sources, such as the Turing Scheme.

Get institutional buy in

Ensure you have full support from your institution's senior leadership, as well as assistance and encouragement from academic colleagues – both are essential to promoting and delivering programmes successfully. Share student feedback about the benefits of short-term mobilities and provide evidence of the impact they have on academic and personal learning. Encourage colleagues to think how a short-term mobility could form an integral part of a programme of study. Think creatively about the types of short-term programme that would be most beneficial to your students and wider institution, and how such programmes can be used as a recruitment tool.

Allow plenty of time for programme development

Establishing beneficial short-term programmes abroad will take time. Whether the programme is delivered by staff from the UK institution, a third-party provider or a partner institution abroad, negotiating between stakeholders, building trust, and gaining information about the programme, the location and other logistics will take time. Adjustments will likely be necessary to improve processes and content as you go.

Measure and share success

Measure and evaluate the benefits of short-term mobility on students in terms of their academic achievement, personal development and soft skills. Work with academic colleagues to ensure students can apply their learning experience abroad to their course, and liaise with the careers service to help students articulate their soft skills when applying for jobs.

Communicate evidence of impact across the institution and share details with external funding organisations. Capture stories of students' transformative international experiences to share with potential participants: student voices have power and authenticity. Encourage students to provide feedback, write blogs and share experiences on social media to encourage others to participate.



PROMOTION AND MARKETING

✓ Promote programmes early

Include information about short-term programmes in all your marketing materials, at open days, in prospectuses, during welcome week and through outreach activities. Focus on the aspects of short-term mobility that attract students: as a way to experience a different culture, meet new people and learn something new. Ensure that communications include information on the funding available and, where possible, include feedback from previous participants about the value of these programmes. Provide information for students about medical insurance, visa requirements and vaccinations.

✓ Explain costs and access to funding early on

Ensure that students understand all the costs involved early on in the process, so that perceived financial barriers do not stop anyone from engaging. Where possible, provide a cost-of-living tool or a model budget to help students calculate how much money they will need to successfully complete the programme. Provide information on all available funding sources, both internal and external, along with clear eligibility criteria.

✓ Simplify the process

Support students in navigating the application process. Provide drop-in sessions to help applicants complete forms, offer individual support for those with complex questions or additional needs, and include a process map in your materials with key milestones and deadlines.

SUPPORT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

✓ Deliver pre-departure sessions and support

Bring students together prior to departure to prepare for their mobility programme and network with each other. These sessions should outline the schedule of the programme and the activities involved, as well as clarify logistical issues such as visas and travel arrangements. They can also be used for basic language and cultural learning, enabling students to better engage with the local community while abroad.

✓ Offer support via peer learning

Establish an ambassador scheme, a mentoring programme or a buddy system, so that students can learn from their peers' experiences abroad. Encourage students planning to study abroad to meet with students on exchange on the home campus. When developing programmes, consider allowing student mentors to join programmes and provide in-country support to students.

✓ Be clear about safety

In communications, particularly in pre-departure sessions, describe the processes in place to ensure students' safety abroad and the actions they should take if they run into difficulties. Ensure there are opportunities for students to raise safety concerns, both through open forums and in one-to-one conversations. Be clear – both in institutional documentation and with students – how crisis support will be delivered and what participants should do in an emergency.

✓ Support student health abroad

Ensure that the support available on campus, such as the university's wellbeing team and counselling service, is also available to students while abroad. Where relevant, check that students' reasonable adjustments have been reviewed by the host institution and that the appropriate support has been put in place. Collaborate with your overseas partners to discuss the support available there and ensure it is in line with requirements. Provide contact details for a support team to liaise with while abroad and provide an out-of-hours telephone number for emergencies.

3. METHODOLOGY



The research for this project has included:

- a student survey which received **749** responses
- **17** focus groups delivered across **14** UK institutions
- **16** case studies of good practice from project institutions

Any demographic data sourced through surveys and focus groups relied on participants' self-identification. Self-identification has several methodological limitations, as identities and group affiliations are complex. Following recommended good practice,¹² the student survey allowed multiple answers when responding to requests for information on identity and background.

3.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The student questionnaire was hosted on JISC Online Surveys. It was open between September and December 2020. The questions were developed by UUKi staff, with further expertise provided by the project Steering Group.

The survey aimed to adhere to the following principles:¹³

- use simple, not complex, questions
- make questions specific and, where needed, include a reference period
- use a number scale rather than vague quantifiers
- use rating rather than ranking
- avoid satisfaction statements where possible
- avoid (binary) agree/disagree questions where possible
- avoid hypothetical questions where possible

The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Responses were confidential, and reasonable efforts were made to protect respondents' anonymity.

DATA PRESENTATION

The data is presented here as percentages rather than numbers, in order to draw more meaningful comparisons in proportional changes and trends.

All counts of respondents have been rounded to the nearest five to protect the confidentiality of individuals. Totals have been calculated from raw values, then rounded. As a result, some totals may appear to differ from the sum of individual figures presented in this report.

The survey questions

were developed by UUKi

with further expertise provided by the project Steering Group



¹² Simon P (2012) 'Collecting ethnic statistics in Europe: a review', in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol 35(8)

¹³ Dillman DA, Smyth JD, Christian LM (2014) *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* New Jersey:

Wiley Fowler F and Mangione T (1990) *Standardized Survey Interviewing: Minimizing Interviewer-Related Error*; Fowler F (1995) *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*; Krosnick J (2000) *The threat of satisficing in surveys: The shortcuts respondents take in answering questions*; Krosnick J and Presser S, (2010) *Handbook of Survey Research* Elsevier

THE SURVEY RECEIVED RESPONSES FROM STUDENTS IN THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS:	
Cardiff Metropolitan University	University of Bradford
Cardiff University	University of Bristol
De Montfort University	University of Dundee
Falmouth University	University of Essex
Glasgow Caledonian University	University of Exeter
Goldsmiths, University of London	University of Kent
Heriot-Watt University	University of Leeds
Middlesex University	University of Leicester
Nottingham Trent University	University of Lincoln
Queen's University Belfast	University of Liverpool
The University of Nottingham	University of London
The University of Sheffield	University of Portsmouth
The University of Warwick	University of Southampton
The University of York	University of St Andrews
Ulster University	University of Sussex
University College London	UAL: London College of Communication
University of Birmingham	University of Westminster

3.2 FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

Student focus groups were held to gain an understanding of what attracts students to short-term mobility, to identify existing barriers to participation and to generate ideas around how to increase participation in mobility activities.

A total of **17** focus groups involving **86** students were held between November 2020 and February 2021. They were split into groups of either mobile or non-mobile students. Mobile students were defined as having engaged in a short-term mobility of less than four weeks' duration.

STUDENTS FROM THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND FOCUS GROUPS:	
Cardiff University	University of Bradford
De Montfort University	University of Bristol
Goldsmiths, University of London	University College London
UAL: London College of Communication	University of Dundee
Nottingham Trent University	University of Essex
Queen's University Belfast	University of Exeter
The University of Sheffield	University of Westminster

The focus groups were hosted virtually, due to lockdown rules relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. The sessions were interactive and designed to encourage students to engage with the topic.

Methods used included:

- group discussions
- private reflections
- polling exercises



The polling exercises were conducted and results collated using mentimeter.com, while the discussions were recorded by means of digital recordings and note-taking.

3.3 LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH

The following limitations should be taken into consideration:

- While the individuals who participated in the focus groups and surveys are from a specified population (the student population) the survey relied on a convenience sample rather than a census. This sample was also self-selecting.
- The information captured from the surveys and focus groups relies solely on self-reporting; it is assumed the participants provided accurate information about their experiences.
- Students who had been abroad were more able to engage with the topic, as they had concrete experiences on which to base their perspectives. However, when these students discussed their motivations and decision making, some post-mobility rationalisation is likely to have been involved.
- Participants in either the survey or focus groups may have had different interpretations of the questions, although every effort was made to provide instruction, direction and classification for each question.
- The survey used closed rather than open questions due to the volume of expected responses. It is likely there are other factors which could influence a student's decision to go abroad, or their experience while are abroad, that are not captured in this report.
- Responses to the survey and focus groups that relate to institutional support and provision are based on participants' experience.
- The report does not seek to establish causation but instead aims to highlight correlations and patterns across students' experiences of short-term mobility programmes.



4. SURVEY FINDINGS



SURVEY FINDINGS

The goal of the student survey was to understand barriers and enablers of mobility, and the particular impacts of short-term programmes. In total, 749 responses were received.

The findings are split into the following seven areas:

1. Educational experience
2. Mobility programmes
3. Mobility funding
4. Mobility motivation
5. Mobility barriers
6. Mobility impact
7. Post-graduation impacts

749
responses
from students



4.1 EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

FIGURE 1: WHAT SUBJECT DID YOU STUDY FOR YOUR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN THE UK?

Social studies	17%
Business and administrative studies	15%
Creative arts and design	13%
Biological sciences	8%
Subjects allied to medicine	6%
Historical and philosophical studies	6%
Physical sciences	6%
Law	5%
Languages	5%
Engineering and technology	4%
Architecture, building and planning	4%
Medicine and dentistry	4%
Education	2%
Computer science	2%
Mathematical sciences	2%
Mass communications and documentation	1%
Veterinary science	1%
Agriculture and related subjects	0%

Number of respondents who answered this question

749

Respondents to the survey studied across a wide variety of disciplines. The most highly represented subjects were social studies (17% of total), business and administrative studies (15%) and creative arts and design (13%).

FIGURE 2: PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE, HAD YOU PREVIOUSLY TRAVELLED ABROAD? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Yes, on holiday or for visits with family or friends	90%
I lived abroad	18%
Yes, to study	13%
Yes, to volunteer	13%
Yes, to work	6%
Other	6%
No	4%

Number of respondents who answered this question

749

The majority of respondents (90%) had been abroad prior to their undergraduate degree for the purpose of holidays or to visit friends and family. Only 13% had studied abroad prior to enrolling at university.

FIGURE 3: PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE, DID YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SCHOOL/COLLEGE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
I studied one or more languages at secondary school prior to GCSE/Scottish Standard Grades (or equivalent level)	74%
I studied one or more languages for GCSE/Scottish Standard Grades (or equivalent level)	62%
I studied one or more languages at primary school	56%
I studied one or more languages for A-Level/Scottish Highers (or equivalent level)	30%
I didn't study any languages at school/college	3%

Number of respondents who answered this question

749

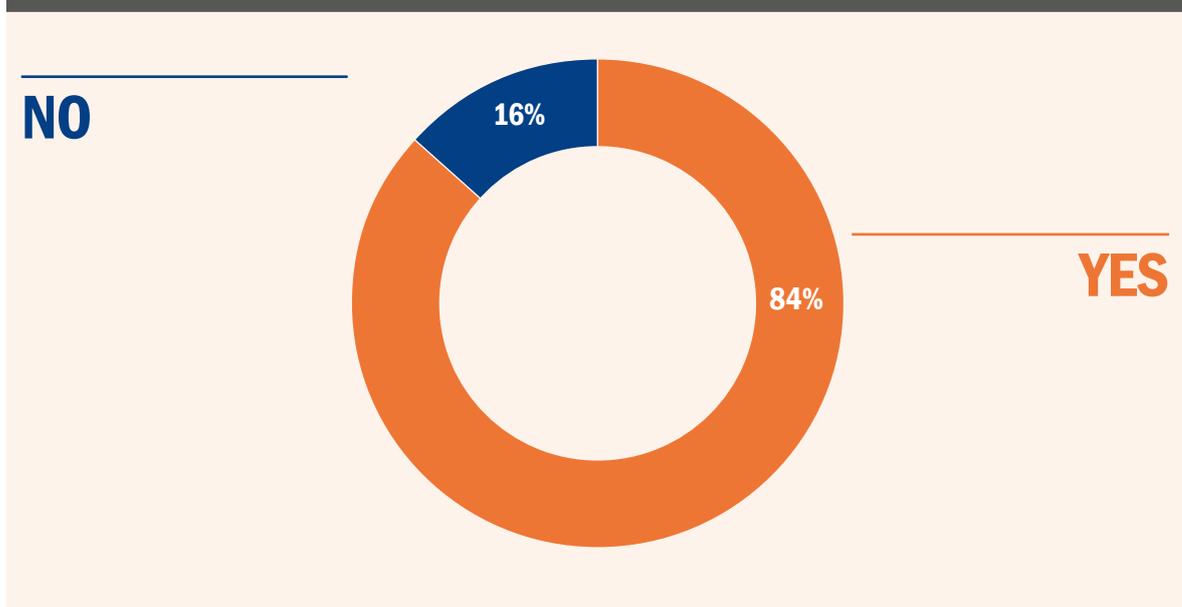
The majority of respondents had studied languages while at school or college: 56% at primary school, 62% for GCSE or equivalent, and 30% for A-level or equivalent.

FIGURE 4: AS FAR AS YOU CAN RECALL, DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES WHILST AT SCHOOL/COLLEGE?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
I was taught by a teacher/(s) from other countries	51%
My class had teaching assistants visiting from other countries	33%
I did not participate in any of the above international initiatives whilst at school/college	32%
I took part in lessons with a partner school/college in another country	21%
I took part in extra-curricular activities, such as workshops or seminars, with a partner school/college in another country	18%
Number of respondents who answered this question	749

In terms of prior international activities other than language learning, **51%** of respondents had been taught by teachers from other countries at school or college, while **33%** had worked with teaching assistants who were visiting from abroad. However, almost a third (**32%**) did not participate in any of the listed international initiatives at school or college.

4.2 MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

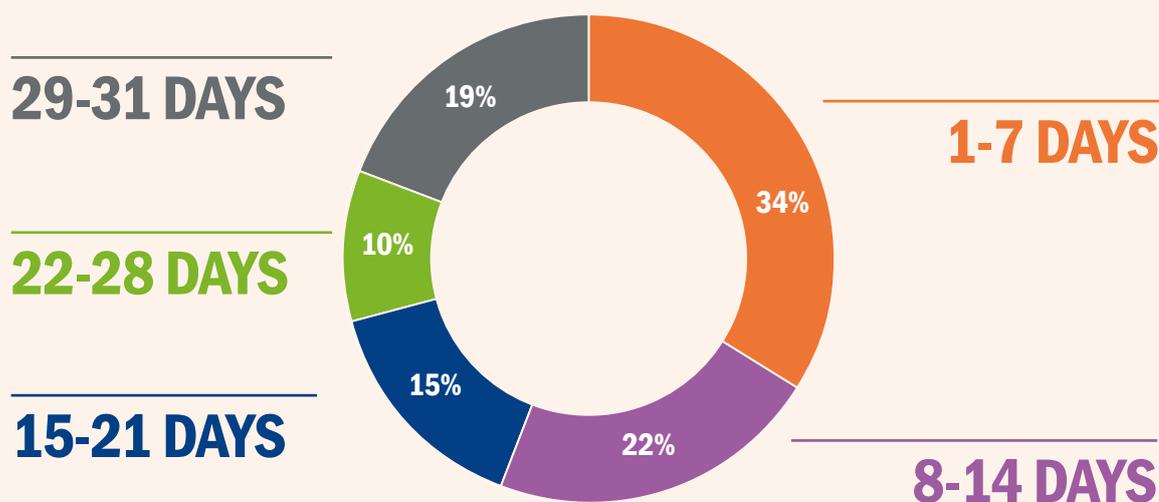
FIGURE 5: DURING YOUR DEGREE PROGRAMME DID YOU TAKE PART IN AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FOR A PERIOD OF 4 WEEKS OR LESS?

Number of respondents who answered this question: 749

In total, **84%** of the survey respondents had participated in a short-term mobility experience while enrolled at university. The remainder of the questions relate to this mobile population.

The majority of mobile students (**87%**) had been abroad in the last three academic years. **53%** of respondents undertook their short-term mobility experience during the 2018–19 academic year. Less than **1%** had been abroad for the programme prior to 2014.

FIGURE 6: WHAT WAS THE APPROXIMATE DURATION OF THE SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME? PLEASE INCLUDE TRAVEL DAYS IN YOUR CALCULATION.



Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

Over half (**56%**) had participated in a programme of two weeks or less. A third (**34%**) undertook a mobility period of up to a week.

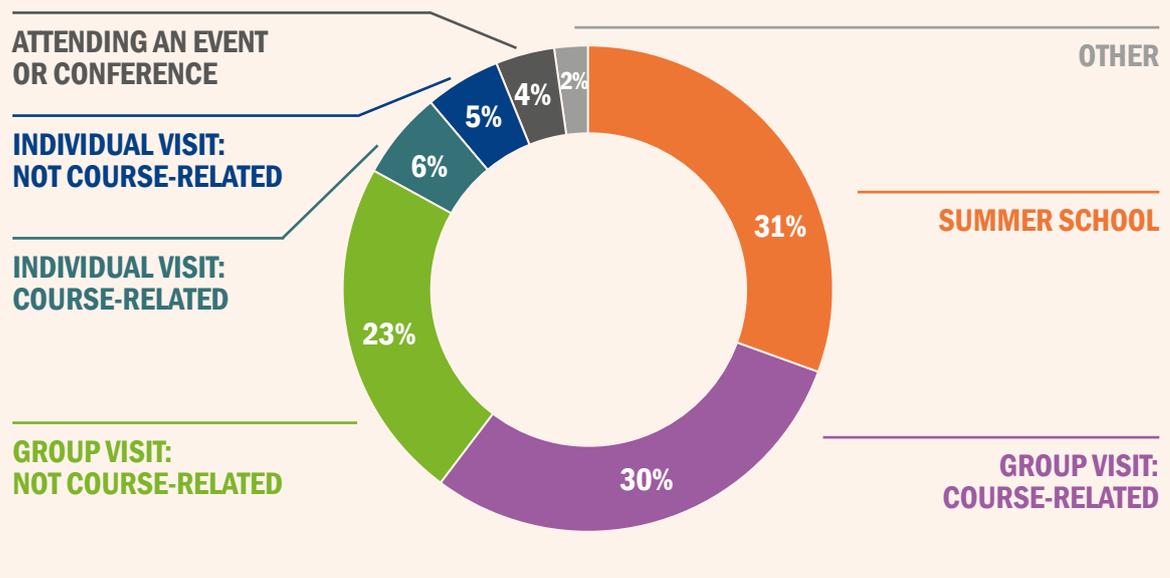
FIGURE 7: WHAT WAS THE FORMAT OF THIS SHORT-TERM MOBILITY EXPERIENCE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Study or research experience	58%
Cultural or language experience	40%
Work or professional learning experience	23%
Volunteer experience	20%
Course elective	8%
Sport experience	2%

Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

Most of the mobilities were for the purpose of study (**58%**) or for a cultural or language experience (**40%**). Just under a quarter (**23%**) went abroad for work or professional learning, and a fifth (**20%**) through a volunteer programme. Respondents could select all models that applied, and the total (**696**) suggests that some students participated in programmes that combined these elements.

FIGURE 8: WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITY WAS THE SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME?

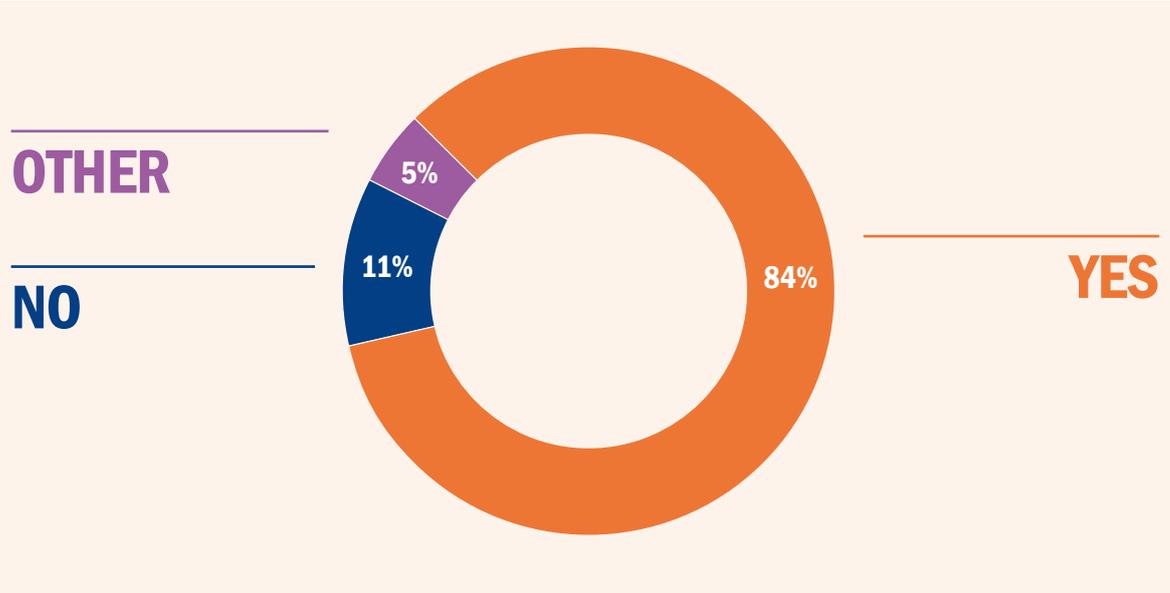


Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

The most common types of short-term mobility were summer schools (31%), course-related group visits, such as field trips (30%) and group visits that were not course related, such as cultural programmes delivered by the international office (23%).

Most mobility experiences were delivered by an academic department (29%) or the university's international office (28%), with third-party providers covering 13%.

FIGURE 9: DID PARTICIPATION IN THE SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME COUNT TOWARDS YOUR DEGREE CLASSIFICATION (I.E. WAS THE PROGRAMME CREDIT-BEARING)?



Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

For the majority of students (84%), the mobility was not credit bearing.

