

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

How many students study abroad and where do they go?

- More than 4.1 million tertiary-level students were enrolled outside their country of citizenship in 2010.
- Australia, Austria, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have the highest percentages of international students among their tertiary students.
- Asians account for 52% of all students studying abroad worldwide. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of international students are from China, India and Korea.
- Some 77% of students worldwide who study abroad do so in OECD countries. This proportion has remained stable during the past decade.

Significance

This section looks at the extent to which students are studying abroad and their preferred destinations. Pursuing higher-level education in a foreign country allows students to expand their knowledge of other cultures and languages, and to better equip themselves in an increasingly globalised labour market. Beyond its social and educational effects, studying abroad has a considerable economic impact. The internationalisation of education is likely to have a growing impact on some countries' economy as a result of revenue from tuition fees and domestic consumption by international students.

Findings

OECD countries attract the bulk of students who study abroad worldwide – almost four out of five. Many of these come from other OECD countries, mainly Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Turkey and the United States. In terms of where students choose to study, the United Kingdom and the United States each receive more than 10% of all foreign students worldwide. Europe is the preferred destination for students studying outside their country, with 41% of all international students. North America has 21% of all international students. Nevertheless, the fastest growing regions of destination are Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and Asia mirroring the internationalisation of universities in an increasing set of countries (see Chart C4.1 and Table C4.6 in *Education at a Glance 2012*).

In a number of countries, especially in Australia and New Zealand, the large presence of international students has a significant impact on tertiary graduation rates (see Chart A3.1 in *Education at a Glance 2012*). If data from international students are excluded, Australia's graduation rate

from university-level first degree programmes drops by 16 percentage points and New Zealand's by 7 percentage points.

Trends

Over the past three decades, the number of international students has increased fivefold from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010. This growth has accelerated during the period, mirroring the processes of economic and social globalisation. The global increase in the number of international students also reflects the overall increase in tertiary enrolment.

Since 2000, the number of foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide has increased by 99%, for an average annual growth rate of 7.1%. The number of foreign tertiary students enrolled in OECD countries doubled since 2000, for an average annual growth rate of 7.2%.

Definitions

Data on international and foreign students are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics, administered annually by the OECD. Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics are also included. Students are classified as "international" if they left their country of origin and moved to another country to study. Students are classified as "foreign" if they are not citizens of the country in which they are studying. This latter category includes some students who are permanent residents, albeit not citizens, of the countries in which they are studying (for example, young people from immigrant families).

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 2012* (Indicator C4).

Areas covered include:

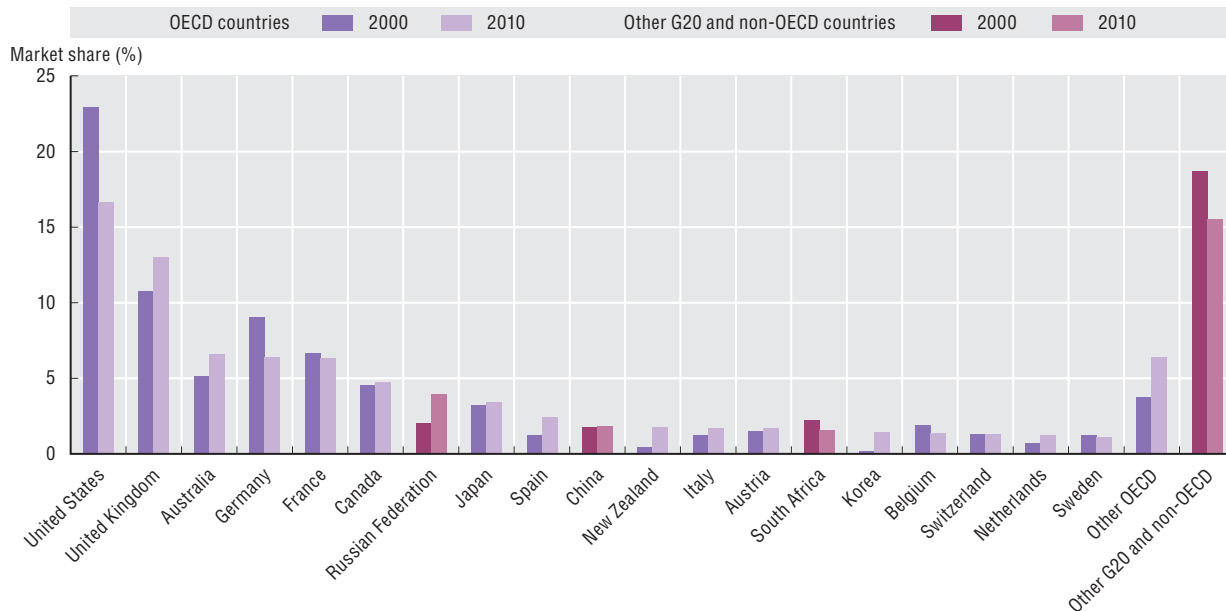
- Distribution of students by country of origin and destination.
- Trends in the number of students studying abroad.

