

International Student Perspective UK

Evaluating Experiences
and Perceptions
of Studying Abroad in
the United Kingdom



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International Student Perspective UK: Evaluating Experiences and Perceptions of Studying Abroad in the United Kingdom.

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Erasmus Student Network United Kingdom

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Key Findings

Satisfaction with Accommodation

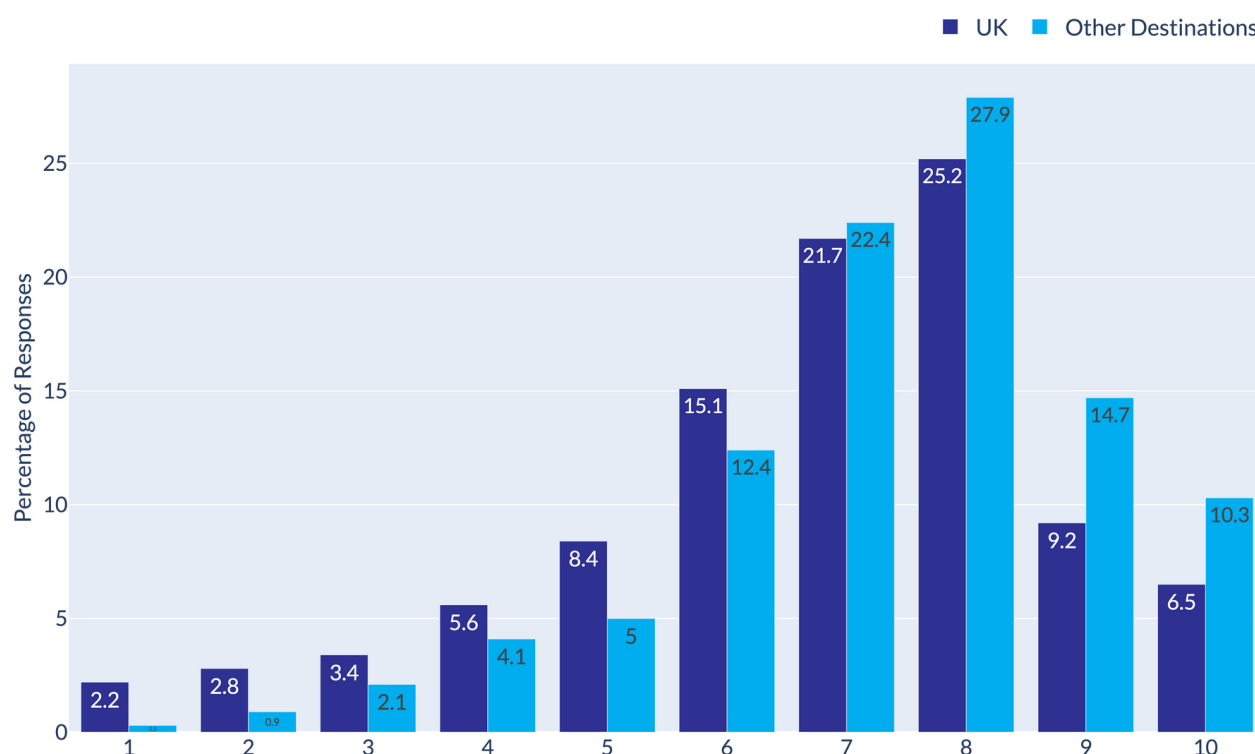


Figure 2.22 - Responses to 'How would you rate your accommodation while studying abroad on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 10 (very good)?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Though the majority of mobile students in the UK rated their accommodation positively, they were more than twice as likely than mobile students in other destinations (8.4% compared to 3.3%) to rate the quality of where they stayed extremely poorly - as a '1' or '2' out of 10. They were also much less likely (15.7% compared to 25%) to rate it as '9' or '10' out of 10.

Problems with Accommodation – Support, Availability, and Price

Just 34% of international students in the UK positively agreed that they received enough support from their host university in finding accommodation. 32.9% strongly disagreed.

Students mobile in the UK were more than twice as likely to rate accommodation availability as 'extremely' problematic than those in other destinations (29.9% compared to 12.6%).

The price of accommodation received a similar response - almost three times as many mobile students in the UK responded that accommodation price was 'extremely' problematic than those elsewhere (25.4% compared to 9.7%).

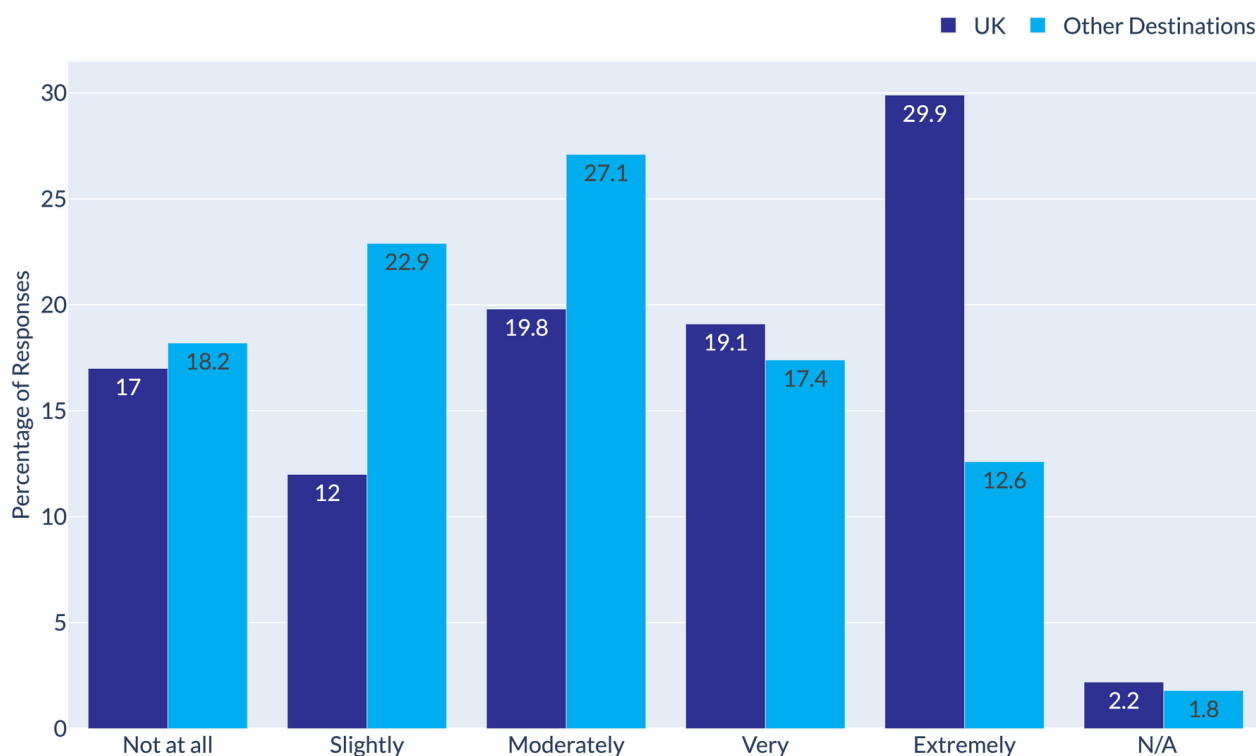


Figure 2.26 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was the availability of accommodation when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

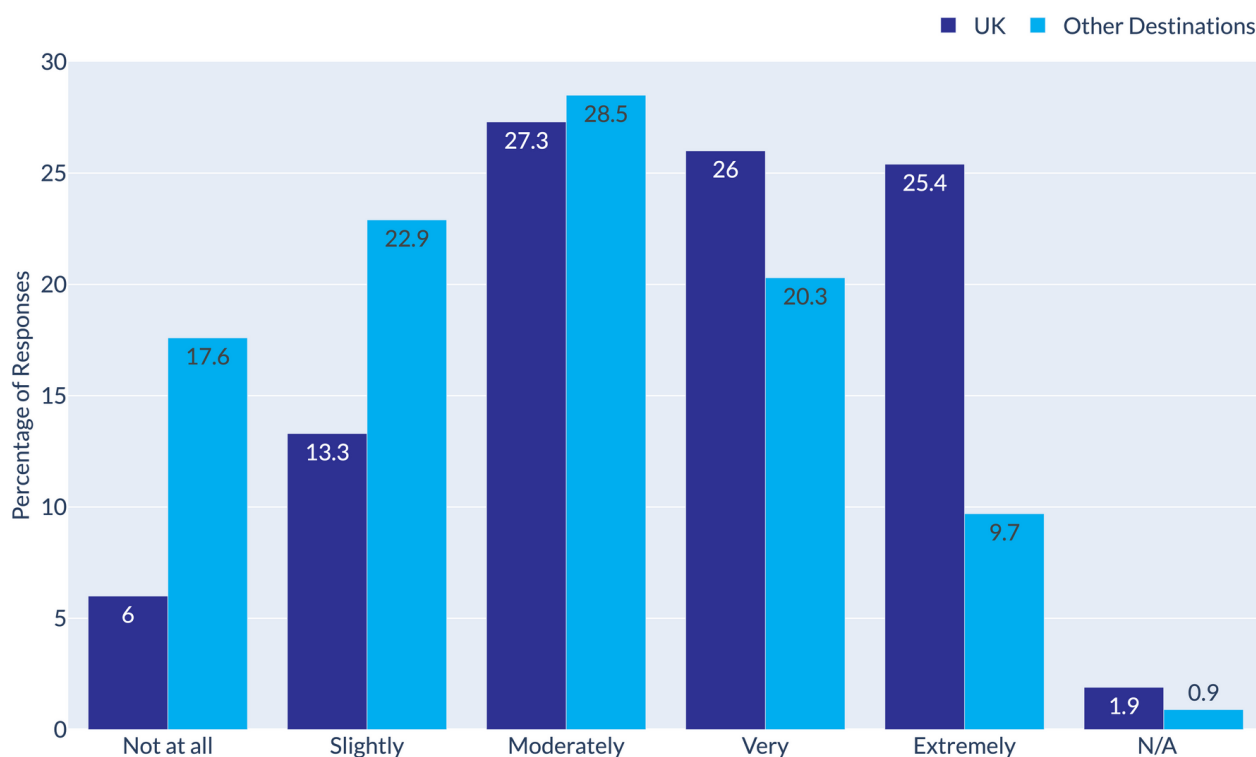


Figure 2.28 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was the price of accommodation when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

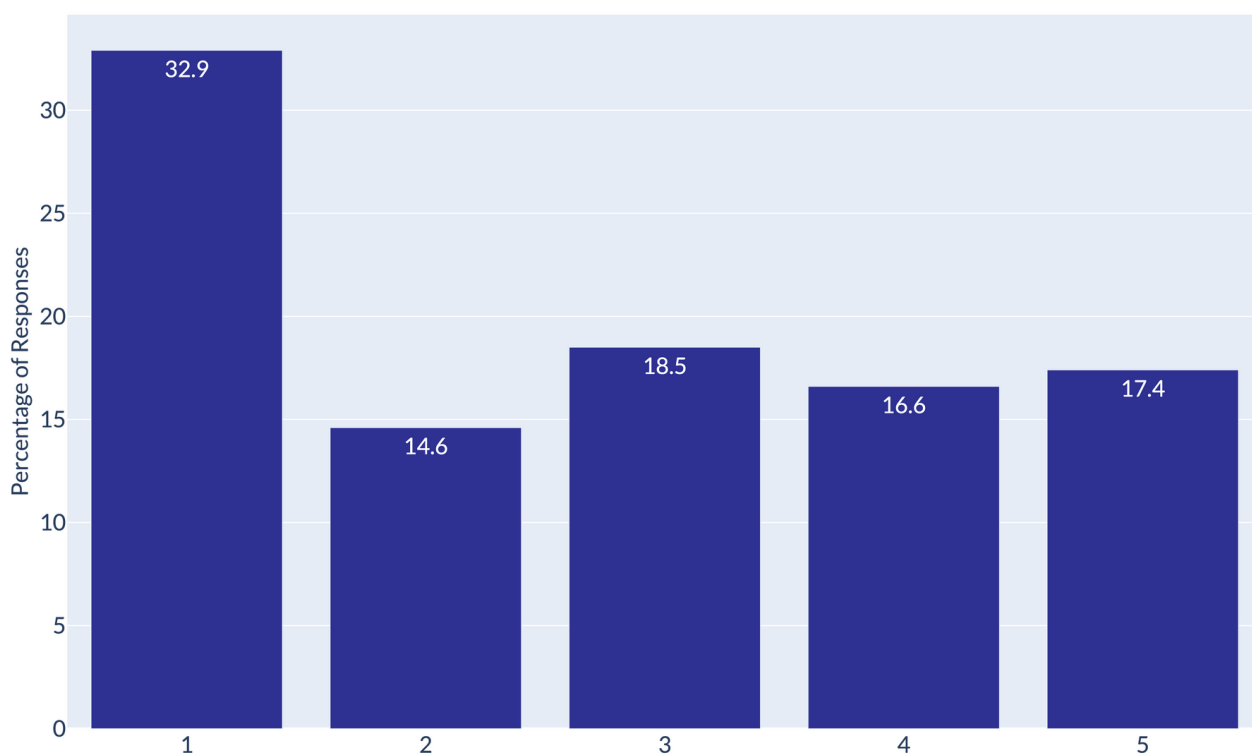


Figure 2.23 - Responses to 'I received enough support from my host university in finding accommodation' (n=465)

Experiences with Visas - Issues and Support

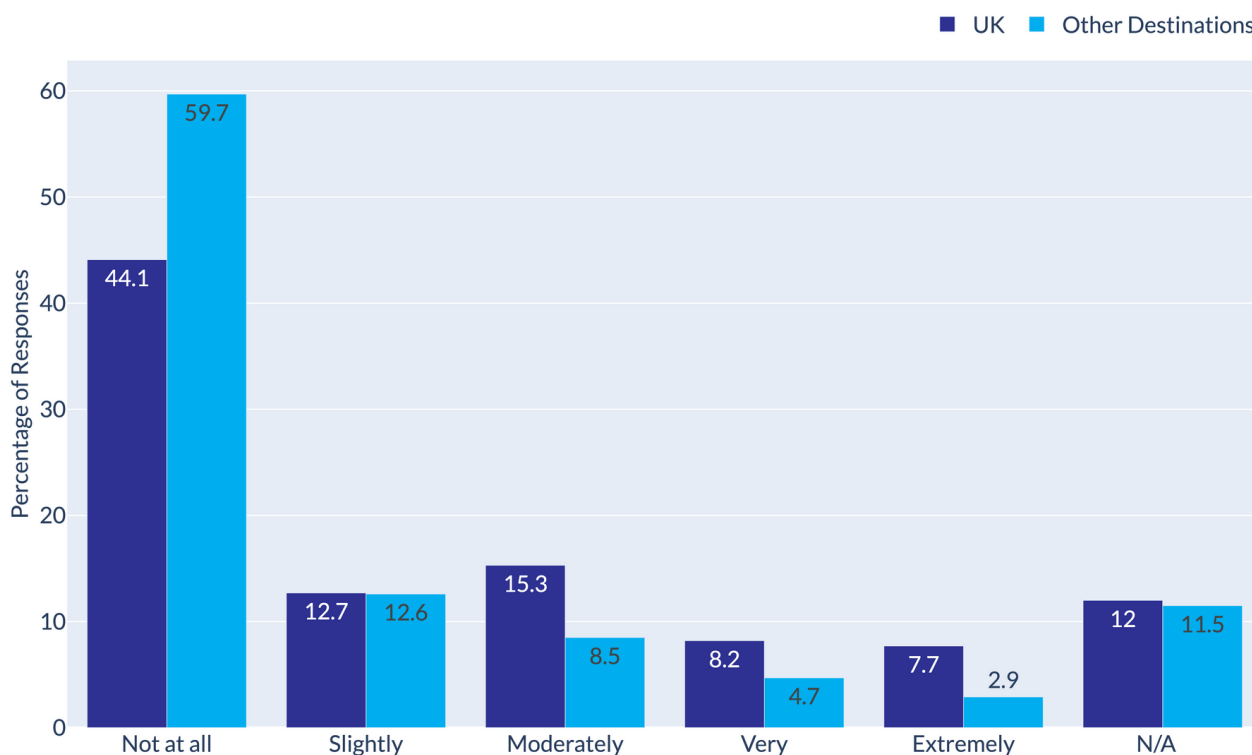


Figure 2.9 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [getting a visa] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Respondents who studied in the UK were significantly more likely to state that visa issues were a problem than those who studied elsewhere. They were more than

twice as likely (15.9% compared to 7.6%) to say that getting a visa was 'very' or 'extremely' problematic. Just 38% of respondents positively agreed they received enough support for a visa (Figure 2.4, page 27). 67 respondents provided specific problems with qualitative answers, focusing on incorrect advice from HEIs and issues with the visa application process.