4.3 MOBILITY FUNDING

TABLE 1: HOW WAS YOUR SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME FUNDED? PLEASE CONSIDER "TOTAL COST" TO INCLUDE ACCOMMODATION, TRAVEL, ADMINISTRATION (INSURANCE, VISA, VACCINATIONS, PROGRAMME COSTS ETC.) FOOD AND POCKET MONEY

AMOUNT OF TOTAL COST COVERED BY SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT FUNDING	PERCENTAGE
0% - private or personal funds only	13%
Less than 25%	15%
25–49%	25%
50–74%	17%
75–99%	19%
100%	10%

Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

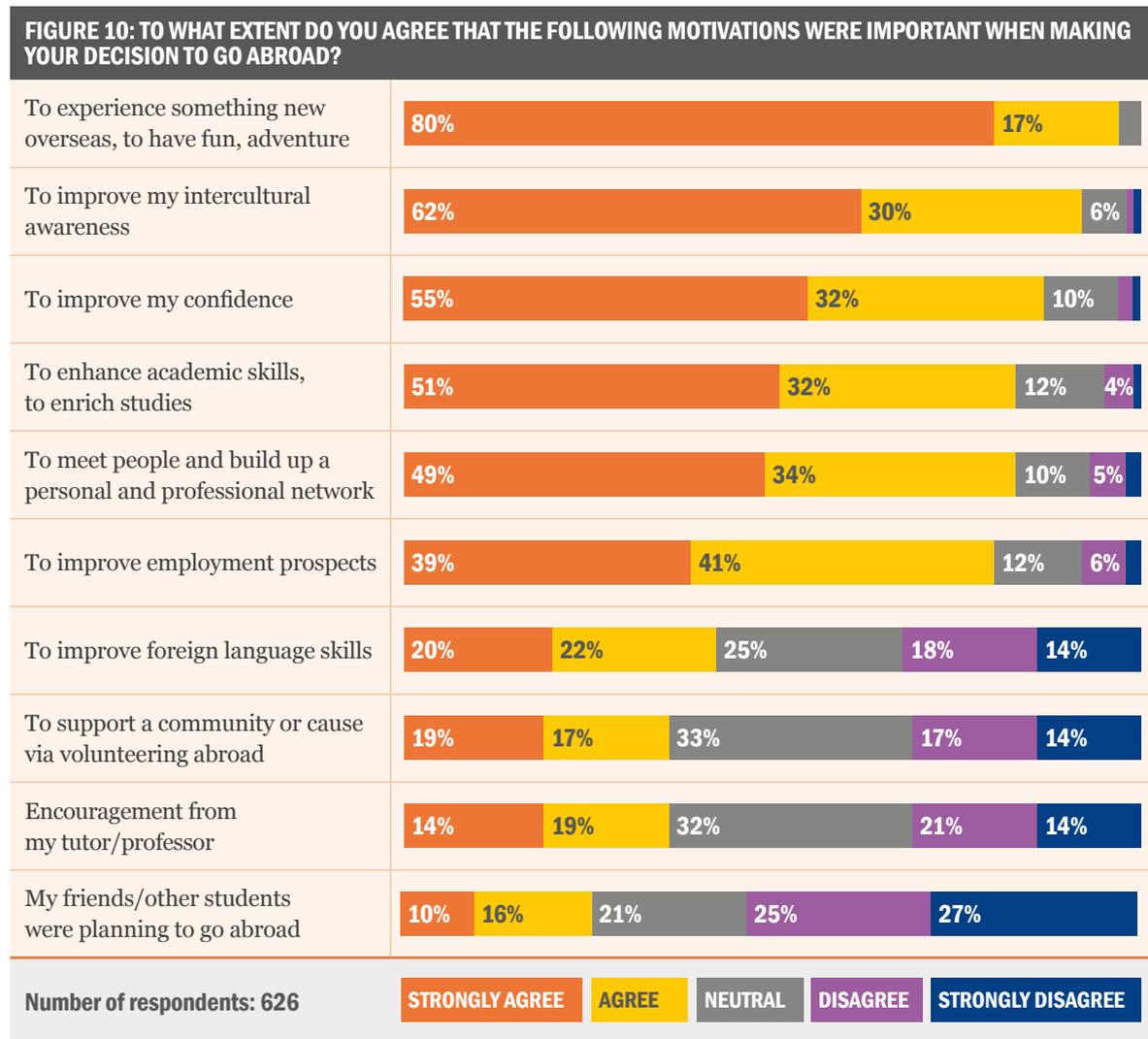
Although the most common level of coverage was 25–49%, with a quarter (**25%**) receiving this level of support, almost half (**46%**) had at least **50%** of their short-term mobility funded, and **10%** had been fully funded. However, nearly one in eight (**13%**) were entirely self-funded.

It is worth noting that only **8%** of respondents from a low-income background¹⁴ self-funded their short-term mobility programme. Over a third (**38%**) of such students chose options where **75%** or more of the cost was funded, compared to **29%** of the whole survey cohort.



¹⁴ Defined as coming from a household in which total annual income is less than £25,000

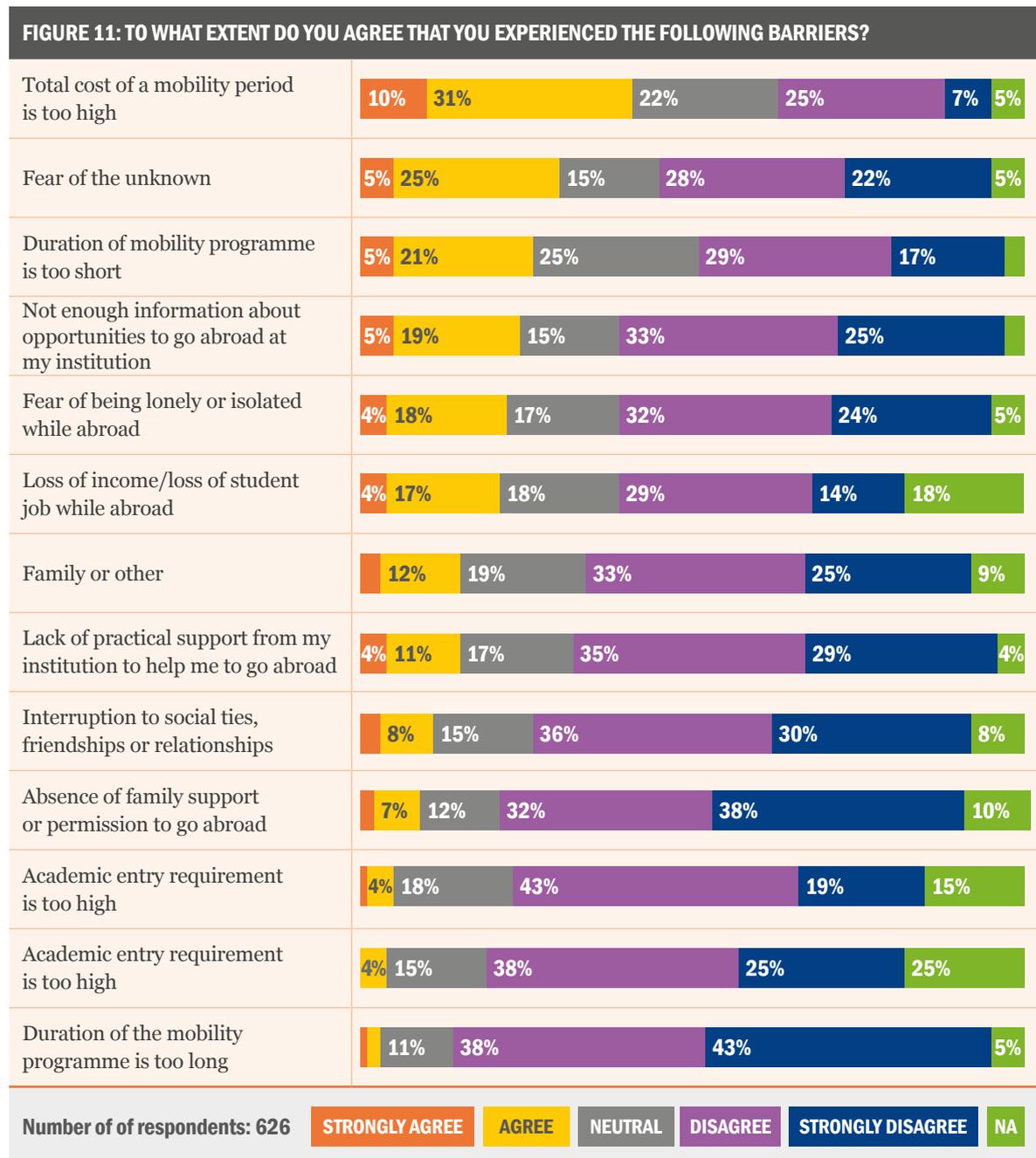
4.4 MOBILITY MOTIVATIONS



Survey participants reported a number of motivations to go abroad. The majority (**80%**) went for new experiences, fun and adventure. Just over three fifths (**62%**) hoped to improve their intercultural awareness. Over half felt the experience would improve their confidence (**55%**), and a similar proportion judged it would enhance their academic skills and enrich their studies (**51%**).

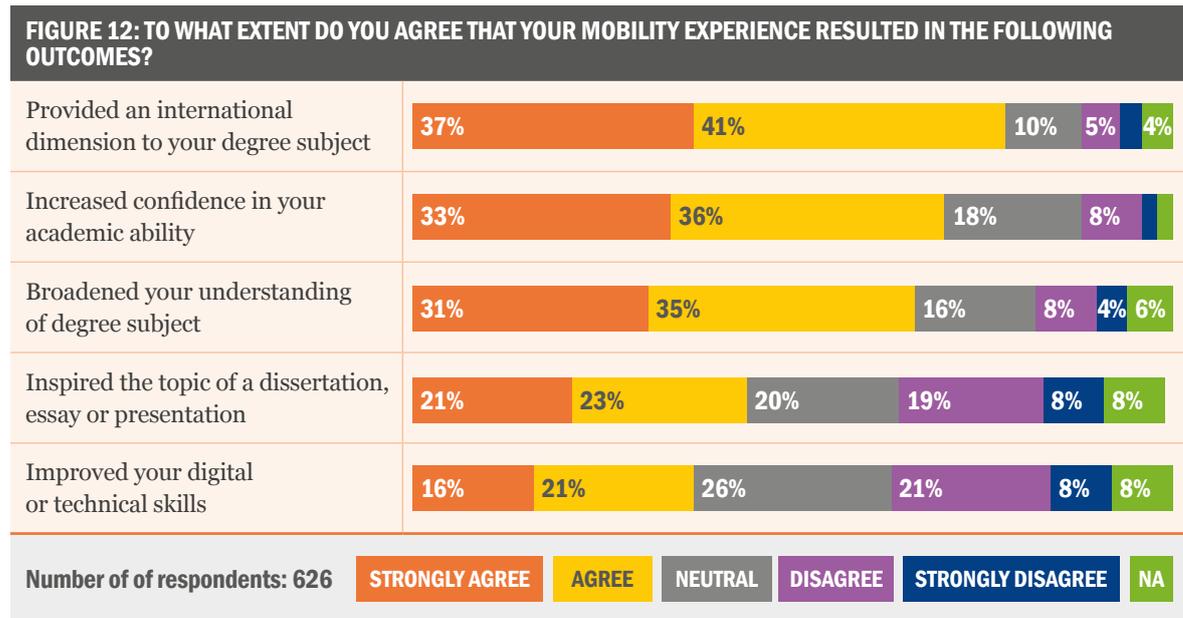


4.5 MOBILITY BARRIERS



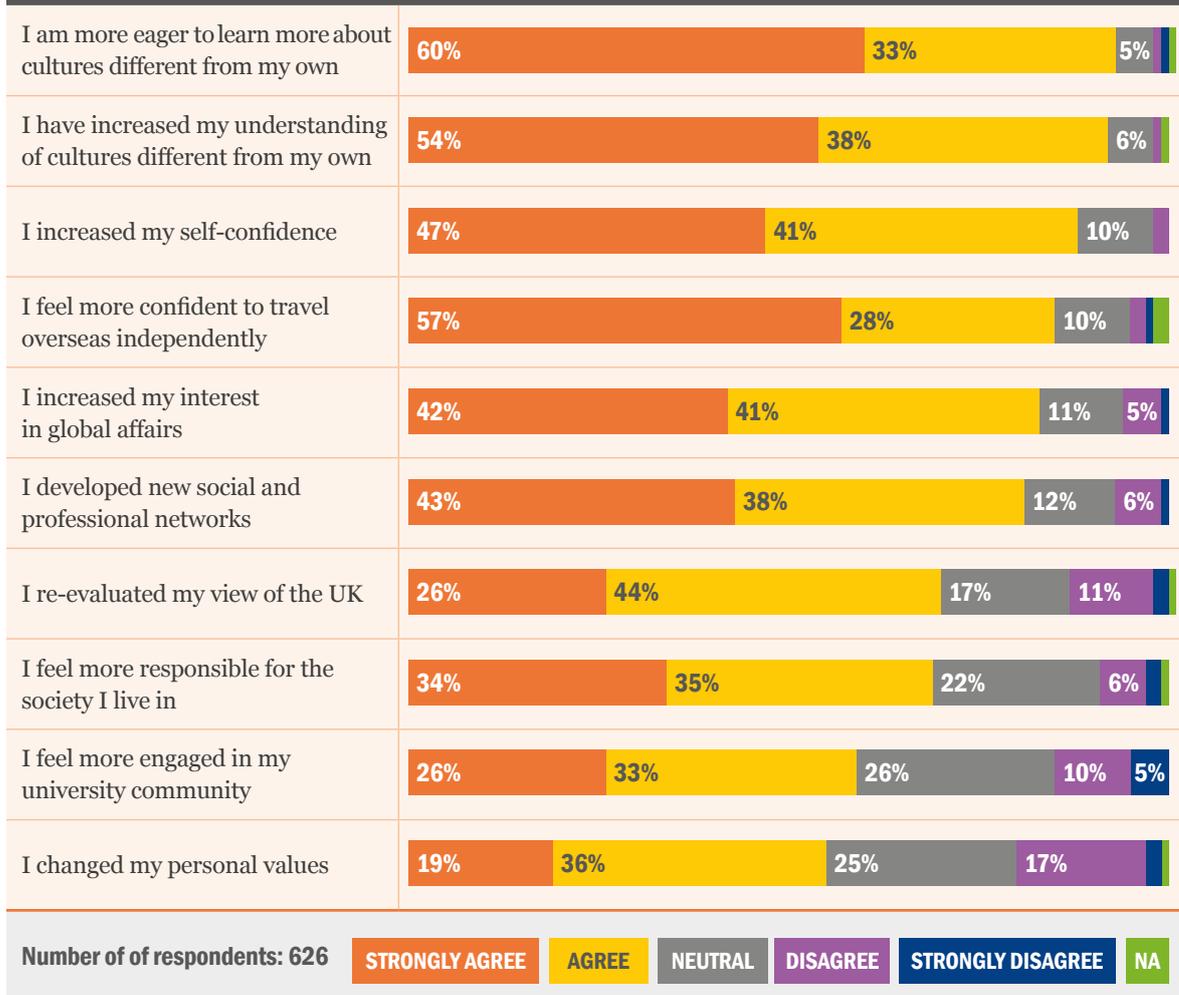
The main barrier to mobility was the cost, with **41%** agreeing or strongly agreeing this was a barrier. Fear of the unknown was the second most commonly reported barrier (**30%**), while one in four felt such mobility programmes were too short (**26%**). In contrast, prior academic and language requirements were not reported as barriers.

4.6 MOBILITY IMPACT



Overall, taking part in the short-term mobility programme had a positive impact on respondents' academic experience, particularly in terms of providing an international dimension to their subject (**78%**), building confidence in their academic ability (**69%**) and shaping a broader understanding of their degree (**66%**). For **44%**, their short-term mobility programme directly inspired the topic of a dissertation, essay or presentation in their formal degree programme.

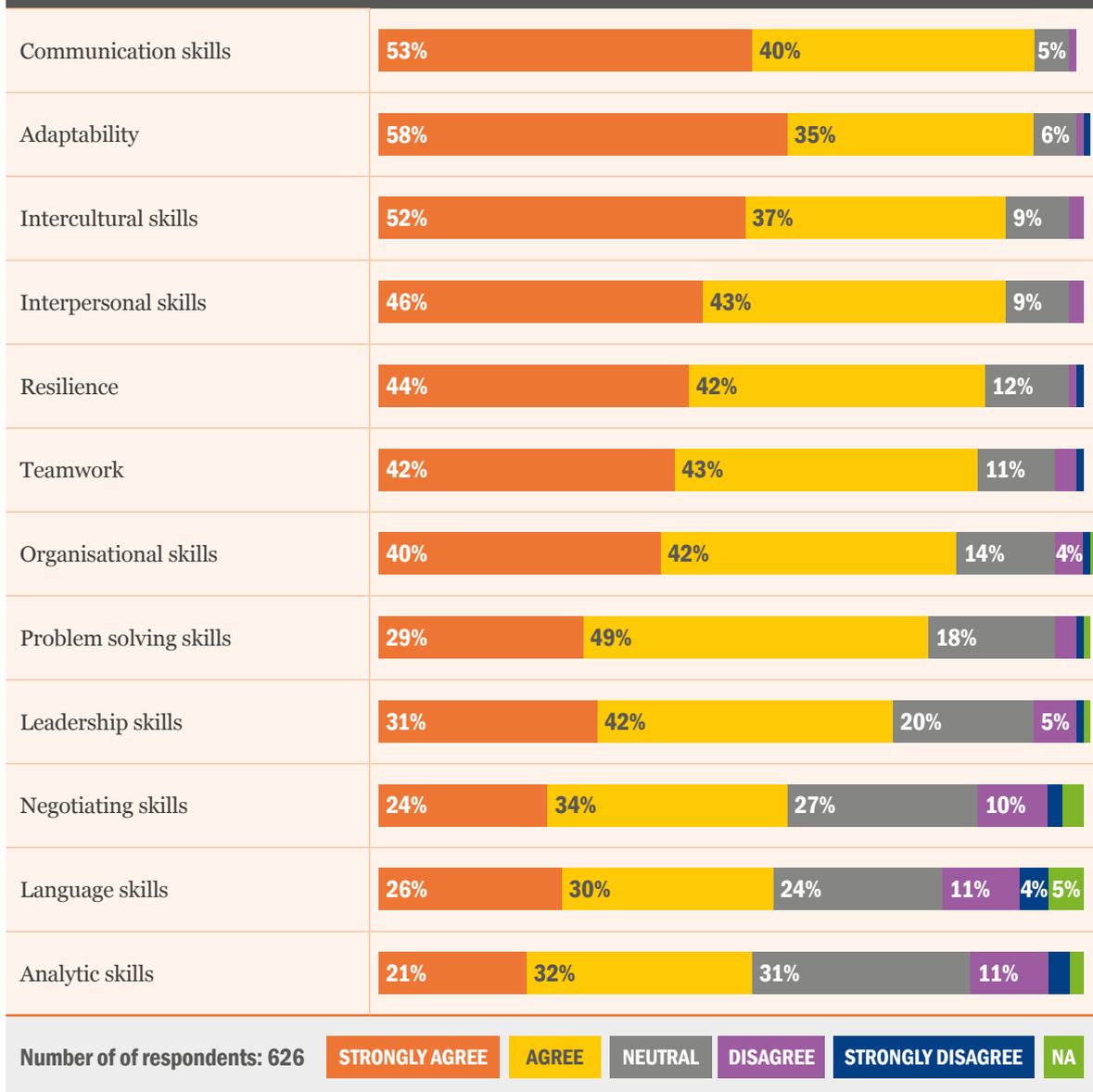


FIGURE 13: PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WITH REGARDS TO HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT FOLLOWING YOUR SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME

Respondents were asked to reflect on how the short-term mobility programme may have affected their personal development. The results show a strong sense among students that it had impacted them on a personal level.

The vast majority felt they were more eager to learn about cultures different from their own, and that they had increased their understanding of different cultures (93% in both cases); 88% reported greater self-confidence following the programme; and 85% felt more confident to travel overseas independently.

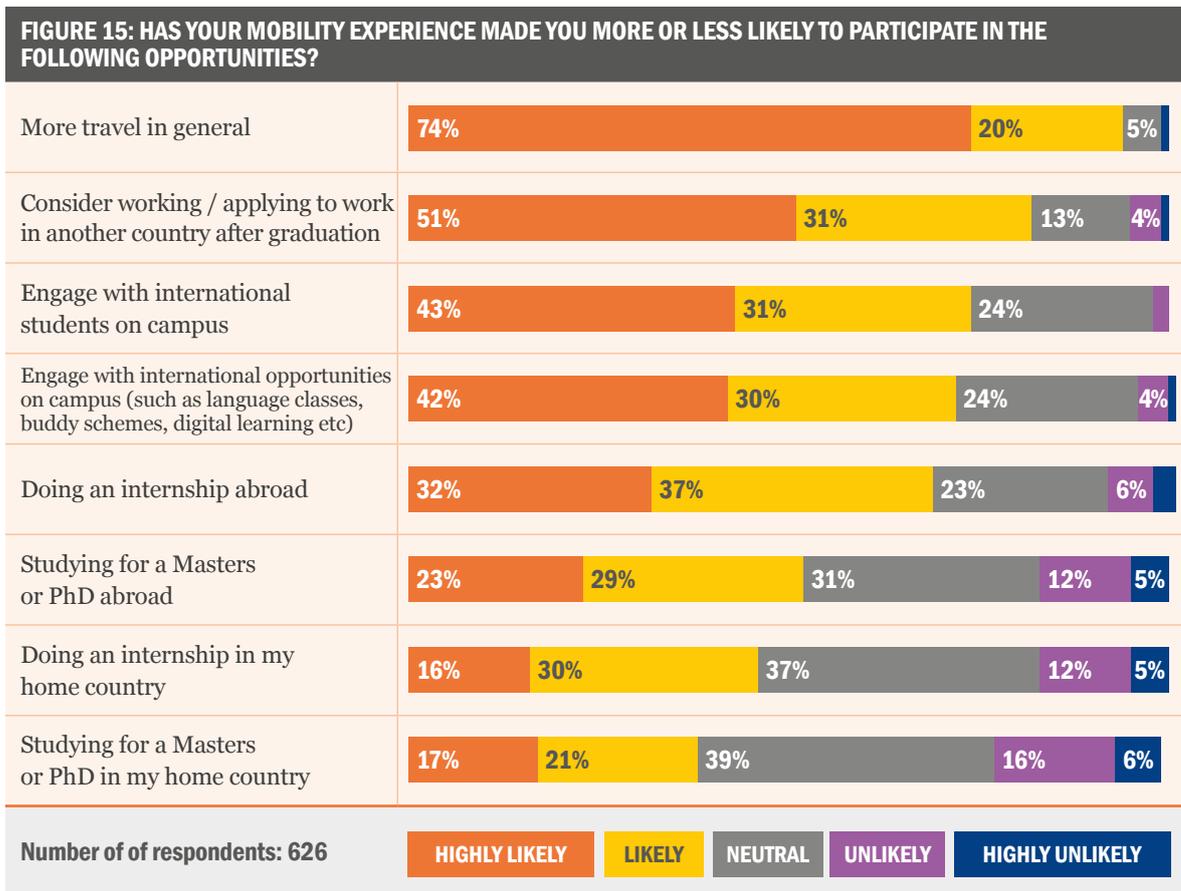


FIGURE 14: FOR THE SKILLS BELOW, PLEASE RATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU AGREE THAT YOUR SKILLS IMPROVED FOLLOWING YOUR SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME

Respondents were given a list of 12 skills and asked to reflect on whether they had improved in these areas following their short-term mobility programme. There was broad consensus among students that the programme had helped them develop across the skillset.

