

Indicator B6. What is the profile of internationally mobile students?

Highlights

- The COVID-19 pandemic had a very uneven impact on international student flows across countries during the period 2019-2021. While the share of mobile students fell by 6 percentage points in Australia and 9 percentage points in New Zealand, it increased in several countries and remained unchanged in many others.
- Students from Asia form the largest group of mobile students enrolled in tertiary education programmes at all levels, representing 57% of all mobile students across OECD and partner countries in 2021. They account for over 80% of mobile tertiary students in Australia, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.
- In total across OECD countries, the distribution of students by field of study differs between mobile and national students, but overall, the broad fields science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and business, administration and law account for the largest shares of both populations of students.

Context

Studying abroad has become a key differentiating experience for young adults enrolled in tertiary education, and international student mobility has received increasing policy attention in recent years. Studying abroad can be a way to access high-quality education at a prestigious institution and acquire skills that may not be taught at home (King and Sondhi, 2017^[1]). It is also seen as a means of accessing career opportunities abroad and improving employability in increasingly globalised labour markets and, for some, it is a first step towards migrating to another country in the long-term (Crossman and Clarke, 2009^[2]; Wintre et al., 2015^[3]). Other motivations include the desire to expand one's knowledge of other societies and to improve language skills, particularly English (Sánchez, Fornerino and Zhang, 2006^[4]; Wu, 2014^[5]).

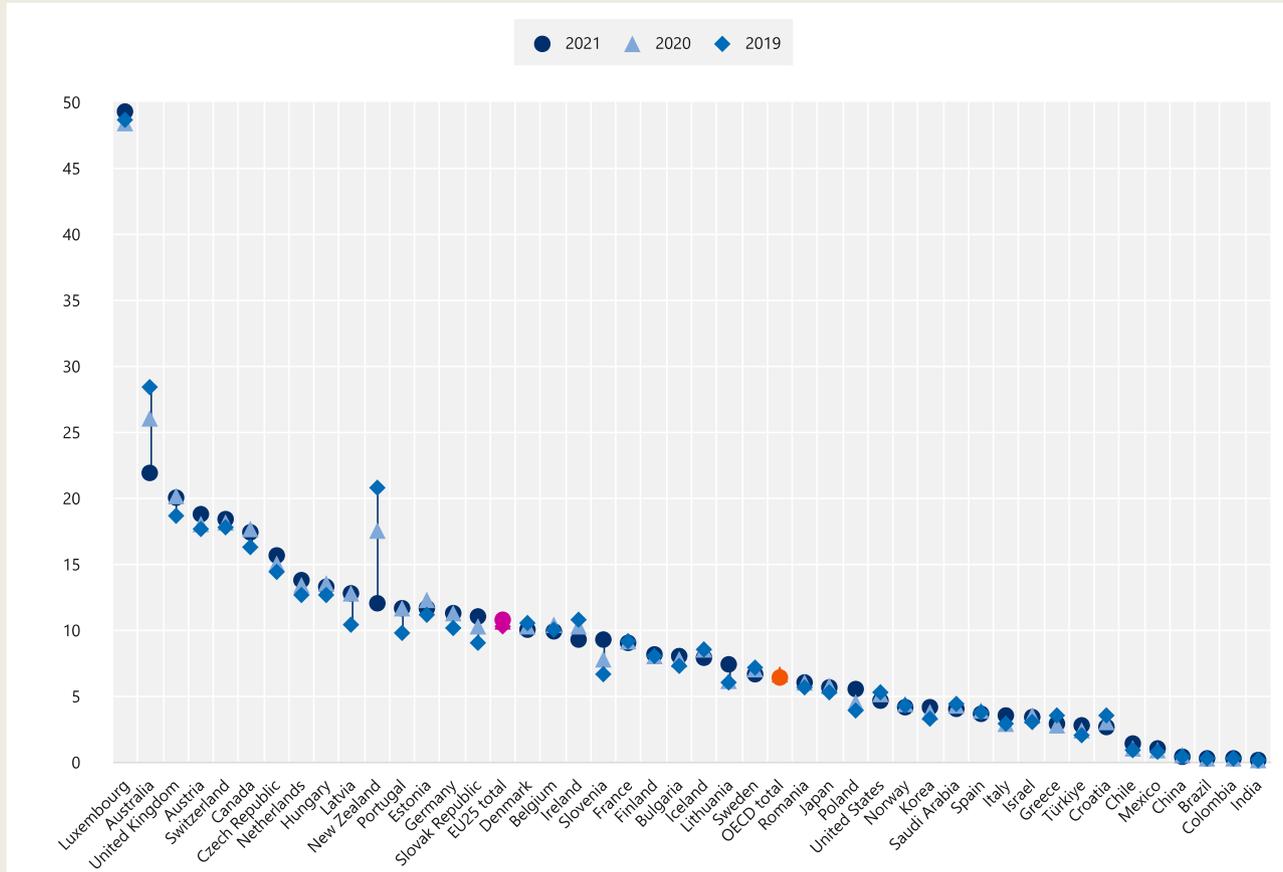
For host countries, mobile students (whether international or foreign) may be an important source of income and have a considerable impact on their economic and innovation systems (Halterbeck and Conlon, 2021^[6]). They often pay higher tuition fees than domestic students (OECD, 2022^[7]) and, in some countries, are subject to higher registration fees. They also contribute to the local economy through their living expenses (Canmac Economics, 2020^[8]). In the longer run, highly educated mobile students can integrate into domestic labour markets more easily than other migrants and contribute to innovation and economic performance. Attracting mobile students, especially if they stay permanently, is therefore a way to tap into a global pool of talent, support the development of innovation and production systems, and, in many countries, mitigate the impact of an ageing population on future skills supply (Hawthorne, 2008^[9]).