Satisfaction with Support

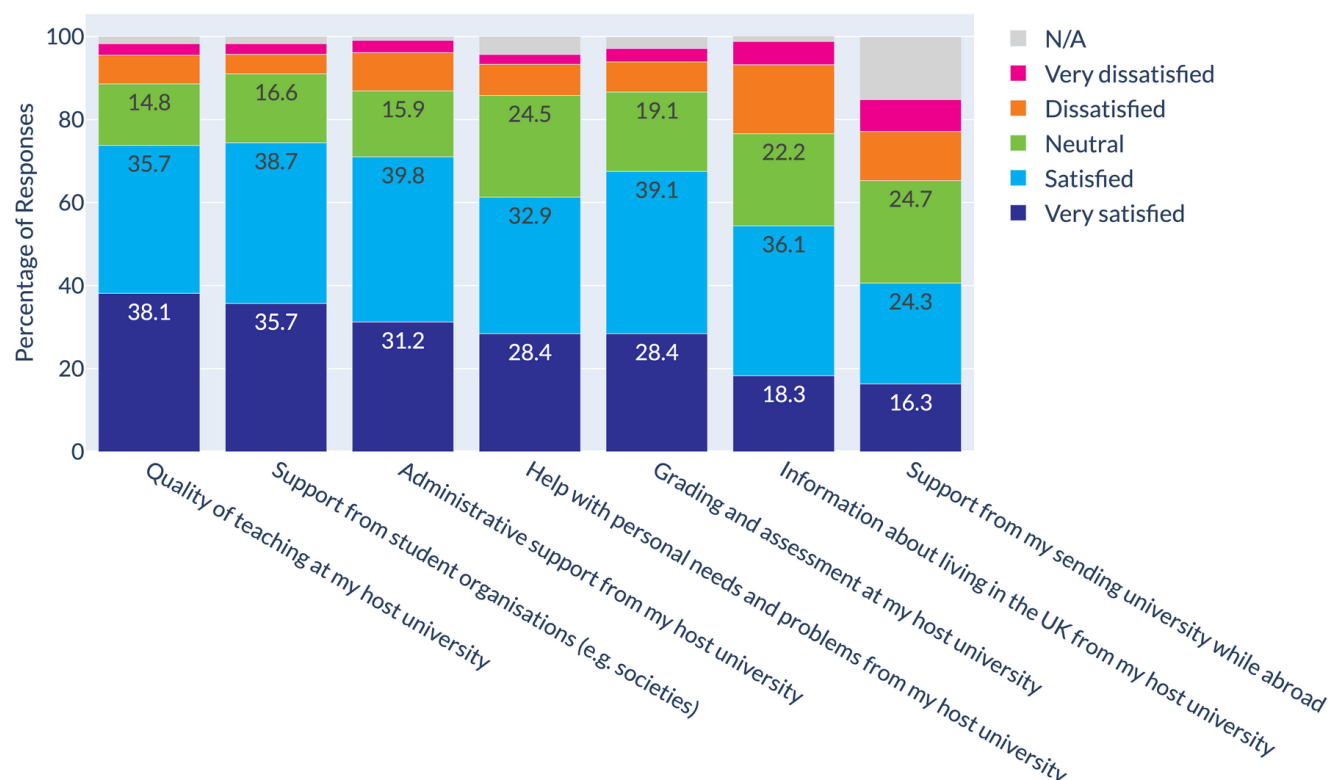


Figure 2.15 - Responses to 'How satisfied are you with the following?' (n=465)

International students in the UK generally responded that they are satisfied with the support they received while studying in the UK. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73.8%) stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching, whilst a similar figure (74.4%) were satisfied or very satisfied with support from student organisations, like societies.

Enjoyment of time in the UK

The overwhelming majority of students mobile in the UK enjoyed their stay. 91% agreed that 'I enjoyed my time in the UK', with only 1.3% disagreeing.

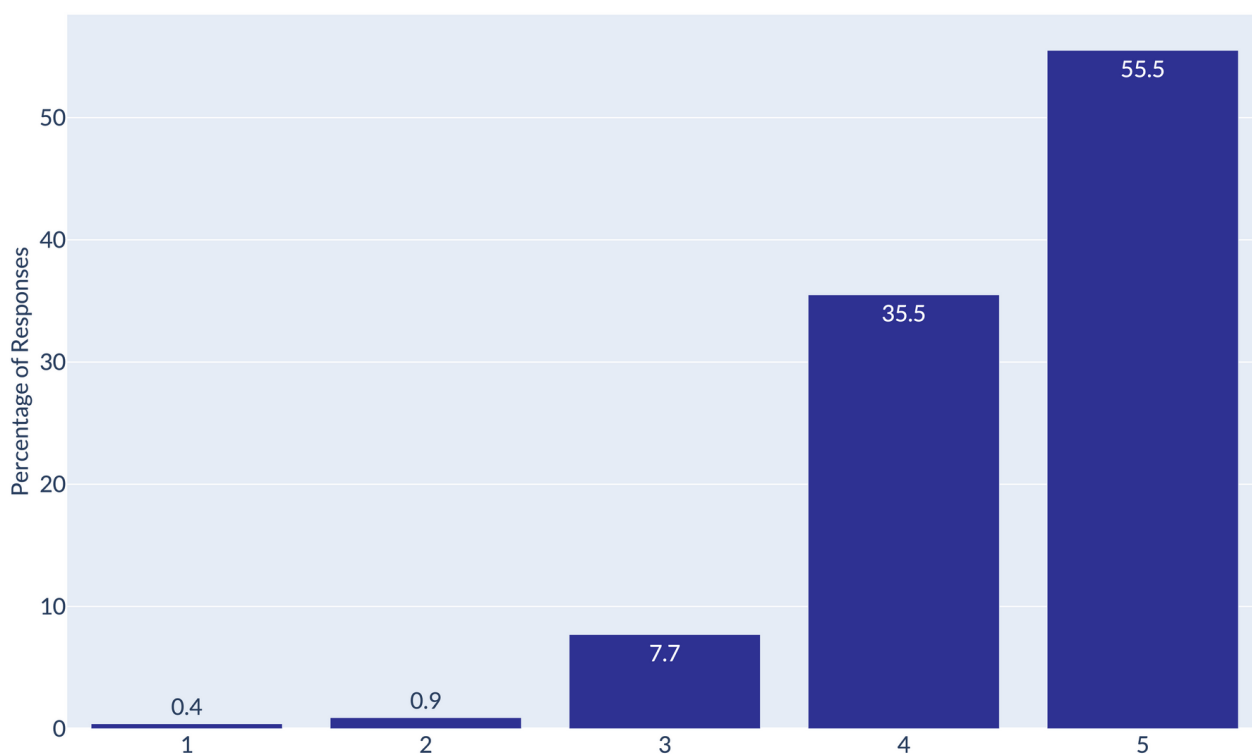


Figure 2.34 - Responses to 'I enjoyed my time in the UK' (n=465)

Motivations to Study in the UK

81.5% of respondents mobile in the UK stated that 'language - the fact my courses were in English' was 'very' or 'extremely' important as a motivation to study in the UK. This compares to just 55.9% of students mobile elsewhere responding the same.

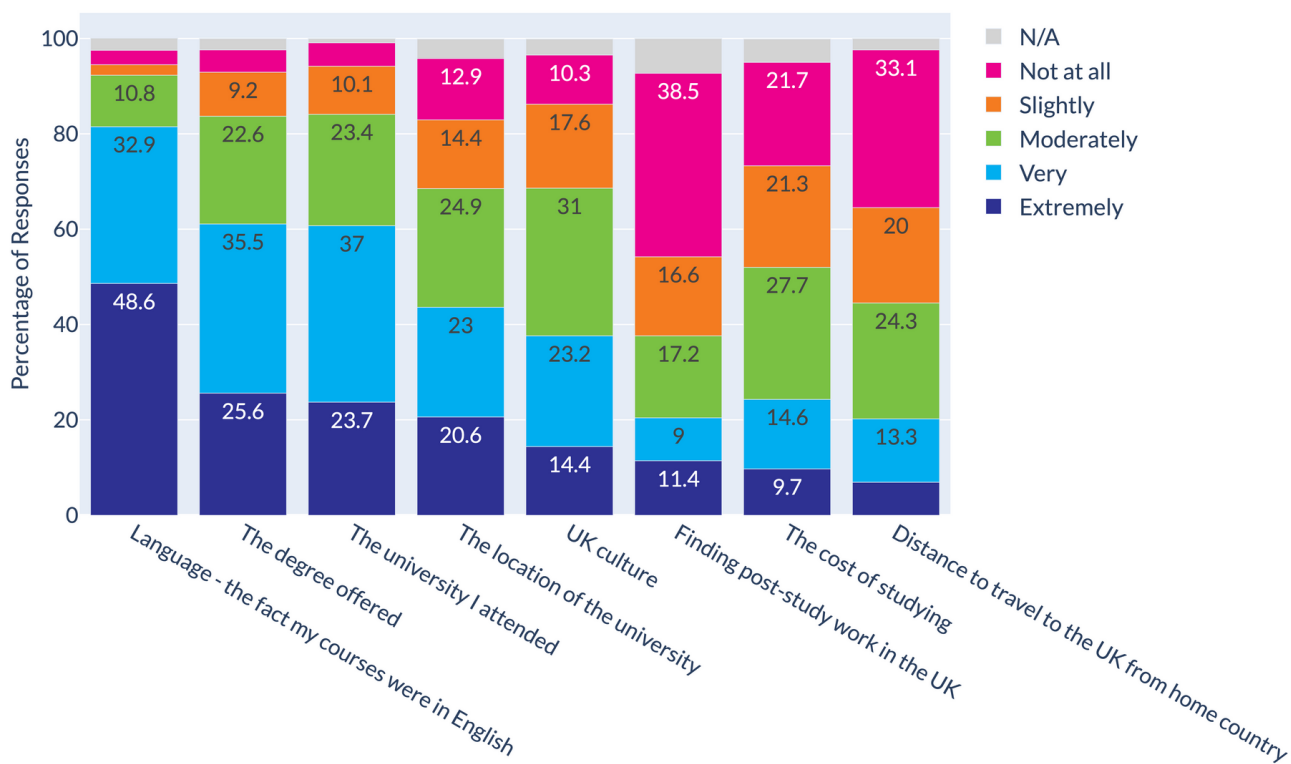


Figure 2.1 - Responses to 'How important were the following factors in choosing to come to the UK to study?' (n=465)

Knowledge of Options Available in the UK Post-Study

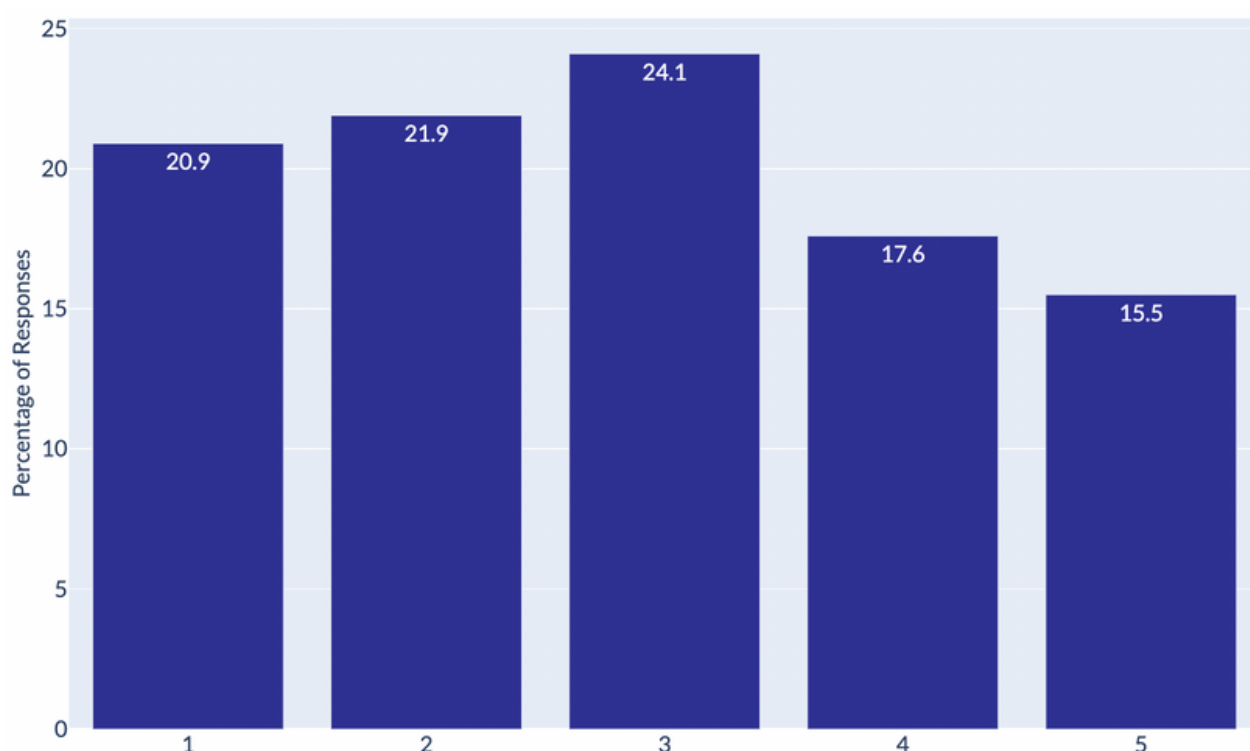


Figure 2.44 - Responses to 'I know what my options are for staying in the UK after my study finishes' (n=465)

Just 33.1% of respondents who were mobile in the UK agreed that they knew their options for staying in the UK after their study period. 20.9% strongly disagreed.

Knowledge of Options to Study in the UK

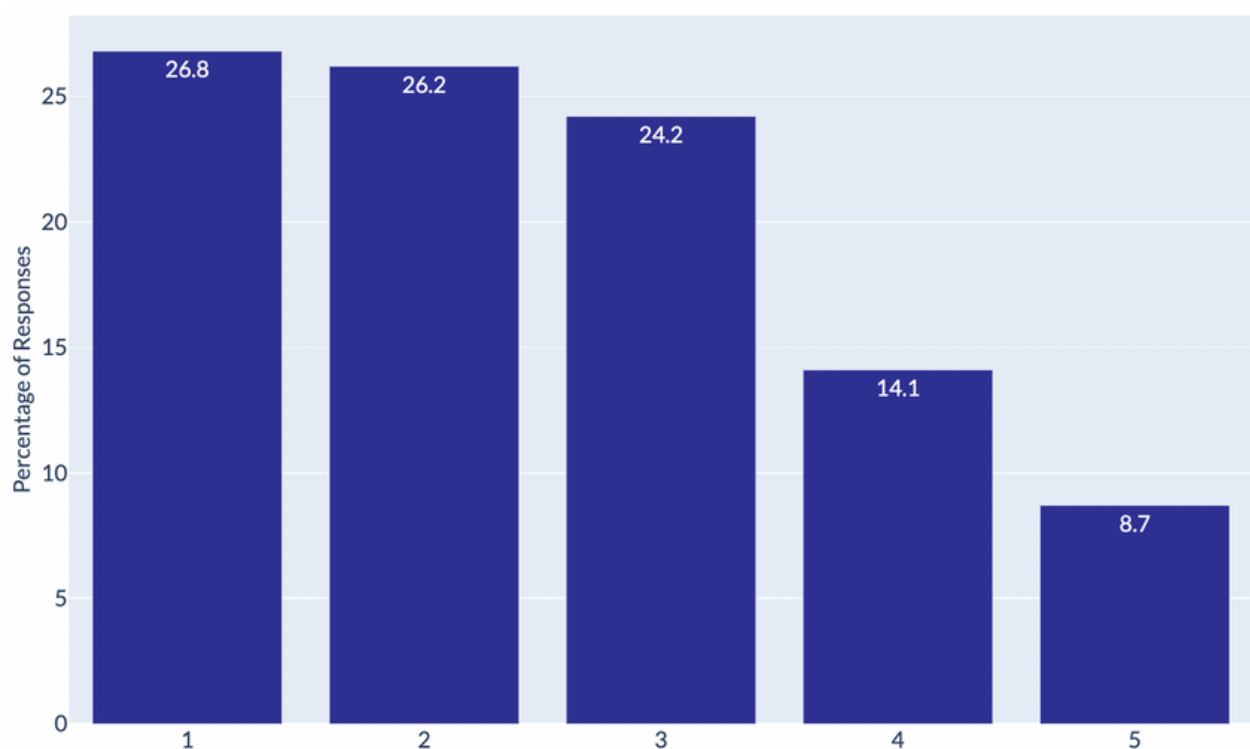


Figure 3.4 - 'I know which exchange programmes are available to me to study in the UK' (n=538)

Whilst 82% of respondents who had not studied in the UK stated they would at least consider the UK as a destination (Figure 3.1, page 65), the majority indicated that they were not aware of how they could do so. Just 22.8% agreed that they know which exchange programmes are available to them, and over half of respondents (53%) disagreed.