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Figure 1.13. Trends in international education market shares (2000, 2010)

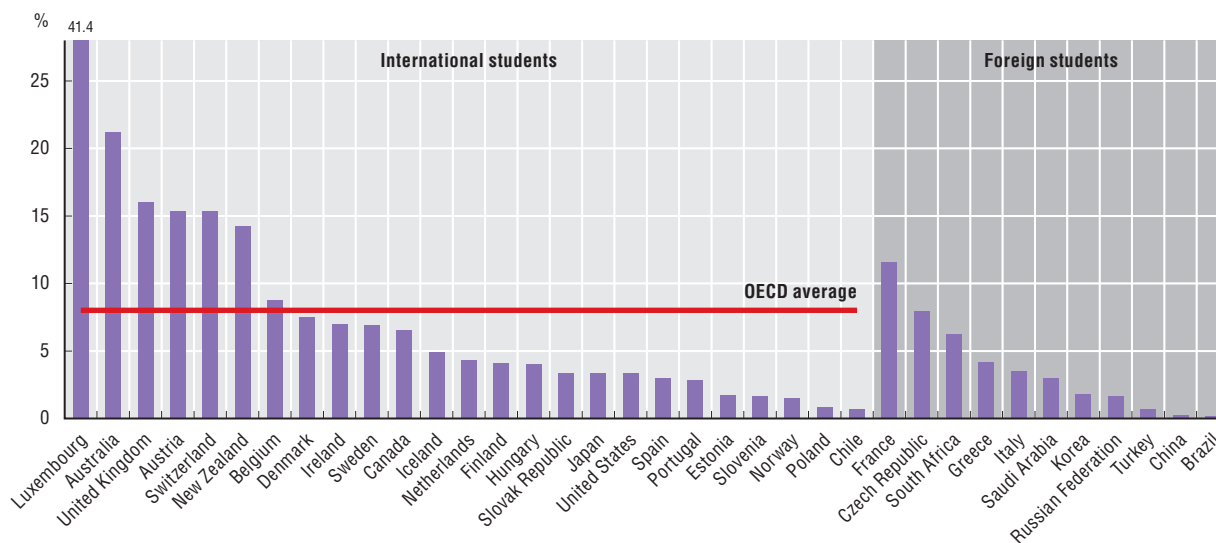
This figure shows the distribution of foreign and international students in tertiary education, by destination.



Source: OECD (2012), Education at a Glance 2012, Table C4.7, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932667349>.

Figure 1.14. Student mobility in tertiary education, 2010

This figure shows the percentage of international students at the tertiary level in each country.



Source: OECD (2012), Education at a Glance 2012, Table C4.1, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932667235>.





2. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF EDUCATION

How much more do tertiary graduates earn?

How does education affect employment rates?

What are the incentives for people to invest in education?

What are the incentives for societies to invest in education?

What are the social benefits of education?

How does education affect the economy?



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