



RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



CAMPUS
FRANCE

JUNE 2022



KEY Figures

on student mobility worldwide

SUMMARY

EUROPE

#1 HOST REGION FOR MOBILE
STUDENTS

6,100,000

INTERNATIONALLY MOBILE
STUDENTS AROUND THE
WORLD

365,000

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN
FRANCE

INTRODUCTION

A changing mobility landscape

The student mobility landscape is changing before our eyes. In the space of two years it has been shaped by three different crises: **Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine**. UNESCO data enabling us to gauge the impact of the pandemic on international student numbers will not be available until the end of 2022. For that reason, this edition of *Key Figures* offers a **snapshot of the situation before the onset of these crises**. What does that snapshot tell us?

- **France ranked 7th in hosting international students**, behind the United States (1st), Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, and Canada. It moved up to become the 5th-largest country of origin of mobile students, after China (1st), India, Vietnam, and Germany.
- **The United Kingdom moved from 2nd to 3rd place** in the host-country ranking, overtaken by Australia, whose numbers have grown rapidly.
- **Europe remained the leading host region and 2nd-largest sending region** for degree-seeking mobile students.

How have the recent crises affected mobility in France?

Even in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, France has shown itself over the past two years to be an **open and welcoming country**. Openness to foreign students during the pandemic enabled France to keep student numbers stable in 2020–21 (–1%), prefiguring a large-scale return of international students to France.

How are student flows likely to evolve worldwide?

In Europe:

- **Brexit** signaled that EU students would face higher tuition and fees in the United Kingdom, causing them to look elsewhere. Greater numbers of Asian students in Britain may have temporarily compensated for this loss. Eager to attract European students, France launched **a new scholarship program in 2022 known as France Excellence Europa**.
- **The war in Ukraine** may well pull down Russia's rank as a host country (it had been 5th); it will also affect the flow of African students to Ukraine.

Globally:

- **The prolonged isolation of China in response to Covid-19** will prove decisive, especially for countries such as Australia that depend heavily on students from the world's largest sending nation.
- **Australia's shutdown** during the pandemic may also slow the rise of the country, which had become the #2 host country before the pandemic.

The 2023 edition of *Key Figures* will reveal how these unprecedented and nearly simultaneous events altered student mobility.



Student mobility in France

Following continuous increases in the number of foreign students in France (+70% over 20 years), the flows dropped for the first time between 2019 and 2020, as the pandemic raged. With **365,000 foreign students in France in 2020-21**, this 1% drop is small in comparison with other major host countries. Certain types of educational institutions even continued to increase their numbers during this period, notably business schools (+8%) and engineering schools (+3%).

Top 25 countries of origin of foreign students in France (2020-21)

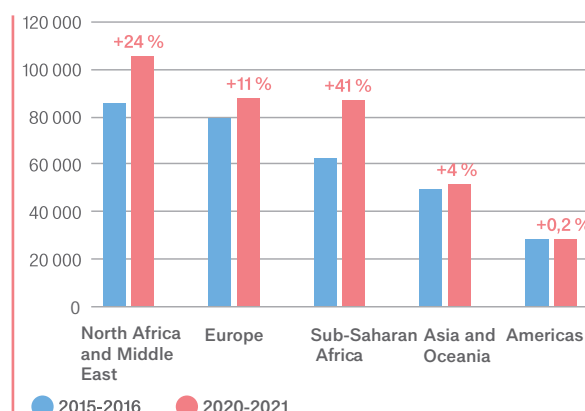
Rank	Country of origin	Number of students	Share	Change over 5 years (2015-2020)	
				Number of students	Rank
1	Morocco	44,933	12 %	+22 %	=
2	Algeria	29,333	8 %	+29 %	+1
3	China	27,950	8 %	0 %	-1
4	Italy	16,482	5 %	+47 %	+1
5	Senegal	14,566	4 %	+62 %	+1
6	Tunisia	13,152	4 %	+9 %	-2
7	Ivory Coast	10,357	3 %	+65 %	+3
8	Spain	9,004	2 %	+32 %	+1
9	Cameroon	8,329	2 %	+20 %	-1
10	Lebanon	8,032	2 %	+55 %	+5
11	Portugal	7,414	2 %	+52 %	+5
12	Germany	7,008	2 %	-18 %	-5
13	Congo	6,421	2 %	+62 %	+9
14	India	5,774	2 %	+91 %	+13
15	Gabon	5,700	2 %	+37 %	+4
16	Vietnam	5,495	2 %	-3 %	-4
17	Russia	5,146	1 %	+3 %	-2
18	Brazil	5,101	1 %	-3 %	-5
19	Belgium	4,697	1 %	+6 %	-2
20	Madagascar	4,614	1 %	+12 %	=
21	Turkey	4,447	1 %	+32 %	+4
22	Benin	4,260	1 %	+59 %	+9
23	Colombia	4,258	1 %	+14 %	+1
24	Guinea	4,173	1 %	+9 %	-1
25	United States	4,126	1 %	-28 %	-14
Other countries		103,984	29 %	+8 %	
Total		364,756	100 %	+18 %	

Source : MESRI/SIES, 2021.