Perceived Barriers to Studying in the UK

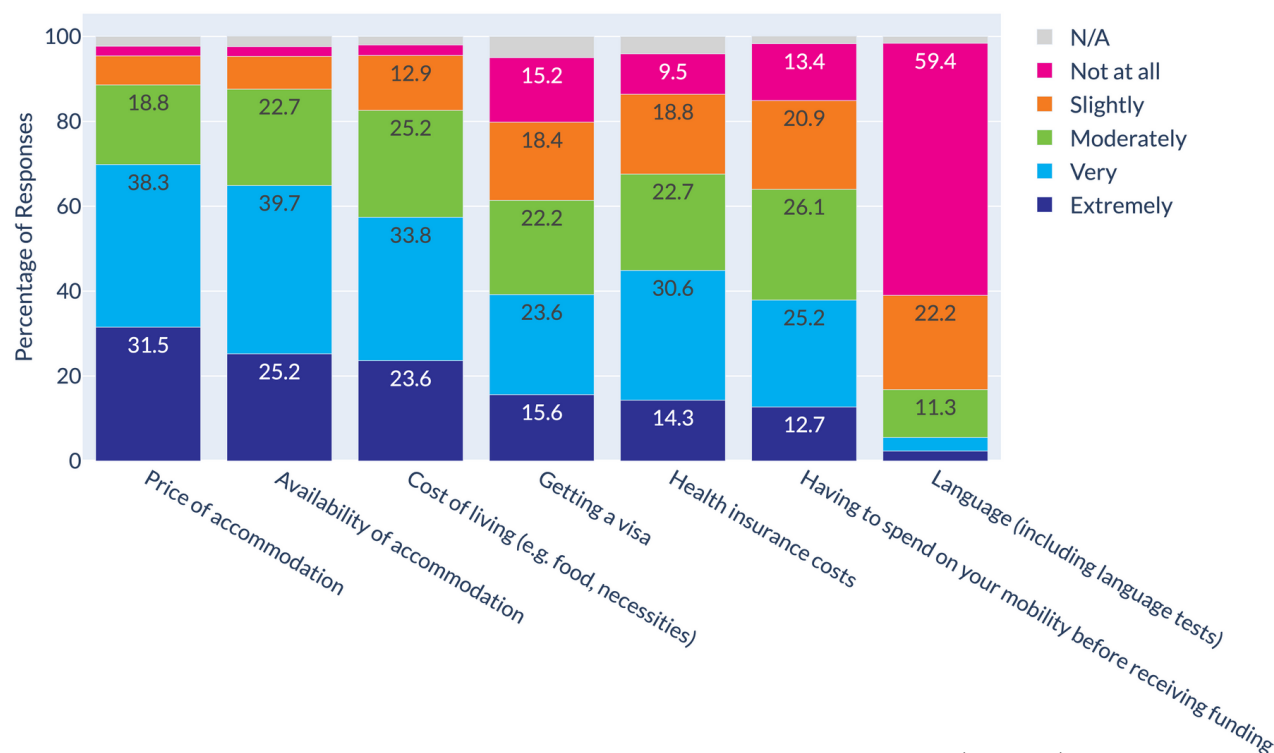


Figure 3.6 - How much of a barrier are these factors to coming to the UK? (n=538)

69.8% of respondents who had not studied in the UK perceived the cost of accommodation as a 'very' or 'extremely' significant barrier to doing so, with 64.9% indicating the same in relation to the availability of accommodation. Over half (57.4%) stated that the cost of living was a 'very' or 'extremely' significant barrier.

Introduction

International Higher Education in the UK - be that inward and outward short-term mobility or full-degree students from other countries choosing to study in one of our institutions - has been characterised by volatility since the UK's decision to withdraw from the Erasmus+ Programme in 2020. Despite political uncertainty, as highlighted by the six Secretaries of State for Education since the withdrawal agreement from the EU became active on the 31st of December 2020, the UK remains a top destination for those seeking study from abroad. A record 697,970 students from abroad chose to be educated here in the 2021-22 academic year.¹

As this number has risen and continues to rise, international students face unique challenges before, during, and after their time in the UK. The accommodation crisis, for example, affects almost every student in the UK, whether they are studying close to home or travelling across borders to our institutions. Reports suggest, though, that the scarce availability and high cost of accommodation and housing in the UK lead international students to feel this crisis to a disproportionate extent. NUS Scotland estimated that 21% of international students in Scotland faced homelessness after starting their studies, compared to 12% of home students.²

For those students studying in the UK from abroad for more than six months, visas present an additional high cost. The application for a student visa costs £363, alongside the annual Immigration Health Surcharge of £470. If you are not from an English-speaking country, tests to prove language proficiency can cost up to £200.³ These costs exist in addition to the international undergraduate tuition fees, which average £22,200 a year.⁴

As a charity with local organisations present within 15 UK institutions, supporting over 10,000 international and exchange students each year, ESN UK is witness to the impact of the above factors and more. This publication allows us to demonstrate this reach across universities in England, Scotland and Wales, and our wider network across Europe and beyond. It serves to quantify the anecdotal evidence our volunteers have experienced throughout the last academic years - demonstrating what world-renowned UK institutions do well and what they must do better. It aims to provide a much-needed student-led voice within policy, reflecting the positives and negatives of studying in the UK from abroad.

There is abundant research into student experience in the UK, with HEPI and Advance HE's yearly Student Academic Experience Survey being an example. Primarily evaluating factors important to institutions, such as teaching quality and value for money, it fails to highlight the aforementioned salient issues facing

international students specifically.⁵ In terms of UK research focussing on international education, the British Council's Broadening Horizons provides a thorough insight into attitudes towards studying abroad. However, its focus is on UK students alone and, having been published in 2017, it fails to provide an accurate reflection of attitudes post-Brexit. Issues discussed within Broadening Horizons have provided inspiration to questions asked within this report - notably, it found that two-thirds of non-mobile students reported financial concern to be a barrier to studying abroad.⁶ The following report will provide additional insight into similar problems facing international students in the UK.

UUKi's 'Why Aren't We Second?' research series imparts similar inspiration to this publication. Focusing primarily on changing attitudes towards studying in the UK, it provides significant context within which this report is written. In particular, 'International Student Recruitment from Europe: The Road to Recovery' notes the changing dynamics of studying abroad in the UK - detailing the likes of a 37% drop in European undergraduate applications from 2020-21 and, importantly for this research, a 416% increase in student visas issued in 2021-22. As UUKi's report notes, however, there is limited existing research into the factors influencing this decision-making.⁷ International Student Perspective UK provides a comparative analysis between international students who have studied within the UK and those who have not, and so aims to illuminate some of these factors. Overall, this report hopes to complement this contemporary national research whilst providing a crucial student-facing outlook that candidly discusses key issues facing international students in the UK.

Previous research by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) provides a comparable basis. The biennial ESNsurvey covers mobility experience across Europe and beyond, including the UK, addressing motivations for, issues during, and outcomes from mobility. While this report may have common themes, ESNsurvey's conclusions and recommendations often focus on Erasmus+ and EU institutions, which are largely not applicable within the UK context.⁸ The Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility project report investigates barriers affecting mobility. Within this, 82% of respondent mobile students stated that funding is the biggest barrier to studying abroad, as well as noting the issues that international students face in receiving support from their host institutions.⁹ Whilst these reports remain relevant, the unique challenges of international education within the UK fail to be fully acknowledged due to their diverse range of respondents and, consequently, their comparatively broad areas of investigation incompatible with the UK's national nuances.

International Student Perspective UK intends to provide a unique perspective to help inform stakeholders and government of the key issues affecting international

students in the UK. It will do so by bridging a gap between previous UK-based research that is more general and institution-facing, and research across Europe that provides a much-needed student voice to policy recommendations. Covering attitudes from international students in the UK and elsewhere, this report will focus on the critical issues affecting students within the country - such as visas and accommodation - whilst also investigating broader factors at play within study destination decision-making and attitudes towards the UK, post-Erasmus+.

Methodology and Limitations

Survey Design

International Student Perspective UK is a research project undertaking descriptive quantitative and qualitative analysis based on an online questionnaire.

The survey was designed considering many similar, previous pieces of research, such as the ESNsurvey and SIEM project undertaken by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), as well as other relevant publications in the UK Higher Education sector, such as UUKi's 'International Student Recruitment from Europe: The Road to Recovery', which in part prompted the research.

The survey evaluated both the experiences of students who were mobile in the UK and the perceptions of the UK as a study destination by students who had not been mobile in the UK, including those who were mobile elsewhere and those who were non-mobile. Depending on the participants' profiles, they were shown different 'tracks' of the survey with different questions.

Students mobile in the UK (including full-degree international students and those undertaking shorter periods of exchange) were asked questions about their mobility experience. Students were first asked to consider pre-mobility aspects, such as their motivations to study abroad and their experience with immigration processes, including visas. The largest part of the survey regarded experience during mobility in the UK and covered topics such as accommodation, support from sending and host HEIs, social life and integration, discrimination, and overall satisfaction. Finally, the survey covered post-mobility aspects; students' plans to work or study in the UK following their mobilities.

Students mobile outside of the UK were asked a smaller set of the same experience questions regarding their mobility elsewhere and questions evaluating their perceptions of and interest in studying abroad in the UK.

Non-mobile students were asked only questions evaluating their perceptions of and interest in studying abroad in the UK.

The questionnaire contained 64 questions (though no one participant would receive the full set of questions). The majority of the questions were mandatory, with the exception of free-text questions.

Approximately 30 ESN UK local volunteers tested the questionnaire during ESN UK's National Assembly VIII in March 2023. They then provided feedback on the

survey experience and the time taken to complete, allowing revisions to be made before the survey was opened.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was launched on the 24th of March 2023 and closed on 31st May 2023.

Due to the different potential 'tracks' of the survey, there were various target audiences: non-British students who had been mobile in the UK, non-British students who had been mobile elsewhere, and non-mobile non-British students.

The survey was mainly disseminated through ESN local and national organisations, with students who had been mobile in the UK being primarily reached by ESN local organisations in the UK and the other target audiences primarily reached by ESN local and national organisations in other countries. A dissemination package was shared with both groups to facilitate the cohesive promotion of the survey to students, HEIs, and other organisations. The survey was disseminated mainly through social media (Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn) and by email. The survey was distributed only in English.

Respondents were incentivised to participate in the survey with a prize draw in which entrants aged 27 or under could enter to win a '4 day in 1 month' Youth Interrail Pass by giving their email address for this purpose at the end of the survey. Snowball sampling was increased as respondents who referred eligible friends to the survey could receive another entry to the prize draw if the referee completed the survey and provided the original respondent's email address. A prize draw winner was randomly selected using Python on June 6th 2023, and the prize was accepted by the first winner chosen.

The questionnaire gathered a total of 1011 responses. A first analysis was conducted after the data collection closed, removing any completely duplicate responses or responses from British students who were not eligible to participate. The total number of responses remaining after the first analysis was 1003, which can be considered the full sample for this survey. Due to the different survey tracks, each question may have been presented to the full sample or various subsets of the sample depending on their previous responses. Therefore, the sample size for each question is written in the description of each figure in the report (e.g. (n=465) for a question answered by 465 respondents).

The first analysis was followed by a rigorous data analysis phase conducted by a qualified data analyst using Python programming, primarily with pandas, plotly, and

wordcloud packages. As most survey questions were multiple choice, the amount of necessary data cleaning was limited, and the large majority of results in this report are based on raw data.

Qualitative analysis of open-text questions was carried out using the Python wordcloud package, generating a word cloud of the most common words seen among responses for each open-text question, with the exception of a set of 'stopwords' which were removed from these figures. As well as the wordcloud package's standard list of stopwords, words four letters long or less (unless relevant to the question such as 'CAS' when discussing visas), and words that were closely related to the question and thus highly represented (e.g., 'accommodation' was removed for questions about accommodation), were also removed.

Quotes displayed within this report may have been cropped (for instance, to show the most relevant sentence of a paragraph to the topic being discussed), but are otherwise shown as given, including any spelling or grammatical errors.

Limitations

The key limitation we would like to highlight in this research is that much of the dissemination was done through local and national organisations of ESN, and it is, therefore, likely to have primarily reached students who have an ESN section present at their HEI or who are otherwise engaged with ESN as an organisation. These students are likely to have higher levels of satisfaction with their mobility and may have received greater support during their mobility.

Steps were taken to limit this effect by contacting HEIs without ESN present and associations not affiliated with ESN to promote the survey. However, it is still likely that the sample of respondents cannot be considered fully representative, and therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the entire population.

Sample Characteristics

Full Sample

Gender Identity

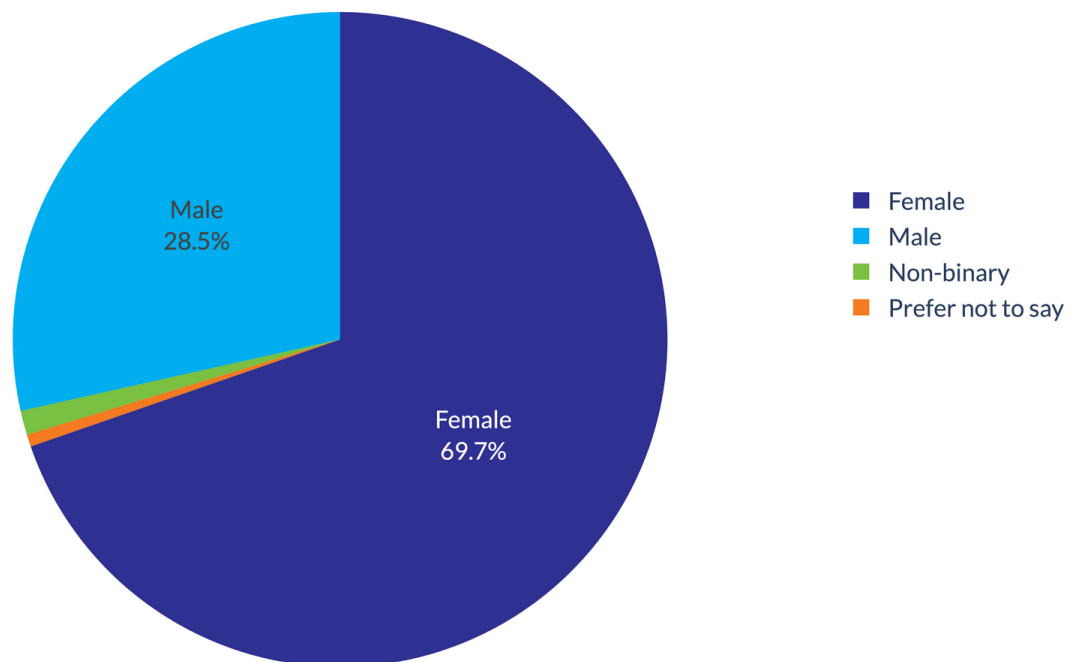


Figure 1.1 - Gender of Respondents (n=1003)

Of the 1003 respondents, 69.7% indicated they identified as female, 28.5% indicated they identified as male, and 1.2% indicated they identified as non-binary. 0.6% preferred not to say their gender identity.

Age

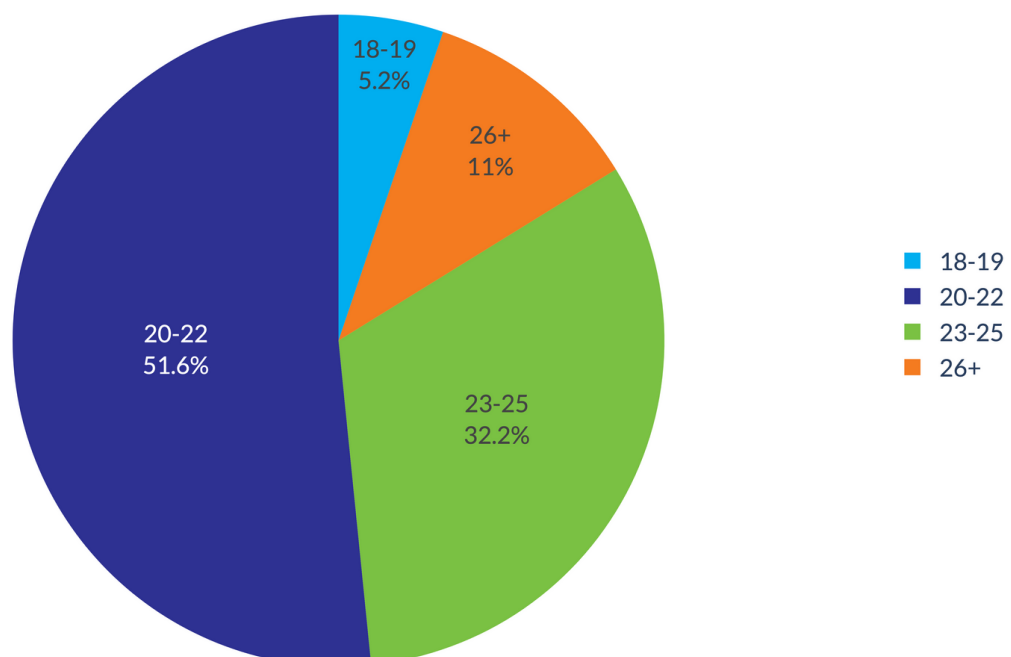


Figure 1.2 - Age of Respondents (n=1003)

Of the 1003 respondents, 51.6% were aged between 20 and 22 at the time of taking the survey. 32.2% were aged between 23 and 25, 11.0% were over 26, and 5.2% of respondents were aged 18-20. Whilst prompted within the survey form for specific ages, this has been simplified to age groups to improve the readability of the data. This field was primarily used to exclude respondents aged 28 and above from the prize draw as they were not eligible.

Nationality

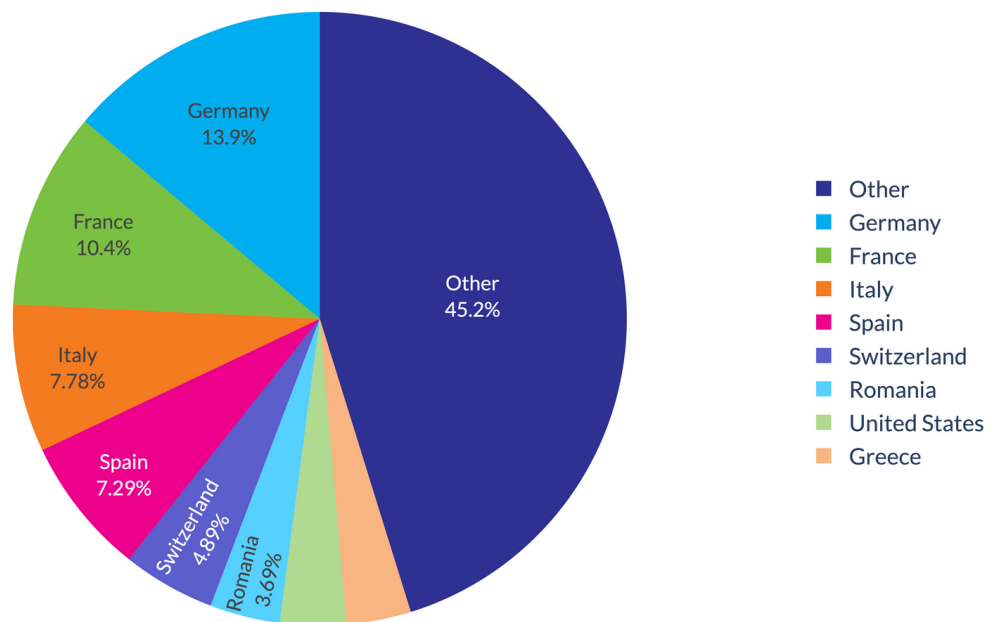


Figure 1.3 - Nationality of Respondents (n=1003)

From a sample of 1003 responses, respondents were from 77 different nationalities. The highest number of respondents were German, with 140 responses (13.9%), followed by French (10.4%) and Italian (7.78%). 61 of the 77 nationalities had multiple respondents.