The majority (93%) reported greater adaptability. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 93% reported improving their communication skills while abroad, with over half (53%) strongly agreeing, while 89% felt they had developed their intercultural skills and interpersonal skills.





Respondents were asked about how the mobility had impacted their future academic and career choices.

The majority (94%) said they were generally interested in further travel following their mobility period, 82% said they were more likely to consider working in another country after graduation, and more than two-thirds (69%) were interested in doing an internship abroad. Students also reported being more engaged on their home campus following their short-term programme: almost three-quarters (74%) said they were more likely to engage with international students on campus, with 43% strongly agreeing, while 72% were more likely to take part in international opportunities on campus, including buddy schemes, language classes and virtual programmes.

Impact of mobility experience

82%

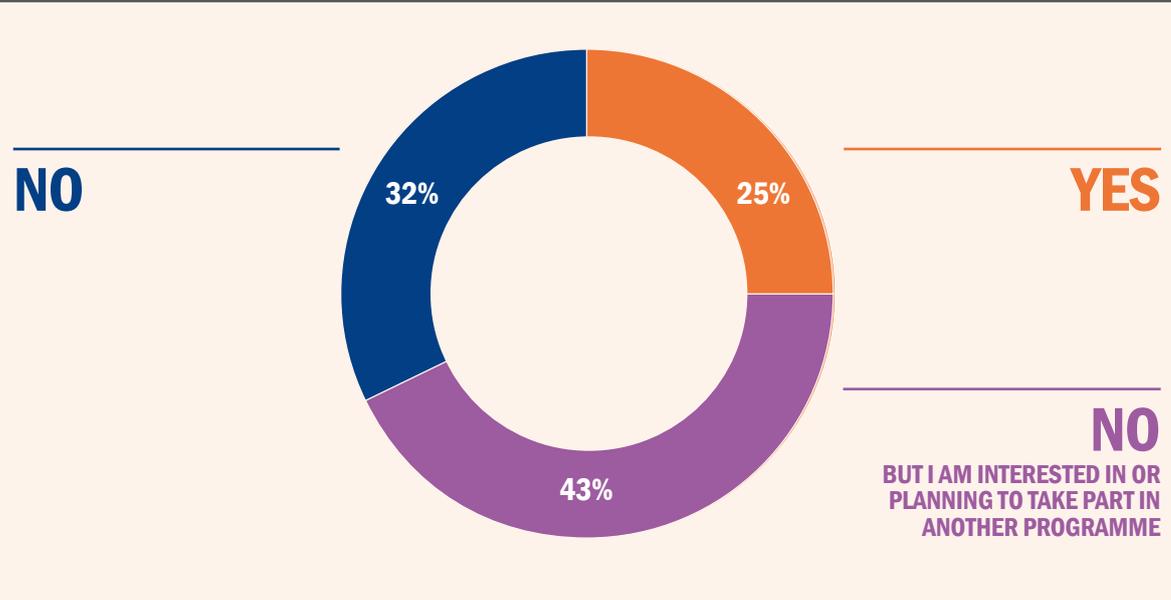
said they were more likely to consider working in another country after graduation



72%

more likely to take part in international opportunities on campus including buddy schemes, language classes



FIGURE 16: SINCE YOU COMPLETED YOUR SHORT-TERM MOBILITY PROGRAMME, HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANOTHER MOBILITY PROGRAMME AT YOUR INSTITUTION

Number of respondents who answered this question: 626

A quarter of respondents had already participated in another mobility programme, while 43% were interested in or planning to go abroad with the university again.

FIGURE 17: IF YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANOTHER MOBILITY PROGRAMME, WHAT WAS THE DURATION OF THIS PROGRAMME?

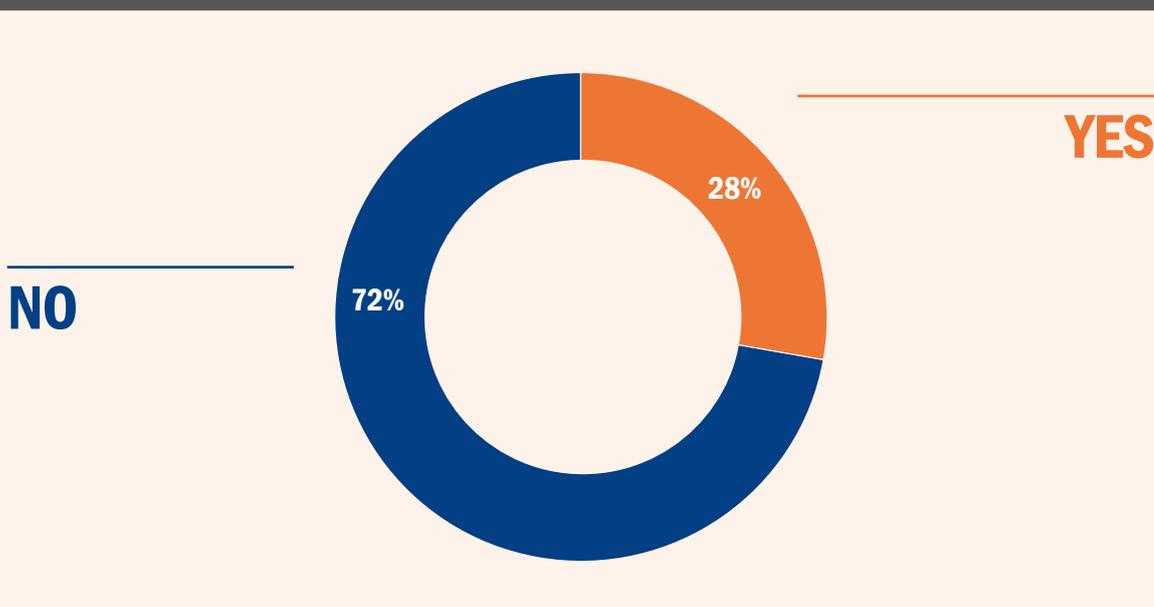
RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Less than 4 weeks	74%
A full academic year abroad	31%
More than 4 weeks but less than a semester	17%
A semester	12%
More than a semester but less than an academic year	6%
Other	1%

Number of respondents who answered this question: 154

For those respondents who did participate in another programme (154 respondents), 74% took part in another short-term programme, 29% chose a medium-term programme (between four weeks and a semester) and 31% spent a year abroad.

4.7 POST-GRADUATION IMPACT

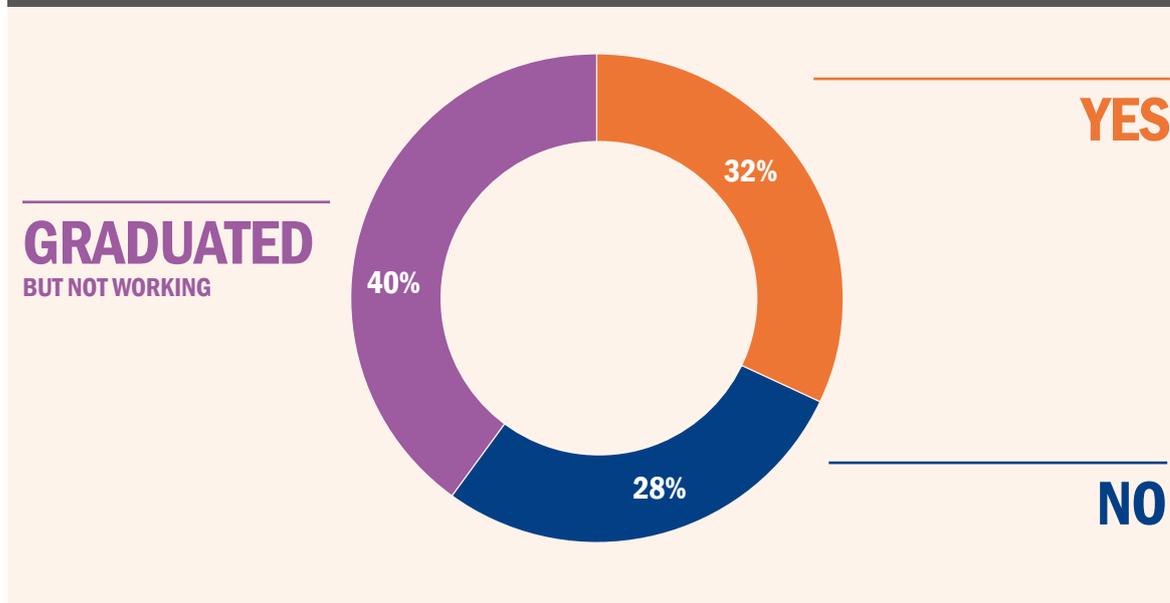
FIGURE 18: HAVE YOU WORKED, STUDIED OR VOLUNTEERED ABROAD SINCE COMPLETING YOUR DEGREE?



Number of respondents who answered this question: 297

Over a quarter of the graduated respondents had worked, studied or volunteered abroad since completing their degree programme.

FIGURE 19: IF YOU ARE WORKING, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR MOBILITY EXPERIENCE HELPED YOU GET YOUR CURRENT JOB?



Number of respondents who answered this question: 297

Among the **297** who had graduated, **60%** were in work. Of those, over half (**53%**) felt that their short-term mobility experience helped them to get their current job. Of those who were working, the majority (**83%**) felt their short-term mobility experience had been beneficial to their career. It is noticeable that a fairly large number of students were not in work at the time of the survey. This could be attributed to the pandemic taking hold in 2020 and the subsequent restrictions in the UK and around the world, which would have impacted significantly on graduating students' ability to get work or start out on their career path from summer 2020.

5. FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS



A series of focus groups were conducted with project institutions between November 2020 and February 2021.

The aims of the focus groups were:

- to better understand what attracts students to short-term mobility programmes
- to discuss their impact
- to find solutions to barriers in accessing opportunities
- to explore ways to increase student participation

Participation rates

86

students took part in 17 sessions



60

of the students who had been abroad via a short-term programme (of four weeks or less)



5.1 MOBILE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

WHAT ATTRACTS STUDENTS TO GOING ABROAD?

I thought I've got nothing to lose but so much to gain

Across the groups, students were excited by the opportunity to travel, to meet new people, to see new places and to learn new things. They were particularly keen to 'experience a different culture' and perspective to that of the UK.

The work and professional learning experience is something you can't get if you travel by yourself

There was consensus across the groups that travelling as part of a university course is 'a unique experience' and 'added something different' compared to a tourist trip or solo travel. The trip being delivered by the university meant that as well as experiencing a deeper engagement with the local culture, students could connect with partner universities, visit companies or work with local organisations, which made the trip more impactful and 'immersive'. Students felt that they should seize the opportunity as they 'might not get that experience later' and noted that 'it's a good way to see the place properly'.

We're at university and we're getting a degree to move on to getting a full-time job and trips can enhance that

For some students, motivations related to their course and what they thought would be 'helpful' for their degree. Many were also 'thinking more about [their] career in the future' and how a mobility period might support those future ambitions, noting that the programme complemented their 'career aspirations'. Some were interested in experiencing the 'work culture abroad' and treated the programme as 'an opportunity to see the workings and dynamics of an international business'. Students across all groups were hoping to 'build skills' while abroad and saw the programme as a way to 'boost' their CVs.

I wanted to meet new people and this came up while I was thinking about it

Students were also motivated by the opportunity to expand their professional and personal networks; many were excited by the opportunity to network internationally and to make connections with different institutions and organisations.

It's a good way of being able to explore somewhere that is so new and so different

Participants were excited to travel to a location with the support and guidance of the university, which 'eased the mind' and reduced the sense of risk associated with travelling to a new place. A number of students commented that programmes appeared 'well organised', which encouraged them to apply. Some had never travelled alone before and felt the programme would help them 'gain independence'. One student said they had been 'anxious' about going abroad but decided to be 'optimistic' and use the programme as 'a way to grow'.

I thought that the summer school would be a good way of trialling study abroad to see if I was capable of doing it

Students also expressed interest in studying abroad for a longer duration later in their degree, and felt that the short-term programmes were 'a good starting point' to see how they would cope with 'home sickness' and living with 'complete independence'.

The allure of going abroad is actually what made me want to come to [the university]

Interestingly, a number of students across different focus groups stated that the opportunity to go abroad played a role in their decision to join the university. One participant noted that because they had been informed about the international programmes at the university, they 'knew that going abroad was something [they] wanted to do' before enrolling.

Generally, students felt that the international element of the programme was important, and that had it been a UK-based programme it would not have been as attractive; part of what appealed was that it took place in a 'different environment' to the UK.

WHERE DID STUDENTS GO, AND WHAT DID THEY DO?

Students were asked what type of mobility programme they participated in, where the programme took place, and its duration.

Location of mobility programme

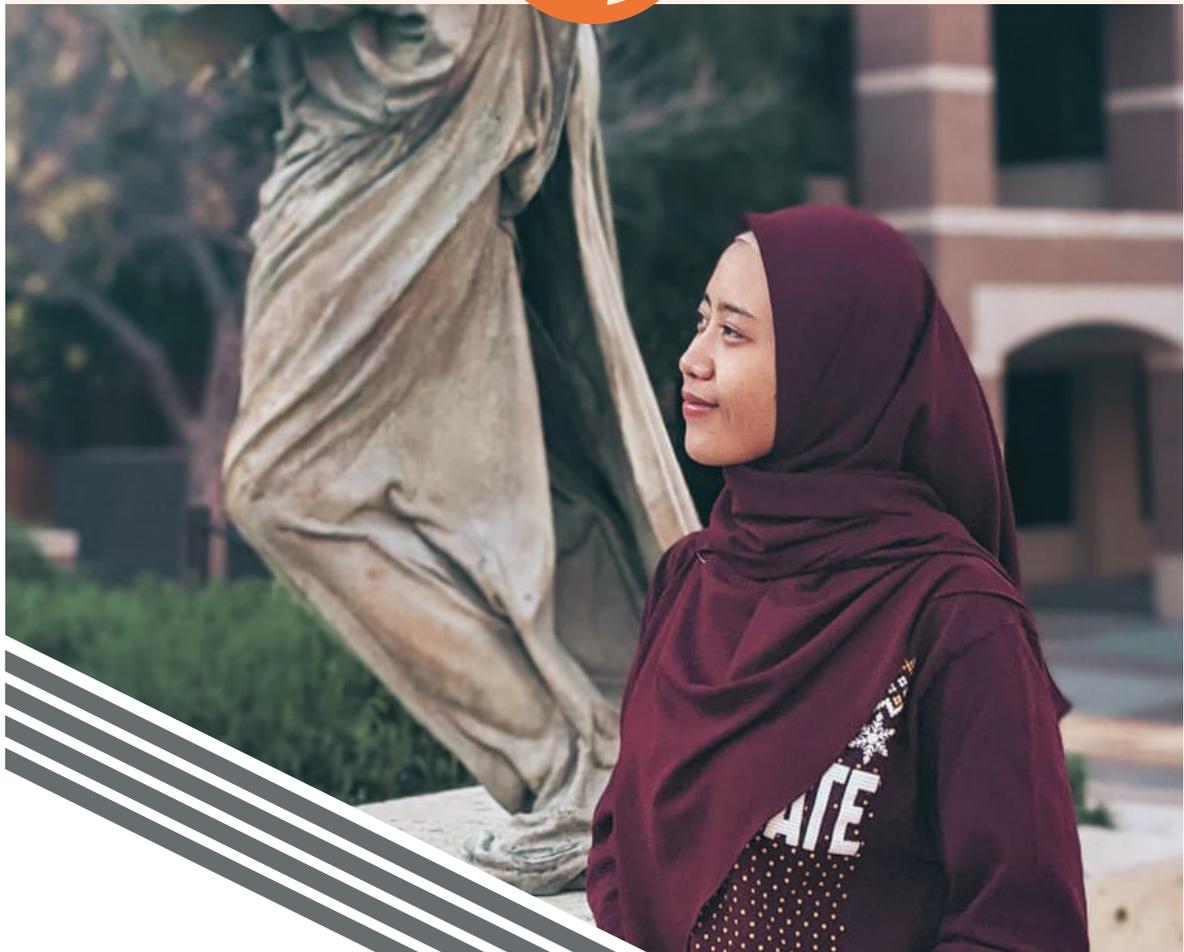
60

mobile students had undertaken short-term placements



31

different countries visited



When asked about the role location played in their motivations, a number of students reported that it was simply the opportunity to travel more broadly that appealed. For these students, the location 'wasn't as important' as the opportunity to go abroad in general and to experience something 'different'. One student said it was the first programme they came across and it 'seemed to be a good opportunity'. Others were 'just excited to go for the programme itself'.

The students for whom the location played a role in their decision offered a variety of reasons for their choices.

It was on my list of places I wanted to go and I thought if I don't go now I'll never get to go

In some cases, students were motivated to visit a specific country; for example, one stated that a programme to Mexico 'was a good chance to practise language and meet Mexican people and know their culture'. Some were motivated by post-graduation career plans, for example, noting that the business landscape in the destination country 'was very relevant for career opportunities and employment opportunities'. One student reported that they were 'particularly' interested in learning more about the 'business culture and the culture in general' of the nation they visited. For others, there was a general interest in visiting a region of the world they had 'never visited before'. One student was motivated to visit a specific country to learn more about their family history 'to see where [they were] from' and to connect with family there that they had 'never seen before'.

I chose [the programme] because it was [in a location] very different from Europe and the UK

Some students were particularly keen to travel to locations that were far away from the UK or had a strikingly 'different culture' to western Europe, saying that they would have been less likely to participate in opportunities closer to home, as they were keen to push themselves to 'try something a bit different'. Conversely, among those who selected mobility in Europe, some were motivated by being 'close to home'. In one case, this was because the student had not travelled alone before and was keen to travel to a location where they felt 'safe to be on [their] own'.

Type of mobility programme

The most popular type of mobility programme was for study, although some took up work, volunteer and language experiences.

When you go with the university it gives you the extra experiences that you wouldn't be able to get on your own

Study programmes were attractive because they offered both the formal learning of the programme itself, and the informal learning of cultural immersion. One student reflected that the programme had 'educational value'. Again, participants noted that travelling for a study, work or volunteer placement was not the same as travelling as a tourist, as it was 'more immersive' and they could engage with the culture and local community instead of 'just visiting tourist spots ... which helps to learn more about the country'.

Students were keen to study in a different environment, as it allowed them to ‘draw on different problem-solving skills’, providing a different approach to and way of engaging with study. One said it was ‘exciting to see how the modules ... are presented in a different country’ and how the theory applies in a ‘real life’ situation.



Some found it ‘fulfilling’ to spend time outside the ‘UK bubble’ they had become ‘accustomed to’ as a student. For some, the programme was embedded into their degree programme, which helped justify the trip.

I’ve never really had any work experience or international networking opportunities across seas

Some students wanted to expand their future job opportunities by working abroad. Their university’s involvement in organising such programmes provided reassurance that the host organisations would be reputable, which students said was very important. One student expressed the hope that, in the long term, the mobility would ‘lead to a role with an NGO’, and said the programme provided insight into the activities involved in their future career ambition.

I really liked the mission of the charity

A number of students participated in volunteer programmes, and the idea of doing this abroad was seen as appealing. A student who had undertaken multiple charitable placements said these experiences had been ‘very career directing’. Students were excited to volunteer with other students and enjoyed meeting other volunteers and building solidarity with people who shared their values.

It’s a good opportunity to meet new people and try new things without feeling too scared

Students were positive about going abroad as part of a group with accompanying staff, and with peers who had different life experiences but ‘shared interests’. They highlighted the opportunity to interact and work together in a cohort and experience the programme collectively. This provided not only a sense of shared experience, but also some security when compared to travelling abroad alone: travelling in a group made it feel like a ‘safe environment’ as ‘a peer group supports you’. In addition, students staying with host families reported that this also made them feel safe.

Good opportunity to learn about something unrelated to my course that I am passionate about

Most agreed the programme allowed them to ‘study something different’ from their degree. One student noted that they wanted to develop their ‘political education’ and that studying abroad ‘helped break out of a silo’ in their learning. Another observed that their programme’s activities ‘seemed to be different to what [we] normally do in the UK’. Notably, students were attracted to programmes which provided a ‘combination of everything’, including language and cultural learning, such as calligraphy classes.

