Gone International:
the value of mobility

Report on the 2013/14 graduating cohort

go international

All you need to know about study and work abroad

Contents

ABOUT THE GO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

Supported by the Government, the UK HE International Unit (IU) launched the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility in December 2013. The IU established the Go International programme to work with universities and colleges, government, sector organisations and students to help tackle the current barriers to UK outward student mobility. Its aim is to help increase the proportion of UK students with some international experience. For more information about the programme visit www.go.international.ac.uk

The UK HE International Unit

The UK HE International Unit represents UK universities globally and helps them meet their international aims. We do this by actively promoting our universities abroad, providing trusted information for and about them, and creating new opportunities through our ability to act at sector level. We draw on UK university expertise to influence policy in the UK and overseas, to deliver information, advice and guidance to enable collaboration with the broadest possible range of international partners for mutual benefit.

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Executive Summary and Key Findings

This report by the UK Higher Education International Unit's Go International programme compares the academic attainment and employment outcomes of mobile and non-mobile first degree undergraduate students who completed their studies at the end of the 2013/14 academic year[1]. It provides the second annual national outline of who goes abroad, and considers what currently available data can tell us about the outcomes of international experience as part of a UK undergraduate programme. The findings in this report also aim to inform discussions within the sector about increasing participation of underrepresented groups in outward mobility opportunities, by identifying specific outcomes for these groups.

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

- the Student Record, which contains details of the profiles of students registered at higher education providers across the UK, and

- the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which asks graduates what they are doing six months after completing their degree.

A total of 13,355 UK-domiciled graduates[2] responding to the 2013/14 Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey had at least one period abroad as part of their undergraduate first degree.[3] The DLHE captures some but not all instances of mobility. For example, the total number of mobile students reported to HESA in 2013/14 numbered 22,100. This report specifically examines DLHE respondents as its sample.

This report outlines:

1. The profiles of UK-domiciled first degree undergraduate students who graduated in 2013/14 and responded to the DLHE, who spent time abroad during their degree programme studying, working or volunteering, and where they went.

2. The academic attainment, salary and employment outcomes of these students when compared with their non-mobile peers six months after graduation.

In comparing mobile and non-mobile students' outcomes, data from this sample of the 2013/14 graduating cohort of UK undergraduates shows that, six months after graduating:

- Unemployment rates among mobile students were lower than those for non-mobile students across almost all socioeconomic backgrounds. 5% of mobile graduates were unemployed or due to start work six months after graduation compared to 7% of their non-mobile peers.[4]

- A significantly lower proportion of graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile were unemployed (5.0%) compared with those from the same backgrounds who were not mobile (6.2%).

- Although they were less likely to be mobile, a period abroad is correlated with a greater improvement in employment outcomes for black and Asian students compared to white students. 9.9% of non-mobile black graduates were unemployed, compared to 5.4% of black mobile graduates. 9.5% of Asian non-mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 4.4% of Asian mobile students.

- Mobile students were more likely to be engaged in further study, or in work and further study.

- The average salary of a mobile student six months after graduation was £21,349 (compared to £20,519 for a non-mobile student).

- Mobile students from almost all socio-economic backgrounds reported higher average salaries than their non-mobile equivalents. Graduates from a background in routine occupations who had been mobile earned, on average, £1,364 per year more than their non-mobile peers.

- In terms of academic outcomes, a higher proportion of mobile students achieved a First Class (1st) or Upper Second Class (2.i) in their degree (81%) compared with non-mobile students (72%).

Looking at specific groups of graduates who completed their studies in 2013/14:

- 38% of mobile students had studied languages.

- Clinical medicine was the second most common discipline for mobile students, with most mobility periods lasting 8 weeks or less.

- More mobile students work in education and professional, scientific and technical activities than their non-mobile peers.

- Employed graduates who had been mobile during their study are more likely (74.8%) than their non-mobile peers (67.1%) to gain employment within one of the top three socioeconomic classifications.

- Overall, more mobile students were female than male. However, if language students are excluded, mobility participation rates are equal - 3.6%.

The present report echoes the first edition of Gone International, which analysed the 2012/13 graduating cohort, in many of its findings, in particular the improved employment outcomes for students who had been mobile compared to their non-mobile peers. As with the 2015 report, the present report outlines what mobile students' outcomes were, but it does not seek to imply or demonstrate causation between outward mobility and students' outcomes.

Methodology

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

1. the Student Record, which contains details of the profiles of students registered at higher education providers across the UK, and

2. the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which asks graduates what they are doing six months after completing their degree.

From the 2013/14 DLHE data, we can identify which activities graduates were engaged in six months after graduation, (e.g. full-time employment, further study), as well as certain aspects of their profile such as gender, ethnic and socioeconomic background. By linking these graduates back to the Student Record to determine whether they undertook a period of mobility in any of 2011/12, 2012/13 or 2013/14, we can identify the characteristics of mobile students, and compare the outcomes for those who were mobile during their degree against those who were not.

In total, there were 245,620 UK-domiciled first degree completers included in this analysis, of which 13,355 were identified as being mobile at some point during their course. Instances of mobility are identifiable by fields within the Student Record stating that they took part in an exchange programme or a work or study placement, as well as the country to which the student travelled.

In 2013/14, the fields of HESA data capturing instances of mobility were enhanced, and the student record for the last year of focus in this report captured more data on mobility than would have been the case in previous years. This includes: periods of mobility of less than four weeks; the mobility scheme with which a period abroad was associated, and mobility type (i.e. whether the student was studying, working or volunteering overseas).

Whilst this change in 2013/14 enriches the information available on UK student mobility, it also means that any comparison between the results detailed in this report and those from the 2015 publication should be treated with caution.

A note on students from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds

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

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

- 'lower supervisory and technical occupations'
- 'semi-routine occupations'
- 'routine occupations'
- 'never worked/long-term unemployed'

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

- 'higher managerial and professional occupations'
- 'lower managerial and professional occupations'
- 'intermediate occupations'
- 'small employers and own account workers'

Limitations to this research

The following additional limitations to this research should be noted:

3. Not all graduates respond to the DLHE survey. This means that there are some disparities in the sample sizes by discipline.

4. The DLHE data only provides details of the activities graduates are engaged in six months after completing their course.

5. This report only refers to UK-domiciled graduates who completed their undergraduate first degrees in 2013/14 and does not include graduates of other levels of study.

6. There might be some instances of mobility not captured by higher education institutions within the Student Record. Therefore, the results produced here, whilst fairly comprehensive, are based on incomplete populations.

7. Some of the findings are based on the number of instances of mobility rather than the number of students. This means that students who spent time in more than one country during their studies are counted more than once in some parts of this report.

8. The data analysed in this report represents one graduating cohort. It therefore does not seek to identify trends over time.