A diverse range of notable nationalities not shown above include prominent sending countries to the UK, such as China and India, and smaller nations, such as Brunei and Malawi.

Mobility Status

From a sample of 1003 respondents, 46.4% (465) responded they studied abroad within the UK, 33.9% (340) responded they studied abroad in a country other than the UK, and 19.7% (198) responded they had not studied abroad. Responses here were necessary to direct respondents to separate tracts of the survey.

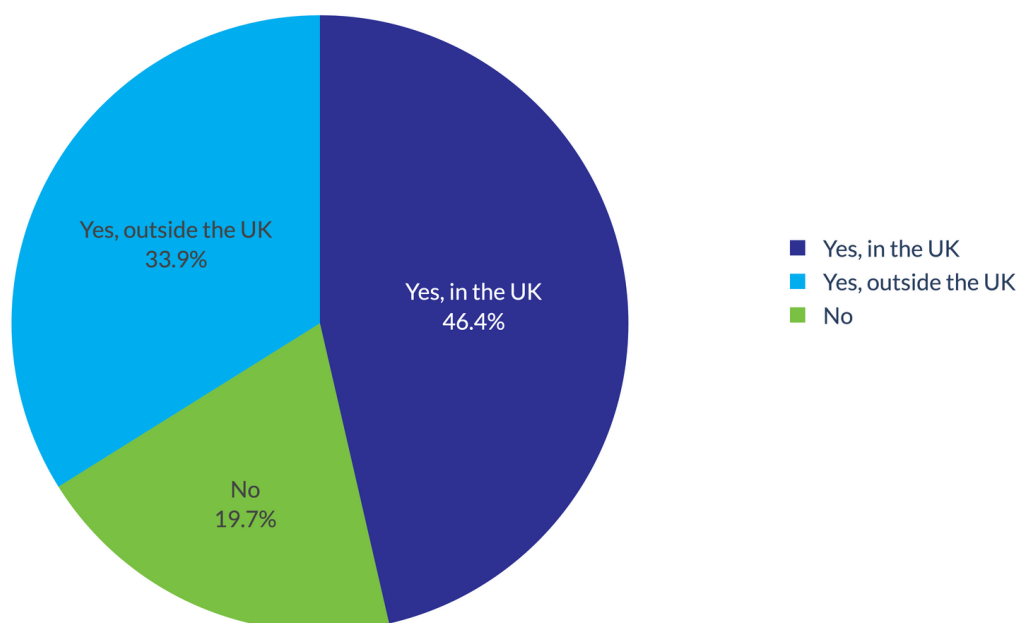


Figure 1.4 - Responses to 'Have you studied abroad?' (n=1003)

Studied in UK Sample Characteristics

This section covers the characteristics of the sample of 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK.

Date of Mobility

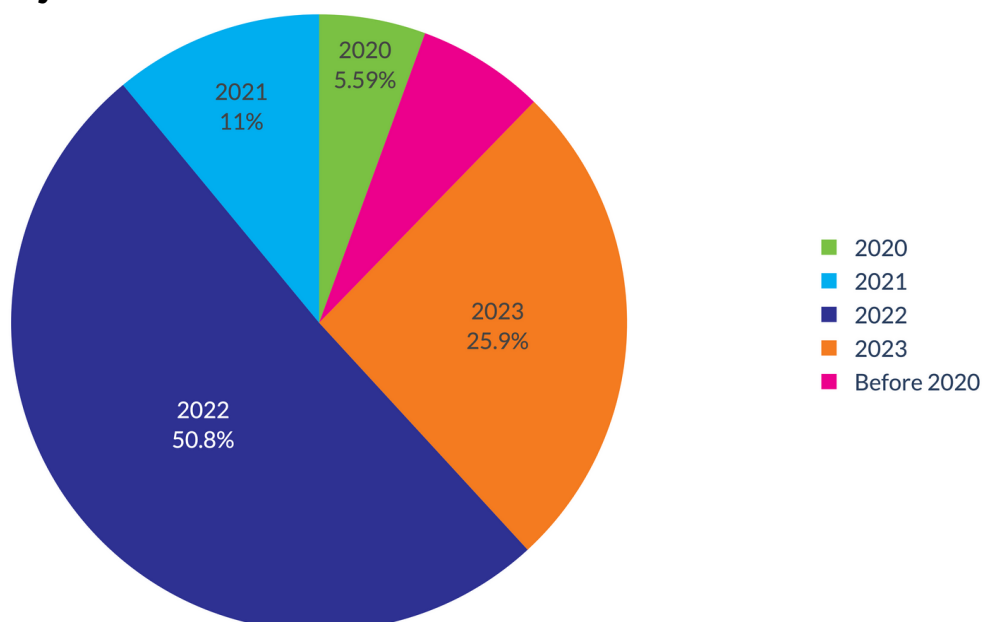


Figure 1.5 - Responses to 'When did you come to the UK to study?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, around half (50.9%) came to the UK in 2022. 25.9% came in 2023, 11% in 2021, 5.6% in 2020, and 6.7% before 2020.

Duration of Mobility

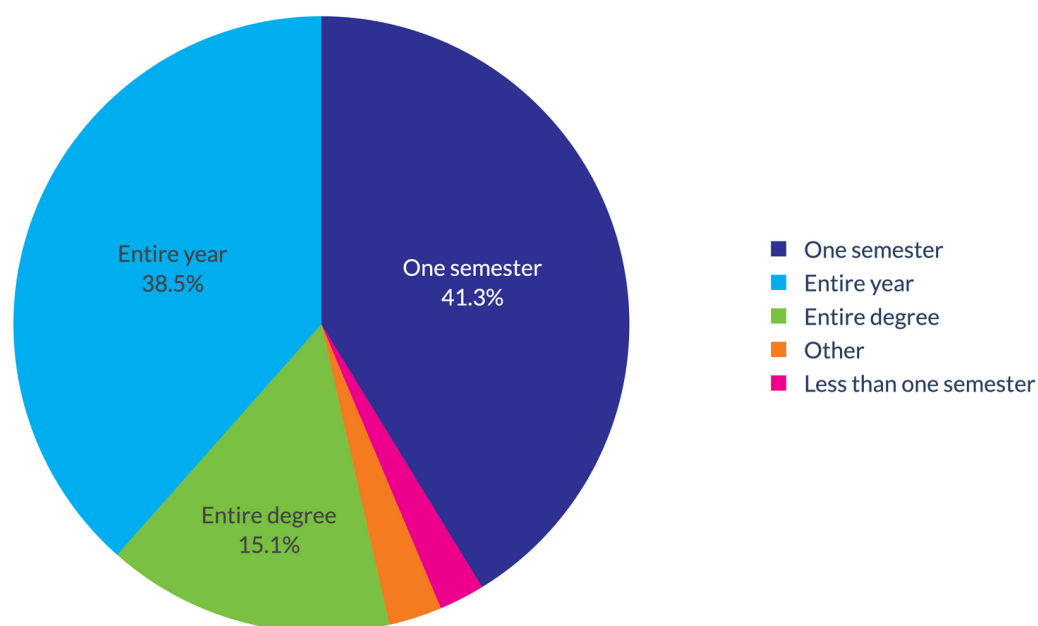


Figure 1.6 - Responses to 'How long were you in the UK?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 41.3% were on mobility for just one semester, 38.5% were on mobility for an entire academic year, 15.1% completed their entire degree in the UK, and 2.4% were on mobility for less than a semester. 2.8% responded 'Other' - a category where participants wrote free-text responses such as 'multiple degrees' and '3 semesters'.

Funding of Mobility

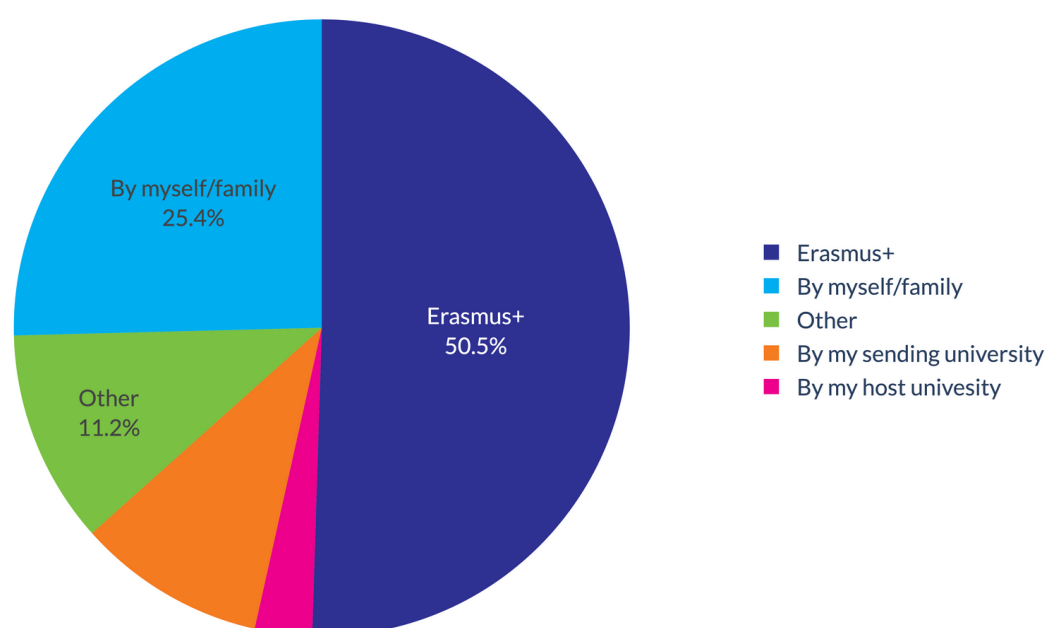


Figure 1.7 - Responses to 'How was your study in the UK funded?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, around half (50.5%) funded their mobility through Erasmus+ grants, 25.4% were self-funded or funded by their

family, 9.9% received funding from their sending university, and 3% received funding from their host university. 11.2% of respondents fell under the category of 'Other' - a category where participants wrote free-text responses such as 'Erasmus Mundus' and other scholarships, as well as some who were unsure of their source of funding. Less than one-quarter of respondents funded their mobility through methods outside of Erasmus+ or their self/family. This foreshadows an accessibility issue; as there are fewer Erasmus+ opportunities to study in the UK, students who are not able to fund their mobility themselves are likely to be less able to come to the UK.

Degree Level

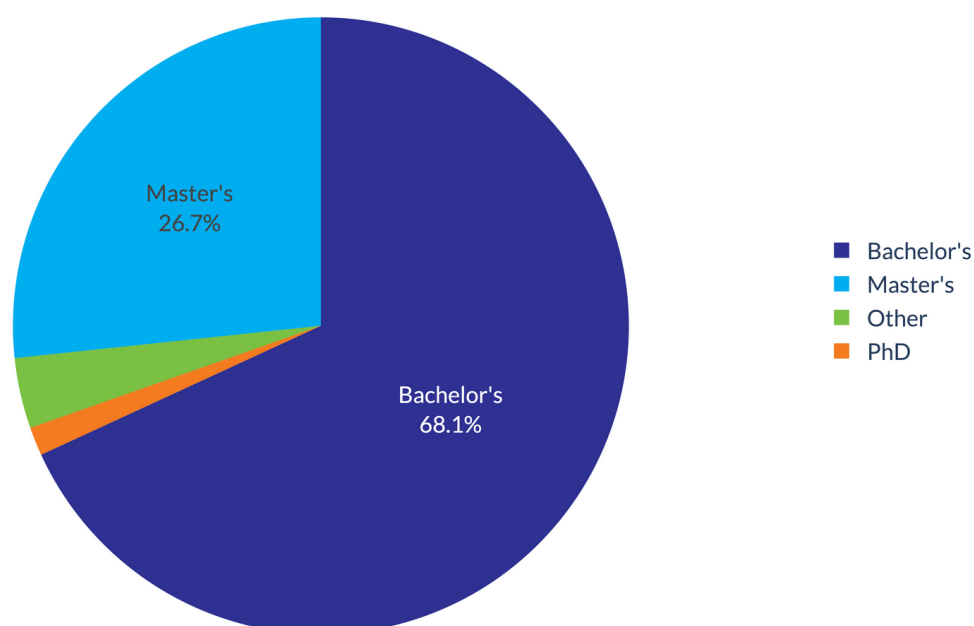


Figure 1.8 - Responses to 'Which level of degree are you currently studying?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, the majority of respondents (68.2%) were studying for a Bachelor's Degree, 26.7% were studying for a Master's Degree, and 1.5% were carrying out a PhD. 3.7% responded 'Other' - a category where participants wrote free-text responses, with some indicating that they were not studying for a degree at that moment or had already graduated.

Host and Sending Institution of Participants

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 21.7% responded that they attended Durham University, 12.5% the University of Glasgow, 8.6% the University of Edinburgh, and 7.1% Newcastle University. Other notable institutions include the University of Strathclyde, Imperial College London and Aberystwyth University. In total, 49 UK HEIs were represented in the survey by participants.

Over 200 HEIs were represented as sending universities for those coming into the UK on mobility. Of these, there were no significant leading sending institutions.

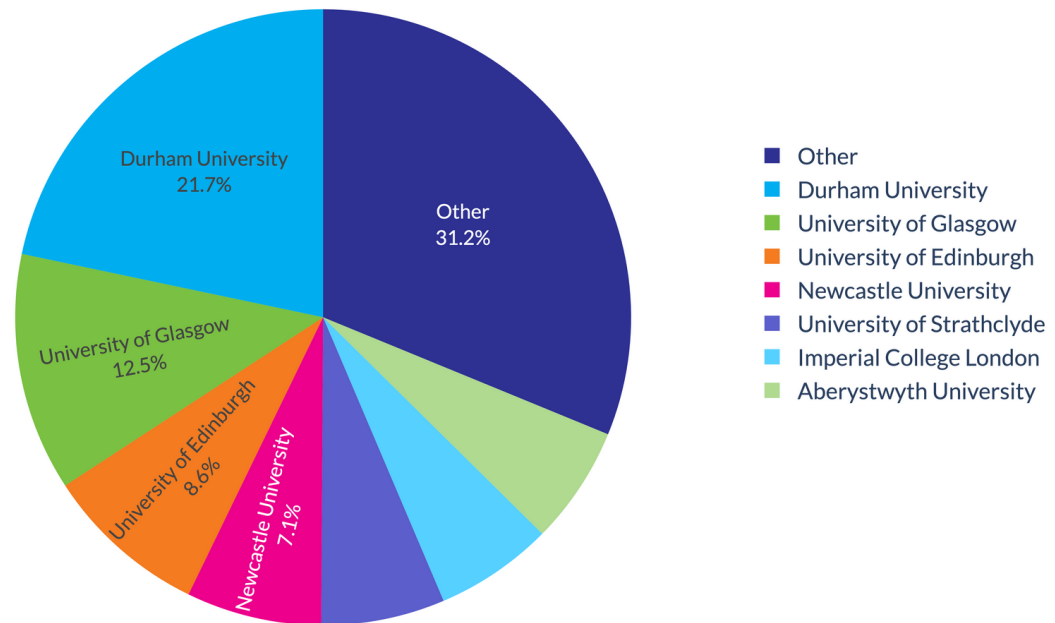


Figure 1.9 - Responses to 'Which UK university did you attend?' (n=465)

Degree Subject

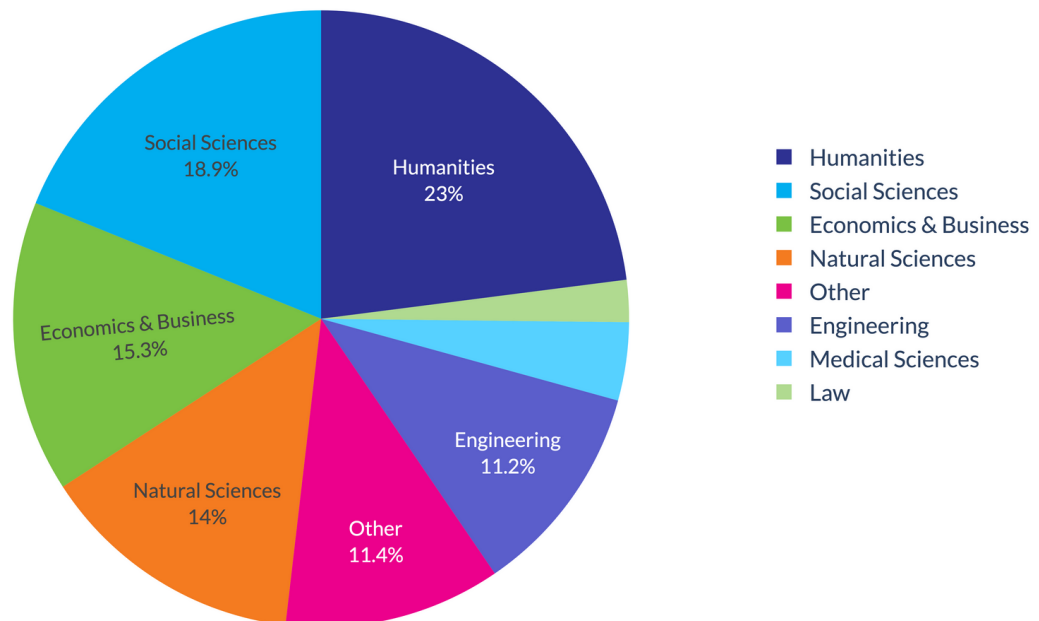


Figure 1.10 - Responses to 'What was your degree subject in the UK?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 23% studied a Humanities degree, 18.9% studied Social Sciences, 15.3% studied Economics and Business, 14% studied Natural Sciences, 11.2% studied Engineering, 4.1% studied Medical Sciences, and 2.2% studied Law. 11.4% studied a degree subject, including responses such as Languages and Tourism.