For their countries of origin, mobile students might be viewed as lost talent ("brain drain") if they stay in their host countries after graduating. However, mobile students can contribute to knowledge absorption, technology upgrading and capacity building in their home country if they return home after their studies or maintain links with nationals at home. They gain tacit knowledge that is often shared through personal interactions and can

help their home country to integrate into global knowledge networks. Some research suggests that the number of students overseas is a good predictor of future scientist flows in the opposite direction, providing evidence of movement of skilled labour across nations (Appelt et al., 2015^[10]). Student mobility also appears to shape international scientific co-operation networks more deeply than either a common language or scientific proximity.

Figure B6.1. Share of international or foreign students in tertiary education in OECD and partner/accession countries (2019, 2020 and 2021)

In per cent



Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of international or foreign students in 2021.

Source: OECD/UIE/Eurostat (2023), Table B6.1. For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023^[11]).

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Other finding

- Students become more mobile as they reach more advanced levels of education. International students account for only 3% of total enrolment in short-cycle tertiary programmes and 5% of total enrolment in bachelor’s programmes, but they represent 14% of master’s programmes and 24% of enrolment in doctoral programmes.

Analysis

Mobility patterns and international student flows

Many factors at the individual, institutional, national and global levels drive patterns of international student mobility. These include personal ambitions and aspirations for better employment prospects, a lack of high-quality higher educational institutions at home, the capacity of higher education institutions abroad to attract talent and government policies to encourage cross-border mobility for education (Bhandari, Robles and Farrugia, 2020^[12]). The needs of increasingly knowledge-based and innovation-driven economies have increased the global demand for tertiary education, while increasing wealth in emerging economies has prompted the children of the growing middle classes to seek educational opportunities abroad. Simultaneously, economic (e.g. costs of international flights), technological (e.g. the spread of the Internet and social media enabling contacts to be maintained across borders) and cultural factors (e.g. use of English as a common working and teaching language) have contributed to rendering international study substantially more affordable and accessible than it was previously.

The perceived quality of instruction abroad and the perceived value of host institutions are a key criteria for mobile students when selecting a study destination (Abbott and Silles, 2015^[13]). The top destinations for internationally mobile students include a large number of top-ranked higher educational institutions. The dissemination of university league tables and other international university rankings has led to a growing awareness among students worldwide regarding the disparities in quality among tertiary education systems. At the same time, institutions' ability to attract international students has become a criterion for assessing their performance and quality. As governments seek to encourage the internationalisation of higher education, they have revised performance agreements with domestic institutions, for example by taking into account inflows of international students in university funding formulas. In Finland, for example, the internationalisation of higher education is one of the dimensions considered for the funding of tertiary institutions, along with quality and impact measures (Eurydice, 2023^[14]). Similarly, in Norway, the share of foreign or international students is an indicator used to determine the level of block grant funding allocated to tertiary institutions (OECD, 2019^[15]).

Most countries have implemented reforms aiming to lower the barriers to migration of highly skilled individuals, beyond the purposes of education. Many countries also operate funding programmes to support inward, outward or return mobility. While the conditions of migration may vary (e.g. short-term versus long-term settlement), pre-doctoral students and early-stage researchers, including both doctoral and postdoctoral candidates, are the primary beneficiaries of these programmes.

Many countries set higher fees for international students as this is less politically controversial than increasing tuition fees for national students and often constitutes an important revenue stream for higher educational institutions. In some countries, international students in public universities pay twice as much for their tuition as national students, attracted by the perceived quality of the education and potential labour-market prospects in their host country. However, the presence of significant disparities in tuition fees between national and international students could potentially pose a concern in the event of funding shortages for educational opportunities. In contrast, some countries seek to promote international mobility within a region by reducing or eliminating fees. Students from the European Economic Area can study in any other country within this area, paying the same tuition fees as national students (OECD, 2022^[7]).

In 2021, 7% of students enrolled in tertiary level programmes held outside their home country, on average across OECD countries. Luxembourg has the highest share of mobile students at 49% due to recently promoted university system (Box B6.2). It was followed by Australia with 22% of mobile students. However, less than 2% of students in Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, and India are internationally mobile.

Moreover, mobility patterns vary by level of education. As students progress to more advanced levels of education, they are more likely to study abroad. Short-cycle tertiary programmes typically focus on specialised vocational training and tend to have a more localized appeal, which may result in fewer students opting to pursue studies abroad. Conversely, institutions of higher tertiary levels often have more international recognition, a wider

range of academic programmes and research opportunities, rendering them attractive destinations for international students (Box B6.1.).

The impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on international student migration in many OECD countries. Many countries implemented travel restrictions and border closures to limit the spread of the virus. The health crisis made it more difficult for international students to complete the administrative procedures necessary to enrol in a tertiary institution abroad and to travel to that country to take up their studies. Most OECD countries closed their national borders – with exceptions for some groups – in an effort to contain the spread of the virus in their territory, and many universities were also physically closed for periods during the pandemic (EMN and OECD, 2020^[16]). Surprisingly, the total share of mobile students across the OECD has been stable between 2019 and 2021. The share of mobile students increased the most in Latvia and Slovenia, by more than 2 percentage points over the period 2019-21 (Table B6.1).

However, in a few countries the share of international students decreased substantially. In Australia, it fell from 28% of all tertiary students to 22% between 2019 and 2021, while in New Zealand, it fell from 21% to 12%. In both countries, most of the decline took place between 2020 and 2021, dropping by 4 percentage points in Australia and 5 percentage points in New Zealand (Table B6.1). Australia and New Zealand are among the countries in the southern hemisphere where the start of the 2020 school year (equivalent to 2019/20 for countries in the northern hemisphere) occurred at the start of the pandemic, and thus had a major impact on the arrival of mobile students. Indeed, many of the students who arrived in September 2019 continued their studies remotely.