Duration of mobility programme

It felt like the perfect amount of time in the city

Across all groups, students were positive about the short duration of the programmes, and broadly felt that they were still immersive and enriching.

It’s only five days but you get a lot out of it

There was general agreement that the ‘really busy schedule’ of short programmes meant participants were more able to immerse themselves and do a lot in a short period. The short duration motivated students to make the most of all the opportunities available to them. One noted that two weeks ‘was the perfect amount of time, because by the end of it everyone was exhausted’. Another student noted that the short duration of the programme forced them ‘to be much more spontaneous’ and make the most of every opportunity on offer, which was a good skill to develop. Another noted that the short duration helped them to ‘see more and make the most of it’ as they ‘only had so many days left.’

It was a convenient gap – it wasn’t too long it wasn’t too short



Students liked the fact that the programme could be scheduled around their curriculum, especially those concerned about spending too much time away from formal study and missing modules or other opportunities at the home university. One felt it was 'important' to return to the UK and 'attend lectures as per usual and to not miss too many tutorials'. Another thought the experience was well timed, as 'it was during career booster week, so [they] didn't miss any lectures or tutorials.' Many viewed these programmes as being in addition to, rather than part of, their curriculum in the UK.

Fitting it around my life, as I work as well as being at university... made it more accessible

For some students, a short-duration programme was more practical. Being able to keep part-time jobs came up as an important issue. One student who relied on part-time work to support themselves while at university noted that they could 'easily get [the] time off' for a short programme, but had it been longer they would have had to 'leave the company', which would not have been feasible. Another noted that 'not everyone can go away for four months' and described these programmes as 'short and sweet'. One person was excited about 'still getting the experience but not having to take a complete year' and ending up 'behind everybody else'.

[Duration] played a big role for me; I'm a carer so having it shorter meant I could get someone just to cover for me for a week, so it meant I could go away

A number of students felt they could not participate in longer mobility programmes due to 'commitments at home' and caring responsibilities. One student was married, and others mentioned that being away from family and partners for a year was 'too much'. Another student cited their mental health, noting that they 'don't like being in areas unknown' to them, but that a shorter duration was more manageable.

It was the first time I was going abroad on my own so it was perfect that it wasn't longer

Some students felt the short duration helped address the fear of the unknown, and made the programme feel like less of a risk, as they did not have to make a long-term commitment to an unknown programme. One found the duration appealing because, 'especially if it's a place that's completely different to where you're from, it can get a bit hard to stay there for too long.' One participant was concerned about travelling abroad for a longer programme, as they still lived at home and had not lived independently before. The short programme offered an opportunity to sample the experience of living alone.

See the world two weeks at a time

Short trips meant that students could potentially visit and experience more cultures, rather than limiting themselves to one long-term programme. Some enjoyed crossing nations off their 'bucket list' and experiencing 'different snippets of the world'. Others noted that they could potentially participate in more than one short mobility and access more locations.



Students enjoyed

crossing nations off their bucket list

and experiencing 'different snippets of the world'

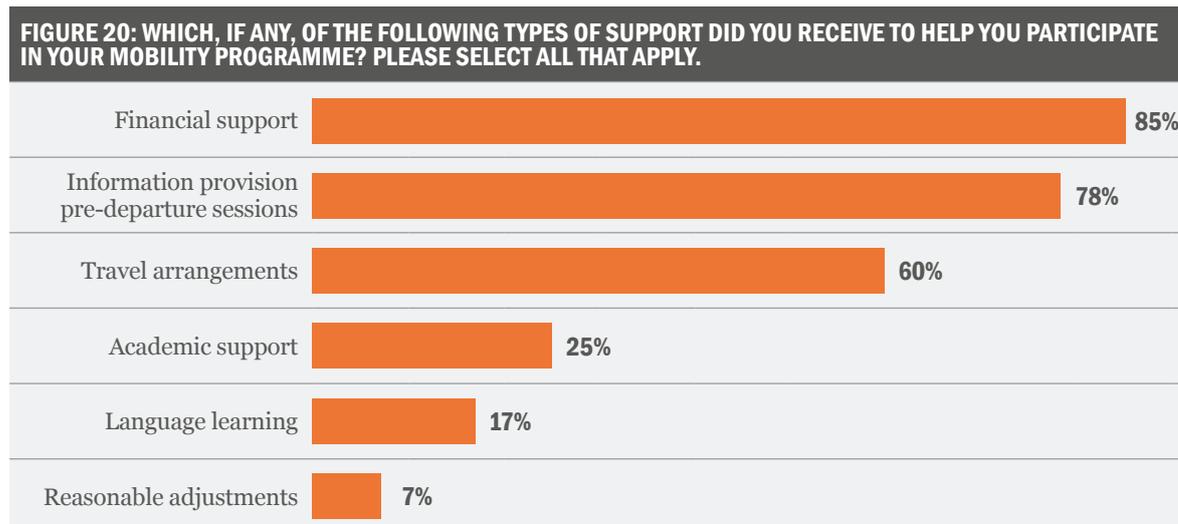
I wanted to go on a long-term experience but I couldn't, so when I saw that there was an opportunity to go on a short-term experience, I jumped on it

Some students were keen to participate in a longer-term programme but, due to curriculum restrictions, were unable to participate in semester or year abroad programmes. The option of short-term or summer programmes meant such students could still undertake an international experience while at university. One student said the length of the programme was good because it fitted into the short four-week summer break on their course; they found it was 'a good amount of time' as 'after a week [they were] quite comfortable.'

One student on a week-long programme felt that the trip could have been extended, as 'everything goes so fast.' The student said that the group went 'straight into activities' and that this was intense. There were also some challenges in adjusting quickly to jetlag. The student wanted a day or two in addition to provide an opportunity for down time to 'reflect on what they had done by discussing the day with other people'. There was general consensus across all groups about the importance of downtime during the trips.

Many of the students felt they would be more likely to go abroad for longer durations now that they had completed a short-term programme, having gained confidence and a 'taster' for living abroad. A number were planning to go back to the places they had visited prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. One student noted that 'the short-term of it encouraged me to go back for a longer time, it was a safety net of not being too much at once'. A number of students were planning to participate in year abroad.

WHAT SUPPORT DID STUDENTS RECEIVE TO GO ABROAD?



Generally, students were happy with the support measures provided by the universities, which included funding, pre-departure sessions and support with programme logistics, as well as academic support and language learning. One student described their university's range of support measures as a 'safety net' and another noted that 'the support network is really necessary to have a good time and feel comfortable while you are abroad'.

The only reason I was able to go was because of the bursary

The funding provided for these trips was important to all students and a 'very good incentive to go'. There was a general consensus that funding made the programme more accessible, with the majority saying they would not have been able to afford to go abroad without it. One student reflected that the security of funding 'made the trip completely stress free'. Another described how their bursary gave them the chance to 'fully enjoy' the opportunity, as they were 'not constantly worrying about how much [they were] spending on food.' One of the students who self-funded their trip said they were 'happy to spend money on this [but] not everyone will have those circumstances'. Another remarked that 'a lot of the mobility programmes are not inclusive of poorer families' and are 'middle-class focused'. They felt the funding helped address these issues.

One student received additional funding from their academic department, which they described as a 'hidden scholarship, as you don't really know about [it] until you're in the situation where you could potentially benefit from it'.

However, across the groups, participants felt better communication about the various sources of available funding and eligibility for these would help encourage more students to go abroad, noting it is more affordable than it first appears due to the financial support.

The pre-departure session I attended was really good, it covered a lot of things

The students generally found the pre-departure sessions delivered by universities ‘very helpful’. Students described sessions as ‘excellent’ and ‘comprehensive’. One student explained that their session prepared them ‘for any possible eventualities’. The information sessions also helped students navigate paperwork and ‘know where to go, what to do and the forms to fill in’. They also provided a space to discuss practical matters like vaccines and visa applications. Students who suffered with anxiety found the support especially helpful.

These sessions also provided the opportunity to meet with group leaders and other students on the programme. Participants especially liked being linked through group chats, which helped connect the cohort and also built a sense of excitement for the programme. Some students on programmes where staff accompanied cohorts felt that meeting them in pre-departure sessions provided additional security and created a ‘safe environment’.

Across all groups, a large number of students expressed interest in language learning and cultural classes before departure



A number of students undertook pre-session language learning and reported that the programme made them feel ‘more prepared’ for the trip by helping them to better understand the culture and learn some ‘key phrases’ before arriving in country. Across all groups, a large number of students expressed interest in language learning and cultural classes before departure.

On the topic of reasonable adjustments, a student who has autism and mental health issues reported that the support provided by their university was a factor in their choice to go abroad. The university provided a mentor and appropriate accommodation for the student for the duration of the programme. This in-country support was appreciated by the student.

Different students that had been before did a talk with us and hearing their experiences made it seem amazing

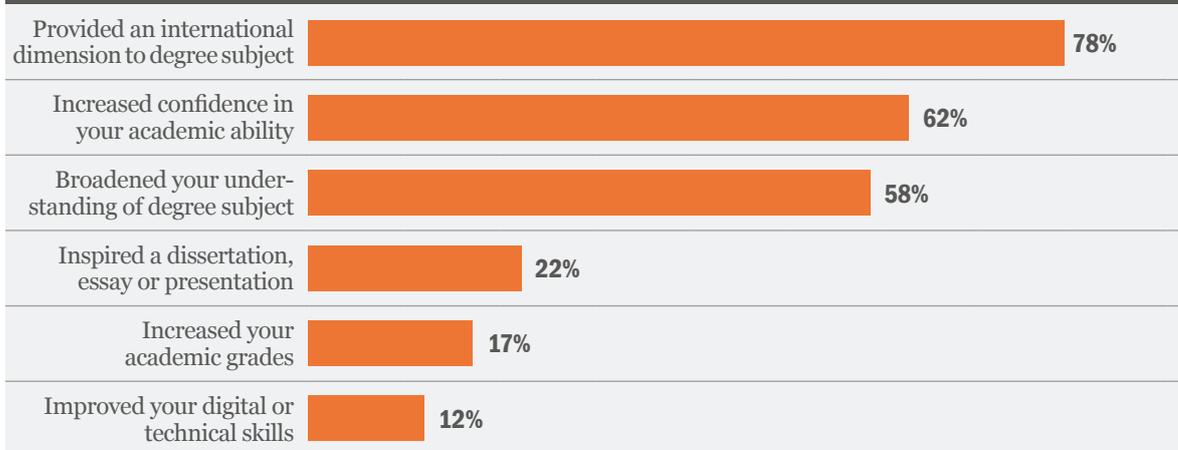
Students who spoke with ambassadors or were assigned mentors or buddies were particularly happy with these activities. Students liked speaking to previously mobile peers as part of the preparation for the programme. One noted that ‘it’s more meaningful to hear from a student’, as they understand the student perspective and can draw on their own experience. Another felt that having a student mentor join their cohort ‘made the trip’, as knowing beforehand exactly what to expect meant they could make the most of the experience from the first day.

Students received support from their academic departments, for example, where tutors and lecturers wrote references. In instances where academics acted as key contacts, students appreciated knowing there was ‘someone who could be contacted’ if things went wrong while they were abroad. In one focus group, a number of participants had been granted extensions to assignments, which was particularly helpful as it allowed students to ‘fully engage’ with the experience without worrying about deadlines back home.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF MOBILITY PROGRAMMES?

Academic impact

FIGURE 21: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING IMPACTS DID YOU EXPERIENCE AS A RESULT OF YOUR MOBILITY EXPERIENCE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.



I gained a global perspective and enhanced my degree through the programme

Students reported broad impacts across a number of areas of academic attainment, and a general feeling that the mobility helped by expanding their learning in an international space. One noted that ‘experiencing how people learn in a different culture has enhanced [their] academic study’.

I do think it enhanced it, as I had a richer experience to draw on when I was writing my assignments

There was general consensus that the experience brought a different cultural perspective that enriched students’ studies. One noted that the host was ‘a very good university’ with an ‘accredited programme’ which they felt contributed to their learning. Another reported that a module they studied while on mobility ‘actually encouraged [them] to do [their] dissertation on electric vehicles’.

Students developed a number of skills during their short-term programme, including ‘presentation skills, managing stakeholders [and] managing disagreements in groups’, which were ‘transferable’ to their academic work. One reflected that the short-term programme supported their academic attainment by helping them feel ‘more comfortable about [their] presentation skills’. Another felt they had developed their ‘ability to be a better group member’ following their group mobility experience.

I feel it’s helped me to grow as a person and that it’s so, so, so much more than just an academic opportunity

I don't feel like you need to benefit academically for it to be worthwhile, because the experience was life-changing, it made me realise what I had back home ... I'm so thankful I had the opportunity to do that



It is interesting to note that students were not all motivated by academic impact. A number of students found the experience to be an enriching experience even when not directly related to academic study.

Employment impact

It gave me a much more global mindset and view of the industry, away from just the UK

Students across all groups felt strongly that programmes abroad would positively impact their employment prospects. They discussed how they built their list of contacts and extended their networks. One student had to 'liaise with brands and businesses' during their programme, a skill they could bring into their career.

The programme demonstrates my confidence, openness, cultural awareness and inclusivity. It has made me more confident to achieve my own success too

Students felt that they had developed an 'international perspective' and the programme enhanced their ability to 'adapt to change' and cope with a 'lack of resources', as well as cultivate an 'awareness of different cultures' and 'of different personal circumstances'.

Students reported developing a number of key skills valued by employers. One noted that 'you learn many transferable skills, such as teamwork, communication and even timekeeping and organisational skills' while abroad. Another reported developing their 'networking, travel and language skills'.

It actually helped me get my current part-time job

Some of the impacts were quite immediate, with students across the groups reporting that their mobility experience helped them secure their current job or placement. Some had continued working for the organisation they did their placement with after returning to the UK; in other cases, the mobility experience had led to a job with a different company. One participant, who is now working for an insurance company, reported that on their assessment they were 'able to show the different competencies' developed while volunteering abroad, including 'resilience, adaptability and teamwork skills'.

Students 'applying for domestic and foreign graduate jobs' felt that the mobility programme shows employers they can 'can handle the situation'. One noted that 'every interview thus far inquired about the experience'. The students felt that they could speak about the opportunity in interviews, and predicted that employers would see the experience as demonstrating a 'broad and practical understanding of the world'. There was a general consensus that mobility helps to enhance CVs and gives job applicants 'an edge'.

Through the experience itself I've changed my career aspirations

For some, the programmes had a direct impact on their future ambitions and career plans. They noted that 'the programme opened up a lot of opportunities to do more afterwards' due to 'the path it sets you on, the doors it can open and what you can go on to do with it'. Others reflected that the programme had made them 'more passionate' about working in their sector', observing that international experience is 'invaluable and can open a lot of opportunities'. Participants reported that their programme helped them in 'developing interest in new areas', and that it gave them ideas for what to do after their degree programme.

One student was 'surprised' by how much they developed their employment skillset while on the programme, noting that 'it really does broaden your outlook' and that those skills will 'really help' them in the future. Another described how the process has made them 'more open to working abroad in the future'.

Courtesy of University of Westminster



Personal impact

What can't I do now?!

Across all groups, students reported a broad range of personal impacts and there was a general consensus that positive personal development was one of the main benefits. One student suggested that it was 'impossible' to overstate how worthwhile the programme had been in terms of their personal development.

It has increased my independence and confidence in meeting new people in a new place. I was a bit worried about new situations, but being able to do it in a different country has helped

Students felt that going abroad increased their self-confidence, their social confidence and their adaptability. As one student put it: 'It increased my confidence 100 times over.' Another said they were no longer 'afraid to ask questions about difficult topics', and another reported being better able to deal with stress and pressure, as well as an ability to 'let go of control'. One student reflected that 'universities have whole modules on personal development, but nothing comes close to those week opportunities abroad.'

It's such a culture shock ... my whole mindset changed after only spending one month there

The students found the experiences incredibly impactful in terms of increasing their interest in experiencing other cultures and learning more about the world. One described how an international experience 'challenges some of your ideas by being confronted with different cultures and ways of life'. Another noted that 'learning new cultures broadens the mind and allows you to be more open-minded and can truly change aspects of your life.'

It's profound... the essence of being somewhere radically different to how it is here

There was agreement that travelling helps to build empathy and understanding, and that these were important skills to have. One student reported that their time abroad had made them more 'empathetic towards people' and another noted they had a greater 'compassion for other cultures'. One student described their mobility as 'an eye-opening experience' which 'makes you feel very small compared to how big this world is'.

I could meet and form lifelong relationships with strangers in the space of two weeks

Students spoke of how they now had networks and friends ‘across the world’, and said the trip had made them more ‘spontaneous’ and more able to ‘make friends’. They were excited by the ‘useful connections’ they made while abroad and their newly extended networks. Many said they felt more comfortable meeting new people and expanding their networks following the mobility programme.

A mature student felt that the personal impact was less for them, although they noted that ‘the opportunity to learn something new and meet new people professionally is always welcome’.

I found myself saying yes to everything ... anything the university offered me I went to

Students reported ‘saying yes to new opportunities’ more often since the programme, finding themselves ‘more motivated and more engaged’ on their return to the UK, with a greater desire to try new things and to ‘set higher goals’ for themselves. Many reported being more engaged with campus life and getting involved with other university-delivered programmes. A number noted that it had convinced them to apply for a year abroad.

One of the students said the programme had motivated them to apply for a part-time job as an HR ambassador and for a leadership scheme at the university. Students were excited by their experiences, and this motivated them to apply for other mobility programmes; as one student put it: ‘Once you’ve done it, you think “I want to do it again”’.

Being able to navigate situations that seem a little risky or a little dangerous

Students felt the time abroad helped their ability to read situations. They learnt how to avoid getting into difficult situations by being able to ‘figure out the signs’. Following the programme, one student wrote a blog for ethnic minority students with advice and guidance on how to travel abroad, to enable them to ‘navigate around countries without getting into any dangerous situations’.

Another student noted that increased independence was a ‘really big’ impact for them: ‘being a young girl’, they thought they ‘might not be able to do solo travel’ as it was ‘too dangerous’. But although there were times when they felt unsafe, ultimately the programme gave them the confidence to continue to travel and ‘it was empowering’.

I enjoyed the time, which brought positivity to life

The students also reflected that the programme had opened up other opportunities, for example, to mentor other students going abroad, or to write blogs about their experience. Participants had many opportunities to talk about their experiences at events and workshops, and were keen to do this to support others wishing to access these ‘amazing’ opportunities.

5.2 NON-MOBILE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

WHAT ATTRACTS STUDENTS TO GOING ABROAD?

You only live once, so try and do as many different opportunities as you can

Students were excited by the opportunity to have an ‘adventure’, to meet new people, see new places and learn ‘different skills’. They were motivated to ‘experience a new culture’ and learn from different cultural perspectives. A number expressed interest in learning a new language.

It’s important to explore the local culture and social context

Across the different group discussions, it was noted that university programmes offer opportunities that differ from those available to tourists, such as access to universities or workplaces. The students felt that travelling with a university would mean they were more able to engage with local institutions and communities, and therefore the cultural immersion would be stronger.

Opens your eyes to opportunities in the future

Students felt that going to another country would help with career prospects, both in terms of direct work experiences – such as working in a different healthcare system – and by expanding their skillsets. They also anticipated it would provide insights into future career paths.

Students discussed how going abroad would enrich their studies and cited an interest in studying at specific universities. This was particularly the case for those with ambitions to study for postgraduate degrees. Students were also interested to try ‘a different style of learning abroad’.

It’s exciting to meet a different set of people

Students were keen to expand their personal and professional networks by meeting peers who share similar interests, and to learn from others about their perspective. Many felt that being away from their networks and friends at home and having to meet new people would be ‘character building’ and ‘good for independence’, and that participating in a programme abroad and learning to navigating a space that is different to home would increase their confidence levels.

WHAT TYPE OF MOBILITY PROGRAMMES ARE STUDENTS INTERESTED IN?

Students were asked what type of mobility programme they would like to participate in, where the programme should take place, and what the duration of the mobility programme should be.

Location of mobility programme

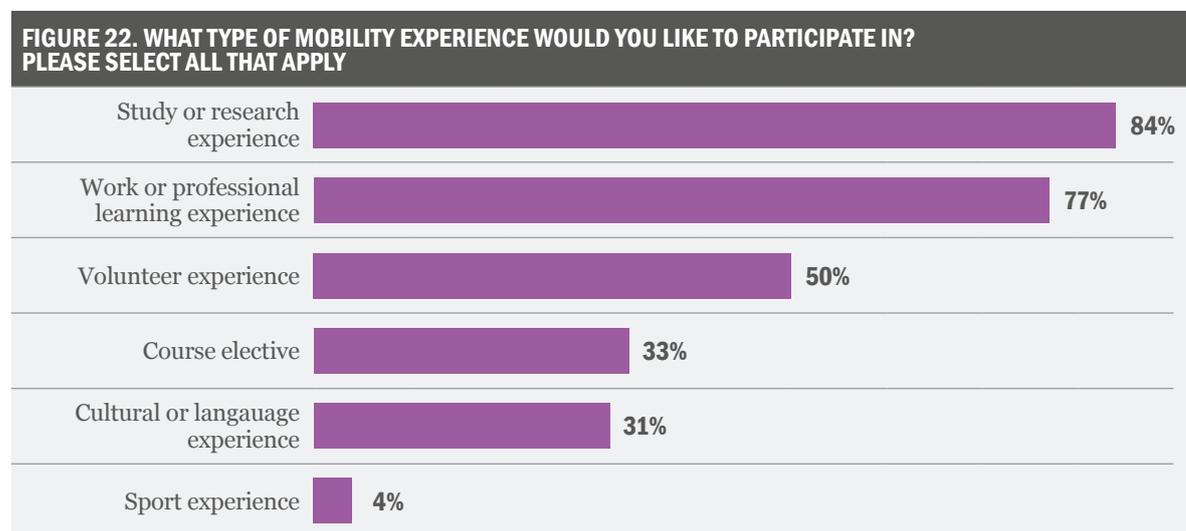
The motivations for particular locations varied. For example, one student was interested in experiencing the ‘quintessential university experience’ in the USA. Another ‘liked Asian culture’ and therefore wanted to visit China. Some were excited by the opportunity to study their discipline in a different overseas destination or country and to experience a new educational system. For example, a music production student was interested in travelling to New Orleans for the community and culture, and a history student was interested in travelling to Italy to learn more about the Italian Renaissance. Others were attracted to specific institutions to work in laboratories on specialist research. A few were motivated to visit countries where they had a family background, to learn more about their own personal history.