University in [the] UK provides a lot of opportunities (society, events, volunteering...), you can experience different things and learn about yourself and other cultures

Mobility Experience

This section highlights the experiences of mobile students, primarily those who were mobile in the UK. The report follows the journey of an international student before, during, and after their mobility, investigating important issues facing international students at each stage. For all questions that were directed to both students mobile in the UK and elsewhere, data is analysed from both groups, with comparisons illustrating how the international student experience differs between the UK and other countries.

Pre-Mobility

In this section, we consider issues affecting respondents before they arrive in the UK; firstly, their motivations for studying in the UK (and how these compare to those for other destinations), and secondly, their experiences with visa and immigration processes to come to the UK.

Motivations to Study in the UK

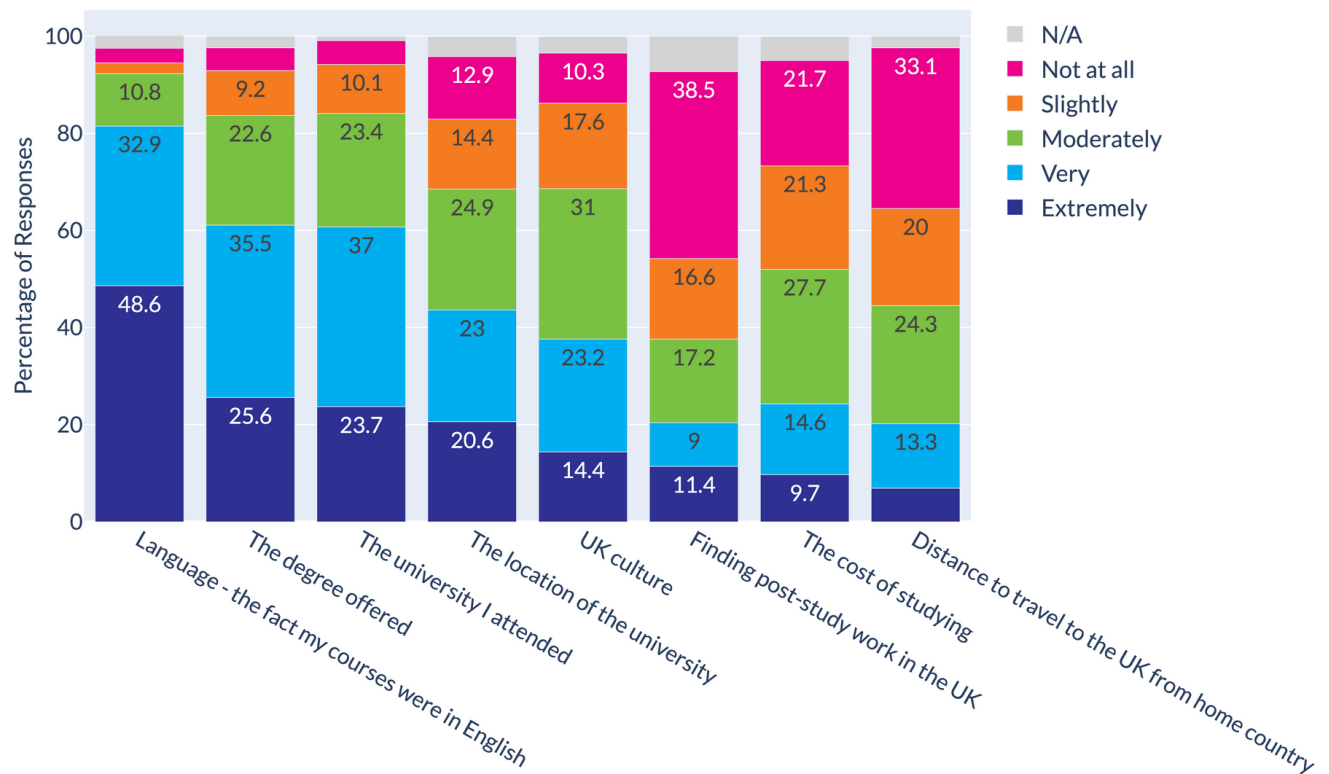


Figure 2.1 - Responses to 'How important were the following factors in choosing to come to the UK to study?' (n=465)

Based on 465 responses from students mobile in the UK, the most important motivations to study in the UK were language (the fact courses were offered in English), the university attended, and the degree offered, with more than 60% of respondents considering each of these reasons to be a 'very' or 'extremely' important factor. Distance to travel to the UK from the home country was the least important factor, with only 20.2% of students considering this to be a 'very' or 'extremely' important factor.

These results reflect previous research that suggests a key factor driving students to study in the UK is that courses are guaranteed to be taught in English - especially at a time when some European nations, such as Denmark and Norway, are reducing the number of English-medium programmes offered.⁷

Motivations to Study Elsewhere

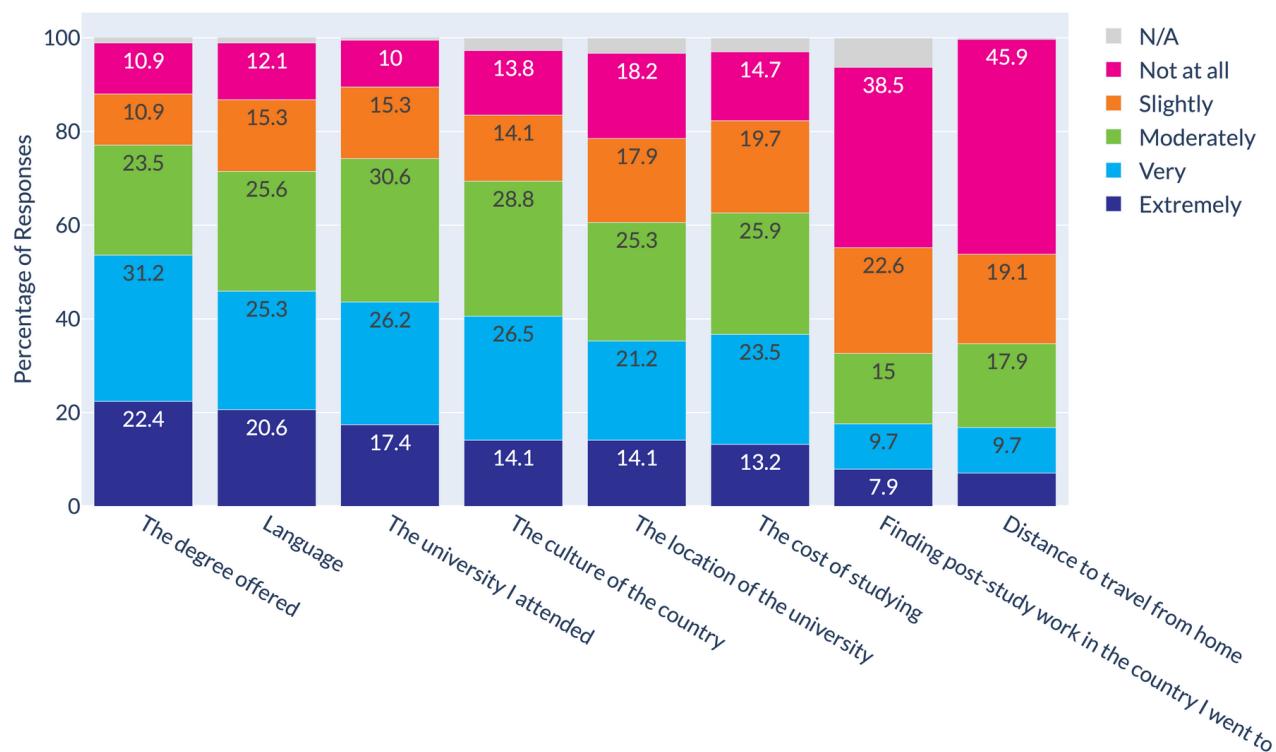


Figure 2.2 - Responses to 'How important were the following factors in choosing the destination for your mobility?' (n=340)

Based on 340 responses from students mobile outside of the UK, the most important motivations to study abroad were the degree offered, language, and the university attended. The most important factors are similar to those to study in the UK but are considered less important, with 53.6%, 45.9%, and 43.6% of respondents considering each of these reasons respectively to be a 'very' or 'extremely' important factor. Distance to travel to the mobility destination from the home country was the least important factor, with only 16.8% of students considering this to be a 'very' or 'extremely' important factor.

Comparing this to responses from students studying in the UK, it is evident courses in English are a key motivator for students studying in the UK - much more so than their counterparts elsewhere.

Notably, those who studied in the UK valued the university they attended more - 43.6% of respondents from elsewhere stated it was a 'very' or 'extremely' important factor versus 61.2% studying in the UK answering the same. This reflects a 2015 British Council study that found the perceived quality of UK higher education is the main motivator behind international students studying STEM courses in the country.¹⁰ UK institutions are highly valued by international students.

Visas and Immigration

Since the UK's exit from the EU, immigration processes and, in particular, visas have become an added barrier for EU students wishing to study in the UK. In this section, we analyse the experiences of mobile students coming to the UK, specifically with respect to process, cost, and support.

Type of Visa Used to Enter the UK

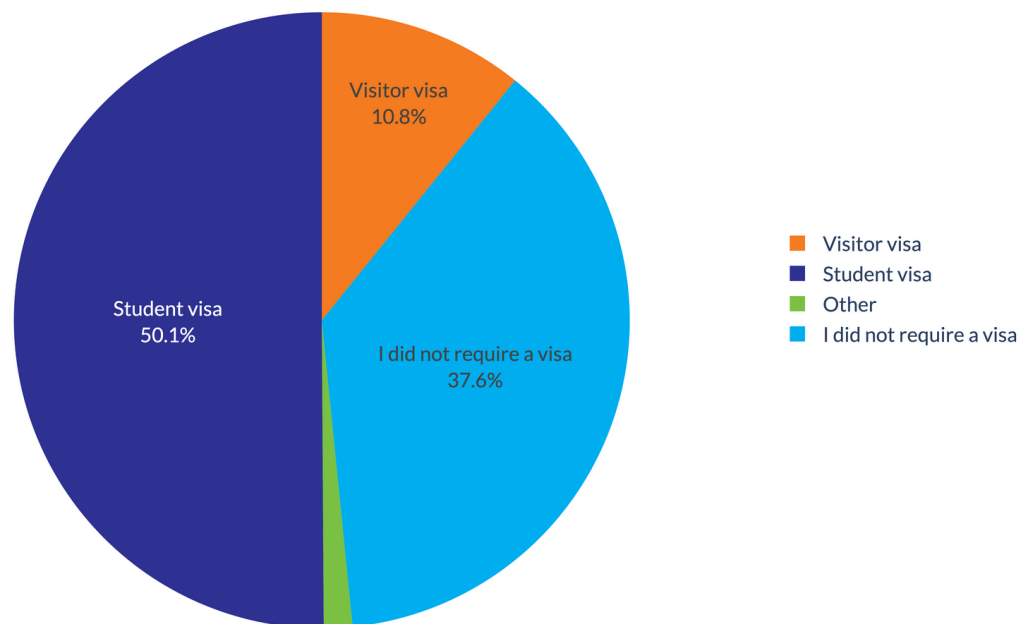


Figure 2.3 - Responses to 'What type of visa did you come to the UK on?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, around half (50.1%) of respondents indicated they studied in the UK on a Student visa, 37.6% indicated they did not require a visa, and 10.8% indicated they came to the UK on a Visitor visa. These figures largely reflect data in the UK sample characteristics section, where around half of respondents stated they studied in the UK for one year or longer. 1.4% of the sample answered 'Other', including those who were not sure or who were on a Tier 4 internship visa, for example.

Support Received During Visa Process

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I received enough support when applying for a visa'. Whilst this was an optional question for those who did require a visa, more respondents answered this question (332) than those who indicated they needed a visa (290). As seen in Figure 2.5, the '3' response is inflated due to those who did not require a visa, using it likely as an 'N/A' field.

Aside from this, 12.7% responded '1' and 13.9% '2', meaning 26.6% (88) felt they did not receive enough support, 19.9% responded '4', and 18.1% responded '5'.

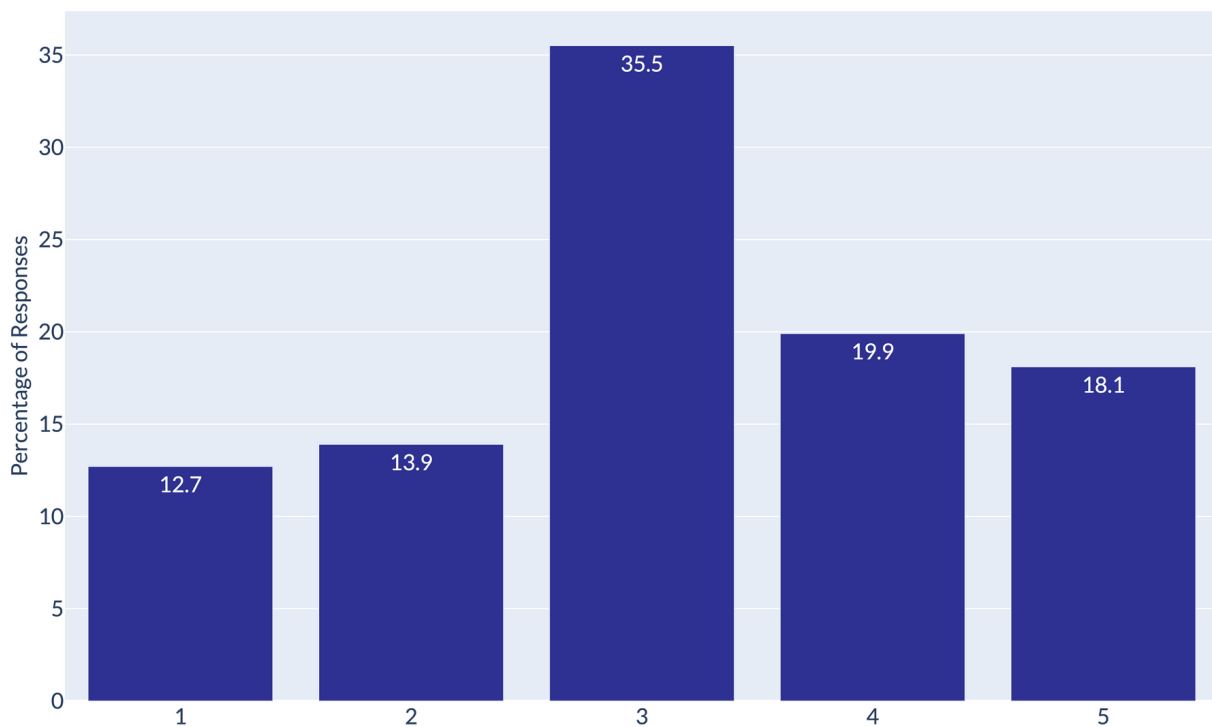


Figure 2.4 - Responses to 'I received enough support when applying for a visa' (n=465)

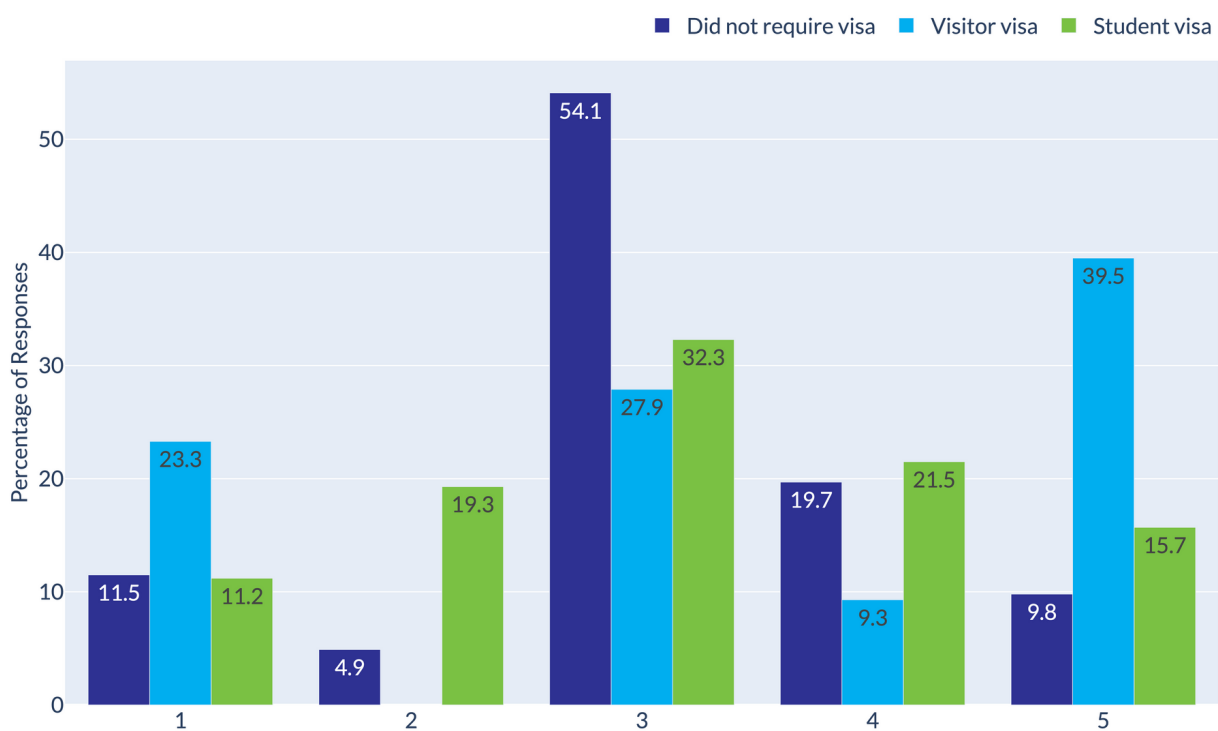


Figure 2.5 - Responses to 'I received enough support when applying for a visa', grouped by type of visa needed (n=465)

Issues with support when obtaining a visa are further highlighted by qualitative responses to the open-text question, 'Did you have any problems with your visa?',

which received 127 responses, of which 67 were non-null (i.e. removing 'no', 'nope', 'N/A' and others).