In other countries which started that academic year in 2019, many of the students who had arrived in September 2019 continued their studies remotely. Indeed, one of the measures taken by countries to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the mobility of international students was online learning. Technological measures have been put in place so that students were able to continue their studies remotely despite travel restrictions and border closures. The pandemic pushed countries to adapt quickly and improvements in online learning technology and platforms have been made. This has made it easier for international students to access course materials, interact with their peers and communicate with their instructors (UNESCO, 2021^[17]).

Another measure implemented during the health crisis was psychological support for students. Mobility restrictions and closure of social spaces resulting from the pandemic had a significant impact on the mental health of international students. Even under normal circumstances, international students were more likely to suffer from mental disorders (e.g. depression), struggle with the local medical system and be less motivated to seek psychological service than their domestic peers (Brunsting et al., 2023^[18]). The pandemic has increased feelings of loneliness and international students' anxieties about the future and their financial difficulties. In response to this emerging stress, most countries, including Germany for example, have put measures in place to communicate with international students about their health and well-being (Baer and Martel, 2020^[19]).

International mobility by country of origin

Data on international student flows illustrate the strength of proximity factors, such as language, historical ties, geographical distance, bilateral relationships and political framework conditions (e.g. the European Higher Education Area) as key determinants for mobility. In the majority of countries, student mobility occurs within the same region: 20% of international students come from neighbouring countries (Table B6.1).

Students from Asia form the largest group of international students enrolled in OECD tertiary education programmes at all levels, accounting for 57% of all mobile students in OECD countries in 2021. Other Asian countries are the main source of international enrolment in Asia: 95% of mobile students in Japan and Korea came from the Asian continent, while in Indonesia, 86% of mobile students were Asian in 2021. They are also very present in countries close to Asia, such as Australia and New Zealand, where they account for over three-quarters of international mobility. However, international students from Asia remain a minority in many Latin

American and Caribbean countries. They accounted for 2% or less in Argentina, Chile and Colombia (Figure B6.2).

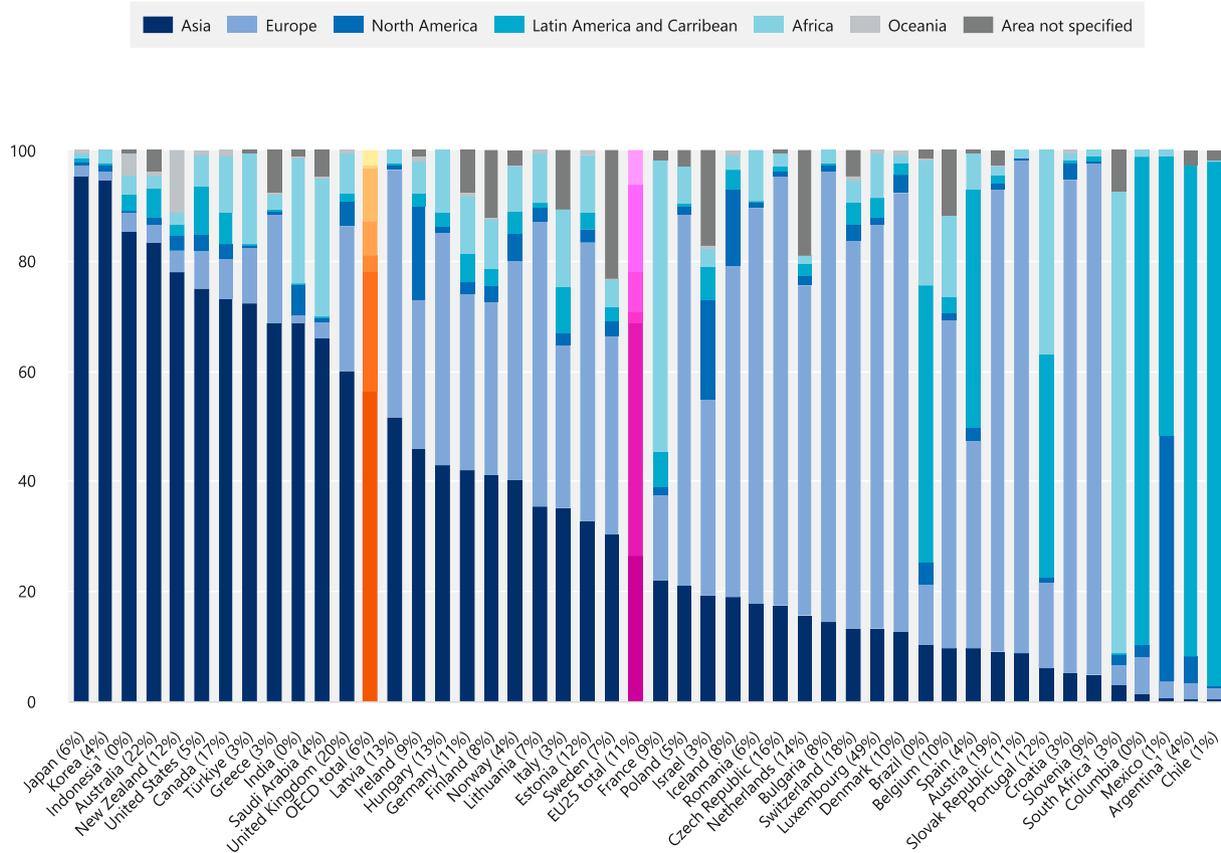
The second major region of origin of international students is Europe, with European international students making up 22% of all mobile students enrolled in OECD countries (Figure B6.2). European students represent 42% of all international students in Europe, compared with 27% in Asia, 16% in Africa and 7% in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is partly explained by the popularity of the Erasmus student exchange programme within the European Union. At least 8 out of 10 mobile students in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia come from other European countries (Figure B6.2).