The regions that grew the most over the five years are also **the top three regions** in terms of flows: North Africa and the Middle East (#1 region, +24%), Sub-Saharan Africa (#2, +41%), and Europe (#3, up 11%). At the same time, France is struggling to regain mobility from Asian students because of the health crisis.

Region of origin	Share
North Africa and Middle East	29 %
Europe	24 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	24 %
Asia and Oceania	14 %
Americas	8 %

Source : MESRI/SIES, 2021.



Source : MESRI/SIES, 2021.

Distribution of foreign students in France by type of institution, 2020–21

Type of institution	Foreign students	Share	Foreign students as % of all students	Change in foreign student enrollments, 2015–20
Universities	240,977	66 %	15 %	+7 %
Business schools	46,120	13 %	20 %	+113 %
Engineering schools	27,429	8 %	15 %	+22 %
Upper secondary schools (preparatory and technical sections)	19,988	5 %	6 %	+60 %
Other institutions providing university education ^a	11,953	3 %	16 %	+4 %
Schools of art and architecture	10,154	3 %	11 %	+23 %
Other educational institutions	8,135	2 %	4 %	+1 %
Total	364,756	100 %	13 %	+18 %

Source : MESRI/SIES, 2021.

^a. [These include: the Universities of Technology of Belfort-Montbéliard, Compiègne and Troyes, Sciences Po, INALCO, the Grenoble Polytechnic Institute, the Toulouse Institute of Technology, the Paris Observatory, the Institut de Physique du Globe in Paris and Paris Dauphine]

In 2020–21, **two-thirds of the foreign students in France were enrolled in universities**. That share, while large, has dropped in recent years: from 71% in 2016–17 to 66% in 2020–21. The share of foreign students in business schools has moved in the opposite direction, growing from 8% in 2016–17 to 13% in 2020–21.

Distribution and change in numbers of foreign students enrolled in universities, by degree level

Degree level	2020-2021			Over 1 year	Over 5 years
	Number of foreign students enrolled	Share	Foreign students as % of total enrollements		
Licence (bachelor)	120,676	50 %	12 %	-3 %	+17 %
Master	98,620	41 %	17 %	-3 %	+1 %
Doctorate	21,681	9 %	40 %	-4 %	-12 %
Total	240,977	100 %	15 %	-3 %	+7 %

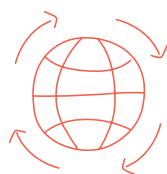
Source : MESRI/SIES, 2021.

With **40% of France's doctoral students coming from abroad**, the doctoral level is particularly internationalized. Within the OECD, **France ranks 3rd in hosting foreign doctoral candidates**, trailing only the United States and the United Kingdom.

2 Student mobility in Europe



Europe,
1ST
destination of
international students in 2019



88 %
of mobile European students
head for another country
in Europe

Europe is at the center of student mobility. It is the world's **#1 host region and the #2 region of origin of degree-seeking mobile students**. It draws students from all over the world, hosting almost half (46%) of the world's mobile students. Europe exerts a strong pull at home: **nearly nine of every ten European students who study abroad do so on the continent**.

Some **570,000 European students** engaged in degree-seeking mobility within the European Union in 2019, up 23% from five years before. **A quarter of those students (144,000) chose the United Kingdom as their destination**. However, the most recent UNESCO figures antedate Brexit, which has had a direct impact on EU students and intra-EU mobility, as detailed in the full version of *Key Figures 2022*.

Numbers of mobile students in top 10 countries by host country in 2019

Rank	Host country	Number of students, 2019	Share, 2019	Change 2014-2019
1	United Kingdom	144,313	25,3 %	+28 %
2	Germany	79,920	14,0 %	+35 %
3	Netherlands	57,912	10,2 %	+34 %
4	Austria	51,934	9,1 %	+12 %
5	France	31,965	5,6 %	ND
6	Belgium	26,574	4,7 %	-6 %
7	Spain	25,753	4,5 %	ND
8	Denmark	21,423	3,8 %	+11 %
9	Czech Republic	16,401	2,9 %	-39 %
10	Greece	16,048	2,8 %	ND

ND = unknown.

