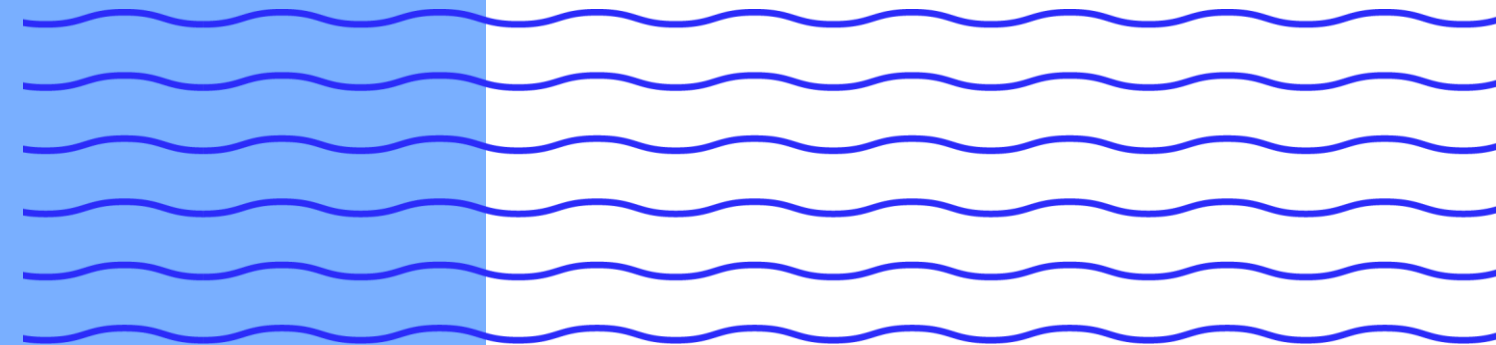# This week

Mond   **The free speech agenda and the free speech bill**
Tue   **Making a difference on student housing**
Wed   **Improving the experience for international students**
Thu   **The secrets of political thinking**
Fri   **Hidden costs and student costs campaigns**

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Improving the experience for international students

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Highlights in 2019-20

THERE WERE **538,615** INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS¹ STUDYING IN THE UK, MAKING UP...

27.5%

of the total student population in the UK

15.7%

of all undergraduates

40.3%

of all postgraduates

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

453,390

students are studying for a UK degree overseas

OUTWARD STUDENT MOBILITY

36,225

students studied, worked, or volunteered overseas as part of their degree in 2019–20

IN 2020, INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS...

59.3%

of all UK publications were the result of international research collaboration (compared to 39.8% in 2010)

INTERNATIONAL STAFF

20.9%

of all staff at UK universities are international

Where do international students study?
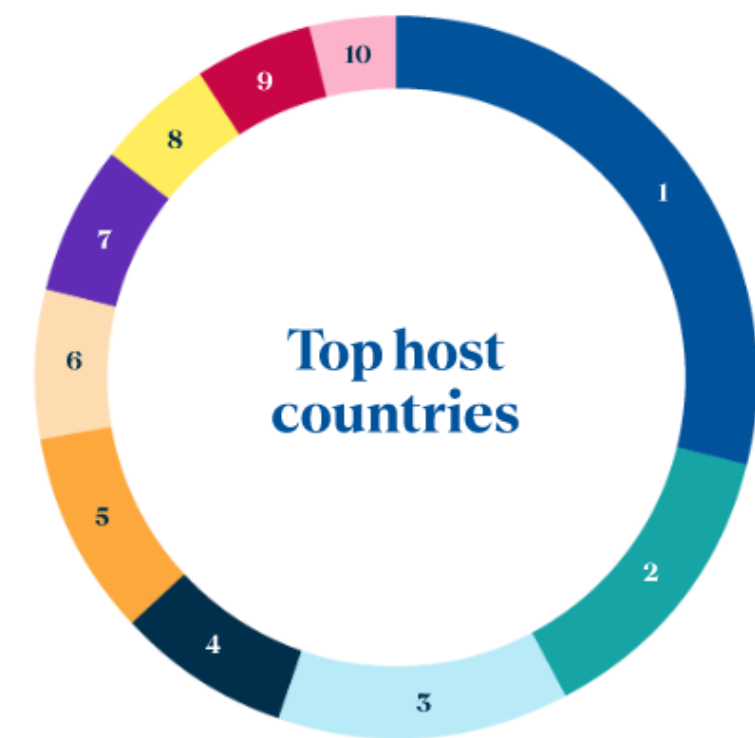
In 2019, the UK was still the second most popular destination in the world for international students[2]. However, the UK's annual growth rate has been modest, at 3.8% between 2018 and 2019. In contrast, the UK's competitor countries are increasing their market share more rapidly.

Prior to the pandemic, Australia and Canada were expanding fastest among the English-speaking destinations, with a growth rate of 16.6% and 6.9% respectively between 2018 and 2019.

The difference in international student numbers between the UK and Australia in 2018 was very slim, with the UK hosting only about 7,600 more international students than Australia[3]. Moreover, Japan, China and Russia grew their market share by 11.2%, 13.5%, and 4.7% respectively from 2017 to 2018.

1	United States	17.7%	6	France	4.0%
2	United Kingdom	8.1%	7	Canada	4.0%
3	Australia	8.0%	8	Japan	3.3%
4	Russia	4.7%	9	China	3.2%
5	Germany	5.6%	10	Turkey	2.2%