Among OECD and partner countries, students from African countries only make up the majority of mobile students in South Africa, where 84% of mobile students come from other African countries, but they make up just over 3 out of 10 mobile students in Portugal and around 5 out of 10 in France. This could be the result of the colonial past of the latter two countries and the scholarships and financial aid provided to African students, but also the language of study: Portuguese is the official language in African countries such as Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique, while French is the official language in Benin, Burkina Faso and Morocco. Student flows from Latin America and the Caribbean highlight the importance of proximity, as they make up the majority of mobile students in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica. More than 85% of international students in these countries are from Latin America and the Caribbean. They also highlight the importance of the language of study: more than 40% of mobile students in Portugal and Spain come from this region (Figure B6.2).

However, proximity is not always a criterion for mobility for international students. In Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States for example, the majority of international students do not come from their home region, with more than 6 out of 10 mobile students coming from Asia (Figure B6.2). English is the *lingua franca* of the globalised world, used by one in four people worldwide (Sharifian, 2013_[20]). Therefore, it is not surprising that English-speaking countries are the most attractive destinations for mobile students.

Figure B6.2. Distribution of international or foreign students studying in OECD and partner/accession countries by region of origin (2021)

In per cent



Note: The number in parentheses corresponds to the international or foreign student enrolment as a percentage of total tertiary enrolments in 2021. 1. Year of reference differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023), Table B6.1 and Table B6.2. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023^[11]).

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Box B6.1. International students in short-cycle tertiary education

International students account for only a small share of short-cycle tertiary students but their numbers are more significant in some countries. They make up 3% of total enrolment at that level, compared to 5% of total enrolment in bachelor's programmes and 24% of enrolment in doctoral programmes in 2021. Australia has the largest share of international students in short-cycle tertiary programmes, at 32%, more than the share of internationally mobile bachelor's students (13%). It is followed by Canada where 24% of short-cycle tertiary students are foreign. International students account for 19% of total enrolment in short-cycle tertiary programmes in Iceland, 13% in Portugal, 11% in Japan and 10% in Luxembourg (Table B6.2).

Trends over time

Between 2013 and 2021, the number of international students in short-cycle tertiary education increased by 1 percentage point on average across OECD countries. However, this concealed larger changes in individual countries. The share of international students at this level increased by 20 percentage points in Australia, from 12% to 32% of students enrolled in short-cycle tertiary programmes, and by 15 percentage points in Canada, from 9% to 24%. Conversely, in some countries the trend is downward. In New Zealand, the share of mobile students in short-cycle tertiary education fell by 12 percentage points, from 21% to 9%, between 2013 and 2021 but this decrease is largely explained by the pandemic as the drop was especially high between 2019 and 2021 (from 18% to 9%) (see *Education at a Glance Database*).

Fields of study

The most popular broad field of study among international short-cycle tertiary students was business, administration and law, chosen by 24%. In particular, 69% chose this field in Australia, 40% in Canada and 43% in Luxembourg. Other less popular fields are more dominant in some countries. While only 15% of international short-cycle tertiary students were enrolled in art and humanities in OECD countries overall, in Iceland, almost 9 out of 10 international students were in this field (89%). Notably, 40% of Iceland's international students enrolled in short-cycle tertiary came from the Philippines and were following Icelandic language courses (see *Education at a Glance Database*).

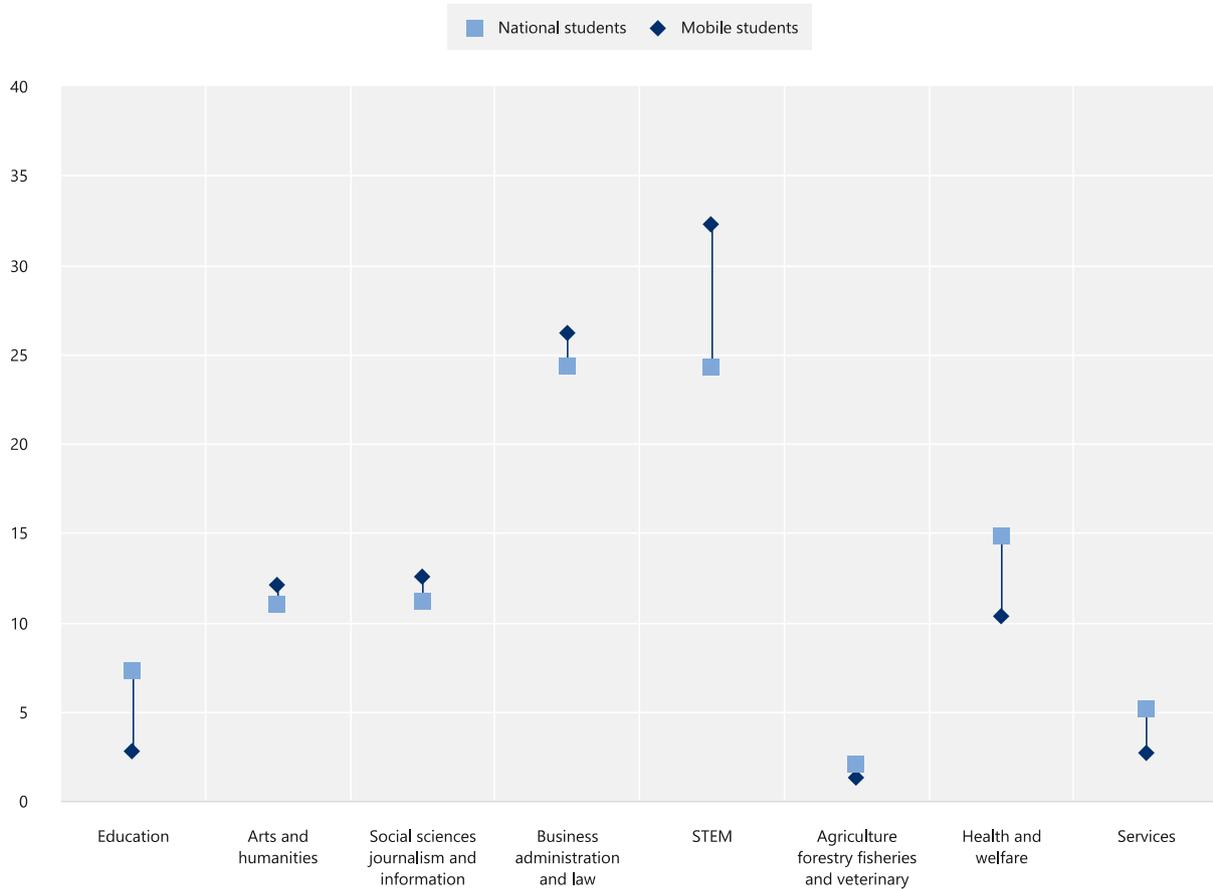
International mobility by field of study