More inclined to choose somewhere outside of Europe

Some mentioned they would be more motivated by programmes outside Europe, as this would offer ‘something different’. It was noted that mobility programmes made such locations more accessible by providing the safety net of travelling with an institution. Some expressed interest in undertaking additional travel while abroad, to make the most of the opportunity.

Generally, students were keen to visit ‘as many places as possible’. One student mentioned that not being able to select the location of the programme could be beneficial, as it ‘might take you to somewhere you hadn’t thought of which might be exciting in its own right.’

Type of mobility programme



Students were mainly interested in undertaking study, work or volunteer placements.

Working and earning your own money helps you become more independent

Some were keen to work abroad, feeling this would expand their CV and provide ‘something to talk about in applications and interviews’. These students were asked whether the work experience needed to relate directly to their career goals. The response was ambiguous: people generally wanted the experience to be directly relevant to their discipline; however, they recognised the value of an experience in the workplace more broadly. Students were also interested in working abroad to support their mobility period financially.

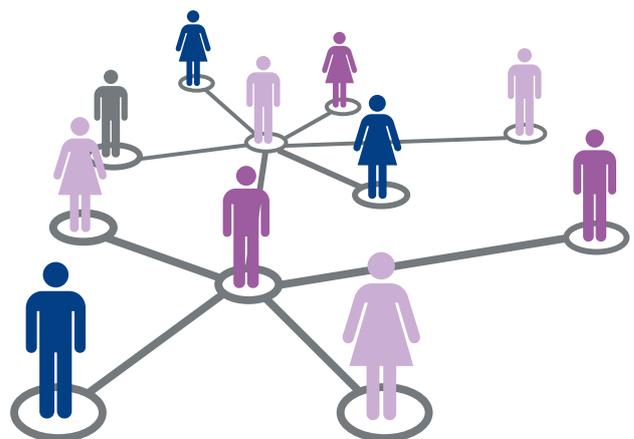
You’re getting something good out of it for your degree and your future

Studying abroad was viewed by students as a way to enrich their academic experience, and to broaden their understanding of their discipline through encounters with a ‘different perspective’. The desire to study abroad was also directly related to students’ ambitions to expand their networks, seen as an important feature of their studies and development.

I would want to be able to enjoy, explore and learn, without the pressure

Some felt that the programme did not have to be credit-bearing; they were interested in a more general immersive learning experience. These students were keen to make the most of being in a new location, and wanted to learn about the culture as well as follow the academic curriculum. They were keen to maximise their university experience by taking up study opportunities abroad, and were eager for programmes that offered the chance to try something new and to learn something outside of their core study programme.

The desire to study abroad was also directly related to students’ ambitions to expand their networks



Duration of mobility programme

I'm not going to lose one whole year from my studies

Students expressed concern that a year abroad might negatively impact their degree programme, or force them to extend their time at university. Some mentioned they were keen not to 'miss' anything at the home university by being away for an extended period of time. Extension of the degree course was especially a concern for students studying medicine or other longer programmes.

A lot less intimidating, and more accessible, you're not scared of going away for a whole six months ... the idea of four weeks sounds a lot more appealing

Students generally agreed that there were 'a lot of benefits' to a shorter-term programme. They felt that a one-month programme is more 'known', something they could 'actually visualise', offering a clearer sense of exactly what will happen, where they will stay, and what they will do while abroad.

Some thought it was a 'risk going for a whole semester' in case the programme was not what was expected. In contrast 'a month is a nice balance of getting to experience everything' without 'getting trapped' into a longer-term programme. One student felt that undertaking a short-term programme would open up the possibility of longer programmes by building their confidence in living abroad.

Some were concerned that a year abroad might impact their personal life, specifically leaving friends and family, or having fellow classmates graduate during their absence.

Short-term programmes were viewed as posing less of a financial barrier, as the combination of funding and the shorter time period makes it easier to plan a budget. One person observed that 'students have no idea how much money they are going to need for a year abroad'.

A student who was also a parent noted that short-term programmes help with challenges relating to childcare. If the children were to accompany them, then 'the timing and situation would have to be correct'.

A programme of less than four weeks is a short experience and you don't get to know everything, you get the tourist experience

One student made the distinction that they 'wouldn't count a two-week programme as study abroad, as it's more like an international work experience or a holiday with a purpose'.

A number of students were keen to participate in semester or year abroad programmes, as they offer enough time to experience the country and culture and become immersed in the study or work opportunity. Students were particularly interested in a semester abroad, as this was long enough to have a 'substantial experience', but not so long that it would extend their degree programme.



When the same students were asked why they did not select short-term opportunities, they said they felt the length of the programme meant it would not be as impactful. They anticipated needing a period of adjustment to settle into the new country, and they wanted to learn about the local area and engage with the culture in a way that would not be possible on a short-term programme.

Generally, there was a tension between wanting a programme to be long enough to be impactful but not so long that it either extended the degree length or risked affecting academic attainment.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION?

How much are you going to spend, and how will you be able to make ends meet?

Finance was the main barrier discussed with regards to accessing mobility programmes. Across all groups, students raised concerns relating to financing their period abroad, including upfront costs, expenditure while abroad, and ongoing financial commitments in the UK, such as rent or mortgage payments. This was particularly an issue for students who were working to support themselves. Participants were also worried about generating additional student debt by extending their degree programme.

They always ask at summer jobs if you have any plans

They perceived that going abroad ‘would cost more’ compared to studying in the UK, and that their regular budget would not be sufficient to cover the time abroad. One student reflected that ‘it can be hard to calculate the money you need for the whole duration’ and that there could be unexpected costs, which would be ‘risky’ for those whose budgets were ‘particularly tight’. International students were particularly concerned about not being eligible for grants or bursaries.

The timing of the mobility was also a concern for some students. Many needed to work during the summer break to support their time at university, making them unable to participate in a programme in the middle of the summer. These students felt it would be better to have the short-term programmes during reading weeks and the spring break, or at the beginning or end of the summer break.

You don't want to end up living somewhere dodgy, or where there are no transport links

Students were concerned about finding accommodation in the 'right area' of the destination city. They wanted advice on accommodation, and for this to be made available early in the application process to support decision-making. In general students were keen for more information on how accommodation was assigned, and assurances that it would be in a good area with good transport links.

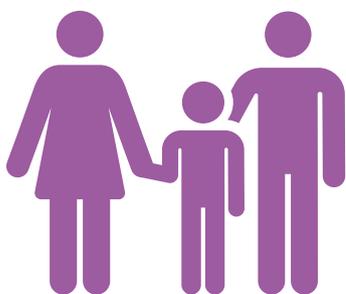
Students were also concerned about navigating the application process and the logistics of the trip, and reported general confusion about 'knowing what is needed' to go abroad, especially in terms of what the university delivers and what they would need to take care of themselves. This uncertainty covered a broad range of issues, from applying for visas, to sourcing accommodation and making travel arrangements, all the way 'down to insurance'.

There's the worry about, if something happens in the country you are in, what happens

Students were concerned about what to do if they encountered problems abroad, for example, if their programme was cancelled or if there was a medical crisis. These concerns had been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. They were unsure what emergency support would be provided to them while abroad. They flagged concerns around accessibility of healthcare, were unsure if they would need to purchase insurance, and wanted information on issues like travel injections.

I think it can be very difficult especially if you are a black student, as racism and colourism is so prevalent across the world

One participant reflected that some marginalised groups – such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds or living with disabilities – may encounter challenges in accessing certain locations across the world, both in terms of support (such as having their disability recognised and reasonable adjustments put in place) and in terms of cultural differences and how they will be treated while abroad.



A number of students flagged family ties as a barrier to accessing mobility programmes

A number of students flagged family ties as a barrier to accessing mobility programmes; this was particularly a challenge for those who were parents. Participants more broadly discussed challenges in maintaining relationships and friendships while abroad, and concerns around loneliness. As one person reflected, 'No one likes to be alone in their room all the time'.

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO ACCESS MOBILITY PROGRAMMES?

Students were keen to understand the costs involved in a mobility period, including any available funding, in order to make an informed decision as to whether they could afford to go abroad.

They wanted information sessions and workshops on what to expect from the programme, suggesting that these could also provide guidance on the application process and on how to prepare for the period abroad, including how to source accommodation.

Any information which could be helpful regarding the fees, the accommodation, the visa, if we need one, and anything else

Students were keen for information about mobility programmes to be provided as early as possible, to help them make an informed decision. They suggested the university should provide a 'leaflet or mini booklet' to take on the trip that would include information on the local area, as well as a 'special number' that students could call 'in case of an emergency'.

It would be really nice if there was a buddy system ... a student assigned to you who would help you with where to go and what to do

Students were keen to hear from other students who had been abroad, and to learn from their experiences. Some wanted systems in place to help them meet other exchange students while abroad, to help alleviate concerns about feeling isolated and provide opportunities to meet people with whom they shared 'common ground'. Some were keen to be allocated a mentor prior to going abroad – someone who could help them prepare for the trip and to whom they could ask candid questions.



I think it's mostly about safety, that's the biggest concern; I'm a girl, I don't want to end up living in unsafe conditions

Students wanted more information on the accommodation available. For one participant, 'the most important aspect of housing is safety'. They wanted assurance that the accommodation was good quality, safe, and that landlords were 'trustworthy'. Students felt it would be 'easier to live with someone' – either a local student or another mobile student – as this would also help them link to university life and provide a social circle.

I think mental health support should be mandatory for students going abroad

Students felt that mental health support while abroad was particularly important. They noted that participants may be at elevated risk of crisis, as they are away from their families, friends, and other support networks and in a new environment, which could make it 'a really difficult time for them.' They flagged a particular need to ensure that any support available on campus – such as the university's wellbeing team and counselling service – was also available from abroad.

A bit of language support would be helpful

Students were interested in language support, including pre-sessional, online and in-country classes. They wanted the courses to cover 'basic' language, either before departure or at the destination, as this would enable them to navigate the city and the programme more easily.



6. **CASE STUDIES**





Global Opportunities, Short-term Opportunities

Global Opportunities at Cardiff Metropolitan University (Cardiff Met) delivers a suite of initiatives aimed at developing success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The university's own funding supports the short-term mobility and GO Global bursary initiatives. Cardiff Met also utilises funding from Santander Universities, allowing more students to participate in short-term programmes.

Established
2013

Location
Worldwide



Duration
1-4 weeks

Funding
available



Background and aims

Cardiff Met is committed to supporting its students to achieve their full academic potential and to become confident global citizens by offering an international opportunity.

The short-term mobility programmes enable students to enhance their employability prospects, linguistic abilities and soft skills (including resilience, independence, cultural awareness and empathy) and broaden networks that will serve them throughout their working careers.

Cardiff Met has a high proportion of students who have either never travelled or travelled very little.

The university also has students with care responsibilities and students from economically disadvantaged areas. Due to barriers such as academic programmes not allowing longer-term mobility, or students being unable to commit to a term or year abroad for personal reasons (e.g. part-time employment or family commitments), undertaking a global opportunity is not easily viable for all students.

The Global Opportunities short-term mobility scheme provides group and academic-led educational and cultural opportunities. It is a well-supported programme for students who would not normally be able to go abroad, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who lack the confidence to travel alone.



In summary

Since its launch in 2013-14, over 1,200 students have participated in academic and employability-related experiences overseas as part of the Global Opportunities short-term programme, traveling to a diverse range of countries including Argentina, Belgium, China, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, the USA and Zambia.

1,200

students participated in overseas experiences since launch in 2013-14



layers of support and strengthens institutional relationships.

Individual student applications via the GO Global scheme are encouraged. Students must provide as much detailed information as possible about their proposed placement, how the activity will fit with their degree and future career plans, and details on the specific outcomes or qualifications they will gain through the activity.

Cardiff Met funds between **80%** and **100%** of the costs that are incurred by its students for flights, accommodation and living expenses.

Previous projects include:

- A one-week programme for **38** undergraduate students from across the university to UC Leuven Limburg in Belgium. The aim of the trip was to work in groups on a project to design and develop an app. The visit also included group cultural activities in Leuven and Brussels.
- A two-week programme to Renmin University in China, providing an opportunity for **20** Cardiff Met students to attend lectures and to integrate with Renmin students.



Measuring success

Global Opportunities at Cardiff Met has more than doubled since the programme was launched in 2013.

The university has seen an increase in students from disadvantaged backgrounds – including widening participation students, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with a disability – undertaking a mobility abroad.

Following a short-term mobility, students have reported feeling **more confident to travel in the future.**

The use of social media has increased the Global Opportunities brand, **reaching a wider student audience.**

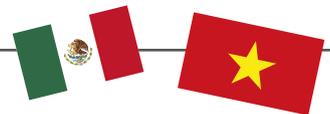


Lessons learned

One of the main challenges has been encouraging students who have not travelled outside of the UK to undertake a short-term mobility, especially those without a passport.

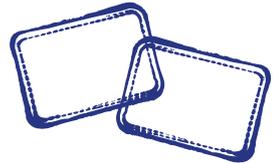


Covid-19



Due to the global pandemic Global Opportunities, in conjunction with Pagoda Projects, has launched specific Christmas and Easter virtual programmes, allowing students to develop cultural fluency and gain an insight into the professional world in China, Vietnam and Mexico.

The virtual programme is an entirely flexible three-week virtual mobility programme with tangible benefits, whilst fitting around the Christmas or Easter break. The programme focuses on cultural fluency, digital skills and employability in a global context.



It is important to identify students who need to apply for visa or passport early on in the process.

It is important that all marketing materials are transparent, clearly outlining all costs that may be incurred outside of the university's funding.



I've had a great week at Leuven. I have gained lots of experiences and new skills. I would not have had the opportunity to meet other students from the wide range of courses provided by Cardiff Met without a trip like this. Big thanks to Global Opportunities!

Student participant



Future sustainability

Cardiff Met's intention is to invest in Global Opportunities by offering short-term opportunities of one to four weeks to all students.

The team is working with their exchange partners and third-party providers to broaden the current network of opportunities with the aim to increase numbers.

3 top tips

1. Ensure you have the full assistance and encouragement of academics

This is essential in ensuring continued investment and support.

2. Ring-fence funding

to support those from a widening participation background and ensure that promotional material is clear and concise to attract students.

3. Manage students' expectations

If the programme is heavily subsidised by the university, ensure that you manage students' expectations. Let them know what will be required from them before, during and after.





DMU Global

DMU Global is an international experience programme for De Montfort University students which aims to enrich studies, broaden cultural horizons and develop key skills valued by employers. The programme offers students a wide range of subsidised opportunities to study, work and volunteer overseas, with a focus on accessibility and inclusivity.

Established
2014

Location
65+
Countries



No. of students
2,000
per year



Funding
available



i Background and aims

The introduction of the government's UK Outbound Mobility Strategy in 2014 inspired DMU to increase its student mobility numbers and create DMU Global.

The stated mission of the programme is to:

- embed internationalisation at DMU, specifically through academic-led short-term mobility opportunities
- engage with universities and businesses worldwide to offer meaningful short-term international experiences
- evolve exchange activity through established exchange programmes
- raise cultural awareness and enhance the language skills of students.

DMU decided to focus on short-term mobility, as it would be more affordable to students and enable a very specific and focussed experience, directly linked to learning outcomes. Moreover, the scheme would appeal to students who might not consider studying abroad, especially students from widening participation backgrounds, who traditionally engage less in international programmes.

The strategy aligned with the demographic of the university and its broader values of equality and diversity, graduate success, public good and the importance of the student experience.

g In summary

The DMU Global programme is characterised by a number of key features. Firstly, it provides a rich and diverse range of short-term experiences for students – many with limited travel experience – to go abroad, experience a new culture and enhance their learning.

Opportunities range from academically embedded activities with peers, to volunteering and public good experiences, to employability and entrepreneurship trips for students from multiple disciplines. With most of these experiences, lasting between 4 and 14 days, costs are lower and other barriers reduced.

Also, significant financial support for students on the programme is provided, with funding used primarily to reduce student costs. Flat-rate bursaries are offered based on destination, and widening participation funding is available to give additional support to those who need it most.

Additionally, DMU Global provides a comprehensive support package for short-term mobility, including face-to-face pre-departure sessions and online learning modules addressing health and safety, sustainability and travel topics. Visa support sessions are organised, with a specific focus on helping international students and those in need of additional support.

Annually, DMU Global delivers around **120** short-term mobility experiences for **2,000** students including opportunities such as: Hearing Screening in India, Diversity and Entrepreneurship in San Francisco, and Employability in Vietnam.

2,000
students

120
short-term mobility
experiences



Measuring success

Since the launch of the programme, close to 15,000 students have travelled overseas to more than 65 countries. All participating students are invited to provide feedback and about 50% of all short-term mobility participants do so.



This data offers DMU insight into satisfaction with the programme, practical arrangements and the impact on students. Responses received in 2019–20 confirmed that 91% of participants felt the experiences were good value for money and that the opportunities added value to their course. 96% of respondents were satisfied with their international experience.

DMU also measures participation numbers and demographic data, as well as data which can be used to analyse the longer-term impact of international experiences. Key findings include:

- 44% of participants are from a BAME background; 20% declared a disability; 33% were from a disadvantaged background
- 79% students that participate on DMU Global experiences achieve Good Honours, compared to 71% among those with no international experience.

DMU Global has received a number of national and international awards which recognise the impact of this work.



Lessons learned

Embedding within the curriculum – DMU Global focuses on the principle that a well-planned short-term experience with meaningful learning outcomes can lead to students experiencing similar benefits to those who go abroad for longer. As a result, all academic-led overseas experiences are required to be embedded within the curriculum, and since 2017 we have had 100% compliance from faculties.

Centralised management – DMU Global consolidated and centralised all short-term mobility, bringing together a team of mobility professionals to oversee all aspects of the student journey. DMU Global manages a central budget, proposal review processes, advertising and promotion, student support, staff training and programme evaluation for all short-term mobilities. This model has ensured quality standards are maintained, outcomes are monitored and reporting is carried out on an institutional basis.



Future sustainability

In September 2020, DMU Global Online Learning was launched in response to societal changes and to address environmental challenges.

This third pillar to the programme, sitting alongside on-campus and overseas experiences, creates a more inclusive and accessible programme which will still give students the chance to enjoy virtual international experiences that

help them develop their digital skills, learn about new cultures, interact with peers globally and develop a range of skills valued by employers.

Since its launch, DMU Global has offered over 50 unique online opportunities and engaged with around 600 students. Opportunities include online international short courses, virtual internships and peer-to-peer learning experiences.

“The trip has helped me significantly with my self-development and given me insight into what my future career may hold, not only in the UK but other parts of the world.”

Student participant



3 top tips

1. Creating a brand and having an online presence are great for engaging with students Moreover, developing a standalone website provides a platform to share all international opportunities, creating a one-stop shop for students.

2. Developing good relations with faculties and working with them to design opportunities which are embedded and have clear learning outcomes is important for running a successful programme.

3. Streamlining and automating processes and communication is important as you scale activity. Work closely with your IT department and learning technology experts to achieve this.



PEETS – Promoting Excellence in Employability and Transversal Skills

Promoting Excellence in Employability and Transversal Skills (PEETS) is an award winning multidisciplinary and intercultural initiative aimed at developing employability skills and personal attributes for students. It includes a five-month preparation phase followed by a 10-day intensive international study period in Scotland, Finland or the Netherlands.

International study period
10 days

Location
Finland,
Scotland, the
Netherlands



No of students
42
per year



Funding
available



i Background and aims

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) wanted to develop an approach to teaching and learning around the concept of global citizenship, using a sustainable development initiative that inspired students and supported their graduation and employment.

Central to this was working across disciplines and borders necessitating students to develop transversal skills and engage in teamwork and industry challenge.

Two of the key objectives were:

- to develop innovative learning approaches and resources to interdisciplinary and multicultural participation in a 'real world' renewable energy project where students could develop transversal skills including communication, teamworking and leadership
- to deliver an industry-informed, 10-day international intensive study period for **42** multidisciplinary international students and **eight** staff.

g In summary

PEETS was developed collaboratively over a five-year period, building on successful and longstanding relationships between GCU, The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, Lahti University of Applied Sciences in Finland and industry partner Constructionarium Ltd in Scotland.

In 2016 the consortium was awarded **€294,000** for a three-year Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership that has been used as a stepping stone to develop the self-sustaining PEETS initiative.

Activities were structured around an annual collaborative cycle, with all the 10-day intensive international study periods occurring between the end of May and early June.

Past participants were selected from each of the higher education institutions to act as mentors, to help with enhancement of the international study periods and facilitate student engagement.

The activities were designed to be inclusive and developed in close liaison with the careers, disability, diversity and wellbeing teams of all participating higher education institutions. All the annual cycles attracted a diverse range of students, including those with a disclosed disability, widening access background or refugee status, as well as participants who identified as LGBT.

Each year, the new cohort of up to **42** students completed a range of activities prior to the international study period (ISP) including:

- a self-evaluation of international competencies
- individual and group research on an aspect of renewable energy for their country
- preparing presentations on this research to share with other PEETS participants before and during the ISP.

The 10-day intensive international study periods followed a similar model each year, with a mixture of individual and group work, research, presentations, site visits, industrial challenges and evaluation. These were complemented by a range of cultural activities, for example, preparing and sharing food from students' own country, taking part in a ceilidh, or a formal dinner.