9. The HESA dataset did not allow us to disaggregate outcomes by type or by period of mobility. The report therefore cannot draw conclusions about the relationship between the length of time spent abroad or by the type of placement (for example, work or study) and graduates' outcomes. This is because changes to the student record to include such information only commenced in 2013/14, and the focus of this report covers the period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

10. The minimum period of mobility captured by HESA up to and including 2012/13 was four weeks, but from 2013/14 this changed to one week.

11. There are other factors which could influence graduate outcomes which are not possible to capture from the Student Record or the DLHE survey, including the academic selectivity of some mobility opportunities.

12. We have performed statistical significance studies where possible and have indicated where differences were or were not statistically significant in the datasets.

This report is a snapshot of the profiles of students who went abroad who graduated in 2013/14, where they went, and what their outcomes were. It does not seek to identify causal links between students going abroad and particular outcomes, but identifies noteworthy outcomes that provide a useful evidence base to be viewed alongside the outcomes for mobile students from other graduating cohorts. It will enable the Go International programme to identify patterns to create a more complete picture of which students go abroad and which groups are underrepresented, and the relationships between mobility and outcomes for different kinds of students.

Introduction

As outward mobility continues to feature in the internationalisation strategies of UK higher education institutions, research into its impact becomes increasingly important.

At the same time, more information is available on outward mobility in UK higher education. Since 2013/14, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has captured more data on mobility, with institutions able to report mobilities from a minimum of one week. This gives the UK higher education sector a more accurate picture of overall outward mobility, enabling institutions to include data on the diverse range of mobility opportunities they offer in the annual return to HESA. The number of UK-domiciled students taking part in mobility programmes in 2013/14 was 22,100, 1.2% of students in this academic year[5].

With a referendum on Europe looming, mobility across Europe is noteworthy. The number of students from UK higher education institutions participating in the Erasmus programme has steadily risen from 10,278 in 2007/8 to 15,566 students in 2013/14, and the range of countries that students and staff can access via the Erasmus+ programme continues to expand. With the introduction of new mobility opportunities, it is important to track participation by UK higher education students, report on emerging trends and ensure that the increase in participation in mobility programmes is maintained.

International experience continues to be important for the individual's employability, intercultural awareness and language skills but its economic and political benefits should not be dismissed, as it reinforces global networks for UK higher education and industry. It is therefore essential that the UK higher education sector continues to be ambitious and increase the number of students it sends abroad each year.

Following the publication of the first iteration of Gone International in February 2015, it has become apparent that research into mobile student outcomes is crucial to the sector in its efforts to increase outward mobility activity, and to widen participation in international opportunities. As the way in which HESA collects data on mobility has changed, this report does not attempt to make a direct comparison with the analysis of the 2012/13 graduating cohort. As with the previous analysis, this report outlines differences in academic attainment and employment outcomes by students who graduated in 2013/14 and went abroad (mobile) and students who did not (non-mobile). But this analysis highlights specific outcomes for students from underrepresented groups in mobility, which are particularly interesting given the sector's interest in promoting social mobility in higher education.

Who goes abroad?

How many students spend a period abroad?

A total of 13,355 graduates responding to the 2013/14 DLHE survey[6] were reported to have had at least one period abroad as part of their undergraduate first degree. This represents 5.4% of all respondents to the survey. This is a larger sample size than that considered for the 2015 publication (10,520 students), and a higher participation rate (up from 4.5%). However, it is worth noting that changes in the reporting of mobility to HESA in 2013/14 mean such comparisons are not like-for-like.

What do mobile students study?

38% of mobile students identified through the DLHE had studied languages. Overall, the most common course of study among mobile students was French, accounting for 10.7% of the total mobile cohort. Subject areas outside of languages with the highest numbers of mobile students were: clinical medicine, business studies, politics, law and history by period.

Top 10 subjects by mobile student numbers

| Subject of study	Students with a period of mobility	% of total
French studies	1,250	9.4%
Clinical medicine	870	6.5%
Spanish studies	865	6.5%
Business studies	730	5.5%
English studies	540	4.0%
German studies	460	3.4%
Politics	440	3.3%
Others in European languages, literature & related subjects	425	3.2%
Law by area	400	3.0%
History by period	375	2.8%

The number of clinical medicine students who spent a period abroad was higher than for any other subject after French studies. However, clinical medicine students did not feature so highly in the 2015 Gone International cohort. To some extent, this is likely due to the changes in HESA reporting in 2013/14, already detailed in the methodology section. The HESA student record for 2013/14 shows that the vast majority of medicine and dentistry students' mobility periods lasted for 8 weeks or less, and many of these periods abroad would not have been reported to HESA in previous years.

Gender

More female graduates in this cohort had a period of mobility during their studies than male graduates. Of all female respondents to the DLHE survey, 5.9% reported a period of mobility compared to 4.9% of all male respondents.

However, within languages – where almost 40% of mobility occurred – the ratio of female to male students within the DLHE cohort was around 2.4:1. If language students are excluded, mobility participation rates are actually the same – 3.6% of female graduates and 3.6% of male graduates.

Participation rates by gender, excluding language students

Female
3.6%

MOBILE 4,595   NON-MOBILE 123,235

Male
3.6%

MOBILE 3,700   NON-MOBILE 97,980
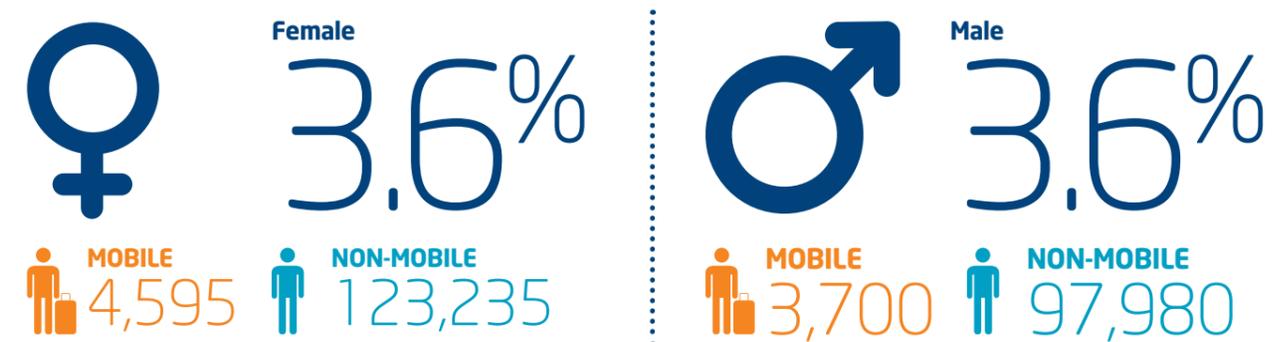
Where are they from in the UK?