Fields of study are a key consideration for students choosing to pursue a tertiary degree abroad and, across OECD countries, the distribution of national and mobile students by fields of study can differ considerably (Figure B6.3). The field of education attracts only 3% of mobile students, compared to 7% of national students, while the field of health and welfare attracts 10% of mobile students compared to 15% of national students. In Australia, for instance, 25% of national students were studying in the health field compared to only 13% of international students (Figure B6.3). Some countries devote more resources to research in certain fields and therefore benefit from strong international recognition, particularly at higher levels of tertiary education. Some programmes may prepare for jobs where students' career prospects do not depend on studying abroad or at a good university. Other programmes might only prepare students for jobs in the host country (e.g. for lawyers or accountants who have to know national law). They are then less attractive for students who are expecting to return to their home country or another country.

In contrast, internationally mobile students are more likely to enrol in STEM-related fields than national students in total across the OECD: 32% of mobile students chose a STEM subject, compared to 24% of national students. In Germany, Sweden and Türkiye, the difference between international and national students enrolled in STEM is more than 16 percentage points (Table B6.3). However, in certain disciplines, such as arts and humanities, the proportion of national and mobile students can be roughly equivalent. On average across OECD countries, around 12% of international and national students alike enrol in the art and humanities field (Figure B6.3).

Figure B6.3. Share of tertiary students enrolled in OECD countries, by field of study and mobility status (2021)

OECD average, in per cent



Note: Mobile students refer to students who are either international or foreign. STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023), Table B6.3. For more information see [Source section and Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[11]).

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Box B6.2. Tertiary education in Luxembourg

Historical background and current situation

Tertiary education in Luxembourg is relatively young, only developing at a significant scale in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. At this time, successive governments pursued a deliberate and proactive policy of developing tertiary education, leading to a unprecedented expansion of the sector.

In 2003, the University of Luxembourg was created by merging four existing institutes: the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg, the Institut Supérieur de Technologie, the Institut Supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherches Pédagogiques and the Institut d'Etudes Educatives et Sociales. The university's foundation law adopted the architecture recommended by the Bologna process. This has enabled Luxembourg to position itself firmly on the European academic scene and even play a pioneering role, as few other states had adapted their respective national legislation in this direction at the time. In 2009, the legal basis for short-cycle tertiary programmes, the *Brevet de technicien supérieur* (BTS), was created and programmes offered by specialised private tertiary institutions. In 2018, the University of Luxembourg Competence Centre was founded to provide continuous education at tertiary level.

The university today

The University of Luxembourg, which is still the only public university in the country, hosts close to 7 000 students from 135 countries. It offers 18 bachelor's programmes and 53 master's programmes in 3 faculties: the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine; the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance; and the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences. The programmes are closely tied to the labour-market needs of the country. Moreover, new programmes that contribute to the diversification of the economy are encouraged (e.g. an interdisciplinary space master's programme).

Before the university was founded, there were fears that the creation of a national university would mean resident students would no longer go abroad for their studies, but this fear turned out to be unfounded. As of 2023, 80% of the 20 000 resident students who applied for state financial aid for their studies were still studying abroad.

Short-cycle tertiary programmes

As of 2021/22, 856 students were enrolled in short-cycle tertiary programmes, and 336 degrees were awarded in 2022. Most programmes have a duration of two years and require 120 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. Courses take place in several high schools and focus on the following areas: business and management, industrial professions, craft trades, health professions, and applied arts and services. A school proposing a new BTS programme has to justify its expertise in the field and programmes are only accredited if they meet the labour-market needs of the country. Apart from the public BTS programmes, there are two specialised private institutions providing programmes in physiotherapy and sports as well as in business and management.

Definitions

Foreign students are those who are not citizens of the country in which they are enrolled and where the data are collected. Although they are counted as internationally mobile, they may be long-term residents or even be born in the "host" country. Therefore, for student mobility and bilateral comparisons, interpretations of data based on the concept of foreign students should be made with caution.

International students are those who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study. The country of origin of a tertiary student is defined according to the criteria of "country of upper

secondary education”, “country of prior education” or “country of usual residence” (see below). Depending on country-specific immigration legislation, mobility arrangements (such as the free mobility of individuals within the European Union and the European Economic Area) and data availability, international students may be defined as students who are not permanent or usual residents of their country of study, or alternatively as students who obtained their prior education in a different country.

Mobile students are students who are either international or foreign.

National students are students who are not internationally mobile. Their number is computed as the difference between the total number of students in each destination country and the number of international or foreign students.