A central part of the intensive international study period involved newly formed multidisciplinary and intercultural teams creating a renewable energy-related item such as miniature wind turbines and solar chargers, or preparing a business case to market solar chargers. Whilst such activities were already challenging but fun for the majority of students, the idea of the PEETS was to push students out of their comfort zone to help them to develop resilience. This was achieved by deliberately introducing additional challenges, for example, regrouping teams and reducing time available for completing tasks.

The variety of activities and experiences, combined with extensive opportunity for self-reflection and analysis by both students and staff, led to a fun and very rewarding initiative.

All the student learning, teaching, travel and sustenance activities were fully supported by the partners and a

significant proportion of the intensive international study periods were funded by the Erasmus+ award. Students completing all activities of the programme were awarded five ECTS credits.



Erasmus+



Measuring success

PEETS was designed to incorporate extensive evaluation, including internal self-evaluation for students and staff, and independent external evaluation.

The reach, value and impact of the activities can be measured by enhancements in:

- student experience and performance
- staff expertise and professionalism
- institutional KPIs and reputation

Notable outcomes included:

- being shortlisted for the finals of the Scottish Green Energy Awards in 2017 and 2018
- winning the prestigious Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) by Advance HE in 2019
- achieving 'Best Practice' Strategic Partnership by the British Council in 2020



Future sustainability

Partners had agreed to continue the initiative on a self-funded basis after the Erasmus funding came to an end, with planned intensive international study periods rotating across the three countries.

Whilst Covid-19 prevented the mobility periods in 2020 and also this year, some of the outputs of PEETS were incorporated into the virtual summer school, hosted by Finland last year.

Many more of the outputs, for example the student international competencies app, have been included in other related mobility initiatives at the respective higher education institutions.

Discussions are underway on how best to deliver PEETS with the partners in future years.



Lessons learned

Involve students as partners in designing and delivering the activities.

Be prepared for the unexpected, but use these situations as opportunities for development for all.

“PEETS allowed me to develop my interpersonal skills and gain a greater appreciation for other cultures ... I gained the confidence to look beyond the boundaries of Scotland for future opportunities. Returning to the project as a mentor consolidated my knowledge of how to be an effective team member and team leader, while being involved as a participant allowed me to gain an understanding of other disciplines and develop my knowledge in areas that were not covered in my degree.

Student participant



Go Abroad programme

Goldsmiths' Go Abroad programme supports students to gain international experience by funding them to work, study, or volunteer abroad for one week to two months.

The programme predominantly targets widening participation students, with funding provided by Santander Universities. There are also opportunities for non-widening participation students, with funding provided by Goldsmiths.

Established 2017	Location 32 countries and five continents 	Duration 1–8 weeks	Funding available 
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Background and aims

Between 2014 and 2017, Goldsmiths supported over 160 students to gain international experience through Erasmus study and work placements.

Participation across the institution was increasing, and our ambition was to widen access further. Based on national research and consultation with Goldsmiths' students, it was clear that cost and duration were the main barriers to studying and working abroad.

To address these barriers, the Go Abroad programme was launched with financial support from Santander Universities in 2017.

The aim was to:

- **diversify** the offer and increase participation
- make study and work abroad **more accessible** to students from diverse backgrounds and from all academic departments
- **enhance** employability skills and employment prospects
- **protect** opportunities from the impact of Brexit

Strategic alignment was fundamental to securing funding and launching:

- **national objectives** – Goldsmiths pledged to diversify their offer and engage students in more short-term international activities as part of our commitment to UUKi's Go International: Stand Out campaign.
- **institutional objectives** – Goldsmiths' institutional strategy commits to supporting students to become global citizens equipped with the skills and expertise to succeed in the international workplace. Global Opportunities support these objectives.
- **funder objectives** – we aligned with Santander Universities' objectives on developing academic and employability skills and prioritising students from a widening participation background.

In summary

The pilot programme, funded by Santander Universities in 2017–18, was only open to first- and second-year undergraduate students who met Goldsmiths' widening participation criteria. Students could apply for up to £1,000 to support short-term international activities over the summer.

Goldsmiths collected evidence throughout this pilot to demonstrate impact. This was presented to Santander Universities and Goldsmiths' management to secure ongoing funding for a full Go Abroad programme from 2018–19, open to all undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Our Go Abroad programme now offers all students the chance to apply for up to £500, to support with the costs of a study, work or volunteer abroad opportunity of two months or less. Students who meet our widening participation criteria can apply for up to £1,500. Funding from Santander is prioritised for these students.

Students who meet our widening participation criteria can apply for up to

£1,500



Offering increased funding to students from a widening participation background and supporting shorter placements of one week to two months was essential in meeting our objectives.

Students source their own placements with support and guidance from the Global Opportunities team, our Careers Service and academic departments. Placements generally take place between April and September.



Lessons learned

Regular check-ins Many students fed back that they would like regular contact with Goldsmiths throughout their experience abroad. As a result, every student is now contacted at least once while they are abroad.

Funding timelines It takes around two months from the time that students submit their application to them receiving their funding. We now encourage students to apply early, highlighting this in the guidance. If students urgently need funding to secure a placement, the team try to contact placement providers on behalf of students to ask for flexibility.

Finding opportunities Many students have difficulty sourcing placements. This disproportionately impacts widening participation students who may not have the contacts to negotiate an opportunity. Goldsmiths tries to source placements, whilst still offering a route for students who find their own.

Engagement to widen participation Students who are the least likely to even consider going abroad can be hard to reach, but it is vital to do so to ensure widening participation. The Go Abroad team engages creatively with academic departments, for example, by matching specific opportunities to specific degree programmes. Colleagues also closely work with the careers team and societies and networks within the Students' Union. Past participants regularly come to speak at promotional events and have interned in the team to support our engagement strategies.



Measuring success

The Go Abroad programme has changed the conversation around international experience at Goldsmiths. Since 2017:

- **207** students have applied and **85** students have taken part, including **30** virtually. Of these students, **52%** were from a widening participation background
- participation in study and work abroad increased by **90%** in 2019
- over **70%** of participants state they benefitted personally, academically and professionally from their opportunity
- virtual opportunities will continue to be offered alongside the Go Abroad programme, further increasing accessibility to international experience.



The **65** placements abroad were across **32** countries and five continents, with durations ranging from one week to three months. Students have undertaken a wide variety of opportunities, including a summer school in Amsterdam, volunteering at a solidarity kitchen in Greece, carrying out a work placement at a psychiatric facility in Sri Lanka, and completing a French language course in Toulouse.



It really is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get out there and learn something new with friends you haven't met yet in a place you've probably never been to. I will remember my time in Helsinki for the rest of my life and I'm certain that all of the things I discovered – in lectures, in conversation, in trips to the local schools, in meeting Finnish students – will have an impact on my life as a teacher moving forward.

Student participant



Covid-19

With travel restricted as a result of Covid-19, we moved our programme online in order to offer continued access to international experiences.

Students were funded to complete remote internships, virtual summer schools and online language courses.

3 top tips

- 1. Align your programme** to national, institutional, and funders' strategies.
- 2. Pilot your programme first** collect evidence to demonstrate impact, and tell the story! Make student case studies mandatory.
- 3. Mitigate risk** by making insurance and pre-departure briefings compulsory and guide students to complete their own risk assessment.



Middlesex
University
London

Biomedical Science International Week

A week-long programme for second-year biomedical science students from Middlesex University who have the opportunity to travel to a partner institution.

Students participate in a group research project working with students from the host institutions.

Established

2020

Location

Austria, Belgium,
Denmark, the
Netherlands



Duration

1 week



Funding

some available



Background and aims

In 2019, colleagues at Middlesex University attended an International Week organised by four European biomedical science universities from Austria, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The aim of the International Week is to facilitate short-term student mobility between partner institutions in order to improve the students' teamwork, language and cross-cultural communication skills. The programme is a combination of internationalisation at home, where students remain at their own institution,



and short-term mobility, where some students travel to the partner universities. Students spend a week working in a mixed team of students from all partner universities. They complete a mini-lab project and, as a group, have to analyse their data and give a presentation in English.

Middlesex decided to join the consortium and introduce this programme as a way of increasing student numbers participating in international activities, as their ambitious students were always looking for ways to differentiate themselves from other new graduates.

Biomedical science students travelled to the partner institutions for the first time in March 2020.



In summary

Students begin the week at their host institution with a day of cross-cultural communication activities, as well as a city tour and cultural activities. They are then divided into international groups of no more than six students and work with laboratory staff on a small research project. On the final day of the programme the students present their results in a group presentation.

The programme is specifically targeted at biomedical science students across the five partner universities and builds upon their physical mobility offer run through the Erasmus scheme. BSc and MSc biomedical science students have the opportunity to conduct their dissertation research project abroad. As only a small number of the Middlesex cohort join the programme, participating students have the option to use the mini-research project they conducted abroad as inspiration for their research proposal assignment on one of their modules. This allows the students participating in the International Week to have the hard work they put in be assessed as part of their degree programme.

The programme was funded by each of the partner institutions, which provided staff, laboratory resources and lunch for the students each day. Students who were travelling either to or from Middlesex were largely self-funded, although some of the outgoing students were supported by Santander studentships.





Measuring success

The aims for the short-term mobility were for students to have a positive experience and consider longer-term mobility in the future.

The feedback from students participating in the International Week at Middlesex was overwhelmingly positive, with all of them stating that they would recommend the programme to other students, and **86%** of respondents saying that it inspired them to do an internship abroad. **81%** rated the overall experience as either excellent or very good



Covid-19

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the programme will not be running at Middlesex for the 2020–21 academic year.

This is due to the likelihood that international students will not be able to join the university due to travel restrictions. Furthermore, teaching laboratories are also under timetabling pressure this academic year, as social distancing is in place in essential laboratories.



Lessons learned

Biomedical Science International Week was set up with the aim of sending 25 students abroad to partner universities within the consortium.

While students were interested in participating, colleagues underestimated the extent to which the self-funding aspect would be a limiting factor among those wishing to join the programme. Financial constraints are the most commonly cited reason for not participating in student mobility. The student body at Middlesex is not affluent and the university has one of the highest proportion of students who received free school meals at secondary school.

Nine students participated at Middlesex as host students for the **25** visiting students from partner universities, and the internationalisation at home participation was free. Through the International Office, colleagues secured six Santander scholarships to enable some students to travel abroad for International Week.



Future sustainability

Middlesex plans to rerun the program in the 2021–22 academic year.

There will be ten students participating in the internationalisation at home part, and an increased number of **30** students travelling to the partner universities. Colleagues are actively seeking additional corporate partners to help fund travel for outgoing students.

30



students travelling to the partner universities

“Middlesex University is a global institution and we recognise the benefits of students working in diverse teams, experiencing different cultures and engaging with leading research. We are delighted to be part of this international network that does such great work to enable student mobility and collaboration.”

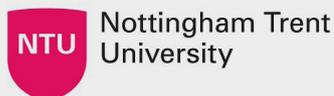
Professor Sean Wellington, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, Middlesex University



3 top tips

- 1. Pitch your project to colleagues and senior staff in person** to show your enthusiasm and answer any questions and concerns they might have. Without the buy-in of many people, a large project like this cannot succeed.
- 2. Do not underestimate the lead time required** to set up an international project.
- 3. Involve your media and communications office** to get great coverage on the university website and social media channels.





European Creative and SMART Cities Challenge

As part of a European Creative and SMART Cities Challenge, 108 Nottingham Trent University (NTU) students and 12 academics visited Karlsruhe in Germany and Timișoara in Romania in April 2019. The students, over half of whom were from widening participation backgrounds, spent time learning about Nottingham's SMART and creative assets before they travelled across Europe by train. As part of the eight-day tour, students visited at least one SMART/creative city in mainland Europe on the way to Karlsruhe or Timisoara, to look at specific initiatives to support creativity and innovation.

Established
2019

Location
Twinned cities in Germany, Romania and other European countries



Duration
8 days

Funding
available



i Background and aims

As a civic university committed to social mobility, NTU's main objectives were:

- to engage the leaders and citizens of Nottingham and two of its twin cities on how European future cities might work with their universities to solve local and global challenges
- to demonstrate NTU's long-term commitment to European mobility post-Brexit and develop European networks for staff and life-long friendships for students
- to encourage NTU students from diverse backgrounds to sign up for a semester or year abroad after this transformative taster experience

Specific targets were:

- to recruit **100** students onto the programme and for at least **50%** to be from widening participation backgrounds
- to recruit a further eight media students to produce short films of the activity to be used to promote study abroad at NTU
- to recruit **12** academic mentors to support the students throughout the process
- to develop at least one new academic collaboration in both twin cities

Target: to recruit

100

students onto the programme



g In summary

In 2019, NTU was invited to contribute to the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the twin city relationship between Karlsruhe and Nottingham. 50 students were to go to Karlsruhe in the 50th year of partnership to gain an understanding of NTU's work in economic development and contribute to the city's future thinking by direct contact with senior city leaders.

After consultation with NTU academics, Nottingham City Council and Creative Quarter Nottingham, the following theme was decided on for the enquiry-based learning challenge: *How can cities and universities work together to support creativity and innovation?*

As a result of the consultation with the City Council, NTU decided to expand the project to send an additional **50** students to Timisoara in Romania to mark the 10th anniversary of the twin city relationship with Nottingham. Of the **100** students recruited, **53** were from widening participation backgrounds.

of the students recruited

53/100

were from widening participation backgrounds

Prior to going abroad, students visited a number of the city's key SMART and creative sites and participated in a seminar led by Nottingham Business School on the vision for future SMART and creative cities, what this meant for Nottingham, and how the students could affect this through their travels.

Under the guidance of **12** academic mentors, **100** students, divided into cross-subject teams of eight or nine members, travelled from Nottingham to Karlsruhe and Timisoara by train. They visited at least one other SMART or creative city along the way, exploring how creativity and innovation were supported in different sectors in cities in France, the Netherlands, Austria and Hungary. Four NTU Media students travelled to Timisoara and four to Karlsruhe to film the students' participation in a three-day programme jointly organised by local university partners and city councils. This included academic seminars, industry visits and cultural activities.



The NTU students were assigned local student buddies in both cities and were also joined by the chief executive of Nottingham City Council for formal receptions hosted by the mayors of both twin cities.

The students learned from schemes currently in place in the European cities they visited to suggest innovations for Nottingham. A showcase event at Nottingham Council House in May 2019 then saw the students present their findings and recommendations to senior members of NTU, Nottingham City Council, the Lord Mayor and representatives from Karlsruhe and Timisoara.



Measuring success

The outputs and outcomes achieved are:

- all students who participated said they would take on another study abroad experience with NTU
- as a result of the project NTU has developed new academic partnerships in both twin cities which have led to innovative teaching and learning collaborations, including virtual exchanges
- NTU students' recommendations were so well received that four were offered internships with the council and many students are now engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the city on economic development
- following the visit, a five-year plan was developed with Timisoara and a virtual challenge was launched in March 2021 linking all three cities



Covid-19

The European Inclusive Cities Challenge planned for April 2020 had to be postponed.

However, a virtual programme was launched in March 2021 for **200** students, including **104** students from Nottingham's three twin cities in Europe.



Future sustainability

The aim is to run an annual enquiry-based learning challenge each April for **100** NTU students with at least 50% from widening participation backgrounds, in collaboration with Nottingham City Council and Nottingham's twin cities, with the theme changing each year.

“

I have already applied to take part in a further study abroad challenge that I am not sure I would have felt confident applying for if I had not taken part in this challenge. I'm hoping it will give me new and exciting experiences and enhance my prospects for the future.

Student participant



3 top tips

1. Take time to develop trust and understanding with your host institutions and cities, as your programme is built on their support. A native speaker can prove a valuable resource when things grind to a halt.

2. Plan how to sustain the partnerships for mutual benefit after the short mobility, as this will allow you to build on your successes rather than start from scratch each time.

3. Harness the innovation and creativity of your students to capture their mobility experience and tell others of their transformative international experience, as their voice has impact and authenticity.



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Queen's Global Leadership Programme

Queen's Global Leadership Programme allows 25 students from across the university to come together to work on a project and develop skills that enable them to become change-makers both at Queen's and in the wider community.

Duration

7–10 days

No. of students

25
per year



Participants receive

**Queen's Employability
Award (Degree plus)**

Open to

**Students from all year
groups, study levels
and disciplines**



Background and aims

The Global Leadership Programme is designed and delivered by staff from Queen's Careers, Employability & Skills (CES) team.

The programme includes on-campus project work, which is enhanced by a short visit to an international city to meet with alumni, other professionals and a range of companies. The aim is to enable students to develop leadership skills in an international context and bring the learning back to support Queen's and the wider community.

The programme supports the university's Vision and Education Strategy through impact on:

- developing student career readiness and employability competencies
- increasing international work-related learning experiences
- engaging with in-country alumni and association members
- developing key contacts with international organisations and companies
- working across internal professional services to support institutional goals
- enhancing collaboration with external organisations in Northern Ireland

Through this programme, Queen's students can expect to:

- develop leadership skills including problem solving, communication, networking and interpersonal skills
- develop team working and project management skills
- gain cultural awareness in an international environment
- gain an insight into international work cultures and environments
- network with other students from Queen's, alumni and professionals in both Northern Ireland and the chosen international location
- act as an ambassador for Queen's University both internationally and locally
- gain Queen's Employability Award, Degree Plus



In summary

The theme for the Programme changes each year and in 2019 students explored 'How will Smart Cities solve 21st Century problems?'

Students work in cross-disciplinary teams to undertake a project related to the theme and use design thinking to understand this and create an outcome that is either a business or a social action idea to tackle some of the issues it presents.

The programme cycle is as follows:

October and November:

- Recruitment of 25 students from any degree programme and year.

January to April:

- On-campus workshops where students work in teams, understand the theme and learn the principles of Design Thinking to address the challenge.

June:

- International trip of seven to ten days to meet with alumni and other leading industry professionals, as well as networking events and receptions.
- On return to Queen's, students receive training in pitching an idea, then work in their teams to hone their ideas into a pitch.
- Students attend a networking event with past participants on the programme and individuals who contributed to it.
- Following the programme, students create and deliver workshops during Queen's Development Weeks, sharing their learning about leadership and the theme with other students.

**Students learn
the principles of Design
Thinking to address
the challenge**



Measuring success

On completion of each programme, student evaluations and feedback are gathered to measure the outcomes in several areas, including:

- how participation has helped students to develop leadership attributes, to progress their career and career decisions
- the most significant learning experiences they gained
- if the student would recommend the programme to other students or any suggestions they may have
- feedback on each of the different programme elements

Additional success is measured through past participants volunteering and joining in other activities. These include:

- Global Opportunities and Career Development Programmes
- Global Opportunities Ambassadors
- on-campus workshops to share their learning with other students
- developing a network of international contacts and alumni, employers and organisations
- participants sharing their learning and experience through social media platforms and producing resources such as blogs and videos

Furthermore, Queen's CES staff build on the success of the programme by continuing to engage with the contacts they made during the activities

“*The Global Leadership Programme is a standout activity in any job application scenario, but I have found the most value to be in understanding more about myself as a leader or in a position of leadership, which has somewhat influenced the direction in which I want my career to progress.*

Student participant



Future sustainability

Queen's CES staff will:

- consider new locations for future international trips
- consider running two programmes per year
- change the theme each year to reflect developments in society and employability trends
- build on the success of this programme by continuing to engage with contacts developed from the programme
- carry out research on the destination outcomes of past participants
- develop additional international mobility programmes that have synergies with the Global Leadership Programme
- continue to promote the programme and build awareness with Queen's students



Lessons learned

- **Visa requirements:** ensure students begin the process of securing the appropriate visa as early as possible, as this can take time and is often complex.
- **Complete a thorough risk assessment and review** this with colleagues in case there is something you have not considered.
- **Provide the right balance between professional work-related events and free time** during the visit abroad. Cultural immersion and time with classmates are an important element of an international mobility.



Covid-19

The 2020 and 2021 Global Leadership Programmes have been postponed due to restrictions on international travel.

The programme will run again when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, Queen's CES colleagues developed a range of virtual programmes with international and career development themes.

3 top tips

- 1. Promote success, raise the profile of your programme and build awareness** among students and university staff by asking students to document their experiences through various social media channels.
- 2. Collaborate with the wider university community.** This leads to sharing best practice, invaluable personal introductions and idea generation for your international mobility programme.
- 3. Aim for a diverse student group** with first to final years, all subject areas and all study levels. This really enhances the programme and the student experience.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Global Summer Experience (GSE)

The GSE scholarship pays for airfare, tuition fees and accommodation for students to attend a summer school with one of our selected international partner universities. There are 60 scholarships available each year, 30 based on academic merit and 30 for widening participation students.

Established

2014

Duration

1–4 weeks

No. of students

60
per year



Location

Worldwide



Background and aims

The fully funded GSE scholarship was introduced in 2014 as a recruitment tool to support the university's internationalisation agenda and to enable highly qualified students to attend a summer school at a partner institution in Europe or beyond.

The scheme is intended to increase the opportunities for short-term mobility and the likelihood of students participating in a longer-term mobility at a later stage.

The first round of scholarships were merit based, with students required to have minimum predicted entry grades of A*AA at A-level or equivalent. Awards were initially limited to **30**, with a budget of up to **£3,000** per student. In 2015 students from widening participation backgrounds, irrespective of predicted grades, were also invited to apply for a scholarship. **20** extra awards were introduced, with the cost covered by the University's Access Agreement.



In summary

The **30 places for high-achieving students are advertised to applicants who have applied through UCAS, with the condition that they firmly accept their offer of a place at Sheffield once selected for the summer school.**

Communications to these students are directed by the Scholarship Communications group, led by a colleague from the Student Finance and Funding Team (FAST), the International Marketing and Communications Manager and the Global Opportunities lead. Applications close in March and are scored by colleagues from FAST and a representative from Global Opportunities. The budget for these awards is **£57,000** and comes from a central source of funding. It is awarded on the basis that it is used as a recruitment tool.