Top host countries

Source: UNESCO, 2021

FIGURE 1 · TOP 10 HOST COUNTRIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2017 AND PERCENTAGE SINCE 2017

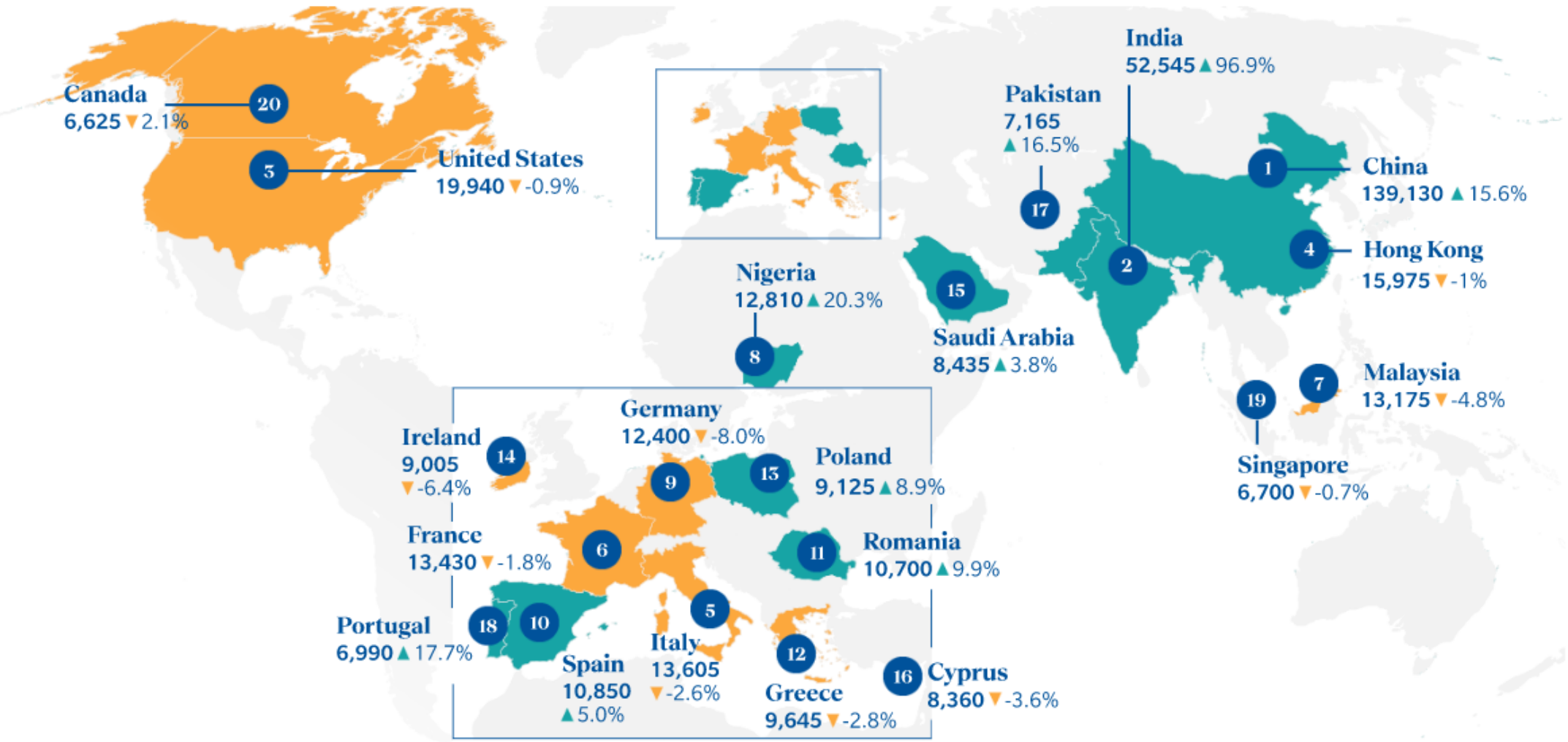|				
1	United States	987,314	(984,898 in 2017)	▲ 0.2%
2	United Kingdom	452,079	(435,734 in 2017)	▲ 3.8%
3	Australia	444,514	(381,202 in 2017)	▲ 16.6%
4	Russia	262,416	(277,623 in 2017)	▲ 12.3%
5	Germany	311,738	(258,873 in 2017)	▼ -11.3%
6	France	229,623	(258,380 in 2017)	▲ 1.6%
7	Canada	224,548	(209,979 in 2017)	▲ 6.9%
8	Japan	182,748	(164,338 in 2017)	▲ 11.2%
9	China	178,271	(157,108 in 2017)	▲ 13.5%
10	Turkey	125,138	(108,076 in 2017)	▲ 15.8%

[2] UIS.stat, last accessed June 2021

[3] Why Aren't We Second? Pt.2, UUKi, available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/international-student-recruitment-why-0

Where do international students come from?

In 2019–20, the top sending countries and territories for international students were China, India, the US, Hong Kong and Italy. Chinese students at UK higher education institutions made up 28.9% of all international students. The fastest-growing senders were India, with 96.9% increase since 2018-19, Nigeria with 20.3%, Portugal with 17.7% and Pakistan with 16.5%. The top sending countries within the EU were Italy, France and Germany. All three showed a slight decrease compared to 2018–19.

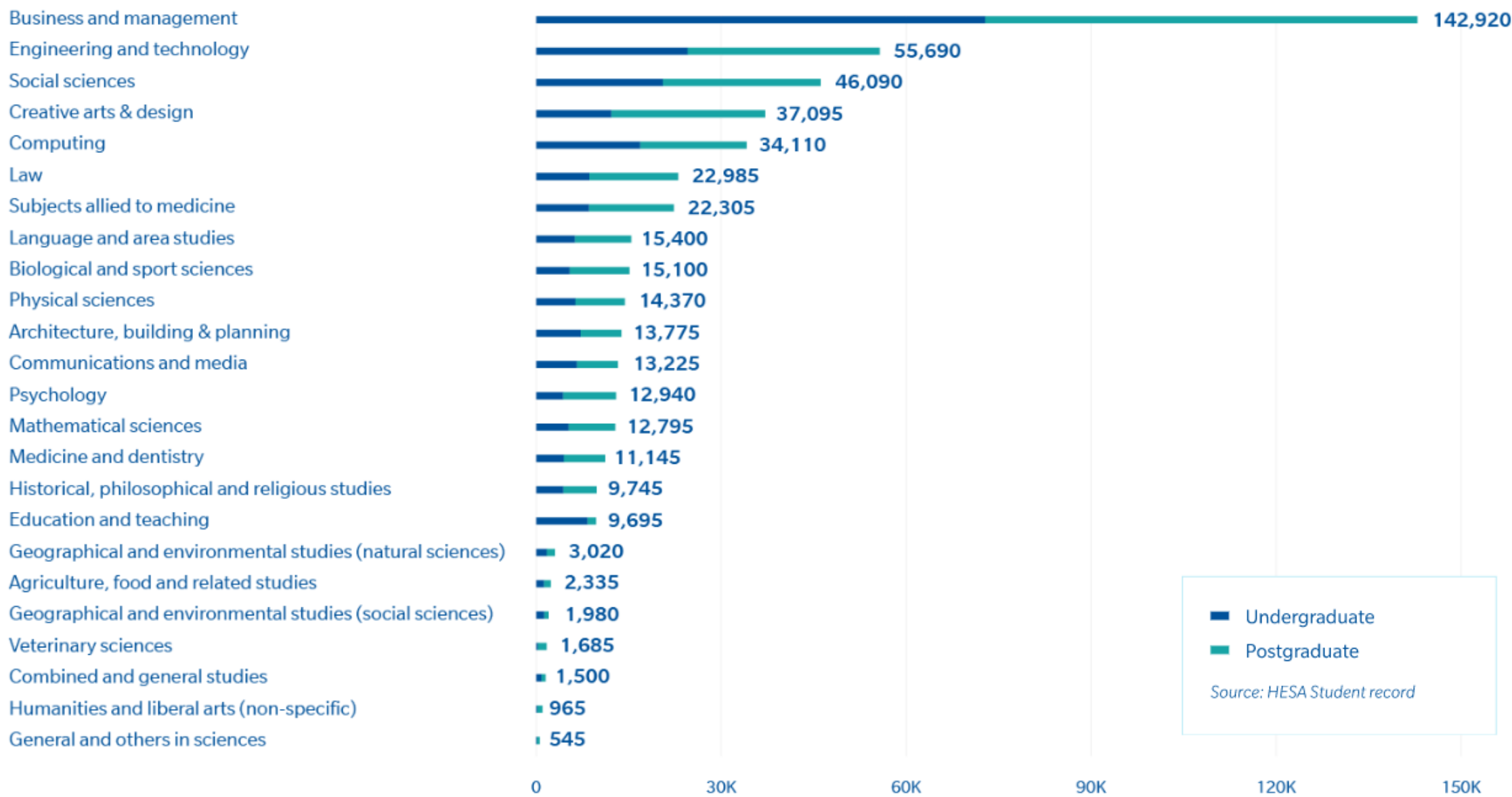**FIGURE 4** · TOP 20 DOMICILES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK 2019–20 AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE SINCE 2018–19