The country of prior education is the country in which students obtained their upper secondary qualification (upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary completion with access to tertiary education programmes) or the qualification required to enrol in their current level of education. Where countries are unable to operationalise this definition, it is recommended that they use the country of usual or permanent residence to determine the country of origin. Where this too is not possible and no other suitable measure exists, the country of citizenship may be used.

Permanent or usual residence in the reporting country is defined according to national legislation. In practice, this means holding a student visa or permit, or electing a foreign country of domicile in the year prior to entering the education system of the country reporting the data. Country-specific operational definitions of international students are indicated in the tables as well as in (OECD, 2023^[11]), *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes*, (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>).

Methodology

Defining and identifying mobile students, as well as their types of learning mobility, are a key challenge for developing international education statistics, since current international and national statistical systems only report domestic educational activities undertaken within national boundaries (OECD, 2018^[21]).

Data on international and foreign students are therefore obtained from enrolments in their countries of destination. This is the same method used for collecting data on total enrolments, i.e. records of regularly enrolled students in an education programme. Students enrolled in countries that did not report to the OECD or to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics are not included and, for their countries of origin, the total number of national students enrolled abroad may be underestimated.

The total number of students enrolled abroad refers to the count of international students, unless data are not available, in which case the count of foreign students is used instead. Enrolment numbers are computed using a snapshot method, i.e. counting enrolled students at a specific day or period of the year.

This methodology has some limits. OECD international statistics on education tend to overlook the impact of distance and e-learning, especially fast-developing massively online open courses (MOOCs), students who commute from one country to another on a daily basis, and short-term exchange programmes that take place within an academic year and are therefore under the radar. Other concerns arise from the classification of students enrolled in foreign campuses and European schools in host countries' student cohorts.

Current data for international students can only help track student flows involving OECD and partner countries as receiving countries. It is not possible to assess extra-OECD flows and, in particular, the contribution of South-South exchanges to global brain circulation.

For more information see the [OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics](#) (OECD, 2018^[21]) and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023^[11]).

Source

Data refer to the 2020/21 academic year and are based on the UNESCO-Institute of Statistics (UIS)/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2022. Data for some countries may have a different reference year. For more information see [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023^[11]).

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) provided data 1) for Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa; 2) for all countries beyond the OECD and partner countries; and 3) for OECD countries for the periods not covered by OECD statistics (2005 and 2010-21).

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Indicator B6 Tables

Tables Indicator B6. What is the profile of internationally mobile students?

Table B6.1	Share of international or foreign students in tertiary education in OECD and partner/accession countries (2019, 2020 and 2021)
Table B6.2	Profile of international and foreign students (2021)
Table B6.3	Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by field of study, by mobility status (2021)
WEB Table B6.4	<i>Distribution of international and foreign students by country of origin (2021)</i>
WEB Table B6.5	<i>Distribution of international and foreign students by country of destination (2021)</i>

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Cut-off date for the data: 17 June 2023. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

Table B6.1. Share of international or foreign students in tertiary education in OECD and partner/accession countries (2019, 2020 and 2021)

Reading the fourth column of the upper section of the table (international): 22% of all students in tertiary education in Australia are international students and 18% of all students in tertiary education in Switzerland are international students.

Reading the fourth column of the lower section of the table (foreign): 17% of all students in tertiary education in Canada are not Canadian citizens, and 4% of all students in tertiary education in Korea are not Korean citizens.

	Number of international or foreign students (in thousands)			International or foreign student enrolment as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment			Percentage of national tertiary students enrolled abroad	Number of international or foreign students per national student abroad	Number of international or foreign students for every hundred national students home and abroad	Percentage of international or foreign students coming from neighbouring countries	International education market share
	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)					
							(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
OECD countries											
	International students										
Australia	378	458	509	22	26	28	1	31	28	4	6
Austria	82	76	75	19	18	18	7	3	21	60	1
Belgium ¹	53	54	52	10	10	10	4	3	11	49	1
Chile	17	13	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	31	0
Czech Republic	51	48	46	16	15	14	4	4	18	46	1
Denmark	31	31	32	10	10	10	2	5	11	37	0
Estonia	5	6	5	12	12	11	8	1	12	34	0
Finland	25	24	24	8	8	8	4	2	8	12	0
France	253	252	246	9	9	9	4	2	9	13	4
Germany	376	369	333	11	11	10	4	3	12	14	6
Greece	24	22	28	3	3	3	5	1	3	72	0
Iceland	2	2	2	8	9	8	12	1	8	9	0
Ireland	23	24	25	9	10	11	7	1	10	8	0
Israel	14	13	11	3	3	3	6	1	5	9	0
Italy	72	59	55	3	3	3	4	1	3	17	1
Japan	216	223	203	6	6	5	1	7	6	54	3
Latvia	10	10	8	13	13	10	7	2	14	14	0
Lithuania	8	7	7	7	6	6	9	1	7	22	0
Luxembourg	4	4	3	49	48	49	78	0	22	47	0
Mexico	51	43	33	1	1	1	1	2	1	43	1
Netherlands	136	125	116	14	13	13	2	7	16	25	2
New Zealand	31	44	53	12	17	21	2	7	13	10	0
Norway	13	13	12	4	4	4	5	1	4	16	0
Poland	74	62	55	5	4	4	2	3	6	61	1
Portugal	47	44	36	12	12	10	6	2	12	2	1
Slovenia	8	6	5	9	8	7	4	2	10	47	0
Spain	81	82	77	4	4	4	2	2	4	29	1
Sweden	33	32	31	7	7	7	3	2	7	18	1
Switzerland	61	58	56	18	18	18	7	3	21	54	1
United Kingdom	601	551	489	20	20	19	2	15	25	8	9
	Foreign students										
Canada	313	323	279	17	18	16	3	6	20	3	5
Colombia	5	5	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	69	0
Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	68	0
Hungary	38	38	35	13	13	13	5	3	14	21	1
Korea	119	112	99	4	4	3	3	1	4	52	2
Slovak Republic	15	14	13	11	10	9	20	0	10	62	0
Türkiye	224	185	155	3	2	2	1	4	3	51	4
United States	833	957	977	5	5	5	1	8	5	6	13
OECD total	4 325	4 389	4 201	6	7	6	2	3	7	20	68
Partner and/or accession countries											
	International students										
Bulgaria	18	18	16	8	8	7	11	1	8	46	0
Croatia	4	5	6	3	3	3	6	0	3	60	0
Romania	34	33	30	6	6	6	6	1	6	42	1
	Foreign students										
Argentina ²	m	122	116	m	4	4	m	m	m	48	2
Brazil	22	22	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	38	0
China	222	225	201	0	0	0	m	m	m	30	3
India	48	49	47	0	0	0	m	m	m	49	1
Indonesia ²	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	73	0
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Saudi Arabia	63	69	73	4	4	4	m	m	m	39	1
South Africa ²	m	36	41	m	3	3	m	m	m	47	1
EU25 total	1 479	1 418	1 337	11	11	10	4	2	8	26	24