As seen in the word cloud below of keywords within these 67 answers, a common theme was misguided and often incorrect advice from HEIs:

- [My university] told me to get a Visa, which is not necessary for 6 months. I had to pay for it, travel to [city] to give my fingerprint and leave them my passport. It took so long it didn't arrive in time.'
- 'The university stated that I required a visa for studies but when I got here I learned that I did not need a visa after all'
- 'Took very long and because the university didnt send me the information I needed to process my visa until August, I had to pay for the express processing of the visa'



Figure 2.6 - Word cloud of most common words given in open text responses to 'Did you have any problems with your visa?' (n=127)

There were notable responses that mentioned issues with the Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from their HEI:

- 'Problem with CAS number from university : they gave it to us really late (beginning of august)'
- 'Yes. I was not informed by the school before applying that I needed a guardianship to receive my CAS number (as I as 17 at the time of the year starting), spent a month scrambling to find one with no help from the university at all...'

- ‘I had to ask the university several times for my CAS so I could get a student visa and work part-time in the UK. They don’t advise students to work and study while here, so I had to insist a lot (I wouldn’t be able to come if I couldn’t work here)’

Students also criticised the practicalities of the visa process, including its cost and duration:

- ‘It just took a long time and i have to pay extra to get a fast visa to come here on time’
- ‘The process was tedious and the company used to process the visa in [my country] was atrocious. At one point I did not know if they had or had not sent me my passport and there was now way to contact them(they took 3 months to respond to my email, after classes’
- ‘Application online was impossible because website didn’t work properly, made appointment...to resolve issues, very bad experience with unqualified personnel there, they kept my passport for 4 months for processing my application’

Getting a Visa as a Problem

This data is reflected when international students in the UK were asked about obtaining a visa as a barrier to study.

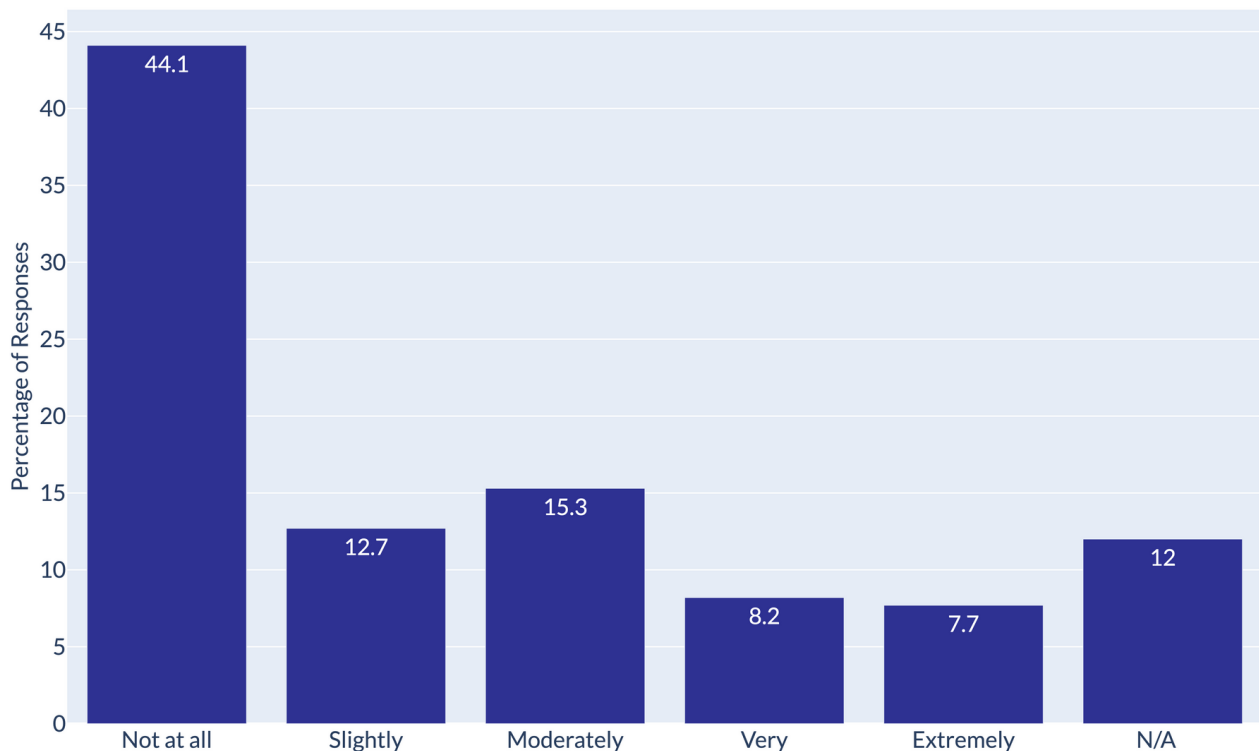


Figure 2.7 - Responses to ‘How much of a problem was [getting a visa] when studying in the UK?’ (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 43.9% responded that obtaining a visa was a problem to varying degrees - 12.7% responded 'slightly', 15.3% responded 'moderately', 8.2% responded 'very', and 7.7% responded 'extremely'.

44.1% responded that they did 'not at all' find getting a visa a problem, and 12% responded it was not applicable.

As can be seen in Figure 2.8, this combined 56.1% largely consists of those who did not require a visa and those who were able to enter the UK on a Standard Visitor visa (that is, those who stayed in the UK for less than six months).

There is a clear difference in the perception of getting a visa as a problem between those who entered on a Standard Visitor visa and those who entered on a Student visa. Over two-thirds (70.4%) of respondents who entered on a Student visa considered getting a visa to be a problem (responding 'slightly', 'moderately', 'very', or 'extremely'), compared to less than one-third (32%) of those who entered on a Visitor visa.

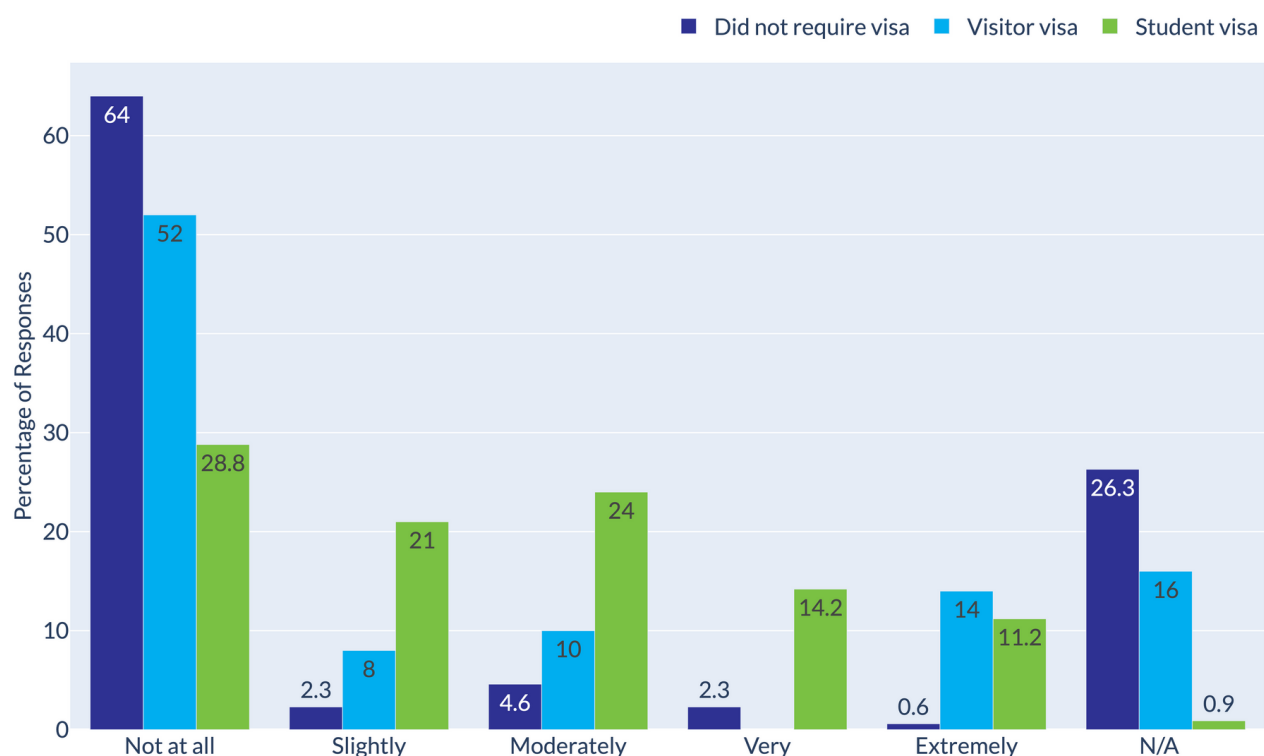


Figure 2.8 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [getting a visa] when studying in the UK?' (n=465)

This barrier is further highlighted by comparing the responses with students who were mobile outside of the UK. Of the 340 respondents who were mobile elsewhere, 59.7% of these respondents stated that getting a visa was 'not at all' a problem - a 15.6% increase compared to students mobile in the UK. 11.5% of these respondents said it was not applicable to them. As such, 71.2% of students mobile in other destinations did not have any problem obtaining visas.

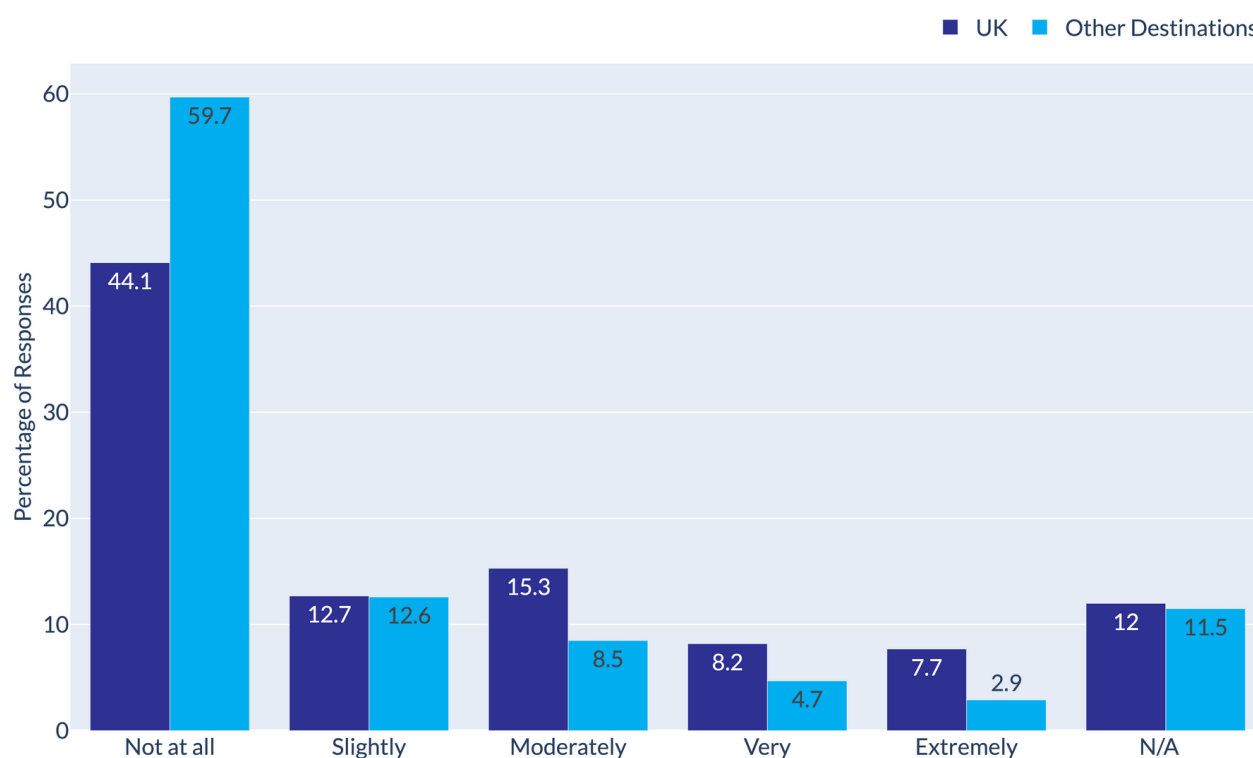


Figure 2.9 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [getting a visa] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Whilst a comparable number responded 'slightly', there is a significant difference between those studying in the UK and elsewhere after this. 8.5% responded 'moderately', 4.7% responded 'very' and just 2.9% responded 'extremely', compared to 7.7% for those studying in the UK. Obtaining a visa was considered to be a greater problem for international students in the UK than they are elsewhere.

Healthcare Costs as a Problem

Another barrier to studying in the UK queried was healthcare costs, with international students in the UK having to pay an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) of £470 per year to access healthcare if their duration of study is greater than six months and they require a Student visa, an amount which is likely to increase.¹¹

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK and comparably with the above data on getting a visa, around half of students did not consider NHS costs to be a problem, with 41.1% of students responding it was 'not at all' a problem and 9.7% responding it was not applicable to them.

As can be seen in Figure 2.11, this combined 50.8% largely consists of those who did not require a visa and those who were able to enter the UK on a Standard Visitor visa (that is, those who stayed in the UK for less than six months).

14.2% responded that this cost was 'slightly' a problem, 15.9% 'moderately', 12.7% 'very' and 6.5% 'extremely'. Overall, just under half (49.2%) of respondents stated that paying this charge as part of their visa application was a problem.