The proportions of DLHE respondents reporting a period of mobility show a similar pattern to the previous year, when considering participation by UK nation.

Students from Scotland had the highest participation rate in mobility programmes (7.6% had at least one period of mobility), closely followed by Northern Ireland (7.2%). Participation among students from England and Wales was lower, with 5.2% participation in England and 4.6% in Wales.

7.6%

7.2%

4.6%

5.2%
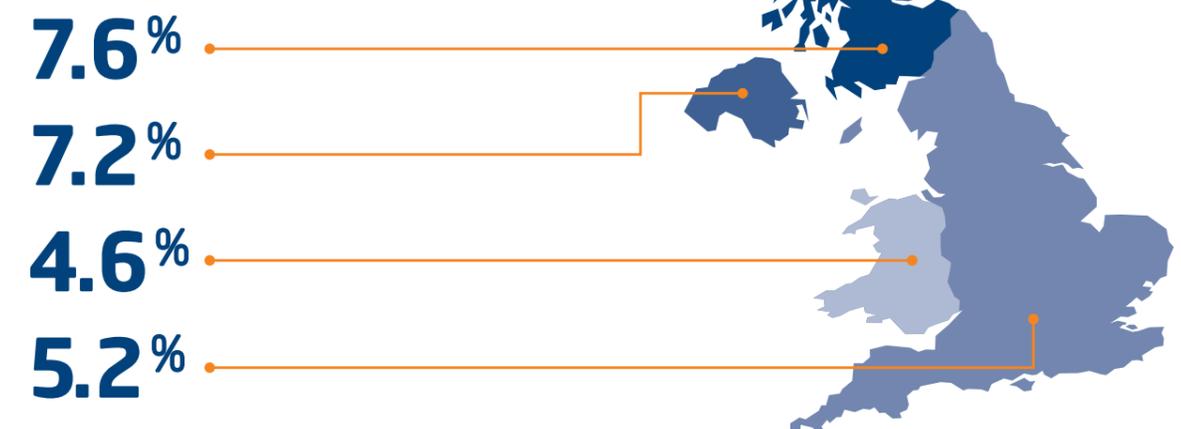
Widening participation

Analysis of the graduating cohort shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds and from minority ethnic groups were less likely to go abroad as part of their degree than those from more advantaged backgrounds. This is consistent with the findings from a similar analysis of the 2012/13 graduating cohort.

Mobile students from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Almost 20% of all those responding to the DLHE were from a higher managerial and professional occupation background. Of these respondents, around one in twelve (7.9%) reported a period of mobility. In comparison, just over 10% were from a 'semi-routine occupations' background and, of these respondents, around one in thirty (3.4%) had a period of mobility. The lowest level of mobility participation was identified among those students from a background of never having worked or long-term unemployment. Just 1.6% – around one in 62 – of these respondents had a period of mobility. At an aggregated level, the participation rate among students from more disadvantaged backgrounds was 3.5%.

Mobility participation rates

DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

3.5%

ADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

16.4%

STUDENTS FROM HIGHER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATION BACKGROUNDS WERE ALMOST

x5 MORE LIKELY TO BE MOBILE

THAN STUDENTS FROM NEVER WORKED AND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED BACKGROUNDS.

Language students

In 2013/14, there were 81,890 UK-domiciled first degree students enrolled onto language courses. In terms of student profile, language courses overall have a higher than average proportion of female students; below average proportion of BME students, and higher proportions of students from more advantaged backgrounds in terms of socioeconomic status.

As these distinct language student profiles may mask other mobile student characteristics, separate analysis within this report will focus only on the non-language student cohort.

Student profile	Languages	All subjects
% female	71%	56%
% BME	12%	21%
Higher socioeconomic status	54%	46%
Quintile 1[7]	9%	11%

Participation rates by socio-economic classification

Socio-economic classification	Mobile	Not mobile	Total	Participation rate
Higher managerial & professional occupations	3,830	44,815	48,640	7.9%
Lower managerial & professional occupations	3,645	54,850	58,495	6.2%
Intermediate occupations	1,425	24,750	26,175	5.4%
Small employers & own account workers	620	13,760	14,380	4.3%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	390	8,970	9,355	4.1%
Semi-routine occupations	875	24,695	25,565	3.4%
Routine occupations	375	11,250	11,625	3.2%
Never worked & long-term unemployed	5	430	435	1.6%
Not classified	2,025	43,470	45,495	4.5%
Unknown	170	5,280	5,445	3.1%
Total	13,355	232,265	245,620	5.4%

Participation by ethnicity and gender

Looking at students by ethnicity, within the DLHE sample, white students were more likely to have had a period abroad as part of their study than black and Asian students. 5.8% of white students were mobile, compared to 2.9% of black students and 3.3% of Asian students. Students with other ethnicities (including mixed ethnicity) were most likely to have had a period abroad. 6.5% of these students were mobile.

Disaggregating further by gender shows that black male students were the least likely to have a period abroad, with a participation rate of 2.2%. In this cohort, white female students were almost three times as likely to have had a period of mobility compared to black male students.

Participation rates by ethnicity and gender

Ethnicity	Gender	Mobile	Not mobile	Total	Participation rate	
White	Female	7,005	105,125	112,130	6.2%	5.8%
	Male	4,380	80,805	85,180	5.1%	
Asian	Female	435	12,440	12,875	3.4%	3.3%
	Male	355	10,775	11,130	3.2%	
Black	Female	250	7,240	7,495	3.3%	2.9%
	Male	100	4,475	4,575	2.2%	
Other (including mixed)	Female	395	5,535	5,935	6.7%	6.5%
	Male	285	4,195	4,475	6.3%	

However, given the comparatively high representation of female students within languages, the analysis below shows participation rates of non-language students, by ethnicity and gender.

Participation rates among non-language students by ethnicity and gender

Ethnicity	Gender	Mobile	Not mobile	Total	Participation rate
White	Female	3,815	98,220	102,035	3.7%
	Male	3,050	77,960	81,015	3.8%
Asian	Female	335	12,010	12,345	2.7%
	Male	315	10,690	11,005	2.8%
Black	Female	185	7,065	7,250	2.6%
	Male	75	4,445	4,520	1.7%
Other (including mixed)	Female	225	5,215	5,440	4.1%
	Male	205	4,065	4,265	4.8%

The analysis shows that, among white and Asian students, mobility participation rates are similar among male and female non-language students. However, this is not the case for black students. Black female graduates from non-language courses were more likely than black male students to be mobile – 2.6% and 1.7% respectively.