Source: ISU, April 2022.

Erasmus+ mobility

Leading host countries of Erasmus students in 2019-20

Rank	Country	Mobile students and interns/ trainees	Share of interns/trainees	Change, 2014-2019	Change, 2018-2019
1	Spain	47,078	24 %	+11 %	-8 %
2	France	28,997	22 %	-2 %	-2 %
3	Germany	28,255	33 %	-14 %	-14 %
4	Italy	26,625	16 %	+23 %	-6 %
5	United Kingdom	22,053	27 %	-27 %	-26 %
6	Poland	17,437	11 %	+33 %	+1 %
7	Portugal	15,147	17 %	+32 %	-5 %
8	Netherlands	14,595	30 %	+28 %	-5 %
9	Belgium	12,261	39 %	+15 %	-2 %
10	Sweden	10,692	18 %	+10 %	+3 %
Other countries		90,403	-	16 %	-2 %
Total	313,543	-	+8 %	-7 %	

Source: European Commission, January 2022.

Since its creation in 1987 (35 years ago), the Erasmus program has benefitted more than ten million people. **In 2019-20, as a consequence of the health crisis, the number of students studying abroad under Erasmus+ shrank for the first time (-7% over a year).** Mobility to France under the program stood up better than the average (-2%), **making it the second destination after Spain and before Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.** The growing prominence of European universities probably spurred greater mobility between partner institutions; intra-European mobility is likely to keep growing. The full version of *Key Figures 2022* also focuses on **student mobility in Russia and the Russian-speaking area** before the war in Ukraine.

Student mobility in the world

In 2019, for the first time, **the number of the world's mobile students exceeded six million**. Over one year, an additional 500,000 students embarked on a period of mobility (+7% from 2018), extending a growth trend in the medium term (+35% over 2014). That, at least, was the scene prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, although not yet fully accounted for by UNESCO, will almost certainly mark a sudden break in the growth pattern. The major mobility trends during this period are presented in the full version of *Key Figures 2022*.

The world's 20 leading hosts of mobile students

Country	Number of students, 2019	Change 2018-2019	Change 2014-2019	Rank in 2014	Rank in 2019
United States	976,853	-1 %	+16 %	1	1
Australia	509,160	+15 %	+91 %	3	2
United Kingdom	489,019	+8 %	+14 %	2	3
Germany	333,233	+7 %	+58 %	6	4
Russia	282,922	+8 %	+33 %	5	5
Canada	279,168	+24 %	+70 %	7	6
France*	246,378	+7 %	ND	4	7
United Arab Emirates	225,339	ND	+251 %	15	8
China**	208,553	+13 %	+85 %	8	9
Japan	202,907	+11 %	+86 %	9	10
Turkey	154,505	+23 %	+221 %	21	11
Argentina	116,330	+7 %	ND	ND	12
Netherlands	108,353	+4 %	+53 %	13	13
South Korea	98,857	+17 %	+88 %	18	14
Malaysia	81,953	ND	-18 %	10	15
Spain	77,062	+9 %	ND	ND	16
Austria	74,631	-1 %	+15 %	14	17
Saudi Arabia	73,216	-1 %	+2 %	12	18
Switzerland	55,698	+3 %	+12 %	19	19
Ukraine	55,333	+11 %	-8 %	16	20
Other countries	1,421,572		9 %	-	
Total	6,063,665	+7 %	+35 %	-	-

* France's accounting method changed in 2013 and 2018, making it impossible to determine changes prior to 2018.

** Including Hong Kong and Macau.

ND = Unknown.

Source : ISU, 2022.

Following strong growth in the number of students hosted (+15% over a year), **Australia has become the world's #2 host country, surpassing the United Kingdom**, which continued to attract more students but at a slower pace (+8%). **France, despite an increase (+7%) in the number of international students hosted in 2019, also dropped one notch** in the rankings, becoming the #7 host country, overtaken by Canada.