Note: See StatLink and Box B6.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[11]).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/ml9tis>

Table B6.2. Profile of international and foreign students (2021)

	International or foreign student enrolment as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment				Share of female students among international or foreign students					"Distribution of international or foreign students by region of origin"					
	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or equivalent	Doctoral or equivalent	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or equivalent	Doctoral or equivalent	All tertiary	Africa	North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Asia	Europe	Oceania
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
OECD countries															
International students															
Australia	32	13	38	33	46	50	50	45	49	2	1	5	84	3	1
Austria	2	19	25	39	69	54	55	49	54	2	1	2	9	84	0
Belgium ¹	6	7	17	26	74	64	55	44	59	15	1	3	10	59	0
Chile	2	1	4	24	59	53	54	49	55	0	0	95	0	2	0
Czech Republic	5	13	19	24	60	52	56	45	53	2	1	1	18	78	0
Denmark	9	5	20	36	52	55	55	47	54	1	3	2	13	80	1
Estonia	a	7	17	29	a	41	47	39	44	10	3	3	33	51	0
Finland	a	6	11	26	a	44	46	44	45	9	3	3	41	32	0
France	3	7	13	37	50	53	49	47	50	53	2	6	22	16	0
Germany	0	7	17	22	a	44	46	47	46	10	2	5	42	32	0
Greece	a	3	1	2	a	53	53	43	52	3	1	0	69	20	0
Iceland	19	5	11	39	64	69	63	49	64	3	14	4	19	60	0
Ireland	3	7	16	37	47	55	54	51	54	6	17	2	46	27	1
Israel	2	3	6	12	50	58	58	46	56	3	18	6	19	36	1
Italy	0	3	4	10	a	54	55	44	54	14	2	8	35	30	0
Japan	11	3	11	22	41	45	51	45	45	1	1	1	95	2	0
Latvia	1	11	27	13	26	25	45	30	35	2	1	0	52	45	0
Lithuania	a	5	14	8	a	45	49	43	47	9	2	1	36	52	0
Luxembourg	10	24	76	91	61	57	54	43	52	8	1	3	13	73	0
Mexico	1	1	3	8	m	m	m	m	m	1	45	51	1	3	0
Netherlands	3	12	20	48	51	55	56	45	55	2	2	2	16	60	0
New Zealand	9	9	23	47	36	52	56	50	50	2	3	2	78	4	11
Norway	1	2	7	22	46	54	48	43	49	8	5	4	40	40	1
Poland	9	5	5	10	56	51	53	51	51	7	1	1	21	67	0
Portugal	13	8	14	33	46	53	55	47	52	37	1	40	6	16	0
Slovenia	4	9	10	21	46	58	60	53	57	1	0	1	5	93	0
Spain	1	2	9	19	61	54	52	48	52	6	3	43	10	38	0
Sweden	0	3	12	36	45	60	50	44	51	5	2	3	30	36	0
Switzerland	0	10	30	57	a	50	52	47	50	4	3	4	14	70	0
United Kingdom	4	16	39	41	59	52	52	48	52	7	4	1	60	26	0
Foreign students															
Canada	24	14	18	35	45	49	45	41	47	10	3	5	73	7	1
Colombia	0	0	1	2	48	53	52	35	52	1	2	89	2	7	0
Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Hungary	1	10	21	28	60	47	53	44	49	11	1	2	43	42	0
Korea	1	3	10	17	40	57	63	51	56	2	1	1	95	2	0
Slovak Republic	2	10	13	12	42	54	56	33	54	1	0	0	9	89	0
Türkiye	1	3	8	7	39	35	39	33	36	17	0	0	72	10	0
United States	1	4	11	22	52	47	47	34	46	5	3	9	75	7	1
OECD total	3	5	14	24	47	48	49	43	48	10	3	6	57	22	1
Partner and/or accession countries															
International students															
Bulgaria	a	4	17	9	a	40	51	47	47	2	1	0	15	82	0
Croatia	0	2	3	8	a	52	58	51	55	1	3	1	6	89	0
Romania	a	4	11	4	a	51	49	37	49	9	1	0	18	72	0
Foreign students															
Argentina ²	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	0	5	89	1	3	0
Brazil	0	0	1	2	0	47	38	38	45	23	4	50	10	11	0
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	23	6	0	69	2	0
Indonesia ²	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	4	0	3	86	3	4
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	25	1	0	66	3	0
South Africa ²	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	84	2	0	3	3	0
EU25 total	2	8	16	25	54	51	51	47	51	16	2	7	27	42	0