Canada 6,625 ▼ 2.1%

United States 19,940 ▼ -0.9%

India 52,545 ▲ 96.9%

Pakistan 7,165 ▲ 16.5%

China 139,130 ▲ 15.6%

Hong Kong 15,975 ▼ -1%

Nigeria 12,810 ▲ 20.3%

Saudi Arabia 8,435 ▲ 3.8%

Malaysia 13,175 ▼ -4.8%

Singapore 6,700 ▼ -0.7%

Germany 12,400 ▼ -8.0%

Poland 9,125 ▲ 8.9%

Ireland 9,005 ▼ -6.4%

France 13,430 ▼ -1.8%

Romania 10,700 ▲ 9.9%

Portugal 6,990 ▲ 17.7%

Spain 10,850 ▲ 5.0%

Italy 13,605 ▼ -2.6%

Greece 9,645 ▼ -2.8%

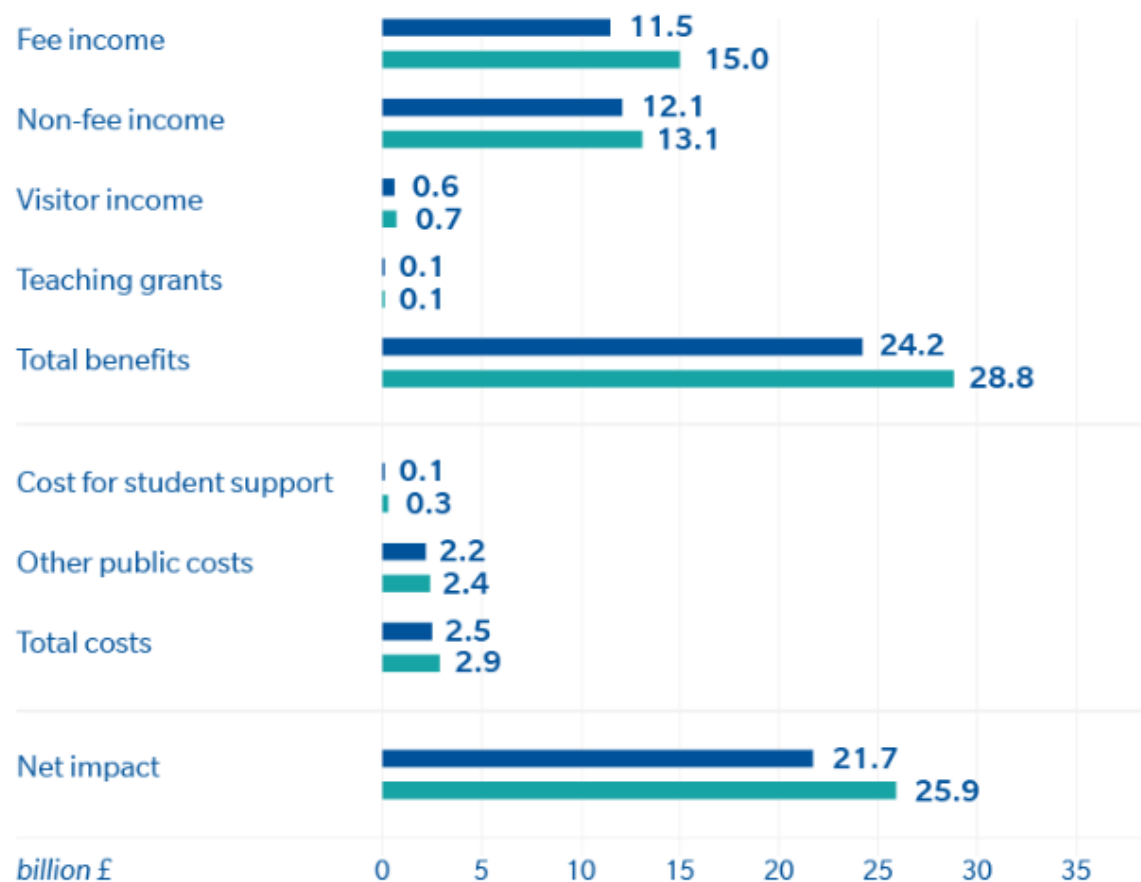**Cyprus** 8,360 ▼ -3.6%

What do international students study?

In 2019–20, international student numbers were highest in the subjects of business and management, engineering and technology and social sciences. International students accounted for 43.8% of business and management students and 39.0% of engineering and technology students and 22.1% of social studies students.

Subject	Total
Business and management	142,920
Engineering and technology	55,690
Social sciences	46,090
Creative arts & design	37,095
Computing	34,110
Law	22,985
Subjects allied to medicine	22,305
Language and area studies	15,400
Biological and sport sciences	15,100
Physical sciences	14,370
Architecture, building & planning	13,775
Communications and media	13,225
Psychology	12,940
Mathematical sciences	12,795
Medicine and dentistry	11,145
Historical, philosophical and religious studies	9,745
Education and teaching	9,695
Geographical and environmental studies (natural sciences)	3,020
Agriculture, food and related studies	2,335
Geographical and environmental studies (social sciences)	1,980
Veterinary sciences	1,685
Combined and general studies	1,500
Humanities and liberal arts (non-specific)	965
General and others in sciences	545

Legend:
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate

Source: HESA Student record

What is the economic impact of international students in the UK?

FIGURE 7 · TOTAL BENEFITS, TOTAL COSTS AND NET IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK 2015-16 VS 2018-19

	2015-16	2018-19
Fee income	11.5	15.0
Non-fee income	12.1	13.1
Visitor income	0.6	0.7
Teaching grants	0.1	0.1
Total benefits	24.2	28.8
Cost for student support	0.1	0.3
Other public costs	2.2	2.4
Total costs	2.5	2.9
Net impact	21.7	25.9

billion £ — axis: 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35

Legend:
- 2015-16
- 2018-19

Source: The costs and benefits of international higher education students to the UK economy, last accessed: 16 September 2021

Welcoming a new cohort of international students every year brings economic benefits across the UK. In 2018-19, the total benefit to the UK economy per student from the EU was £94,000 and per student from outside the EU £109,000.[4,5]

Approximately £22.9 billion of this was generated by non-EU students, and £6.2 billion by EU students. The largest benefit was associated with fees (£15.0 billion), followed by non-fee income (£13.1 billion) and income from students' visitors, such as family members and friends (£0.7 billion).

In 2015–16, non-tuition fee income from international students (£12.1 billion in 2018–19 prices) exceeded fee income (£11.5 billion associated with tuition fee income). The reverse pattern was seen in 2018-19 where non-tuition fee income was £13.1 billion and fee income was £15.0 billion.

After considering costs associated with teaching and international students, the net economic benefit was £25.9 billion in 2018–19, up from £21.7 billion in 2015–16 (a 20% increase in real terms).

The total benefit to the UK economy was approximately £95,000 per EU domiciled student and £110,000 for a non-EU student.

[4] The figure for 2015–16 has been converted to 2018–19 prices, to allow a like-for-like comparison.

[5] The costs and benefits of international higher education students to the UK economy, available at: https://londoneconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LE-HEPI-UUKi-Impact-of-intl-HE-students-on-the-UK-economy-Summary-Report-September-2021.pdf

Issues!

Theresa May and the "hostile environment"

- "The Home Office doesn't do incentives: it Cracks Down, it Tightens Up, it Sends a Strong Message"

- A decade's worth of tightening restrictions on international students...

- Race relations and public attitudes to immigration

Issues!