Top 20 countries of origin of mobile students throughout the world

Country	Number of students, 2019	Change 2018-2019	Change 2014-2019	Rank in 2014	Rank in 2019
China*	1,047,186	+6%	+36%	1	1
India	461,792	+22%	+114%	2	2
Vietnam	126,059	+16%	+112%	11	3
Germany	122,445	+0%	+3%	3	4
France	103,161	+4%	+26%	6	5
United States	102,246	+19%	+31%	8	6
South Korea	101,493	0%	-8%	4	7
Nepal	93,921	+14%	+163%	25	8
Kazakhstan	89,292	+1%	+33%	9	9
Brazil	81,882	+17%	+81%	20	10
Ukraine	77,586	-1%	+55%	16	11
Italy	77,505	+2%	+41%	13	12
Syria	74,839	+16%	+136%	34	13
Nigeria	71,133	-7%	-10%	7	14
Saudi Arabia	66,398	-14%	-21%	5	15
Turkmenistan	63,584	+29%	+34%	17	16
Pakistan	59,784	+3%	+34%	21	17
Iran	59,585	+5%	+17%	15	18
Malaysia	59,144	-4%	-5%	10	19
Morocco	56,730	+7%	+34%	22	20
Other countries	3,067,900	+11%	+36%	-	-
Total	6,063,665	+7%	+35%	-	-

* Including Hong Kong and Macau.

Source : ISU, 2022.

Until the onset of the pandemic, **Asia-Oceania was by far the top sending region**, with five countries in the top ten countries of origin of internationally mobile degree-seeking students: China (1st), India (2nd), Vietnam (3rd), South Korea (7th), and Nepal (8th). **In all, 45% of mobile degree-seeking students come from Asia-Oceania.** Between 2014 and 2019, the number of mobile students originating in Asia-Oceania grew by 43% (against 35% growth for all regions combined). In 2019, for the first time, the number of mobile Chinese students exceeded one million. They are by far the largest contingent, outnumbering India's 462,000 students. Taken together, Chinese and Indian students make up 25% of all degree-seeking mobile students.

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world beginning in early 2020 has had unprecedented consequences for student mobility. The major receiving and sending countries made radical and often very different decisions. Although nearly all countries are now back to allowing students to cross their borders, this was not always the case after the virus began to spread. **The year 2021 was a turning point, and thanks to the distribution of vaccines in the major host countries, mobility has begun to recover.** Nevertheless, the period of restricted mobility may leave its mark. Certain large host countries, economically dependent on incoming flows of international students, may need several years before they return to the level prevailing before the pandemic.

Outward mobility of French students

FRANCE: #5 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

In 2019, **103,161 French students left their country to study abroad**, marking the continuation of a growing trend: Since 2014, mobility among French students has risen by 26%. With respect to 2018, **France climbed one place in the rankings, becoming the #5 country of origin of mobile degree-seeking students** after China, India, Vietnam, and Germany—and ahead of the United States and South Korea.

A large majority of mobile **French students study elsewhere in Europe** (71% of them in 2019) or **North America** (23%, mostly in Canada). Only 3.5% of mobile French students head for Asia-Oceania (with Australia and Japan at the top), but their numbers rose 11% in a year. The other regions of the world (Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean) attract less than 2% of French students.

KEY Figures

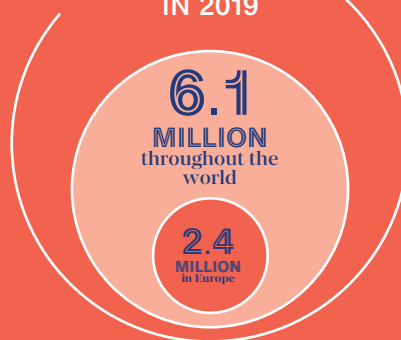
on student mobility



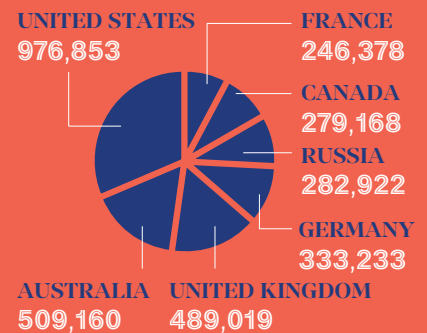
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MILLION
STUDENTS IN
THE WORLD IN
2019



STUDENTS
PURSUING
A DEGREE ABROAD
IN 2019



LEADING HOST COUNTRIES



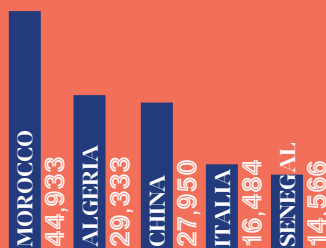
FRANCE

364,758 (+18%
over 5 years)
foreign students enrolled in France

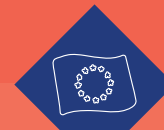
103,161 French students
pursuing a degree
abroad



TOP 5 SOURCE COUNTRIES



TOP 5 DESTINATIONS FOR FRENCH STUDENTS



EUROPE

88 %
of European students pursuing
a degree abroad stay on the
continent



1ST

DESTINATION FOR
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS



FRANCE
#2 HOST COUNTRY
FOR ERASMUS+
STUDENTS