Note: See StatLink and Box B6.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023^[11]).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Table B6.3. Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by field of study, by mobility status (2021)

	Education		Arts and humanities		Social sciences, journalism and information		Business, administration and law		STEM		Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary		Health and welfare		Services	
	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National	Mobile	National
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
OECD countries																
	International students															
Australia	5	11	6	11	2	9	44	22	29	19	1	1	13	25	1	2
Austria	5	14	14	10	16	7	21	25	32	29	1	1	9	10	1	4
Belgium	3	9	13	8	11	10	13	24	19	19	5	2	35	25	1	2
Chile	5	10	4	4	6	5	34	22	27	27	2	3	19	24	4	5
Czech Republic	2	14	10	9	10	8	21	19	33	24	3	4	18	14	4	7
Denmark	2	8	9	9	9	9	27	23	38	22	2	1	9	25	4	2
Estonia	3	8	14	13	10	6	34	19	30	32	4	2	4	14	0	6
Finland	3	6	10	11	4	7	21	18	46	33	1	2	11	19	4	4
France	1	3	14	13	10	7	31	26	35	25	0	2	6	14	2	10
Germany	2	9	12	12	7	8	18	24	51	34	2	1	7	9	1	3
Greece	4	5	16	13	14	13	14	20	33	34	3	5	12	8	4	3
Iceland	10	16	40	8	10	17	6	20	25	18	2	1	5	17	1	3
Ireland	1	7	13	14	7	6	18	23	31	27	1	2	25	16	2	4
Israel	14	19	13	7	16	17	16	15	29	32	1	0	12	9	0	0
Italy	1	6	21	17	16	14	15	18	29	25	2	2	14	14	1	3
Japan ¹	m	8 ^d	m	17 ^d	m	29 ^d	m	x	m	19 ^d	m	3 ^d	m	18 ^d	m	6 ^d
Latvia	1	13	3	8	4	12	38	21	21	30	1	2	27	11	6	0
Lithuania	0	4	11	10	16	9	24	27	19	26	2	3	27	19	1	2
Luxembourg	4	19	6	12	13	10	36	25	31	22	6	0	2	12	1	0
Mexico	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Netherlands	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
New Zealand	7	8	8	13	8	13	28	19	34	25	2	2	9	18	4	3
Norway	4	16	19	9	12	12	16	20	33	19	1	1	11	18	4	4
Poland	2	8	11	9	16	11	26	23	17	23	1	2	15	15	11	7
Portugal	4	3	11	10	13	11	25	22	27	29	2	2	13	16	5	7
Slovenia	4	10	8	9	14	9	24	18	34	29	1	3	7	15	8	8
Spain	4	11	10	11	12	10	25	20	21	25	3	1	22	16	4	6
Sweden	3	14	15	14	13	11	11	14	46	27	1	1	11	17	1	2
Switzerland	5	11	13	8	12	8	18	26	40	24	0	1	9	18	3	3
United Kingdom	2	5	12	13	13	13	34	22	29	22	1	1	9	21	0	0
	Foreign students															
Canada	1	6	7	10	10	12	28	20	41	27	1	1	6	17	5	5
Colombia	7	8	9	4	14	11	26	36	23	28	2	3	16	7	2	3
Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Hungary	m	13	m	8	m	9	m	26	m	25	m	3	m	9	m	6
Korea	3	6	22	16	13	6	31	13	16	34	0	2	4	15	11	9
Slovak Republic	8	14	8	7	7	10	13	19	19	22	3	2	38	18	4	7
Türkiye	5	3	12	13	14	14	17	33	31	13	2	2	15	14	4	8
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
OECD total	3	7	12	11	13	11	26	24	32	24	1	2	10	15	3	5
Partner and/or accession countries																
	International students															
Bulgaria	3	12	5	9	6	9	8	22	10	26	4	3	59	11	5	8
Croatia	2	7	8	8	7	6	19	25	30	28	4	3	23	13	7	10
Romania	1	4	8	9	7	9	17	25	17	33	4	5	43	12	3	4
	Foreign students															
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil	12	18	8	3	8	6	16	29	29	17	5	3	17	21	4	3
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
EU25 total	3	9	11	10	9	10	22	22	29	27	2	2	19	15	3	5

Note: See StatLink and Box B6.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[11]).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Box B6.3. Notes for Indicator B6 tables

Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by field of study, by mobility status (2021)

Table B6.1. Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by field of study, by mobility status (2021)

Additional columns showing the exact number of international or foreign students for each year are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

1. Data on short-cycle tertiary programmes are based on nationality and refer to the Flemish community only.
2. Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Argentina and South Africa; 2018 for Indonesia.

Table B6.2. Profile of international and foreign students (2021)

Additional columns showing the distribution of international or foreign students by region of origin and level of education are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

1. Data on short-cycle tertiary programmes are based on nationality and refer to the Flemish community only.
2. Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Argentina and South Africa; 2018 for Indonesia.

Table B6.3. Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by field of study, by mobility status (2021)

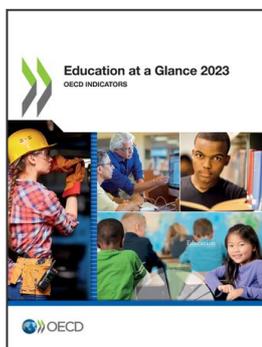
STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Mobile students refer to students who are either international or foreign. See Definitions and Methodology sections for more information. Additional columns showing data for students enrolled in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics; information and communication technologies; and engineering, manufacturing and construction are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

1. All fields of study include the field of information and communication technologies and the field of social sciences, journalism and information includes business, administration and law.

For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023^[11]).

Data and more breakdowns are available in the Education at a Glance Database (<http://stats.oecd.org/>).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.



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