Brexit

- Culture wars
- EU students after 2021
- Erasmus+
- "Mix" on UK campuses
- Viability of some programmes/courses
- Science and Horizon 2020

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Financialisation

- Hypermarketisation
- Economic judgments and impacts
- Questions over how UK higher education is sold
- Antics of agents around the world
- Hostile environment and impacts on finances of international students
- Property and accommodation

Latest Non-EU domiciled student intake against vice-chancellor total remuneration
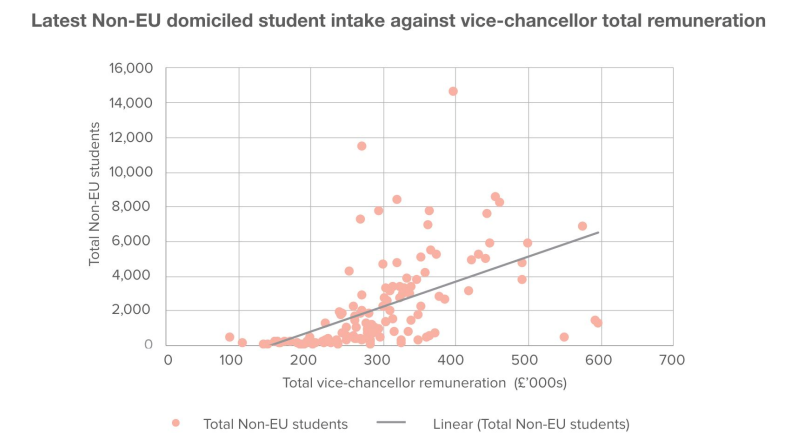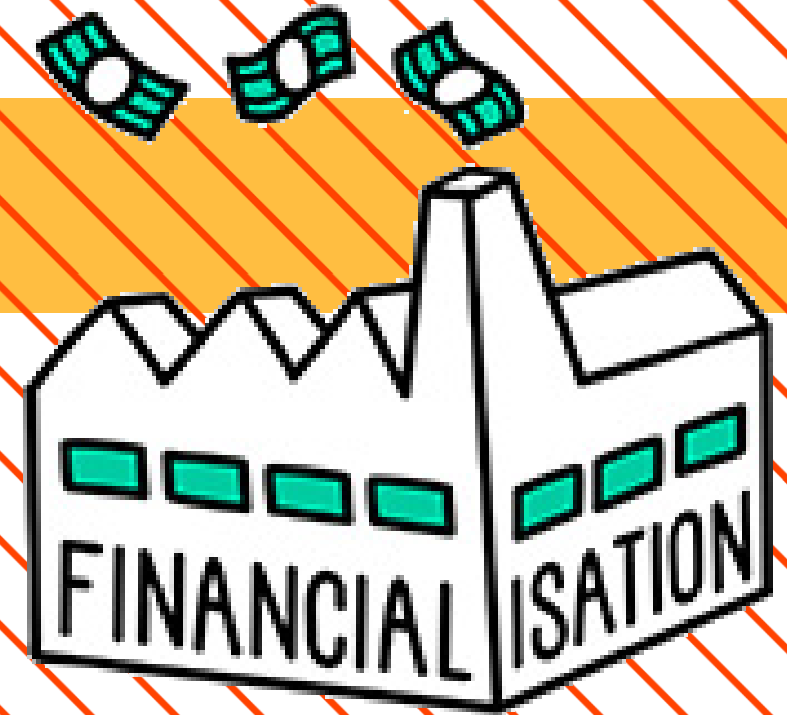
Financialisation

- Hyp
- Econ
- Que sold
- Anti
- Host of in
- Prop

Latest Non-EU domiciled student intake against vice-chancellor total remuneration
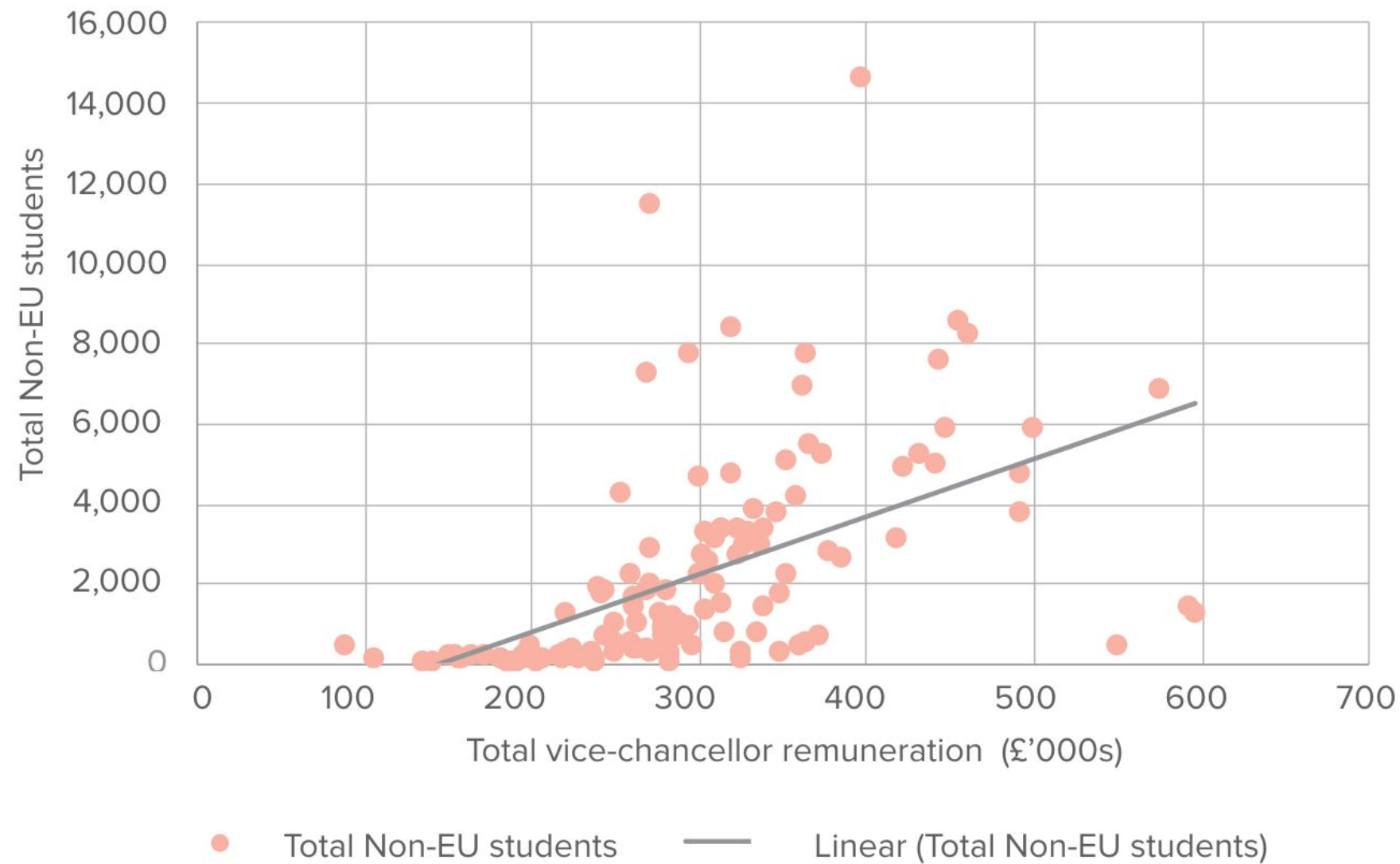
Today

- Softening of hostile environment
- Britain "open to the world"
- But major political issues with China
- Big changes with Europe
- Reputation on health and "competence" faltering
- Still strong education reputation

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- Let's work on Access and Participation
- Look at the BME attainment gap!
- Oh, a lot of that is international students
- Can we find out how much is home students?
- Look at the (home) BME attainment gap!
- Let's find out why
- Yeah, but…

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a national exercise, introduced by the government in England. It assesses excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study.