Participation by ethnicity and socio-economic background

Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds of any ethnicity were more likely to have a period abroad than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Students with other (including mixed) ethnicity from higher managerial and professional occupation backgrounds showed the highest participation rate – 8.8% of all DLHE respondents in this category were mobile, as were 8.0% of all white students from the same backgrounds.

Students with white and other (including mixed) ethnicities were more likely than Asian and black students to be mobile within every socio-economic group. For example, white students from semi-routine occupation backgrounds were 1.5 times more likely than Asian and over two times more likely than black students from the same socio-economic background to be mobile.

Not one black student from a background of having 'never worked' or of 'long-term unemployment' reported a period of mobility, though this is based on a relatively small sample size of 53.

Participation rate by ethnicity and socio-economic classification

Socio-economic classification	Participation rate			
	White	Asian	Black	Other
Higher managerial & professional occupations	8.0%	6.1%	5.4%	8.8%
Lower managerial & professional occupations	6.5%	4.0%	3.6%	7.8%
Intermediate occupations	5.7%	3.6%	3.2%	5.8%
Small employers & own account workers	4.7%	2.1%	3.4%	6.8%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	4.1%	3.5%	1.6%	7.2%
Semi-routine occupations	3.7%	2.4%	1.7%	4.6%
Routine occupations	3.5%	1.7%	3.0%	3.4%
Never worked & long-term unemployed	2.0%	1.2%	0.0%	2.6%
Not classified	4.9%	2.7%	2.6%	4.9%
Unknown	3.0%	3.5%	0.3%	8.8%

Subjects

Undertaking a period of outward mobility is more common in some subjects and subject groups than others. This section examines the proportion of students from different subjects and subject groups who reported a period of mobility.[8]

Language courses

31.4% of all graduates from language subjects spent a period of their study abroad, although participation did vary between subjects. Over 90% of all respondents from French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Scandinavian, Japanese and Australasian studies reported having a period abroad as part of their study. The proportion of students with a period abroad is also high for many other modern foreign language courses, including Russian and East European studies (88%), Chinese studies (75%) and modern Middle Eastern studies (59%).

Non-language courses

After languages, the subject group with the largest proportion of mobile students was medicine and dentistry. 16.6% of all medicine and dentistry graduates responding to the DLHE had a period abroad. Medicine and dentistry was followed by law, of which 6.4% were mobile, and then by physical sciences, of which 6.0% were mobile.

In this sample, the subject group with the smallest proportion of mobile students is veterinary science. Of 573 veterinary graduates responding to the DLHE, not one reported a period of mobility. Other subject groups with low proportions of students reporting a period abroad are agriculture and related subjects (just 0.6% of all respondents); subjects allied to medicine (1.2%); education (1.3%); computer science (1.3%), and biological sciences (1.5%).

Participation rates by subject group
(this table excludes languages)

Subject group	Mobile	Total	% mobile
Medicine & dentistry	1,205	7,280	16.6%
Law	600	9,340	6.4%
Physical sciences	730	12,140	6.0%
Historical and philosophical studies	640	12,375	5.2%
Business & administrative studies	1,270	27,485	4.6%
Social studies	1,090	25,115	4.3%
Architecture, building & planning	180	4,795	3.8%
Engineering & technology	435	12,190	3.6%
Mathematical sciences	145	5,295	2.7%
Creative arts & design	765	29,005	2.6%
Mass communications & documentation	165	7,555	2.2%
Biological sciences	415	28,380	1.5%
Computer science	120	9,305	1.3%
Education	150	12,065	1.3%
Subjects allied to medicine	285	24,005	1.2%
Agriculture & related subjects	10	2,035	0.6%
Veterinary science	0	575	0.0%

Participation also varies strongly between specific subjects. Excluding language subjects, the subject with the highest proportion of mobile students is development studies, although this is based on a small sample of 64 students. This was followed by: history by area, in which almost 21.8% of students were mobile, and pre-clinical medicine, where 19.4% were mobile.

The top 10 subjects with the highest mobility rates, excluding languages
(excluding subjects with fewer than 20 mobile students)

Subject of study	Mobile	Total	% mobile
History by area	50	230	21.8%
Pre-clinical medicine	290	1,485	19.4%
Clinical medicine	870	4,785	18.1%
Geology	150	1,270	11.7%
Planning (urban, rural & regional)	65	625	10.5%
Politics	440	4,535	9.7%
Law by area	400	4,430	9.1%
Chemistry	220	2,910	7.6%
Business studies	730	9,660	7.6%
Human and social geography	160	2,345	6.9%

In a number of subjects, no students – or only a small proportion of students – were mobile. Of 582 respondents to the DLHE who studied aural and oral sciences, none reported a period of mobility. Similarly, of 11,469 nursing students, just 59 were mobile (0.5%).

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects

The DLHE sample shows an underrepresentation of STEM graduates within the mobile cohort. Although approximately 44% of UK students study for STEM degrees, only 26.4% of mobile students studied a STEM subject. The participation rate among STEM students was 3.3%, though there is substantial variation between subjects.

Within STEM subject groups, graduates of computer science, biological sciences, subjects allied to medicine, agriculture and related subjects, and veterinary science were among the least likely to have a period abroad.

Top 10 STEM subjects with the greatest proportion of mobile students
(excluding subjects with fewer than 20 mobile students)

Subject of study	Mobile	Total	% mobile
Pre-clinical medicine	290	1,485	19.4%
Clinical medicine	870	4,785	18.1%
Geology	150	1,270	11.7%
Planning (urban, rural & regional)	65	625	10.5%
Chemistry	220	2,910	7.6%
Science of aquatic & terrestrial environments	65	945	7.1%
Civil Engineering	130	2,265	5.8%
Chemical, process & energy engineering	50	925	5.6%
Physical geographical sciences	160	2,900	5.4%
Clinical dentistry	50	895	5.4%

The top 10 STEM subjects with the smallest proportion of mobile students
(Includes only subjects studied by at least 500 DLHE respondents.)

Subject of study	Mobile	Total	% mobile
Aural & oral sciences	0	580	0.0%
Agriculture	0	865	0.2%
Building	5	1,685	0.3%
Animal science	5	770	0.4%
Ophthalmics	5	600	0.5%
Nursing	60	11,470	0.5%
Sport & exercise science	70	8,365	0.8%
Nutrition	5	825	0.8%
Others in subjects allied to medicine	40	3,420	1.1%
Psychology	130	10,525	1.2%

Where do they go?

The mobile students who responded to the DLHE are engaging in opportunities around the world. Approximately 64% of all student mobility identified through the DLHE took place within Europe[9]. The most popular destination in the world was France, accounting for 20.8% of all student mobility, followed by Spain (15.3%).

Looking further afield, the United States (10.5%) was the most popular non-European destination and the third most popular destination overall. The next most popular non-European destinations were Australia and Canada.