30 further places are available to students who come from low-income household backgrounds

30 further places are available to students who come from low-income household backgrounds. These are advertised to all first-year students who qualify for a Sheffield Bursary after they begin their degree in the autumn. The Global Opportunities team works with FAST to communicate these awards to students. If a low number of applications are received, there is potential to advertise them again in early spring.

8

destinations were offered in 2020



Once all **60** students have been offered the scholarship, students are invited to an awards ceremony and presentation in early December. The presentation informs students about the destination choices and the procedure. **Eight** destinations were offered in 2020 and all destinations are at trusted partners, including some of Sheffield's priority partners.

Students are asked to submit an application with the destinations listed in order of preference, including a supporting statement indicating the rationale for their choices. As European destinations tend to be less popular, all students have to select a European partner in their top three. Previous year's costs are used to estimate the budget, and the average cost is normally no more than **£2,000** per student. The aim is for students to be spread as evenly as possible between host institutions.

Following the allocation process, students receive an email with instructions on how to book their summer school and work with a selected travel agent to book their travel.

Students must complete a risk assessment before they depart, and are covered by the University of Sheffield's travel insurance.



Measuring success

Participation has increased year on year since the scholarship was launched. For 60 places annually, approximately 400 applications are received.

Students are asked to contribute to a blog while they are abroad, and staff find out about students' experiences by engaging with them on their return. For example, students help at the Global Opportunities Fair and at open days, and advertise the opportunity to applicants and new students. They are also invited to apply to be a Global Opportunities Ambassador to help with the promotion of opportunities abroad.



Lessons learned

When the scholarship was expanded to include widening participation students, it was challenging to encourage eligible students to apply.

The awards had been offered at the application stage and the messaging around eligibility for the academic awards was unclear. Once promotion was moved to target students in their first year, many more applications were received.

Managing the programme, particularly the financial aspects, is very admin-heavy and a small team currently spends a significant amount of time processing invoices from partners and sorting out flights and accommodation for students. For summer 2021, the team has enlisted the help of another member of staff to deal with this, and intends to expand the team in the future, with the management of this programme as a specific part of a new role.



Future sustainability

The aim is to continue with the programme as it is, in the long term.

Most of our summer schools are not eligible for Turing funding, as they are under four weeks long. This programme will therefore be run alongside Turing

opportunities, as it is an extra draw for the university in recruitment terms and also offers an additional pathway to an international mobility experience for widening participation students.



Covid-19

The programme for summer 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic. Options for summer 2021 are limited, with only summer schools in Europe currently still going ahead in person.

Following discussion with FAST, it was agreed that students originally awarded a GSE scholarship for summer 2020

who had their funding rolled over to summer 2021 can have it rolled over again to summer 2022 – on the condition that they are still registered as an undergraduate at the University of Sheffield in the 2022–23 academic year. This means that some students are required to undertake some form of experience this year, possibly virtually, as some of the 2020 cohort are now in their final year.



Learning in a completely different place gave me a far better perspective of global career possibilities, but also gave me an insight into the global competition I will face in the future when I start looking for jobs.

Student participant



3 top tips

- 1. A programme with a partial widening participation-only focus can be challenging to promote but it is worth it in the end, as students really value it once they engage.**
- 2. Recruit a really good student ambassador** who can promote all your summer opportunities.
- 3. Ensure your scholarship terms and conditions are clear** and available to students, so you do not run into issues if the programme is delayed or cancelled for any reason.



Short-Term Global Opportunities

The short-term mobility offering at University College London (UCL) consists of a varied and exciting portfolio of opportunities, designed to provide a range of international activities and schemes to encourage and support increasing numbers of students in undertaking global opportunities.

Established
2016

Location
Worldwide



No. of students
420
2018/19



Funding & bursaries
available



i Background and aims

With support from the Provost's Strategic Initiative Fund, short-term mobility at UCL launched in February 2016.

Primarily, this was to diversify the mobility offering, support students on programmes that did not offer a year or semester abroad, and widen access to international opportunities for those who did not want to, or felt unable to commit to longer-term study abroad. Offering a range of global opportunities was important to reflect the diversity of academic and non-academic interests among undergraduate students. The provision of short-term mobility also allowed the Study Abroad team to reach students and academic departments who have not traditionally engaged in international mobility, to ensure more students graduate with a valuable global experience.

The predicted increases in student mobility would provide a wider strategic benefit, contributing to the ambitious institutional mobility target for **30%** of undergraduates to undertake an international opportunity by 2020. This was also part of UCL's pledge for UUKi's Go International: Stand Out campaign. Since the inception of short-term mobility at UCL in 2016–17, there has been a **196%** increase in short-term mobilities, with numbers increasing from **142** in 2016–17 to **420** in 2018–19. This significant increase emphasises the appeal and importance of short-term opportunities to UCL students.

Short-term mobilities facilitated and supported by the Study Abroad team constituted a quarter of all mobilities that were recorded across the undergraduate cohort in 2018–19, with the institutional target of **30%** achieved a year ahead of schedule.



In summary

The short-term mobility offering is varied, with a number of different initiatives and schemes tailored to UCL's students. The majority of opportunities are open to students from any academic department, although some opportunities are subject specific.



The main short-term initiatives at UCL are as follows:

- **Tuition Fee Free Summer School Scheme**, available at partner institutions that allow UCL to convert long-term exchange places into the equivalent number of summer school spots.
- **Undergraduate Research Exchange**, established with Seoul National University, building on our existing student exchanges and academic collaboration.
- **Global Experience Bursary**, established to support students who are undertaking independent global opportunities. Students have undertaken a plethora of international opportunities, including dissertation and laboratory research and summer school participation.
- **Santander Universities Mobility Bursary** provides funding to support students from underrepresented groups in achieving their international mobility aspirations.
- **International Volunteering opportunities** have been offered since 2018–19 and the number and range of activities have increased each year, including collaboration with volunteering organisations in Fiji, China, Costa Rica and Nepal.
- **Global Internships Programme**, managed by the UCL Careers team, promotes and supports international internships.



Lessons learned

In every institution, there will be barriers to establishing new activity.

UCL faced specific challenges in expanding certain areas, and it is useful and important to recognise that it is not always possible to achieve everything.



Covid-19

Due to the pandemic, all short-mobility activity was cancelled over the summer of 2020.

The Study Abroad team hopes to resume activities over the summer of 2021, with additional emphasis on virtual opportunities for students who are unable to, or do not feel comfortable in traveling abroad.



Measuring success

- **Recording and reporting** on mobility numbers has been an important measure of success for short-term mobility. The number of students engaging with UCL's projects and the increases since 2016–17 demonstrate the importance of this area and the capacity for further growth.
- **Feedback provided** by returning short-term mobility students has been overwhelmingly positive, with **99%** of students who completed the feedback survey in the three years since 2016–17 agreeing strongly with the statement that they would recommend a short-term international opportunity to other students.
- **Anecdotal feedback** from students who have provided testimonials shows the impact that short-term mobility can have; these testimonials are an important marketing tool as we promote our opportunities to other students.



Future sustainability

Following early successes and clear impact, long-term funding for short-term mobility at UCL has been secured, and the university looks forward to continuing this work, expanding the offering and supporting increasing numbers of students.

UCL also hopes to explore different opportunities, such as virtual mobility, building on past experience having implemented this as a Covid-19 contingency, to allow for further diversification of the programme.

UCL also aims to work in partnership with increasing numbers of academic departments to support and deliver tailored opportunities that align with the specific academic needs of the department.

“ This short-term study abroad experience contributed to my personal growth and enhanced my appreciation for diversity. I was able to explore new subjects, which furthered my academic interests and gave me new career and life skills. The experience overall made me a better and more complete person by shifting some of my perspectives, both academic and personal

Student participant



3 top tips



1. Monitor the impact of the programme

by capturing and measuring mobility numbers, but also by collecting quantitative and qualitative student feedback to be used to demonstrate success to staff and other students.

2. Build slowly UCL has grown its programme year on year, allowing for sustained growth and evolution of the programme but at a manageable level.

3. When establishing short-term mobility **focus your energy on the areas where you can deliver impact.**

Entrepreneurs Across Borders

Integrate theory and practice of transacting business in emerging markets. **Entrepreneurs Across Borders** aims to help students to discover and explore what it means to be an entrepreneur in the 21st century.

Established
2019

No. of students
16
over 2 years



Location
Qatar and
Bahrain



Financial support
provided



i Background and aims

The School of Management at the University of Bradford provides fantastic international opportunities for its students. One of these is the annual Entrepreneurs Across Borders programme, which sponsors students to travel abroad and experience entrepreneurship activities.

The School of Management believes that this initiative can contribute to giving students an informed global perspective, particularly in relation to understanding new international markets. It is also a great way for students to make connections, increase cultural awareness, challenge stereotypes, and gain unique innovation insights into different parts of the world.

The Entrepreneurs Across Borders programme aims to develop the following skills:

- awareness and knowledge about the importance of entrepreneurship and related ecosystems
- conceptual knowledge on entrepreneurship, the entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial motivation, and the entrepreneurial process
- basic skills to find, select, and implement a good business idea
- ability to analyse individual personalities and attitudes and lead behavioural change conducive to the creation of an entrepreneurial culture.



In summary

Entrepreneurs Across Borders aims to help students to discover and explore what it means to be an entrepreneur in the 21st century.



The programme consists of site visits to industry, guest speakers, and interactive seminars that allow exposure to, and learning about, entrepreneurship ecosystems, entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets, digital entrepreneurship, and design thinking.

Hosted by one of Bradford's Faculty of Management partners in Bahrain and Qatar, this learning opportunity has been carefully designed to engage, inspire, and challenge students to challenge themselves. The interactive seminars are delivered by a world-class faculty that includes an internationally certified professional coach in entrepreneurship and leadership, an internationally certified training and life coach, and a social commerce and digital entrepreneurship expert.

The programme includes cultural tours, site visits and industry job-shadowing that supports students' learning and gives them the opportunity to engage and reflect on their experiences. The industry-cultural immersion allows students to learn more about the host country's businesses, industry, culture, history and people. The experience inspires some students to consider it as a launchpad for their future start-ups.

16

students participated and were financially supported by the Faculty



Participants for this programme are selected based on their academic performance and socioeconomic background. The Faculty of Management aims for a diverse cohort that reflects its commitment to academic excellence, equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Entrepreneurs Across Borders programme is delivered in collaboration with the Faculty's partners in Bahrain and Qatar. Between 2019 and 2020, **16** students participated and were financially supported by the Faculty.



Measuring success

- At the end of each programme, students and host partners give a **verbal assessment**; students provide feedback on the activities and how they can assimilate the lessons learned into their academic development.
- Students are invited to **reflect on their activities abroad** and how the experience can benefit them in terms of their future academic and professional endeavours.
- Students are invited to participate in the Careers Booster Week at the Faculty of Management and **share their experience with other colleagues**.

“ At the end of each programme, students and host partners give a verbal assessment ”



Lessons learned

Pre-departure briefing: in the future, involve the host organisation in the pre-departure briefing meeting.

The host organisation will be invited to deliver a remote webinar about the host country culture and costumes. During the webinar, the host organisation will mention any specific aspects regarding in-country business and organisational culture. This approach aims to support our students' cultural awareness and business engagement.

3 top tips

1. It is important to have a good relationship with the host partner and liaise with them early on in the process, particularly in terms of practical arrangements.

2. Visiting industry and companies is an amazing opportunity for students to explore and engage with real examples and experience in practice what they have been taught in the classroom.

3. Visits abroad are an opportunity to engage business students in real and successful industry cases and an opportunity for them to learn about other cultures and gain an understanding which can be applied in a global business setting.

Short-term mobility at the University of Bristol

Since 2017, the University of Bristol has offered a range of extra-curricular opportunities for students to work, study or volunteer abroad in the summer.

Established
2017

Location

Worldwide



Duration

1–8 weeks

Funding

available



i Background and aims

The University has a target of 25% of home undergraduate students participating in international mobility.

Whilst strong year and semester abroad programmes exist, with over **500** students participating annually, significant growth in these programmes is limited and short-term mobility allowed the university to reach its target.

By diversifying the offer to include short-term opportunities, Bristol hoped to reach new groups of students, including those whose degree programmes do not offer a longer period abroad. As indicated by previous UUKi research, it was also hoped that short-term opportunities would widen access to mobility and diversify participation.

500+

students participating annually

All opportunities aim to benefit students in three areas:

- positive impact on personal development and essential skills, including communication, independence, resilience and adaptability
- a more global mindset and increased intercultural awareness
- positive impact on employability

g In summary

The aim was to offer a broad range of activities in terms of duration, flexibility and cost and the university worked with a range of partners, including third-party organisations and university partners.

Programmes take place in the summer holidays and are not credit-bearing. They are for undergraduate students, excluding those in their final year, whose degree programmes do not include a period abroad.

The majority of programmes are open to undergraduates from all disciplines, presenting students with several options to choose from according to their interests, and providing the chance to develop knowledge and skills outside their subject area. Having a diverse cohort, with students from a range of disciplines, benefits participants and group work.

There are a couple of exceptions to this university-wide approach, with

one programme only for students studying STEM subjects, and the other for those who meet a number of widening participation criteria.

The university uses funding from various sources to support short-term initiatives, including Santander Universities UK, the Access and Participation Plan and the Alumni Office, and discounts have been negotiated with some of the delivery partners.

The majority of programmes require students to cover some of the associated costs; however, a limited number of bursaries for widening participation students are available.

The planning and delivery of these initiatives is managed by a Short-term Global Opportunities Officer who oversees the design, delivery and all other aspects of the programmes, including partnerships, student communication, recruitment and pre-departure preparation.

The portfolio of programmes offers a wide range of activities, including:

- an **eight-week** internship in China
- a **one-week** leadership programme for up to **50** students in selected global locations
-  a **four-week** study programme for up to **60** students, hosted by university partner in China
- exchange places on summer schools at selected partner universities
- scholarships of up to **£500** to help students fund a work, study or volunteer experience they find themselves
- work, study, and volunteer opportunities facilitated by a third-party partner



Measuring success

The success of the programmes is measured through post-programme quantitative and qualitative surveys, and focus groups.

Students are asked what they have gained from the experience and provide qualitative feedback on the benefits and shortcomings of their mobility.

Examples from previous years:

- **92%** of students said they are more empathetic following the programme
- **94%** said the programme had a positive impact on their desire to work or study abroad in the future



The team will introduce additional surveys at six months and two years post-mobility to ask students to reflect on the impact of the experience.



Covid-19

None of the extra-curricular international travel will go ahead in person this year, with three programmes having been adapted to a virtual format.

Programmes delivered by third-party partners have been straightforward to switch. For programmes codesigned with a partner university, the move to virtual has required a significant amount of resource.

Bristol has started work with a new third-party partner in South Africa to run three virtual programmes this summer which are targeted at students from specific subject areas. This was achieved by redirecting Santander funding from cancelled in-person programmes and has allowed Bristol to build closer partnerships with academic colleagues in its various Schools and offer programmes that build on students' learning within their subject area.



Lessons learned

Recruiting students can be challenging as there is currently no student-facing space on campus and it can be hard to get messages heard. Offering non-subject-specific programmes provides a large pool of students to recruit from but makes marketing challenging, as there is no specific target group. A separate Global Opportunities Fair for short-term opportunities will be introduced to allow clear messaging to students; this initiative will engage previous participants to run the stands at the fair.

Identifying academic colleagues who value these opportunities and share them with their colleagues and students has been effective. In-person promotion and lecture shout outs in key recruitment periods, particularly for programmes targeted at a particular cohort, work well.

Identifying funding sources and finding affordable programmes is an ongoing challenge. The bursaries for students meeting widening participation criteria are consistently over-subscribed. Information about costs is provided from the pre-application stage so that students know what to expect.

It is key to manage students' expectations of the programme and to be clear about what the university expects of them. Pre-departure support is essential and two mandatory sessions are held for each programme. Support is tailored and varies between student groups and programmes, with one programme including a year-long pre-departure provision.



Future sustainability

Bristol plans to diversify the short-term offer by introducing academic-led, extra-curricular programmes of up to one week, starting with two pilot programmes in the Faculty of Arts.

To get buy-in from academic colleagues, proposals were invited from across the Faculty. Funding will be provided by Santander Universities UK.



I gained an understanding of international business, my own ambitions, personal and professional connections, an eagerness to work and travel abroad in the future.

Student participant



2 top tips

1. Visit the programme – being there provides some additional support to students and gives you a much better understanding of the programme and the student experience, which will help you improve promotion, programme design and pre-departure support.

2. In the digital age, do not underestimate the power of in-person promotion when restrictions allow.



University
of Dundee

Common Purpose Global Leader programme

The University of Dundee has partnered with the global charity Common Purpose since 2016 to support a short-term international experience for students who face barriers to accessing study abroad.

Groups of 25–50 students have experienced transformative five-day programmes in locations including Kuala Lumpur and Dubai, with a range of support provided by the university to enable uptake and maximise benefits.

Established
2016

Location
Kuala Lumpur
and Dubai



Duration
5 days

Financial support
provided



Background and aims

The programme was championed by the university's Vice-Principal International, as part of an internationalisation strategy that aims to 'Bring the world to Dundee, and Dundee to the world'.

Our International Mobility group had reviewed barriers preventing students from accessing existing study abroad opportunities and found these included financial and academic concerns, but also practical factors such as part-time jobs and caring responsibilities. A pilot project was carried out in 2016 to investigate if some of these barriers could be circumvented through a short-term programme.



In summary

The university established a project steering group with colleagues from the internationalisation, widening access, student support and careers teams as well as student representation.

25 students completed cultural awareness, team working and leadership exercises, went on employer visits



The group reviewed options and agreed to target students who had not previously travelled abroad for work or study and who faced barriers to doing so, and that recruitment, support and follow-up should be designed with this group in mind.

To ensure the widest possible reach, it was agreed not to limit the programme to any defined student group, but to specifically invite applications from students with high contextual admissions scores, and to monitor uptake.

This meant the programme was promoted widely, with applications invited from all students and scored individually on their potential to benefit. Subsequent analysis showed the majority of successful applicants came from widening access backgrounds, but the cohort also included students with refugee status, disabilities and caring responsibilities.

A support package was agreed, including all accommodation and travel costs, and also offering support in arranging vaccinations and passports. A member of staff was identified to chaperone the students, many of whom had never travelled abroad before, and to offer preparation sessions and email guidance prior to travel.

Dundee worked in partnership with Common Purpose to agree the scope and make arrangements for the pilot programme in Kuala Lumpur in December 2016. During the programme, **25** students completed cultural awareness, team working and leadership exercises, went on employer visits and met inspirational contributors from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. They worked in teams with local participants to complete proposals for 'Smart Cities'. Engagement was extremely positive, with students actively seeking out Malaysian students to discuss similarities and differences in their cultures and making the most of their free time to explore the city with local students as guides.

Following successful evaluation of the programme it was repeated in 2017 and 2019 in different locations, with an online version planned for 2021.



Lessons learned

While the pilot programme was hugely successful, the cost per student was relatively high.

So for subsequent years, the university investigated whether the same benefits could be realised while seeking economies of scale through alternative locations, bigger student cohorts and partnership with another institution.



Covid-19

The 2020 programme was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a virtual programme with Common Purpose will run in May 2021 instead.

This allows them to offer the programme to a greater number of students, including those who were unable to participate in other study abroad activities.



Measuring success

Feedback for the pilot programme indicated hugely positive impact:

- **100%** said that they were better able to lead or operate beyond their circle of authority
- **100%** said they were able to engage with people who are different from themselves
- **100%** said they had a stronger sense of purpose
- **86%** said they felt better able to contribute to their organisation, city or community

The positive outcome for the students was clear; they came home feeling more confident about exploring the world and interacting with other cultures. Furthermore, **95%** indicated they intend to take part in work, study or volunteering abroad in the future. For example, one student who had never travelled abroad before went Interrailing over the summer; others went beyond their comfort zone by contacting local employers for summer work experience.



Future sustainability

Dundee has aimed to repeat the programme every academic year since the successful pilot, and has improved the support package to enable students to derive maximum benefit.

The university now keeps in contact with the participants through Facebook so that they can alert them to upcoming

opportunities and host reunion events at which students tell senior management about the impact of the programme and provide quotes and pictures for marketing purposes. The returning students are asked to commit to a small amount of time as Global Ambassadors and promote outward mobility opportunities to home students, while actively developing their cultural awareness through engaging with international students.



The programme really helped me push myself outside of my comfort zone, to speak up more and voice my opinions. Leadership takes time to build especially for someone who is normally quite reserved. It's encouraged me to apply for more opportunities working with new people and made me consider future careers.

Student participant

3 top tips

- 1. The decision to recruit students by potential to benefit** rather than targeting a specific group has led to great breadth of uptake.
- 2. Increased support before departure** helped the students feel prepared.
- 3. Giving the students specific roles** (social media, photos, team leaders, ambassadors – with training provided) maximised the benefit to them and created a fantastic legacy for the wider university.





Wildlife Sense

Wildlife Sense is a sea turtle research and conservation organisation based on the island of Kefalonia, Greece. Its mission is to protect endangered sea turtles and their natural habitats, promote public awareness and offer a unique learning experience to the volunteers who join their programme.

Established
2016

Location
Kefalonia
Greece



Duration
2+ weeks

No. of students
10 per year



i Background and aims

The University of Essex partnered with Wildlife Sense in 2016 to offer a great immersive experience to their students through this sustainable volunteering project. The aim is for around 10 students to participate in the programme each year.

The Essex Abroad team supports students with fundraising opportunities to help with the cost of the programme. Each of the participating students receives an employability award upon completion of the two-week programme. The Big Essex Award features on the student's transcript when they graduate and recognises the achievements of volunteering abroad.

g In summary

The opportunity is open to all University of Essex students. While the programme may particularly appeal to Life Science students, for many participants it does not directly relate to their degree.