How are the TEF ratings decided?

The ratings are decided by an independent panel of experts, including academics, students, and employer representatives.

Assessments are based on a set of metrics using national data and written evidence submitted by the university or college. The metrics cover continuation rates, student satisfaction, and employment outcomes for undergraduate students. The assessment takes into account each course provider's particular mix of students – their characteristics, entry qualifications, and subjects studied.

Continuation

We use this data to tell you what students are doing one year after starting the course. The number of students still on the course is called the 'continuation rate'.

It's not unusual for some students to leave during their first year. If the continuation rate is much lower than other courses this could be a sign that the course is not meeting students' expectations.
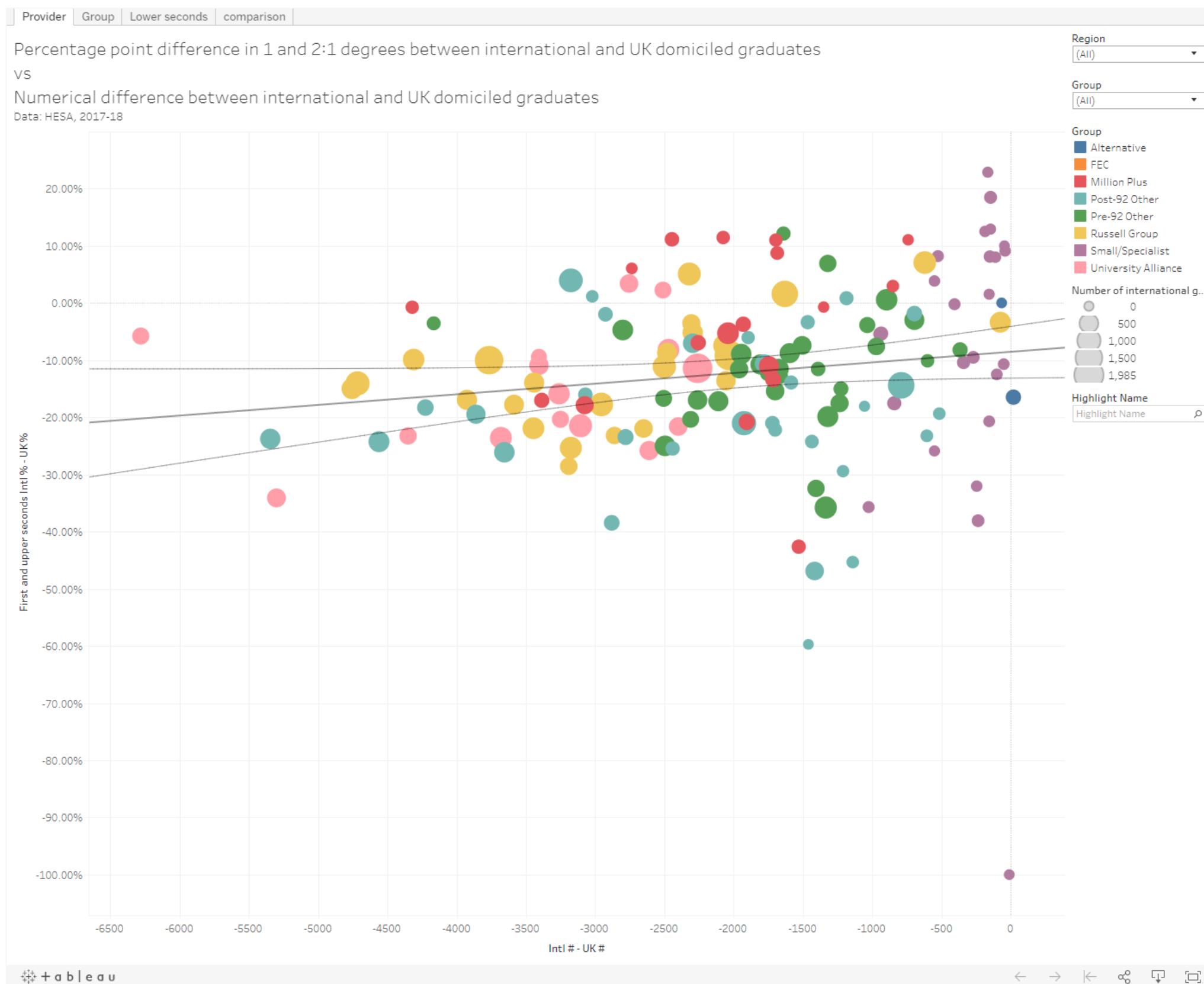
Current students