The most popular non-EU, non-English speaking destinations were: Russia, China and Malaysia. 1.7% of all student mobility took place in Russia, 1.7% in China and 1.4% in Malaysia.

Top 10 destination countries by instances of mobility:

Country	Mobilities	% of total
France	2,845	20.8%
Spain	2,085	15.3%
United States	1,435	10.5%
Germany	1,150	8.4%
Italy	610	4.5%
Australia	560	4.1%
Canada	410	3.0%
Netherlands	320	2.4%
Russia	240	1.7%
China	235	1.7%

Overall, 61% of student mobility reported within this cohort took place within other EU countries, and 39% to non-EU countries.

Mobility by region of destination

61% EU

4% Other Europe

9% Asia

15% North America

2% South America

3% Africa

1% Middle East

6% Australasia
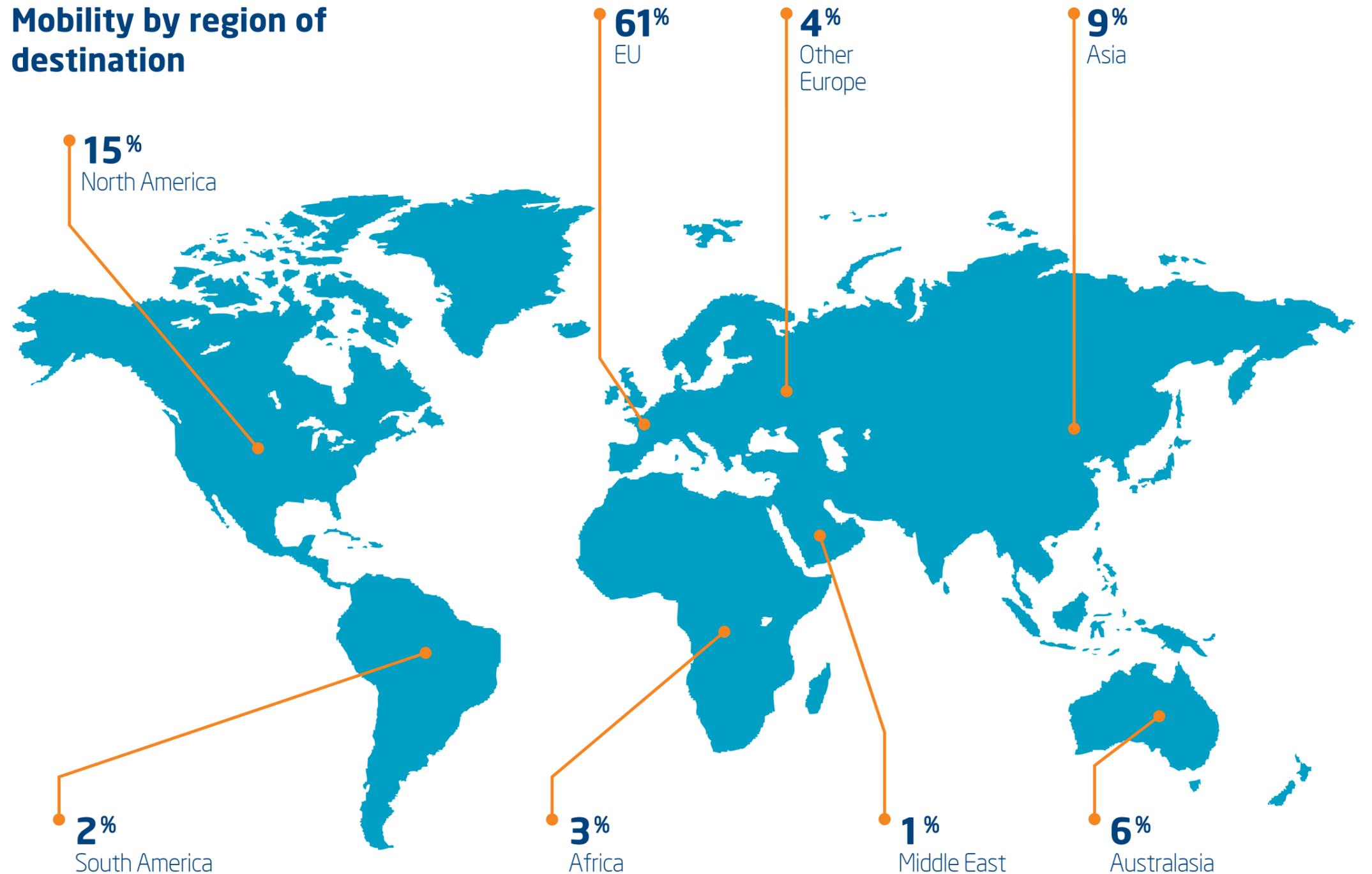
What do they do next?

The DLHE offers valuable insight into what graduates are doing six months after completing their undergraduate degree.

While the majority of graduates are either in work or engaged in further study within six months, this section compares the outcomes of mobile and non-mobile DLHE respondents, and in particular also examines the outcomes of disadvantaged students and black and Asian students who had a period abroad.

Employment and further study

Comparisons between respondents with and without a period of mobility suggest that graduates who were mobile are less likely than their non-mobile peers to be unemployed – 6.6% of graduates without a period of mobility were unemployed or about to start work six months after graduation, compared to 5.4% of mobile graduates.

How well did they do in their studies?

A higher proportion of mobile students who graduated in 2013/14 achieved a first or an upper second class degree. 81% of mobile students graduated with a first or an upper second class degree, compared to 72% of non-mobile students.
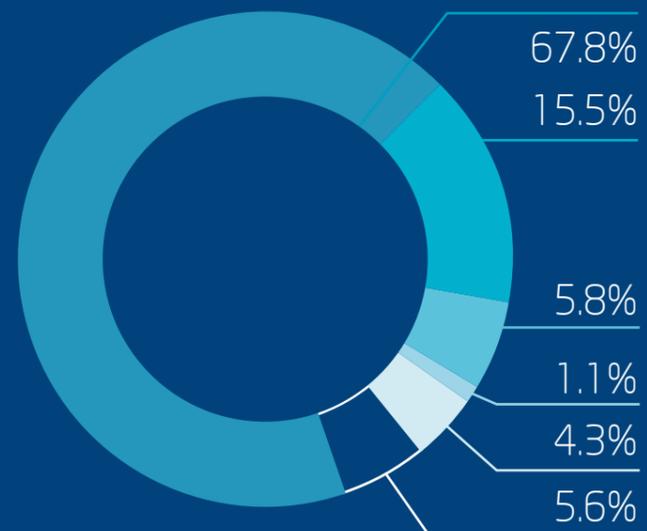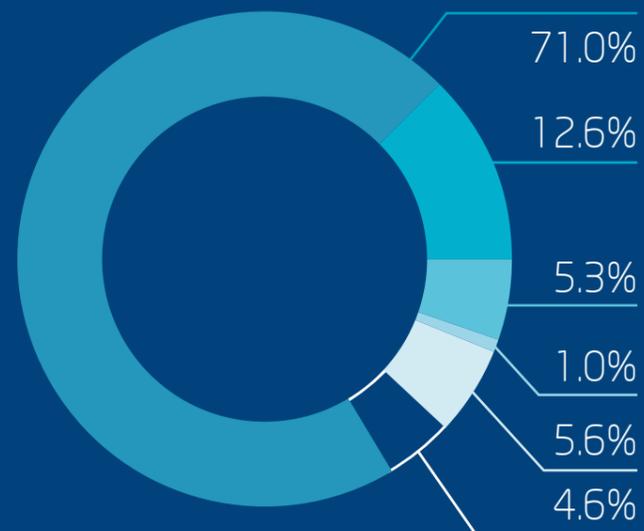
Mobile students responding to the DLHE were also more likely than their non-mobile peers to be engaged in further study, or in work and further study. 21.3% of mobile students were in further study (or work and further study), compared to 17.9% of non-mobile students.