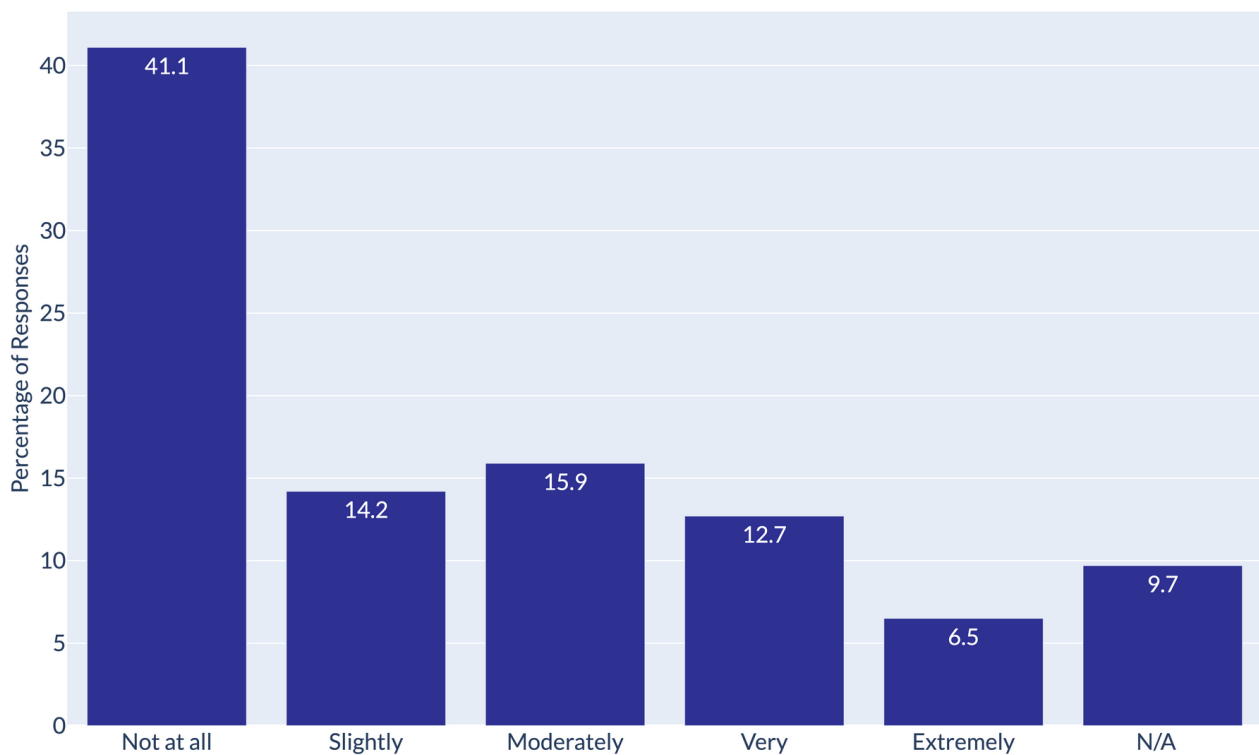


Figure 2.10 - Responses to 'How much of a problem were [NHS costs] when studying in the UK?' (n=465)

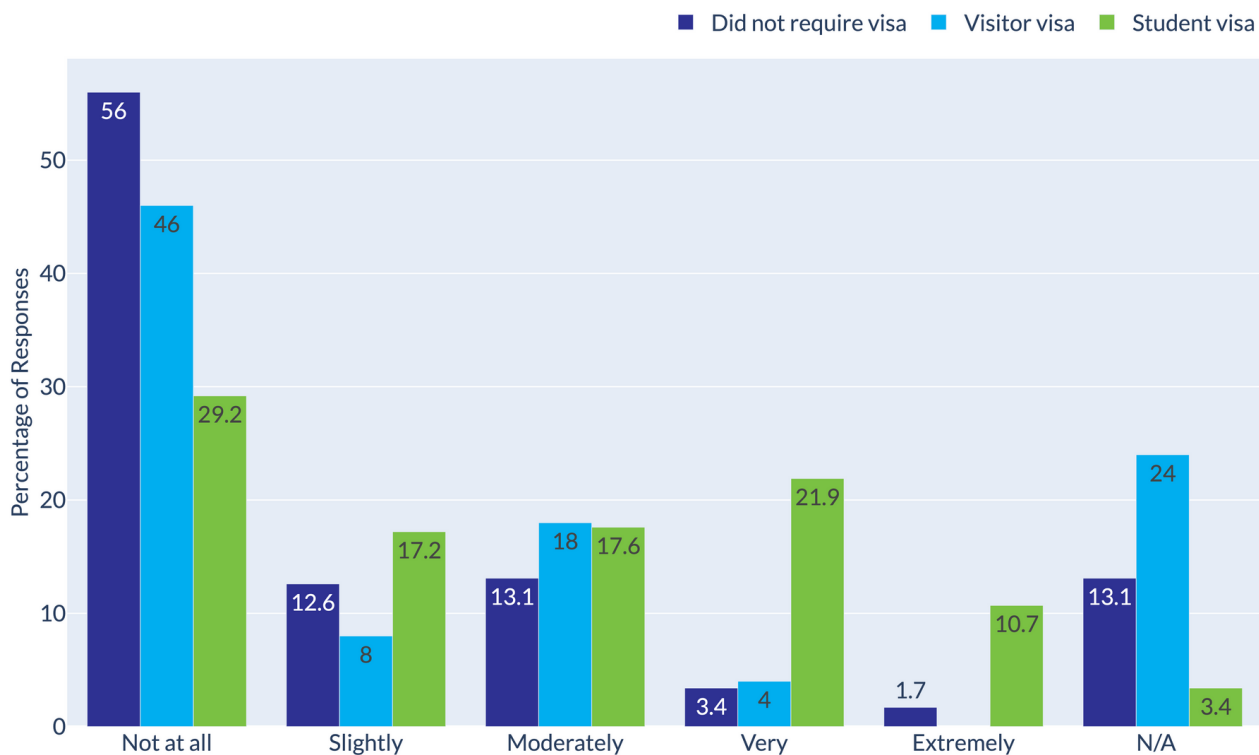


Figure 2.11 - Responses to 'How much of a problem were [NHS costs] when studying in the UK?' (n=465)

Similarly to the data on getting a visa, there is a clear difference in the perception of IHS costs as a problem between those who entered on a Standard Visitor visa and those who entered on a Student visa. Again, over two-thirds (67.4%) of respondents who entered on a Student visa considered getting a visa to be a problem (responding 'slightly', 'moderately', 'very', or 'extremely'), compared to less than one-third (30%) of those who entered on a Visitor visa.

The expense generally, and specifically the healthcare charge, was also highlighted when respondents were asked the earlier open-text about problems with obtaining their visa:

- 'Changed of duration that I did not ask and thus need to pay £200 additional for NHS'
- 'My sending university did not tell me I had to pay that much money for health insurance, so it was an unexpected expense'
- 'Paying a massive NHS fee while I wasn't even able to use any of the medical the services'
- 'It was more expensive than I thought. Including NHS fee it was £1020'

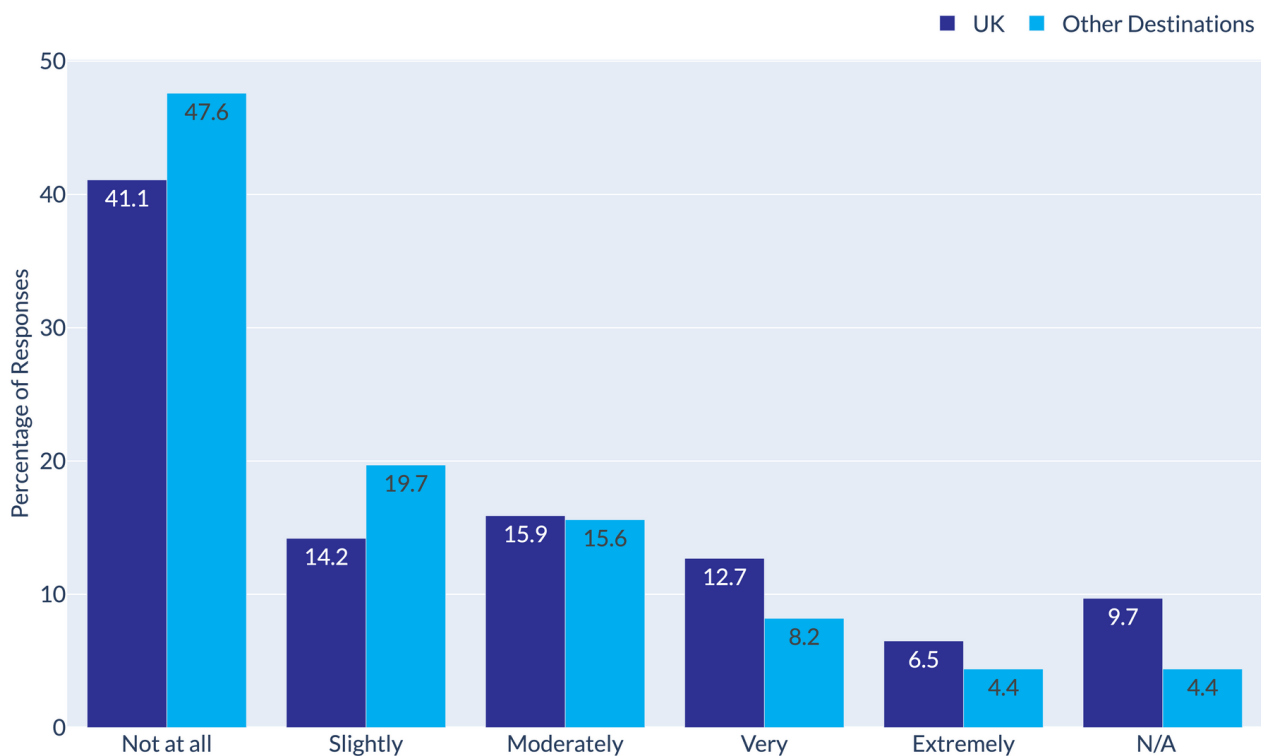


Figure 2.12 - Responses to 'How much of a problem were [NHS/health insurance costs] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Of the 340 respondents who were mobile elsewhere, when asked how much of a problem health insurance costs were during their stay abroad, 47.6% responded 'not at all'. Combining this with international students who said it was 'not applicable' to them (4.4%), 52% of respondents going to destinations other than the UK had no experience with health insurance problems. This is comparable to the rate of UK

responses (50.8%).

Similarly to the data on obtaining a visa, respondents mobile in the UK experienced health insurance costs as a problem more extremely - when asked how much of a problem this was 19.7% of respondents mobile in other destinations responded 'slightly', compared to 14.2% of UK students. Similarly, 15.6% deemed it 'moderately' a problem, compared to 15.9% for those in the UK. Just 8.2% of students elsewhere indicated health insurance was 'very' problematic, and 4.4% 'extremely' problematic. This compares to 12.7% and 6.5% respectively for students in the UK, making students in the UK just over 50% more likely to consider health insurance costs a significant issue (19.2% compared to 12.6%).

Language and Language Tests as a Problem

International students from non-English speaking countries that require a visa must also provide proof of English proficiency by passing a Secure English Language Test (SELT) to the equivalent of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale level B2. These tests can be associated with costs of up to £200.

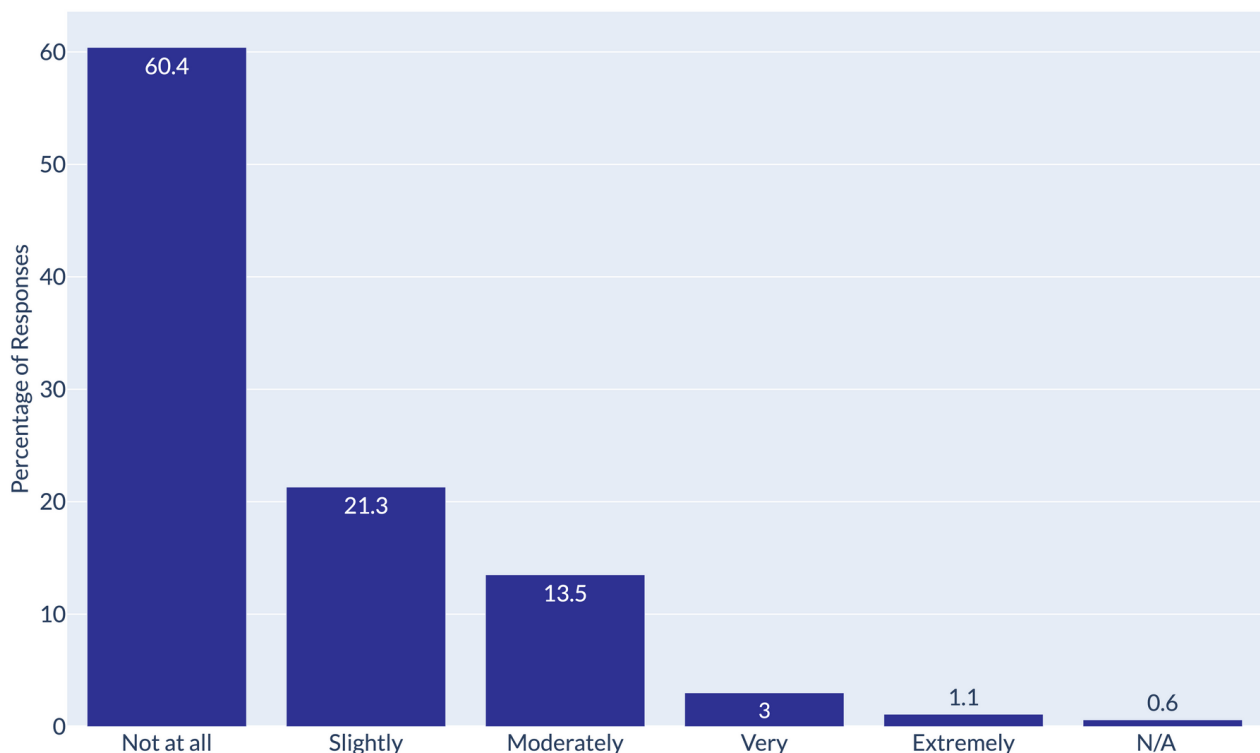


Figure 2.13 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [language (including language tests)] when studying in the UK?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, when asked to what extent language, including language tests, was a problem when studying in the UK, 60.4% indicated 'not at all', 21.3% 'slightly', 13.5% 'moderately', 3% 'very', and 1.1%

'extremely'. 0.6% of respondents said it was not applicable.

Comparing this to respondents studying in other countries, we see a positive difference for the UK.

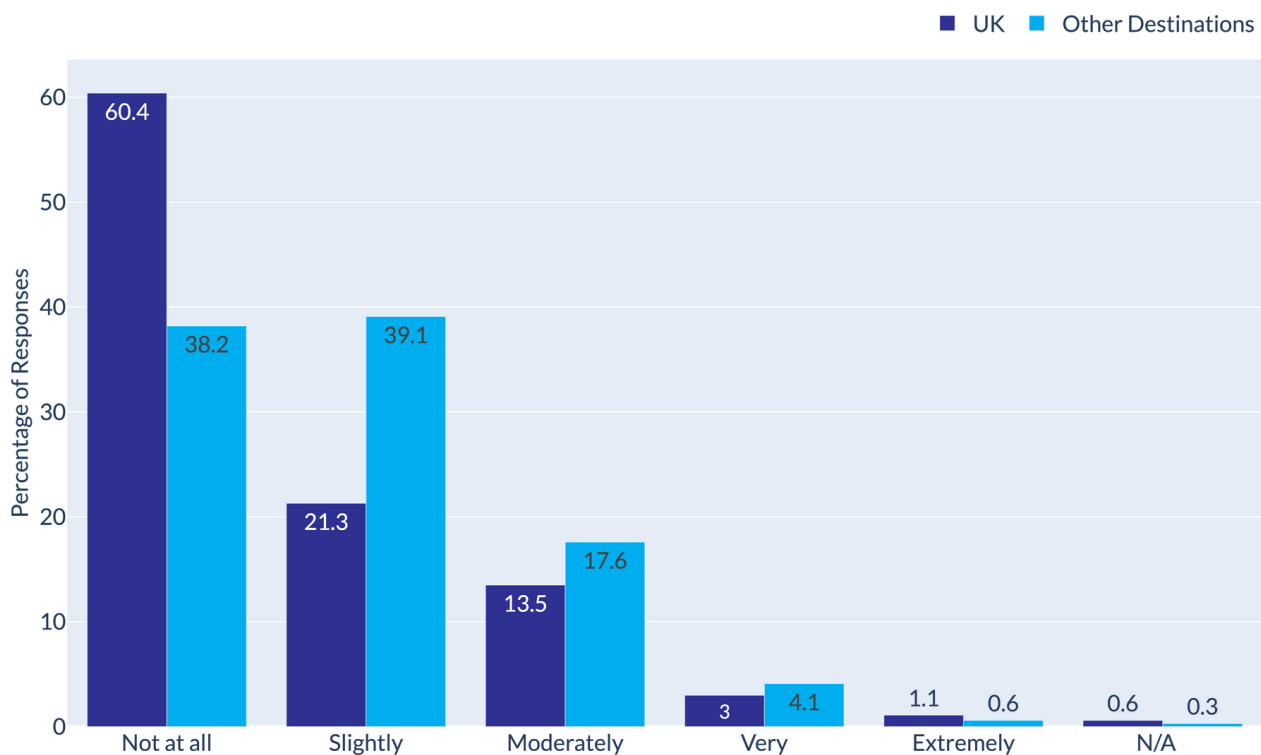


Figure 2.14 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [language (including language tests)] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Of the 340 respondents who were mobile elsewhere, 38.2% indicated that language, including tests, was 'not at all' a problem whilst studying abroad, 39.1% indicated it was 'slightly' a problem, 17.6% 'moderately', 4.1% 'very', and 0.6% 'extremely'. Language is generally perceived as a greater problem facing students in destinations other than the UK.

This reflects prior research suggesting that the language used in a destination is a key factor in an international student's decision-making process when deciding where to study.¹² The use of English in universities and society, at a time when some European countries such as Denmark are reducing the number of English-language programmes due to political pressure, is likely a key factor for students wanting to study in the UK.

Conclusions

Visas constitute a major issue for mobility students entering the UK. The qualitative responses in this section illustrate that the visa process is considered to be expensive, complicated, and time-consuming, which is further hindered by a lack of support and correct advice from universities.

Visas are found to be a considerably greater problem for those who require a Student visa than those who require a Visitor visa, particularly with regard to the process of obtaining a visa and the associated IHS costs.

Positively, language is found to be the most important motivating factor for students to study in the UK, and most mobile respondents did not consider language, including tests, to be a significant issue for them. However, more research is needed into language tests as a barrier, as there are likely to be considerable global differences outside the scope of this survey.

During Mobility

In this section, we investigate various issues important to mobility students during their time abroad, such as accommodation, social life and integration, and mental health, as well as the support respondents received in relation to various issues and throughout their time abroad, and their overall satisfaction with their time in the UK.