Students as objects of data
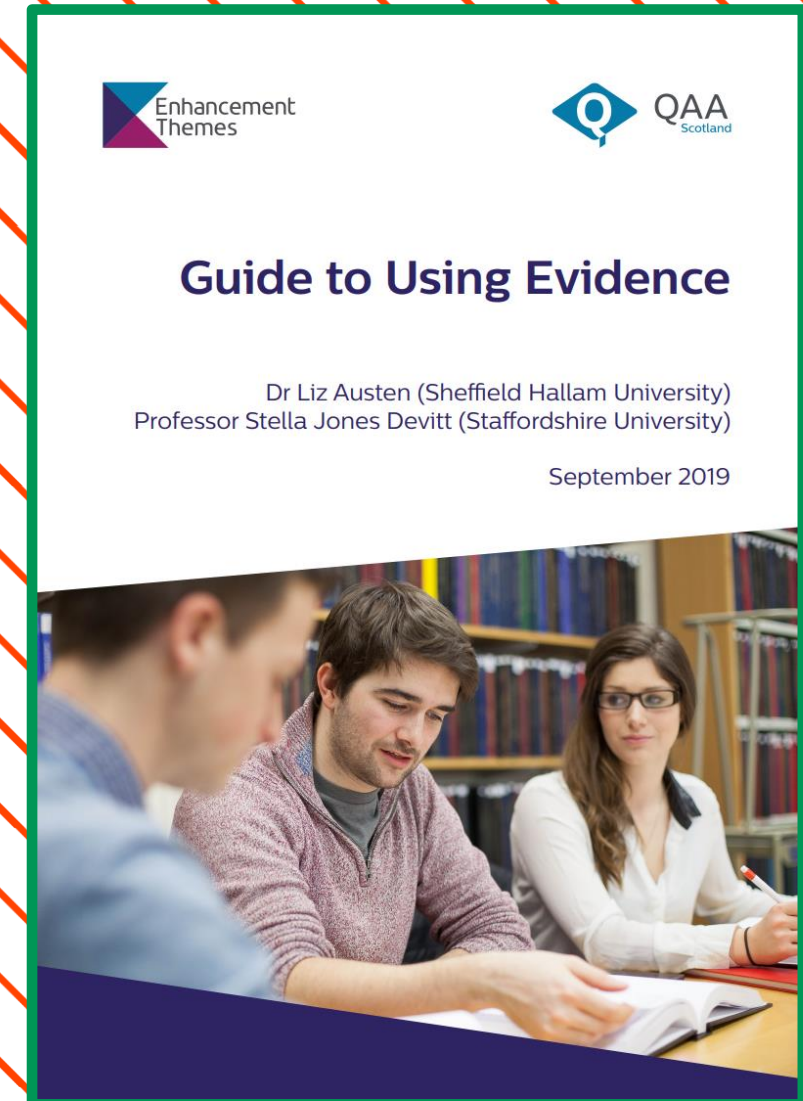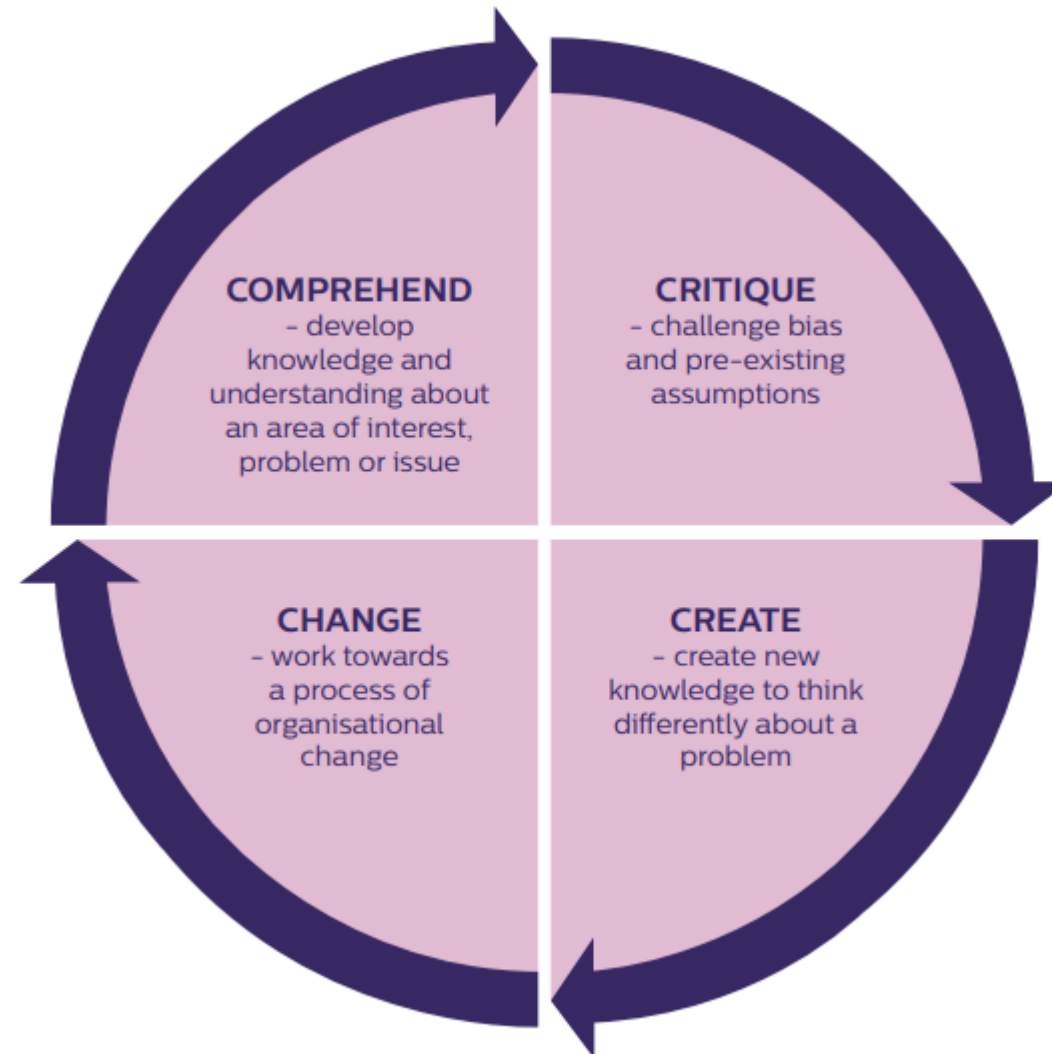
Students as commissioners and users of evidence

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Gap?

National attainment gap (good honours) around 10% points

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BME attainment gap

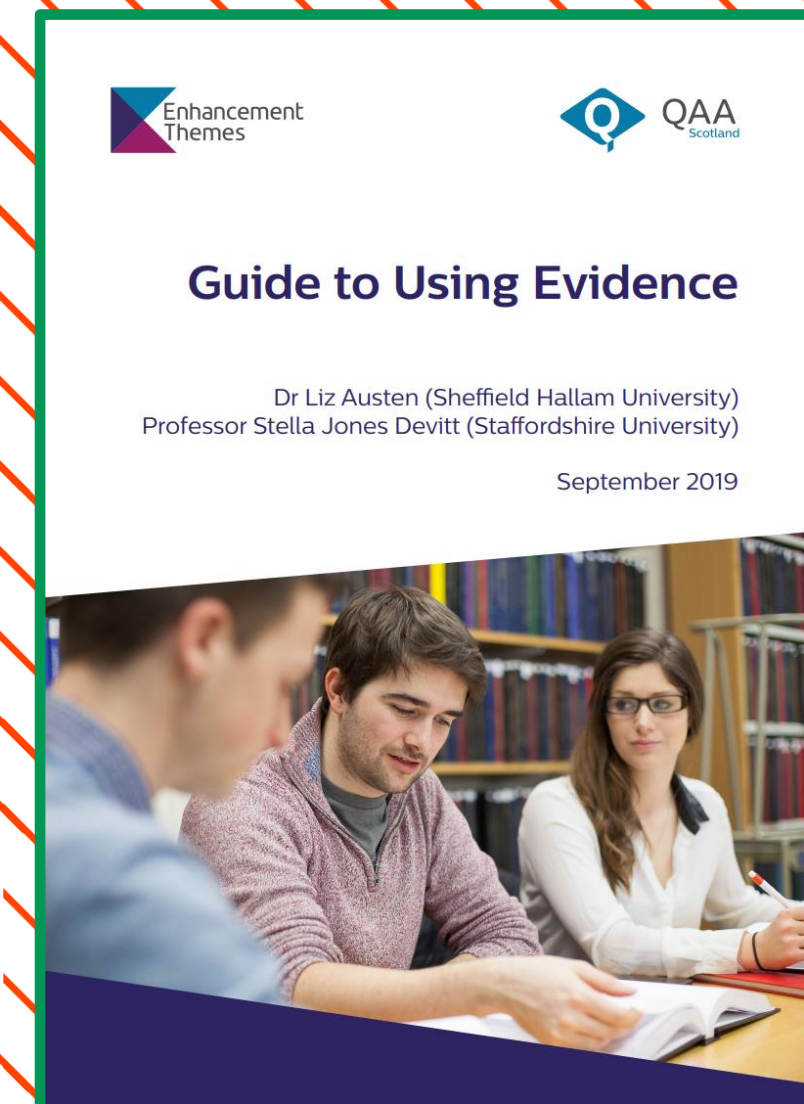- Measured, published, communicated to applicants

- Noticed at institutional (and deeper) level

- Hypotheses testing – understanding why?