On average, working mobile students in this sample also had higher starting salaries than their non-mobile peers. The average salary of a mobile student six months after graduation was £21,349 compared to an average salary of £20,519 for a non-mobile student. The average starting salary of mobile students working in the UK specifically is £21,833, compared to an average salary of £20,544 for their non-mobile peers working in the UK.

Looking more widely at all DLHE responses in 2013/14 (and not just the mobile cohort):

■ the unemployment rate of full-time first degree leavers was 7%, and

■ the average salary of those in full-time employment was £21,000

However, the DLHE shows that a greater proportion of mobile students gained a first or upper second degree compared to non-mobile students. As degree outcomes are correlated with employment outcomes and salaries, it is interesting to see whether the trends identified still hold once degree classification is controlled for within the cohort analysed for this report.

Employment outcomes for graduates who achieved a first or upper-second class degree

The employment outcomes of mobile and non-mobile DLHE respondents who achieved a first or upper-second class degree were analysed. The analysis shows that even when degree outcomes are controlled for, a smaller proportion of mobile students are unemployed (4.4%) compared to their non-mobile peers (4.8%). A greater proportion of mobile students are also still in study or work and study (24.2% of mobile students and 20.6% of non-mobile students). The difference in the unemployment rate between mobile and non-mobile students is, however, less pronounced than when not controlling for degree classification.

Students with a period of mobility

67.8%
15.5%
5.8%
1.1%
4.3%
5.6%

Students without a period of mobility

71.0%
12.6%
5.3%
1.0%
5.6%
4.6%

■ Work only   ■ Study only   ■ Work and study
■ Due to start work   ■ Unemployed   □ Other

Outcomes for those who achieved a first or upper-second class degree

Students with a period of mobility
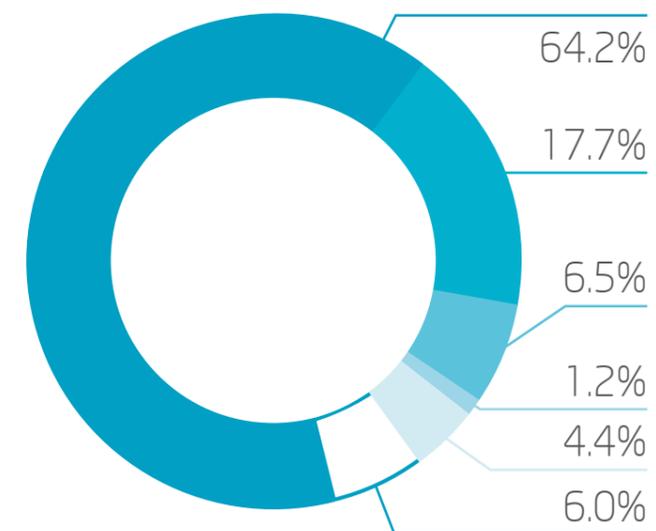
64.2%
17.7%
6.5%
1.2%
4.4%
6.0%

Students without a period of mobility

69.0%
14.7%
5.9%
1.0%
4.8%
4.6%
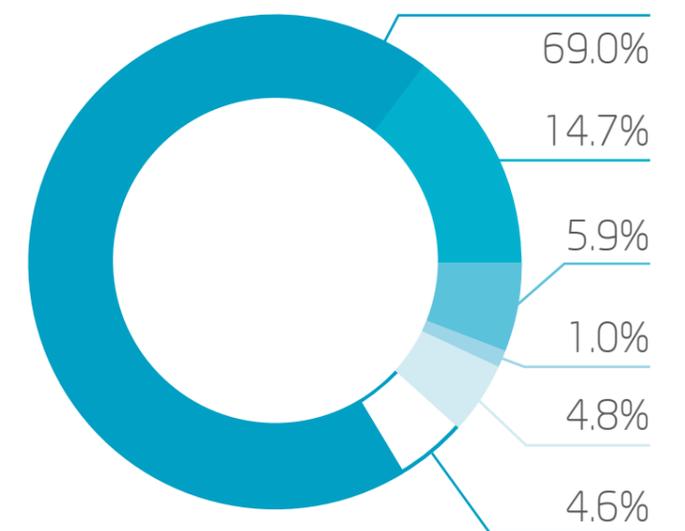
■ Work only   ■ Study only   ■ Work and study
■ Due to start work   ■ Unemployed   □ Other

The difference between the average salary earned by mobile students who achieve a first or upper-second class degree compared to their non-mobile equivalents is just £85. While this is a small difference, it would be interesting to examine whether it might increase after a longer period of time in employment.

Average salaries of those who achieved a first or upper-second class degree

MOBILE £20,554

NON-MOBILE £20,469

Employment outcomes of graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Unemployment rates among mobile students were lower than those for non-mobile students from almost all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Unemployment rates for mobile and non-mobile students by socio-economic classification

Socioeconomic classification	% unemployed- graduates with a period of mobility	% unemployed- graduates without a period of mobility
Higher managerial & professional occupations	3.5%	4.4%
Lower managerial & professional occupations	4.1%	4.8%
Intermediate occupations	4.1%	5.4%
Small employers & own account workers	5.8%	6.1%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	4.6%	5.4%
Semi-routine occupations	4.0%	6.2%
Routine occupations	7.4%	6.7%

At an aggregated level, mobile students from more disadvantaged backgrounds had a lower unemployment rate than among those who had not been mobile.

When restricting analysis only to those who were awarded a first or upper-second class degree, mobile students from most socio-economic backgrounds show very similar unemployment rates to their non-mobile equivalents.

