

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

How many international students stay on in the host country?

- Several OECD countries have eased their immigration policies to encourage the temporary or permanent immigration of international students, including Australia, Canada, Finland, France, New Zealand and Norway.
- Many students move under a free-movement regime, such as the European Union, and do not need a residence permit to remain in their country of study.
- On average, 25% of international students who did not renew their student permits changed their student status in the host country mainly for work-related reasons.

Significance

This spread examines students who decide to remain in the host country after completion of their studies. International students decide to stay in their country of study for various reasons, including: increased work opportunities compared to their country of origin, ease of integration into their host country, and future career advantages when returning to their country of origin or when moving to a third country.

Findings

Several OECD countries have eased their immigration policies to encourage the temporary or permanent immigration of international students. Australia, Canada and New Zealand, for example, make it easy for foreign students who have studied in their universities to settle by granting them additional points in those countries' immigration point system. Finland and Norway amended their naturalisation acts and now take the years of residence spent as students into account when they assess eligibility. In France, enrolment of international students in advanced research programmes reduces the period of residence needed to be eligible for naturalisation. In many other OECD countries, working visa and temporary residence procedures have been simplified for international students and graduates.

Countries apply other measures to integrate international students. These includes local language courses, as offered in Finland and Norway, and internship programmes or work permits for part-time participation in the labour market, as offered in Australia, the Czech Republic, Japan, Norway and Sweden. In addition, the freedom of movement of workers within Europe and standardised national policies with respect to tuition fees partly explain the high level of student mobility in Europe compared to that among the countries of North America.

The number of students who remain in the country in which they have studied and the success of policies designed to retain migrants with high skills can be measured by stay rates. The stay rate is defined as the proportion of international students changing to a status other than student to the amount of students not renewing their student permits in the same year.

The stay rate averaged 25% among international students who did not renew their student permit in 2008 or 2009, and

is above 25% in Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany and the Netherlands. In all countries with available data, the stay rate is higher than 17% and reaches 33% in Canada. On average, 74% of students who change their status do so for work-related reasons. This is true for 80% or more of status changes in Canada, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands (see Chart C3.5 in *Education at a Glance 2011*).

Stay rates need to be treated with some caution because of data limitations and because some students may have not completed their education at the time when they changed status. In addition, not all of these students may be staying for work reasons; some will remain because of humanitarian or family reasons. Finally, the rates presented below exclude all students moving under a free-movement regime, such as that in the European Union. Such individuals do not need a residence permit and thus do not show up in the permit statistics.

Definitions

Data on international and foreign students refer to the academic year 2008/09 and are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2010. The stay rate is estimated as the ratio of the number of persons who have changed status (whether for work, family or other reasons) to the number of students who have not renewed their permits. Because the change-of-status statistics are based on permit data, they do not include citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) for European countries, who do not need a student permit to study in another country of the EEA. For the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland and Spain, all permit statistics were obtained from the online migration database of Eurostat. This was also the source for student status changes for the United Kingdom. Data for the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom are for 2009; for all other countries, 2008.

Information on data for Israel:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2011* (Indicator C3).

Areas covered include:

- Stay rates of international enrolled and graduated students.

Further reading from the OECD

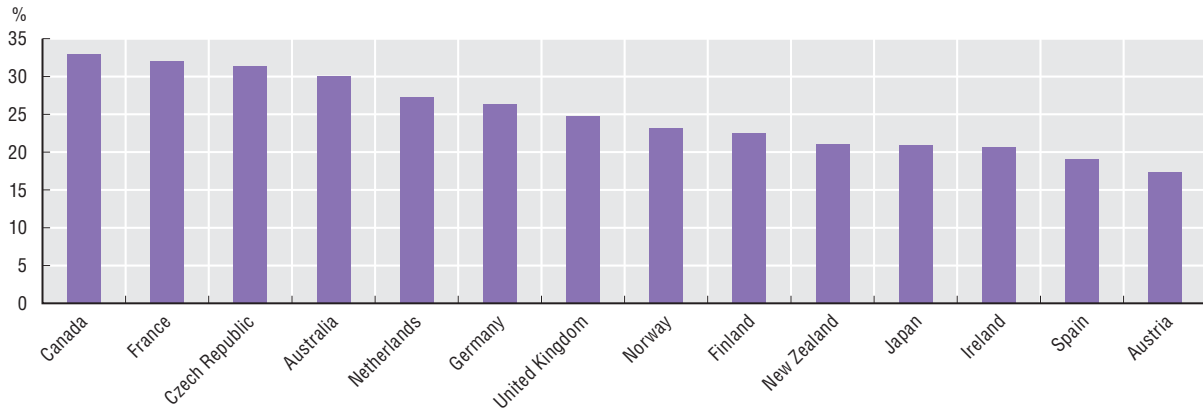
International Migration Outlook 2011 (2011).

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Figure 1.22. **Stay rates of international students in selected OECD countries (2008 or 2009)**

This figure shows the percentage of international students who decide to change their student status and legally remain in their country of study. In many cases, countries with higher rates have immigration policies that encourage the temporary or permanent immigration of international students.



Source: OECD (2011), *Education at a Glance 2011*, Table C3.5, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932464543>.



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