- "Quality" of student v "Quality" of support & environment

- Interventions deployed

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Using evidence

COMPREHEND
– develop knowledge and understanding about an area of interest, problem or issue

CRITIQUE
– challenge bias and pre-existing assumptions

CHANGE
– work towards a process of organisational change

CREATE
– create new knowledge to think differently about a problem

Guide to Using Evidence

Dr Liz Austen (Sheffield Hallam University)
Professor Stella Jones Devitt (Staffordshire University)

September 2019

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Qualitative data

Quantitative Survey Data	Qualitative Survey Data
Can tell you what your respondents are doing	Can tell you why your respondents are doing it
Will ask questions that have pre-determined answers designed by the researcher (closed questions)	Will ask questions which allow the respondent to add their own comments (open questions)
Will have a limited number of possible answers	Can offer additional answers by adding comments via an 'Other' response option
Answers (variables) become units of measurement and are analysed numerically, for example frequency counts, averages or measures of dispertion (range of lowest and highest nummerical scores)	Answers are analysed by reading written comments from all respondents and grouping them into themes
Results for each variable can be presented in charts or tables or analysed together to show relationships between variables	Results can be described as key themes with quotes taken from respondents to help illustrate key points. Qualitative data can also be analysed quantitatively (content analysis – a frequency count of key words or phrases)
Findings can be biased by the way the researcher has designed the questions and possible answers	Findings can be biased during the interpretation of the written answers

Enhancement Themes

QAA Scotland

Guide to Using Evidence

Dr Liz Austen (Sheffield Hallam University)
Professor Stella Jones Devitt (Staffordshire University)

September 2019

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What's out there?

- National student survey
- UK Enhancement Survey
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
- The International Student Barometer™
- Key outcomes – good honours, continuation

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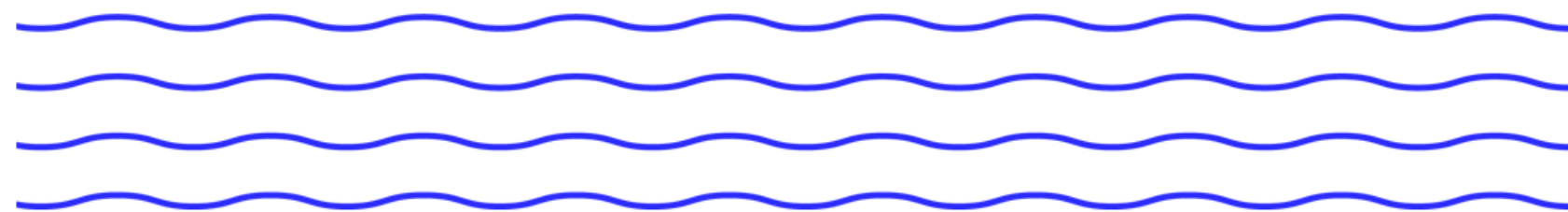# If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me

77%
AGREE

17%
NEITHER

6%
DISAGREE

If I wanted company or to socialise, there are people I can call on

75% 15% 10%

AGREE NEITHER DISAGREE

Non EU students are almost 10% points less likely to agree that there are people they can call on.
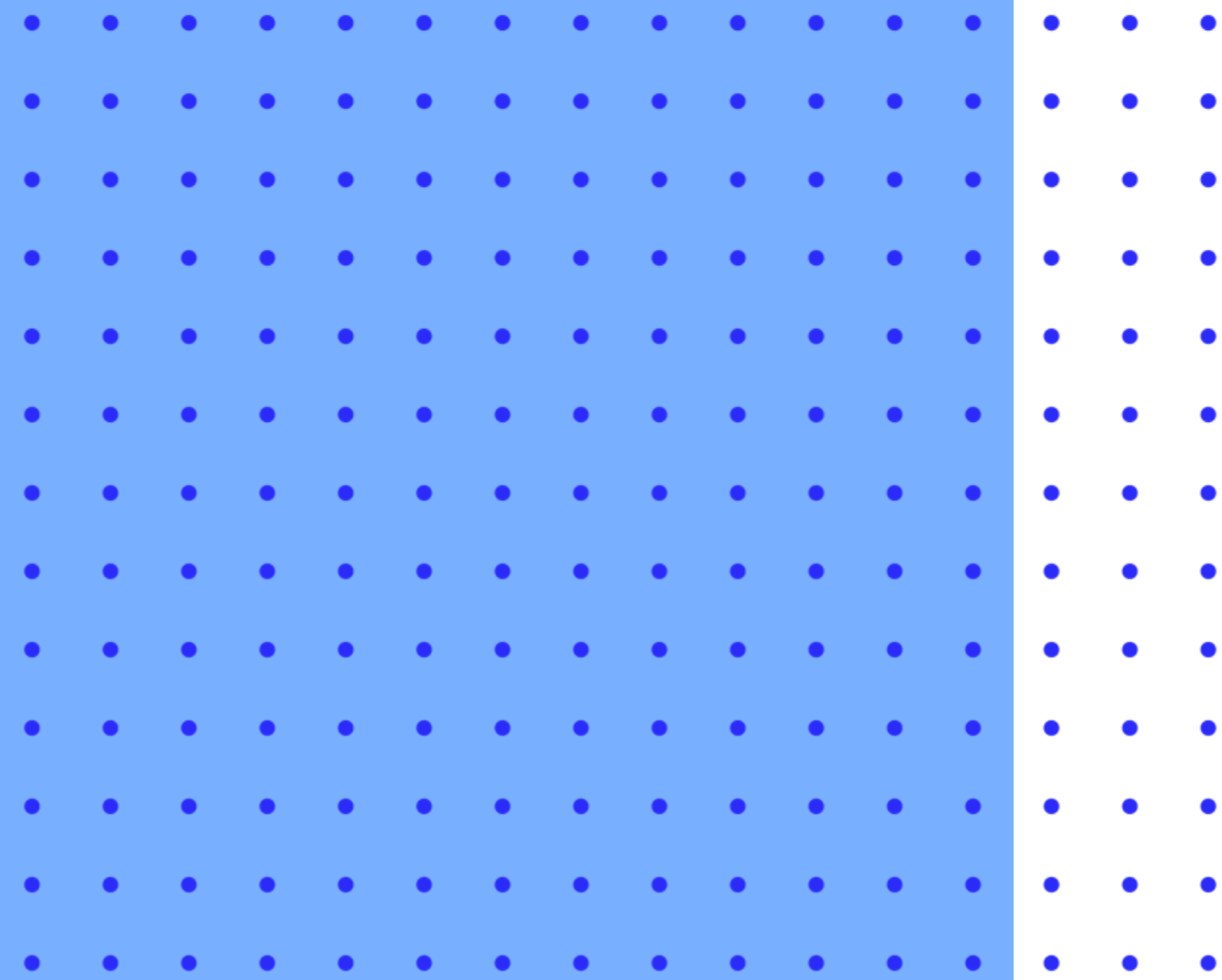
Which of the following statements is most like you at university?