Students sign up with Wildlife Sense to participate in a programme lasting a minimum of two weeks, and as a student from the University of Essex they receive a discount on specific dates in the summer.

The programme is self-funded and the Essex Abroad team monitors applications in partnership with Wildlife Sense. Students are offered support with any relevant funding and fundraising through the university's crowdfunding team, and also university travel insurance. The team also connect students who are doing the same programme with one another.

Wildlife Sense runs a series of information sessions for University of Essex students and, once they are registered on the programme, students can join the organisation's closed Facebook group to meet other volunteers from all over the world.

Airport collection and training are provided as part of the programme. Wildlife Sense also have a volunteer coordinator to support the group and provide information to the Essex Abroad team about how students are getting on during the programme.



Lessons learned

- **Originally, students applied via Essex Abroad.** This process was changed and students now apply and pay Wildlife Sense directly, making the application more streamlined.
- **Staffing changes within the Essex Abroad team affected the relationship with Wildlife Sense** due to the loss of the main point-of-contact who left the team. Colleagues invested time to build new relationships with the organisation and to learn about the programme. All members of the team are now encouraged to have knowledge of the scheme.



Covid-19

Due to Covid-19, students have been unable to attend the programme.

The Essex Abroad team has held some successful information sessions, though, so that future students can participate in the programme once travel restrictions allow.

“ I volunteered at Wildlife Sense [and] described this experience as the best thing I have ever done to my friends and family. The work is so rewarding ... I also met amazing people that I would not have had the chance to meet. You do need to be organised to take part but past students such as myself can help with this if needed. I recommend Wildlife Sense 100% and might even go back myself.

Student participant



Future sustainability

- To date, **63%** of all participants succeed in raising funds for their programme and travel costs. The Essex Abroad team plans to continue to run the programme in the future and hopes to offer some funded spaces for widening participation students.

63%



of all participants succeed in raising funds for their programme and travel costs

- The Essex Abroad team would like to reintroduce pre-departure sessions and introduce sessions for returning students so they can gain the most from their volunteering experience. The post-placement session would be organised and delivered in collaboration with the careers team at the university, who would advise students on how to feature the experience on their CV and how to talk about the acquired skills to future employers.

3 top tips

- 1. Build strong relationships with the organisation that you are partnering with** – being there provides some additional support to students and gives you a much better understanding of the programme and the student experience, which will help you improve promotion, programme design and pre-departure support.
- 2. Offer students help with funding, travel insurance and other logistics.** Formally recognise students' achievements by providing them with an award.
- 3. Encourage students to share their experience in as many ways as possible** via the university's social media, webpages, blog posts, information events and presentations to students and staff. Students love to connect with other students and hear directly from those who have taken part.

Global Leader Experience/ Global Leaders

Since the 2015–16 academic year, the University of Exeter has organised short-term mobility in the form of the Global Leader Experience (GLE).

The institution sends a large number of students abroad on semester and year-long exchange programmes and work placements. The GLE programme was developed to support students from underrepresented backgrounds to gain a global experience.

Established
2015-16

Location
Worldwide



No. of students
600+



Funding
available



i Background and aims

Global Mobility has always been popular at the University of Exeter. Before Covid-19, the institution sent approximately 600 students per year on placements abroad.

Two thirds of these students study abroad as part of their degree, with the remainder working abroad. The foundations for this mobility at Exeter are a combination of outstanding academic and professional services buy-in and a strong modern languages department.

The overall aim of the GLE is to provide a global experience to students from underrepresented groups, including widening participation backgrounds.



In summary

The first GLE saw a group of students travel to Kuala Lumpur to engage in a one-week self-leadership programme. Fast forward six years and over 600 students have engaged in a short-term programme of a similar format.

The programme requires students to adapt to situations they may be unfamiliar with and undertake a series of tasks they may not have participated in before. Students come together to tackle complex issues. They are in groups that cover a range of different disciplines and this enhances the experience and learning gain for everyone.

Demand for the programme has always been high, as the funding of students' flights, accommodation and insurance acts as a key incentive. As a result, it is often a competitive application process and the student's determination to join the programme is tested.

600+
students have engaged in a short-term programme since 2015/16



Measuring success

Students are surveyed before and after the short-term mobility to assess the overall benefits of the experience and some very useful data is captured this way. However, the level of responses received to the survey can vary before and after the mobility.

The University of Exeter has captured several success stories from participants in the programme. Students have shared the impact that the GLE has had on their employability at recruitment stage, with recruiters seeming fascinated by the period abroad.



Being able to articulate the experience appears to give students an advantage when entering the labour market.

The university also reaches out to participants to obtain their views and testimonials about the programme and how it may have benefitted the participant in relation to their careers or aspirations more widely.

Having a bank of testimonials provides quality evidence of the overall benefit of the programme to both internal and external stakeholders.



Lessons learned

The Exeter team believes that the key success to any short-term mobility is to assess students' motivations for applying to the programme to ensure that those who participate fully benefit from the experience.

Finding the time and resource to do so is not always easy, but a robust selection process is important to ensure success. On one occasion, for example, it was vital that students applying for the programme were aware of the political history of the location. To be selected, students had to complete an online application form, followed by a phone interview where their motivation was assessed, and also their knowledge of the location. Thanks to this recruitment activity, the successful students were all eager to learn and partake fully in the programme, making this trip one of the most beneficial.



Covid-19

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the GLE. From March 2020 planning for in-person mobility had to stop and attention moved towards virtual mobility.

Given that a key feature of the GLE is travel abroad and cultural immersion, this posed a challenge.

The transition to online mobility resulted in a rise in drop-out rates, with students more likely to accept a place and then decide not to participate due to other commitments.

However, the enhanced flexibility of online programmes enabled students who would not typically be able to engage with GLEs to take part in a programme.

Another key benefit of the online format is the ability for students to work as a team to produce a shared resource which has not been a focus of an in-person programme.



Future sustainability

Due to the pandemic, there was an expectation that numbers would drop during 2021–22 academic year, but numbers are the same and there is an increased level of interest and engagement from first year students to go abroad.

As well as traditional semester or year-long mobility, the number of short-term programmes has also continued. They are currently offered in an online format that has been remarkably successful, and participation numbers have remained consistent.

“ I can safely say I have never experienced anything like it and can't wait to get back out there! What an amazing group of people to meet and I really cannot imagine a better way to finish my time at Exeter, so my sincere thanks in making it happen!

Student participant



3 top tips

1. Chaperone well When students travel to a location and undertake the mobility in person, it is paramount to the success of the programme to have a member of the university staff at the location.

2. Ensure students do their research Encourage students to research the location to help eliminate any potential risks with the trip. If students have prior knowledge of the accommodation and local amenities then a number of issues can be avoided.

3. Make it enjoyable Make the trip enjoyable for everyone (students, chaperones and course leaders) to help and add overall value to the programme.

Futurising in the Museum: Design students' study trip to Malta

London College of Communication BA (Hons) Design for Branded Spaces students travelled to Valetta to the National Museum of Art in Malta, MUŻA, in May 2019. Over the course of the week-long visit, students worked with staff at the museum to put into practice their ideas for the enhancement of MUŻA's engagement with its audiences and their local community in Valletta.

Location

Malta


Module

Credit bearing

Funding

provided


Background and aims

London College of Communication (LCC) supported the visit, as there was clear alignment with the objectives stated in several of its policy documents, including its overarching strategy, the international and mobility strategies, and the 'manifesto' for LCC's Design School, which aim to:

- provide a broad range of student mobility opportunities which reflect the diversity of the College's student body
- provide an opportunity to work in an international professional context, and to develop professional and intercultural skills that can be directly transferred and applied to working in the creative industries
- help enhance the global reputation of the University of the Arts London (UAL) and LCC as a world leader in creative education by supporting collaboration with a prominent European cultural organisation

- leverage LCC's international partnerships to develop the discipline and practice of designing branded spaces
- promote the potential of creative disciplines to address social issues and global challenges

The summarised goals for the programme are to:

- contribute to UAL's institutional target of **6%** of students participating in an international mobility
- contribute to UAL's institutional target of **100%** of students having an international experience during their course
- ensure LCC's curriculum and assessment reflect international content
- help provide transformative education and enrich opportunities for students



In summary

A core part of LCC's curriculum in year two is to develop students' collaborative learning, including team skills, to provide experience of the roles and responsibilities associated with group working, and to put into practice principles associated with personal and professional development.

Collaborations are varied and take place internally, between different courses and cohorts across UAL/LCC, but also with external organisations, locally, nationally or internationally. Collaborative learning is one of the main tools LCC uses to place creative disciplines in an international context and to develop students' intercultural competences.

In 2019, BA (Hons) Design for Branded Spaces delivered this aspect of LCC's curriculum by partnering with MUZA in Valletta. Regarded as one of Europe's leading museums for community engagement, students worked with MUZA in exploring how the museum could draw on its collections to inspire audiences and the wider community to critically engage with social issues, such as environmental change and global warming.

The collaboration was provided through a distinct 20-credit unit delivered during the spring and summer terms of the second year. Most of the unit took place at LCC, with museum staff from Malta contributing on digital learning platforms. All students had the opportunity to travel to Valletta in May 2019. The course team held regular meetings with MUZA staff to plan the virtual collaboration and trip itinerary, beginning six months beforehand. As the unit was an established feature of LCC's curriculum, the course team had a clear sense of the outcomes that were needed from the collaboration.

£5,000



secured from LCC's International Development Office to support the trip

It was agreed that students would use their time in Malta to work on-site at the museum to test designs and implement participatory activities with museum visitors that were conceived in London prior to the trip, with museum staff virtually contributing from Malta to the class sessions at LCC. The work produced by students in Malta also formed part of LCC's contribution to the 2019 London Design Festival.

The course leader secured £5,000 from LCC's International Development Office to support the trip. The course team also worked with the International Development Office on logistical arrangements, including travel and accommodation bookings, compliance for participating students with differing immigration statuses, health and safety processes, and securing internal support for the trip by ensuring that cover arrangements were in place for the staff members who were travelling. Through Travelbound, a specialist youth travel company and approved supplier, LCC secured discounted rates on flights and accommodation.



Measuring success

Success for the project was measured through:

- students' academic performance on the Branded Spaces Futures unit
- students' qualitative feedback on the unit evaluation and UAL's Undergraduate Student Survey
- qualitative feedback from MUZA staff and visitors, as well as visitors to the London Design Festival and LCC public programme



Lessons learned

1. Managing expectations

There were different levels of expectation between LCC and MUZA over what could be achieved in the time available. Defining clear objectives and outcomes that all parties can agree to from the outset is critical.

2. Preparation time

Students need time to prepare for the experience and it was necessary to build in sufficient lead time. The pace of the work while on site was fast and it was important to allow space and time for students to be able to work while also allowing them to explore and enjoy Malta.

3. Communicate

There was an element of familiarisation on arrival. LCC instigated a process of collaboration between tutors, the director of MUZA and students, in which tutors acted as mediators and students engaged directly with the director of MUZA.

“I found the experience of working with MUZA, with its mix of traditional Maltese culture and modern construction, extremely rewarding. It really helped me understand how serious climate change is.

Student participant

3 top tips

- 1. Start planning early** – it takes time to organise and negotiate between different stakeholders.
- 2. Access** it is essential that all students can participate.
- 3. Outcomes** it is important to agree in advance a clear schedule of activities and specific outcomes for the trip.

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER[®]

Westminster Working Cultures (WWC) International

Westminster Working Cultures (WWC) International offers undergraduate students from across the University of Westminster the opportunity to travel abroad to major global cities, such as Hong Kong and Mumbai, to meet a diverse range of employers, and to learn what it is like to live and work in the region. The programme, designed and overseen by the Alumni Relations team, draws on the goodwill of Westminster graduates and university partners who host our students, and has a particular focus on supporting undergraduates from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

Established
2017

Location
Major global locations,
including Hong Kong
and Mumbai



No. of students
200
to date



Funding
Fully funded



Background and aims

One of Westminster's key priorities is to connect students with industry, giving them the experience, skills, confidence and networks they need to be successful after graduation.

WWC International offers this on a global scale, enabling large groups of students to gain an unparalleled employability experience which they can fit around their studies.

WWC International has a particular focus on students with fewer opportunities; **90%** of participants self-identified as coming from an underrepresented background in 2019-20.

Alongside other international opportunities offered at the University, WWC International promotes the 'One University' vision by bringing together students from different disciplines and backgrounds on each trip, utilising the connections of our global alumni community and partners to make this a truly unique experience.

Launched in 2017, WWC International was piloted with a week-long trip to Hong Kong where students met with Westminster graduates. Since the pilot, the programme has received **2,470** applications; **11** trips to multiple destinations – including Washington DC, Shanghai and Berlin – have been organised; and almost **200** students have been supported.

90% of participants in 2019/20 self-identified as coming from an underrepresented background



In summary

To ensure the programme engages students from across the university, an effort is made to select applicants:

- from different courses and colleges,
- from a range of backgrounds
- from amongst those who have not yet had an international experience with the university.

The programme provides a meaningful way for students to learn from graduates in international countries, who share their time and expertise and provide an insight into the major industries and working cultures which characterise each destination. Destinations are predominantly linked to where Westminster has a large alumni community, but also take into consideration university partnership and recruitment priorities.

Multiple WWC International trips are run at four points of the year, mainly avoiding term time, so that students can participate around their study commitments. Students receive a thorough pre-trip briefing and are encouraged to treat the experience as a business trip, meeting with at least two organisations a day.

The programme is not credit bearing, but students receive points towards their 'Westminster Employability Award', an initiative managed by the Careers and Employability Service. In addition to this, students are required to complete a reflective workbook before, during and after their trip. Following the trip and completion of the workbook, students also receive a LinkedIn badge and access to a closed LinkedIn group to encourage continued engagement and networking.

Funding is fully covered by philanthropic support from the Quintin Hogg Trust (QHT), which supports the advancement of education of students at the University of Westminster, Santander Universities and a private donation.

“ Industry-related international experience is of enormous benefit to students preparing for graduate-working life and offering our students this sort of experience – highly valued by graduate employers – is a central priority for the University

Professor Alex Hughes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Global Engagement and Employability



Lessons learned

Learning who our participants were

To know more about who was travelling with WWC International, Westminster added questions to the application form to have this information easily accessible for reporting purposes and to know more about the specific needs of the selected students.

Building programme awareness

To encourage more students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds to apply, Westminster created a strong identity for the programme through all promotional materials, involved senior academics with the delivery of each trip to get their buy-in and support with student engagement, and also launched a WWC ambassador programme.

Students learn much more than sector-specific information

Through the experience, students develop a breadth of transferable skills, learning how to network and gaining self-confidence by hearing from successful graduates who serve as inspiring role models.

Cross-institutional international experiences are just as important as course-specific field trips

Participants come from different backgrounds and study a variety of courses. They learn from each other through their varied life experiences and this has contributed to the long-lasting inspirational impact of the programme on students.



Future sustainability

Westminster Working Cultures has expanded to include a UK strand and a virtual events series.

These activities support the international activity by further building the WWC brand and its reputation as a core employability activity for students.

By 2024, WWC International aims to run an additional **30** trips, support over **600** students with a short-term international experience, and maintain at least **85%** participation from students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds.



Measuring success

Measuring success is vital to WWC International and is done in various ways:

- **Increase in applicants from underrepresented backgrounds.** Tracking engagement from these groups demonstrates the programme is increasing the aspirations and confidence among these students to apply and participate. This is a key priority for the university, with an emphasis on supporting students from BAME backgrounds and those with a disability.
- **Student feedback.** WWC International is designed specifically to provide students with support in the areas they are looking to develop. Feedback is measured through a mandatory reflective workbook, daily reflective logs and a final overview of what they have learned. All participants are sent an evaluation form to share their thoughts about the programme and students participate in focus groups to talk about their experience and the impact it has had.
- **Track employment after graduation.** Westminster tracks what roles participants take up through staying in touch with them and utilising social media tools such as LinkedIn. Graduate outcomes data will also be used to track participants' professional journeys.



Covid-19

WWC International is on hold during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the meantime, students can benefit from WWC UK, a UK variant of WWC International, that is held entirely online during the pandemic. This is helping spread the word about WWC International and maintain the strength of the WWC brand.

3 top tips

1. **Involve senior staff to support raising the profile of international activities** and involve colleagues in the international and careers teams to deliver the trips with you where possible, as their expertise is invaluable for building quality employability programmes.
2. **Word of mouth is the best promotion** Students want to hear from their peers about their experience and this will motivate them to want to participate.
3. **Tracking impact is imperative** to ensure delivery of the best programme possible, giving students a useful experience and demonstrating the value of the programme to internal colleagues and external stakeholders.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Numbers of reported short-term mobilities in the UK have risen over the last few years, with options of four weeks or less now accounting for 21%, or one in five of all reported mobilities.¹⁵ This is clearly an important area of growth in the overall outward mobility offer, and many opportunities are specifically aimed at disadvantaged students, making international activities more inclusive.

Through the student survey and focus groups, as well as the institutional case studies, several themes have emerged

EVIDENCE OF A POSITIVE IMPACT

Short-term mobility programmes lead to a wide range of beneficial outcomes. The skills students acquire include soft skills, personal development, academic skills and a range of attributes that help in an employment context. The experience also often acts as a catalyst for involvement in other, possibly longer, periods abroad; generally encourages engagement with international activities on campus; and helps to cultivate a global outlook.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

For short-term programmes to become a truly integral part of an institution's international mobility offer, there needs to be buy-in from across the institution. The reach and impact of short-term mobility initiatives can be vast, bringing benefits to students, staff and institutions. Support from senior management is crucial. Short-term mobility programmes should be included in institutions' internationalisation strategies, with a distinct reference to making global opportunities accessible to all students and the value of involving staff at both central and academic department level in their creation, support and management.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS THROUGHOUT

There is need for support at all times, from the application stage through to pre-departure and during the mobility. More needs to be done to understand and address barriers to participation – such as financial limitations, curriculum-related restrictions, disabilities and mental health, or simple lack of information – to ensure all students feel they can engage in the opportunities.

FOCUS ON FUNDING

Funding is a very important aspect for those considering participating. It is vital that students are made aware of the financial support available early on, and that eligibility criteria are communicated in a transparent way, to ensure that students do not perceive short-term mobility as unattainable. It is also crucial to explain what the overall financial commitments are, so that students can budget accordingly. SIEM found that '82% of mobile respondents reported needing to advance the initial costs for a mobility period'.¹⁶

EVALUATION

Students reported a huge variety of valuable outcomes following short-term mobility programmes. To ensure the continued success and sustainable growth of these programmes, institutions need to measure the activity's impacts and gather testimonials, so that they can showcase the benefits to future student participants, as well as demonstrate their value to internal stakeholders and external funding organisations.

¹⁵ UUKi (2019) *Gone International: Rising Aspirations*

¹⁶ SIEM (2021) *Maybe it will be different abroad: Student and Staff Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion in student exchanges*

ACCESSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are often especially attracted to short-term mobility as, in addition to the financial implications, many are unable to go away for longer due to work or caring commitments. More generally, the fact that many short-term programmes are led by staff from the home university or facilitated by a partner institution abroad makes the visit seem more secure and provides students with a sense of security. Preparation; transparent information about funding options and overall costs; and additional support for those with needs such as disabilities, mental health or childcare are key to engaging students from a broad range of backgrounds.

THE FUTURE OF SHORT-TERM MOBILITY

Short-term mobility should not replace other longer-term options, such as a semester and a year abroad, as there are many different factors that influence a student's decision when considering a period abroad. However, given their many demonstrable benefits, short-term programmes should become a firm component of the diverse international opportunities universities offer their students, and can be used as a recruitment tool to emphasise the institution's international outlook.

Short-term mobility programmes are frequently immersive, intensive and structured experiences. Many elements and characteristics of these programmes remove barriers to accessing international experiences, allowing students from disadvantaged groups to acquire the skills such opportunities provide and to benefit from the positive impacts on academic achievement, self-development, future careers and employment. It is crucial therefore that universities embed these opportunities into their university policies for widening access, levelling up and addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The recent introduction of the UK's own student mobility programme, the Turing Scheme, will allow institutions to expand their portfolio of short-term mobilities, as well as fund programmes of four weeks and more. This will be particularly welcome to ensure increased participation in outward mobility among students from the most disadvantaged groups. Inclusion is also a priority in other schemes, such as the next Erasmus+ programme¹⁷ and the Australian government's New Colombo Plan Mobility Program.¹⁸

We know that short-term mobility programmes can offer a life-changing experience that leads to long-term impacts. Developing, promoting and delivering these programmes will help ensure equal access, to both the programmes and their benefits, for all students.

For the UK to continue to be a global participant in outward mobility, providing opportunities that equal those of other countries, a number of points should be considered:

- **Research:** Universities should carry out more research within their institutions to understand who participates in international short-term mobility and where gaps in participation exist, so that support, including funding, can be tailored accordingly.
- **Record:** Universities should record all mobilities, of all lengths, being undertaken by their students, to gain an insight into the level of participation in short-term programmes.
- **Report:** Universities should report all recorded mobility data to HESA, to build an accurate picture of participation in the UK.
- **Support:** Mobilities of less than one month should receive additional targeted funding to enable more students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to access them.

¹⁷ Erasmus+ Programme Guide Part A, available at https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-a_en

¹⁸ The New Colombo Plan Mobility Program, available at www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/mobility-program

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Universities UK International (UUKi) represents UK higher education institutions (HEIs) globally and helps them flourish internationally. To do this we actively promote UK HEIs abroad, provide trusted information for and about them, and create new opportunities through our unique ability to act at sector level. We draw on UK university expertise to influence policy in the UK and overseas, delivering information, advice and guidance to facilitate mutually beneficial collaboration between UK HEIs and a broad range of international partners.



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