Unemployment rates for mobile and non-mobile students by socio-economic classification – among those with first or upper-second class degrees

	% unemployed- graduates with a period of mobility	% unemployed- graduates without a period of mobility
Higher Managerial & professional occupations	3.9%	4.0%
Lower Managerial & professional occupations	4.0%	4.3%
Intermediate occupations	4.2%	4.7%
Small employers & own account workers	5.3%	5.5%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	4.4%	4.8%
Semi-routine occupations	3.8%[10]	5.4%
Routine occupations	7.7%	5.8%
Never worked & long-term unemployed	--	11.0%

Mobile students from almost all socio-economic backgrounds reported higher average salaries than the average salaries of their non-mobile equivalents. Graduates from a background in routine occupations who had a period of mobility earned, on average, £1,364 per year more than their non-mobile equivalents and were less likely to be unemployed six months after graduation even when degree attainment is controlled for.

Unemployment rates for disadvantaged students
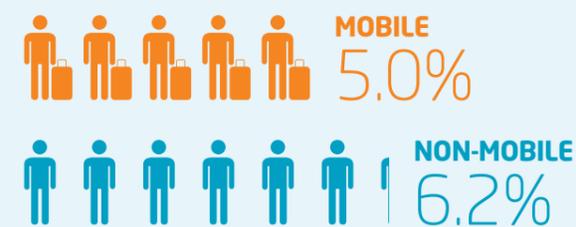
MOBILE 5.0%

NON-MOBILE 6.2%

A significantly lower proportion of graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile were unemployed compared with those from the same backgrounds who were not mobile.

Unemployment rates for disadvantaged students with 1st Class degrees

MOBILE 3.1%
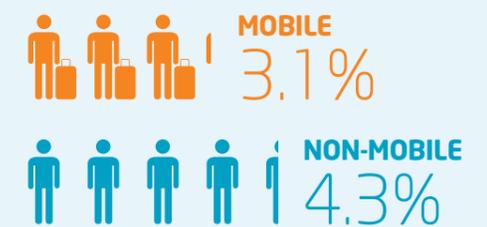
NON-MOBILE 4.3%

When considering disadvantaged students who received 1st Class degrees, 3.1% of mobile students and 4.3% of non-mobile students were unemployed.[11]

Employment outcomes of students of different ethnicities

Mobile students of all ethnicities are less likely to be unemployed than their non-mobile equivalents. Although they were less likely to be mobile, a period abroad is correlated with a greater improvement in employment outcomes for black and Asian students compared to white students. 9.9% of non-mobile black graduates were unemployed, compared to 5.4% of black mobile graduates. 9.5% of Asian non-mobile graduates were unemployed, compared to 4.4% of Asian mobile students.

Controlling for those with firsts and 2.1s, the unemployment rates for mobile black and Asian graduates were still lower than for their non-mobile counterparts.

	% unemployed	% unemployed among those with firsts / 2.1s
Black graduates without a period abroad	9.9%	8.3%
Black graduates with a period abroad	5.4%	6.7%
Asian graduates without a period abroad	9.5%	8.4%
Asian graduates with a period abroad	4.4%	5.5%
White graduates without a period abroad	4.7%	4.1%
White graduates with a period abroad	4.1%	4.2%
Other graduates without a period abroad	7.4%	6.4%
Other graduates with a period abroad	5.7%	5.8%

Employment outcomes by subject area

Unemployment rates are lower for mobile students than non-mobile students across a range of subject areas. For example, 8% of non-mobile mathematical sciences students were unemployed 6 months after graduation, compared to 3% of mobile students.

Employment outcomes by subject area[12]

Subject area	% unemployed mobile	% unemployed non-mobile
Medicine & dentistry	0.1%	0.1%
Subjects allied to medicine	3.1%	3.0%
Biological sciences	7.4%	6.3%
Physical sciences	6.0%	7.8%
Mathematical sciences	3.1%	8.0%
Computer science	9.8%	11.4%
Engineering & technology	5.3%	7.8%
Architecture, building and planning	3.3%	5.9%
Social studies	5.4%	7.3%
Law	3.1%	5.5%
Business & administrative studies	6.8%	7.8%
Mass communications & documentation	4.2%	9.2%
Languages	6.3%	6.8%
Historical & philosophical studies	4.8%	6.9%
Creative arts & design	7.2%	7.5%
Education	2.7%	2.9%

The sectors in which students work

Graduates go on to work in a range of sectors. There are some differences between the sectors that mobile and non-mobile students are likely to work in. Mobile students are more likely to work in education and professional, scientific and technical activities than their non-mobile peers. Conversely, a smaller proportion of mobile students work in wholesale and retail trade than non-mobile students.

Top 10 sectors where mobile students work

Sector	Mobile students	Non-mobile students
Human health and social work activities	18.0%	18.3%
Education	15.0%	12.4%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	13.5%	11.2%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	11.0%	15.0%
Information and communication	6.4%	6.4%
Administrative and support service activities	6.2%	4.9%
Accommodation and food service activities	5.8%	6.2%
Financial and insurance activities	4.9%	4.5%
Manufacturing	4.7%	4.7%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3.6%	4.7%

Social economic classification of graduates working

Working graduates who had a period abroad during their study are more likely than their non-mobile peers to enter employment within one of the top three socioeconomic classifications: as managers and senior officials, in professional occupations, or in associate professional and technical occupations (74.8% of mobile students, compared to 67.1% of non-mobile students).

Where students work

A greater proportion of mobile students work outside the UK compared to non-mobile students. Of all working mobile students, 4% work in other EU countries and 3% work in non-EU countries. This compares to, among non-mobile students, 1% working in other EU countries and 1% working in non-EU countries.

Conclusion

Gone International 2016 looks at the profile and outcomes of the 2013/14 graduating students who responded to the DLHE and undertook a period of mobility abroad, providing a similar and complementary analysis to Gone International 2015, which analyses an equivalent cohort from 2012/13.

The current report echoes the 2015 report in its research objectives, its methodology and in many of its findings. However, there are also important differences between the two reports, which make any direct comparisons difficult. Firstly, the populations they analyse are incomplete, derived from graduates who chose to respond to the DLHE surveys in consecutive years, rather than from complete cohorts, on which outcomes data simply does not exist. Secondly, improved data collection in the 2013/14 Student Record means that one of the years this report covers has more reliable mobility data than its previous years, and than the 2015 report.[13] For these and other reasons, listed in the methodology section, this report does not seek to compare findings between the two cohorts, or begin to identify trends over time. However, with the benefit of more reliable data, and the analysis of further cohorts, these comparisons may become possible in future versions of the report.