21.4%

LOTS

I have a large group of friends at university

61.9%
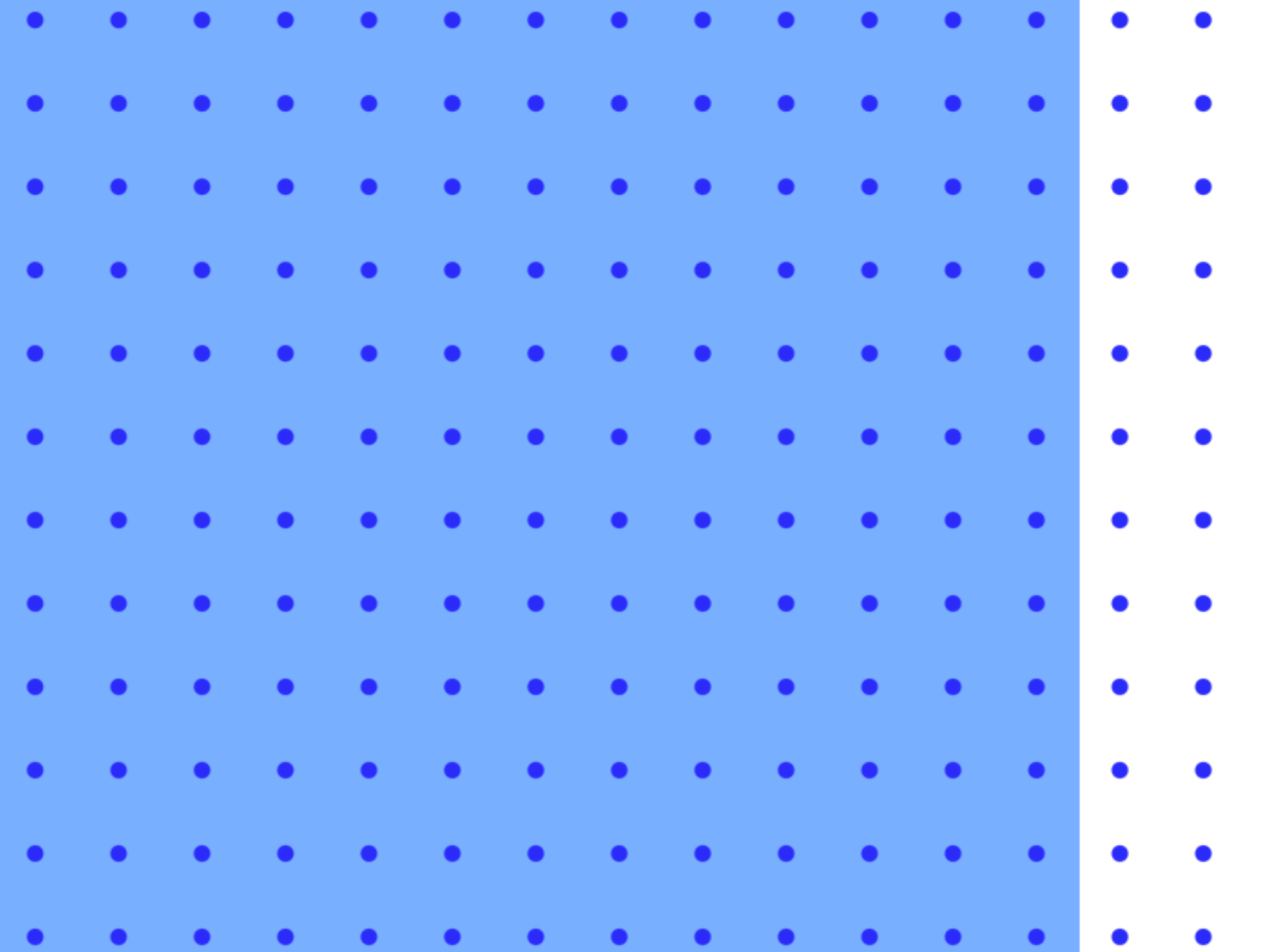
SOME

I have a small group of friends at university

16.6%

NONE

I do not consider myself to have any true friends at university

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20% of international students say they have "no true friends"

Williamson

I would like the OfS to consider what steps it can take to ensure international students feel:

- feel integrated on campus

- are supported in terms of their mental health and wellbeing

- receive the employability skills they need and are supported into employment, whether in their home country or the UK.

It will, therefore, be critical to ensure the OfS:

- makes public transparent data on the outcomes achieved by international students

- data should also inform the approach the OfS takes to setting and monitoring compliance with its quality requirements

- OfS's work on harmful student recruitment practices also seems relevant to international students

Strategy

International Education Strategy: 2021 update
Supporting recovery, driving growth

2.2 Enhancing the international student experience

Action 3 (2021)

- The Department for Education will work with the sector and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service to ensure there is clearer, more accessible information for international students wishing to study in the UK. This will include information and advice tailored to students' needs, including links to the immigration system.

Action 4 (2021)

- Universities UK International will convene alternative finance providers, sector and student representatives together, in order to raise awareness of the financial options available to international students and how products could be improved to meet demand.

Action 5 (2021)

- The Office for Students together with the UK Council for International Student Affairs, will launch a new project that will aim to find 'what works' in ensuring international students can integrate and receive a fulfilling academic experience in the UK. It will explore the positive impact international students have on home students, and what longer term lessons can be learnt from their response to the coronavirus pandemic on provider-level delivery and student engagement.

Action 6 (2021)

- UK Council for International Student Affairs will collaborate with the Confederation of British Industry, Universities UK International, and key education and employer groups to support international student employability. This group will build understanding of the UK's skills needs, international labour markets, and barriers to international graduate employability and share examples of best practice across the sector.
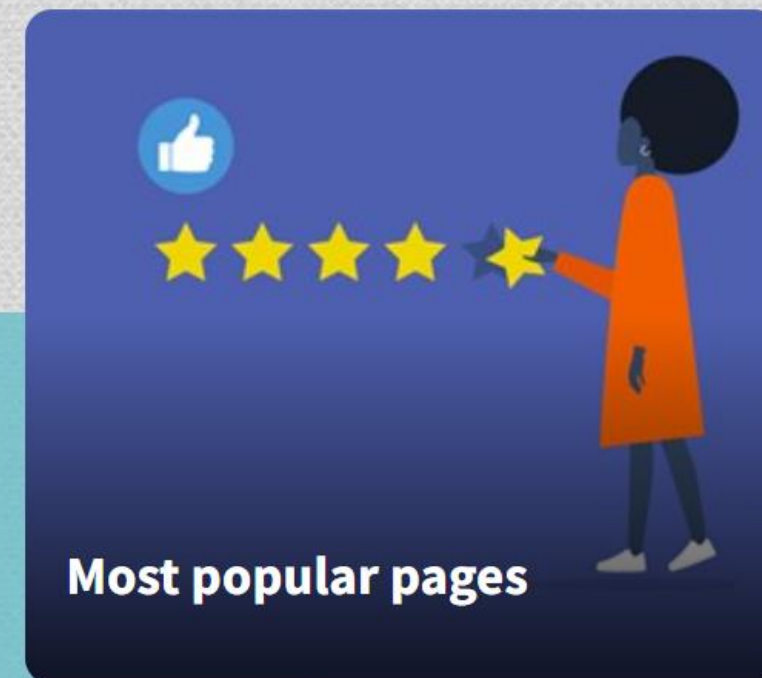
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14 major issues

1. Isolation
2. Financial hardship
3. Participation
4. Immigration
5. Housing
6. Recruitment and suitability
7. Agents
8. Visa length and academic issues
9. Discrimination and harassment
10. Culturally competent services (and T&L)
11. Bonding social capital and bridging social capital
12. Compound impact of 100 x lived experience issues
13. Cash cows and cash cow courses
14. Employment and employability

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UKCISA

- Free membership for SUs

- Advice and events

- Advocacy for international education

- Ambassador scheme to amplify international student voice

- Charter

- Network?

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Improving the experience for international students

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Improving the experience for international students

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