There are other intentional differences in this year's report, including a focus on widening participation, BME, and non-language students, as well as an effort to control employment, and other outcomes, for academic attainment. These additions were made in response to interest in these aspects of the 2015 report from institutions. They were made possible due to the larger population of this report and its increased percentage of mobile students, allowing further disaggregation of data and control of variables, while maintaining large enough sample sizes to prove statistical significance where possible.

Standing apart from Gone International 2012/13, this report has a number of important findings for institutions interested in understanding the mobility profiles and outcomes of the 2013/14 graduating cohort. Some findings are unsurprising, and mirror the previous report. Language students, for instance, who so often have mobility built into their course, enjoy by far the highest mobility rate. Europe is the top destination, thanks to the popularity of the Erasmus+ mobility programme. The breakdown of mobility across the UK sees students from Scotland, with its more generous four-year degree structure, more likely to spend time abroad than those from England and Wales. Taken together, the most common profiles and outcomes would tend to depict an average mobile student as a white woman from an advantaged background studying French at a Scottish institution, spending time abroad in France, graduating with a first, or upper second class degree and in work six months after completing her degree.

However, language students have their own particular profile bias that can mask all other mobile students in the population. When the report controls for this profile – a higher proportion of women, a lower than average proportion of BME students, and a higher proportion of students from advantaged backgrounds – gender participation rates are broadly similar, and remain so across ethnicities, except for black male students, who are still less likely than women to be mobile, and 'other', including mixed, ethnicities, where mobile men are more likely to be mobile than women. With linguists taken out of the equation, our average mobile student could as easily turn into a male medic, although he is still more likely to come from an advantaged background.

Delving more deeply into the results, and the wealth of detail available in this year's report, yields some more unexpected findings. For example, while French studies is still the subject area where students were most mobile, clinical medicine, absent from the 2015 report, now sits in second place, with more mobile students than Spanish or Business studies. This is likely due to the new and improved data from 2013/14, the last year of study for this cohort, which counts mobility placements as short as two weeks in length. As clinical electives abroad are traditionally eight weeks in length and taken in the final year of study, the new data will capture many more electives than the 2012/13 data would have in the 2015 report. More detailed reporting in this year's report on mobility by subject shows that over 90% of students surveyed from a number of language studies were mobile, including French, German, Spanish and Portuguese as the usual suspects, but also Scandinavian, Japanese and Australasian studies. Alongside the subjects with the most mobility, there is also analysis of those with the least, where barriers to mobility may be particularly strong. These include subject areas like veterinary science and aural and oral science, where there was not a single instance of mobility, and nursing, where only 0.5% of the large student body was mobile. STEM graduates continue to be underrepresented in the mobile group, although again, more detailed analysis shows significant variation between subjects: the more mobile medics versus the less mobile computer, veterinary or biological scientists, or students of agriculture.

Although the top 10 destination countries for mobile students are dominated by Western Europe and the developed Anglophone countries, Russia and China have crept in at numbers nine and ten, perhaps a sign that students are beginning to seek out more challenging and exotic locations, a finding which may become more pronounced in future years as institutions tap into funding available under the new international credit mobility component of Erasmus+. A regional breakdown of locations still shows that the developed regions dominate in this cohort. Although Asia has some representation with a 9 percent share of mobile students, Africa, South America and Europe outside of the EU are much less represented in comparison with other regions, with individual shares of 4 percent or less.

Some of the most interesting findings of this report are in its detailed examination of widening participation profiles in mobility. The report, like its 2015 predecessor, finds that students from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority ethnic groups are less likely to be mobile, although it is still striking how consistently mobility rates drop with socioeconomic classification codes. Both groups are further disaggregated by gender, showing that black male students are least likely to be mobile, and that socioeconomic factors are, on average, more likely than ethnicity to predict mobility in this cohort. To this effect, the Go International programme has developed an action plan to support the uptake of mobility from widening participation groups across institutions, recognising that it is the participation of this group that will ultimately drive up overall mobility numbers. (This action plan is available on the Go International website at www.go.international.ac.uk)

The present analysis also examines mobile student outcomes, disaggregating again by socioeconomic background, ethnicity and controlling for academic attainment. Like the 2015 Gone International report, which

analysed the 2012/13 graduating cohort, the current report finds improved employment outcomes for mobile students. While the present report cannot identify causal relationships between improved employment outcomes and mobility, it does find that the mobile graduates in this cohort are less likely to be unemployed, and more likely to achieve a first or upper second class degree, enter employment at one of the top three socioeconomic levels, and enjoy higher starting salaries than non-mobile peers. Even the sector and country of employment in which students choose to work can potentially be affected by mobility. Furthermore, when the sample is controlled for academic attainment, a measure taken to control for the academic selectivity of many mobility programmes, certain underrepresented groups continue to display improved outcomes. For students graduating with a first and upper second class degree, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those from black and Asian ethnicities, were still less likely to be unemployed than their non-mobile counterparts. This is an important finding, as it shows that, at least for this cohort, the students who may have encountered the biggest barriers to mobility also had the most to gain from their time abroad.

With its focus on underrepresented groups, and its control for language bias and academic attainment in the 2013/14 graduating cohort, this report shines a spotlight on widening participation and BME students, and in particular their improved outcomes. As a whole, institutions can view this report alongside its 2015 predecessor as an adjacent cohort study. Together the two reports represent the initial building blocks in the construction of a more detailed picture of UK-domiciled undergraduate mobility; a picture that we hope will become sharper each year thanks to improved data and the analysis of subsequent cohorts.

References

1. For the purposes of this report, the data collected includes graduates who completed their studies in the summer of 2014.

2. This report only considers the outcomes for UK-domiciled students as the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility aims to increase the proportion of these students working, studying or volunteering abroad.

3. Please note that this number, and all data in this report has been rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 5, with numbers ending in 0, 1 or 2 rounded to 0. Percentages in charts are calculated on un-rounded numbers.

4. If excluding those 'due to start work', the rates were 4.3% and 5.6% respectively.

5. It is important to note that this is the participation rate for 2013/14 only. Students can be mobile at different points in the academic cycle, so the overall participation rate for mobility will be higher.

6. 443,110 UK and EU-domicile leavers responded to the survey.

7. Those wards with the lowest higher education participation rates.

8. HESA's Joint Academic Coding System is used to divide subjects into 17 groups. The proportion of DLHE respondents who are mobile is analysed both by subject group and by specific subject within the group.

9. Defined here as European Union member states and other European countries.

10. Statistically significant.

11. Not statistically significant.

12. Excludes subject areas for which there is no comparable data on mobile and non-mobile unemployment. 'Unemployment' here also includes those who said they were "due to start work".

13. The Go International programme worked closely with HESA to improve the fields used to collect mobility data, meaning that a wider range of mobilities are reported, including those of shorter durations.

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