Satisfaction with HEIs and Student Organisations

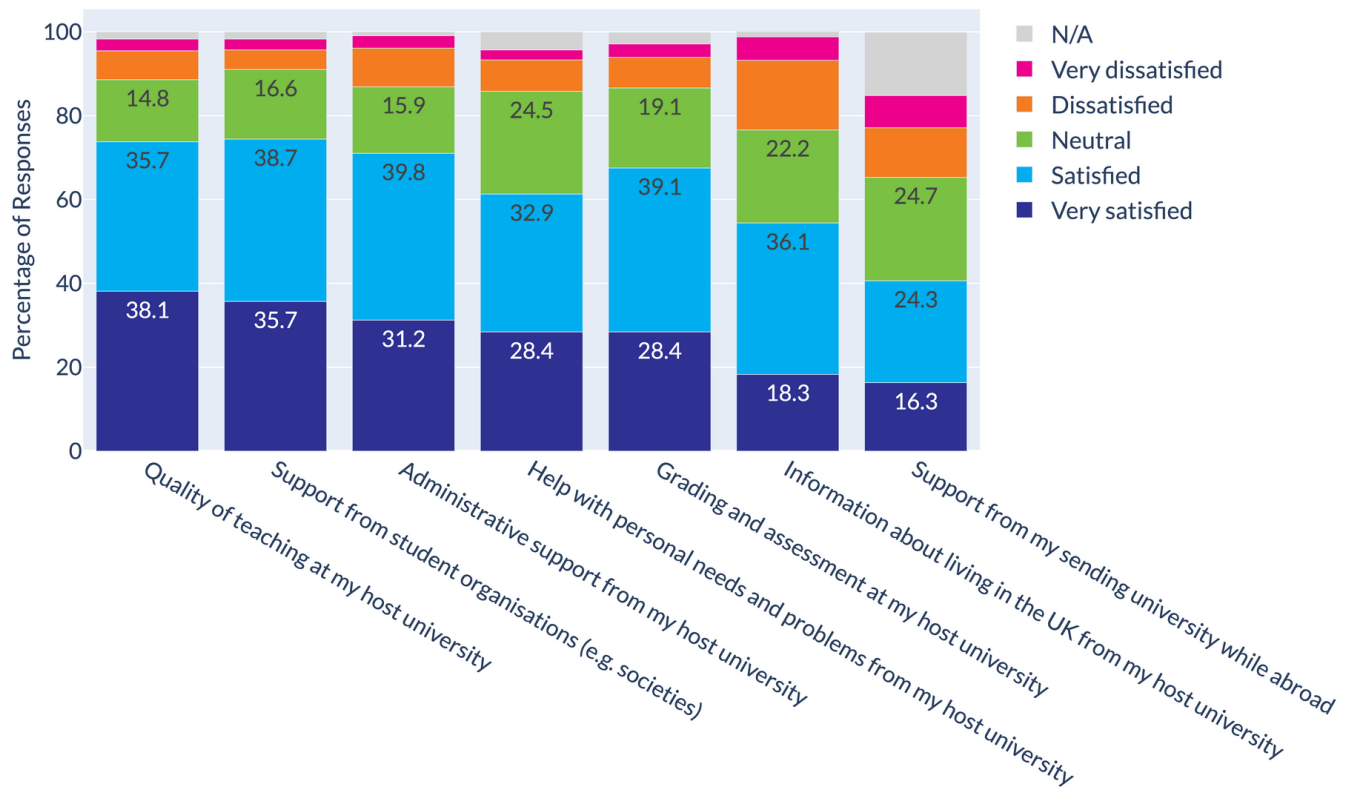


Figure 2.15 - Responses to 'How satisfied are you with the following?' (n=465)

Based on 465 responses from students mobile in the UK, students were generally satisfied with the teaching and support received during their mobility. The areas with the highest satisfaction were the support received from student societies, the quality of teaching at the host university, and the administrative support from the host university, with more than 70% of respondents 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with each of these. Support from sending universities while abroad received the lowest levels of satisfaction, with 40.6% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this support.

Social Life and Integration

ESNs survey XIV found that among mobile students, meeting new people was the single most common motivation to go on mobility.⁸ Understanding students'

satisfaction with their social life and level of integration into UK society is therefore an essential part of understanding if mobility in the UK meets these expectations.

Integration into UK Society

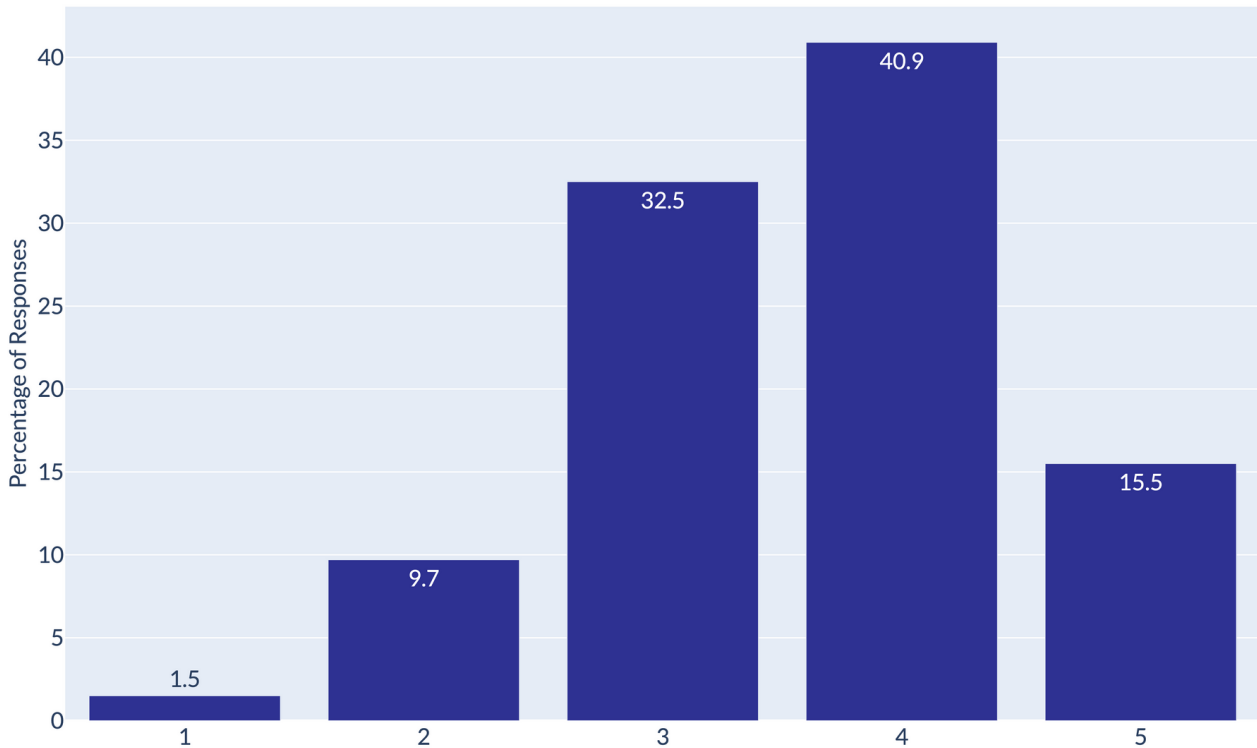


Figure 2.16 - Responses to 'I felt integrated into UK society' (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I felt integrated into UK society'. Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 15.5% responded '5', 40.9% responded '4', 32.5% responded '3', 9.7% responded '2', and 1.5% responded '1'. More than half (56.4%) responded positively that they felt integrated into UK society.

Satisfaction with Social Life

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I was happy with my social life in the UK'. Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 36.3% responded '5', 37.0% responded '4', 19.4% responded '3', 6.2% responded '2', and 1.1% responded '1'.

Almost three-quarters (73.3%) responded positively and agreed they were happy with their social life in the UK. This is roughly consistent with results from the ESNsurvey XIV, which found that 75.4% of respondents were satisfied or very

satisfied with their social life during their mobilities.⁸

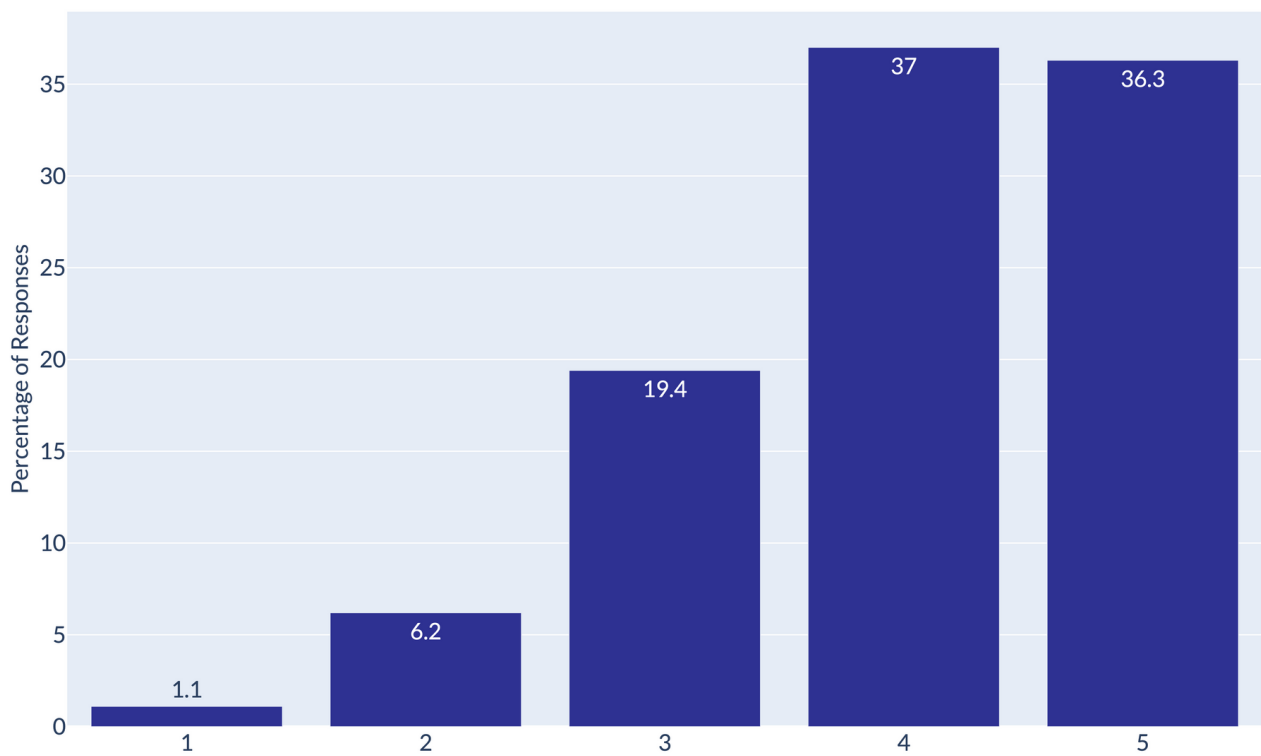


Figure 2.17 - Responses to 'I was happy with my social life in the UK' (n=465)

Interaction with Different Groups

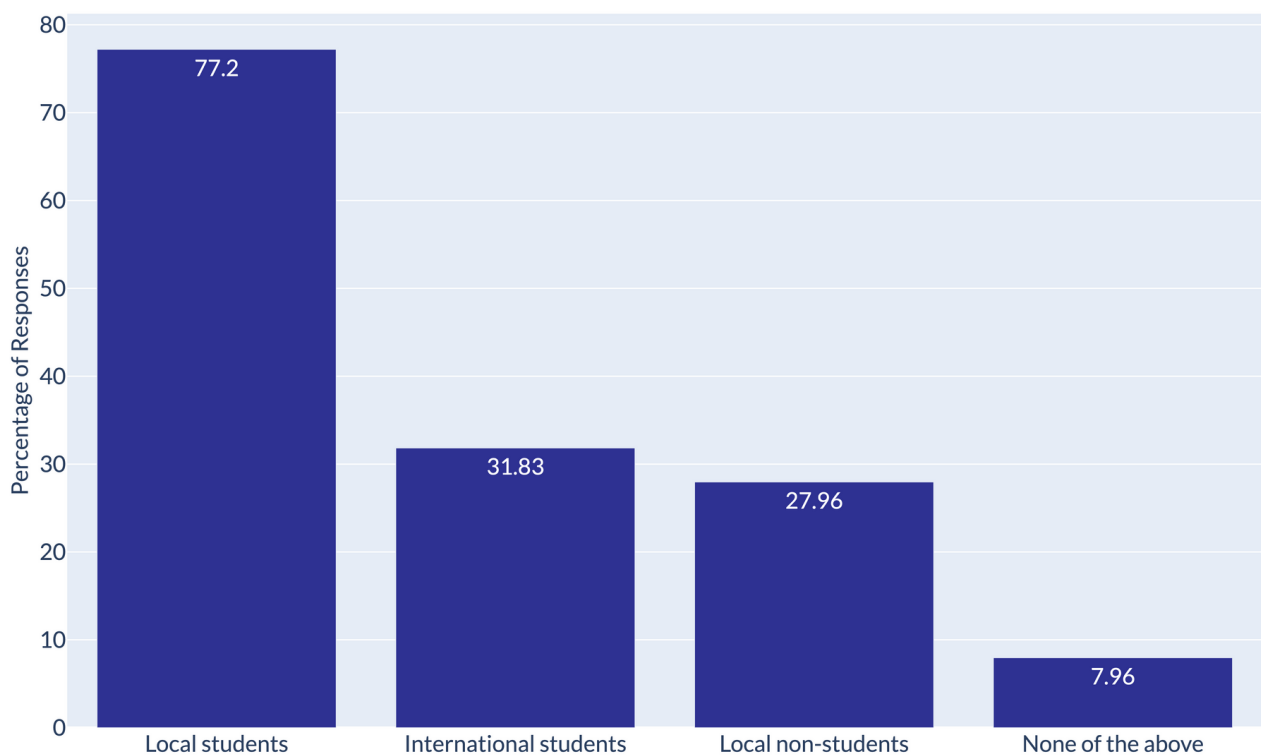


Figure 2.18 - Responses to 'I would have liked more interaction with...' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 77.2% indicated they would have liked more interaction with local students, 31.8% indicated they would have liked more interaction with international students, and 27.8% indicated they would have liked more interaction with local non-students.

7.96% responded they would have liked more interaction with none of the above, meaning they were happy with their level of interaction with all of the aforementioned groups.

Mental Health

Student mental health remains a crucial topic for all those involved in supporting students to understand. A 2022 report by Student Minds into the mental health experiences of international students emphasises ‘recognising the heterogeneity of the student community’ and how international students may experience¹³ mental health differently from domestic students during their stay abroad. Here, we briefly investigate this experience and, specifically, satisfaction with the mental health support received.

Emotions Experienced While in the UK

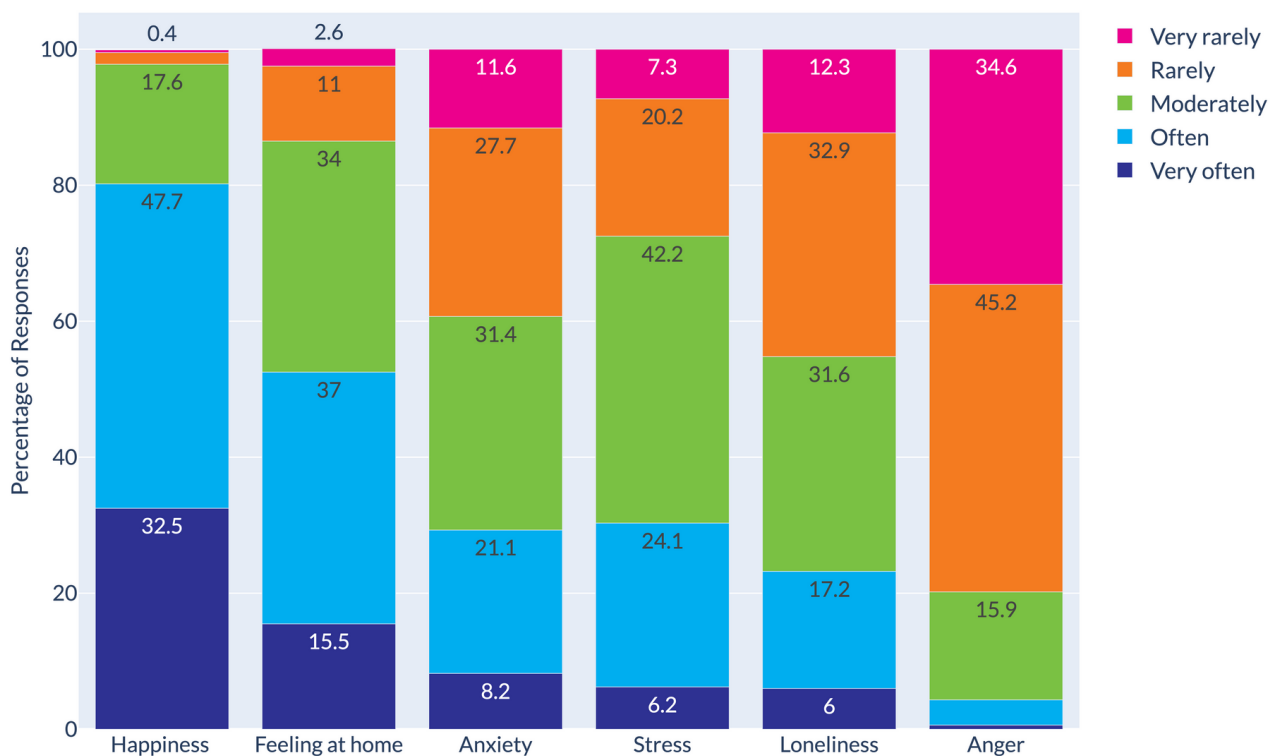


Figure 2.19 - Responses to ‘How often did you experience the following emotions whilst studying in the UK?’ (n=465)

Based on 465 responses from students mobile in the UK, respondents most

commonly experienced happiness and feeling at home, with 80.% and 42.5% of respondents, respectively, stating they felt these emotions ‘often’ or ‘very often’. Of the negative emotions listed (anxiety, stress, loneliness, and anger), most respondents reported feeling stress most often and anger least often.

Support Received for Mental Health

In the HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2023, when asked how their institution could improve the quality of respondents’ academic experience, the third-most common response given was providing more mental health support. ⁵ In another report by Student Minds, international students in the UK were found to anticipate requiring more support for their mental health at the beginning of the academic semester than domestic students. ¹³

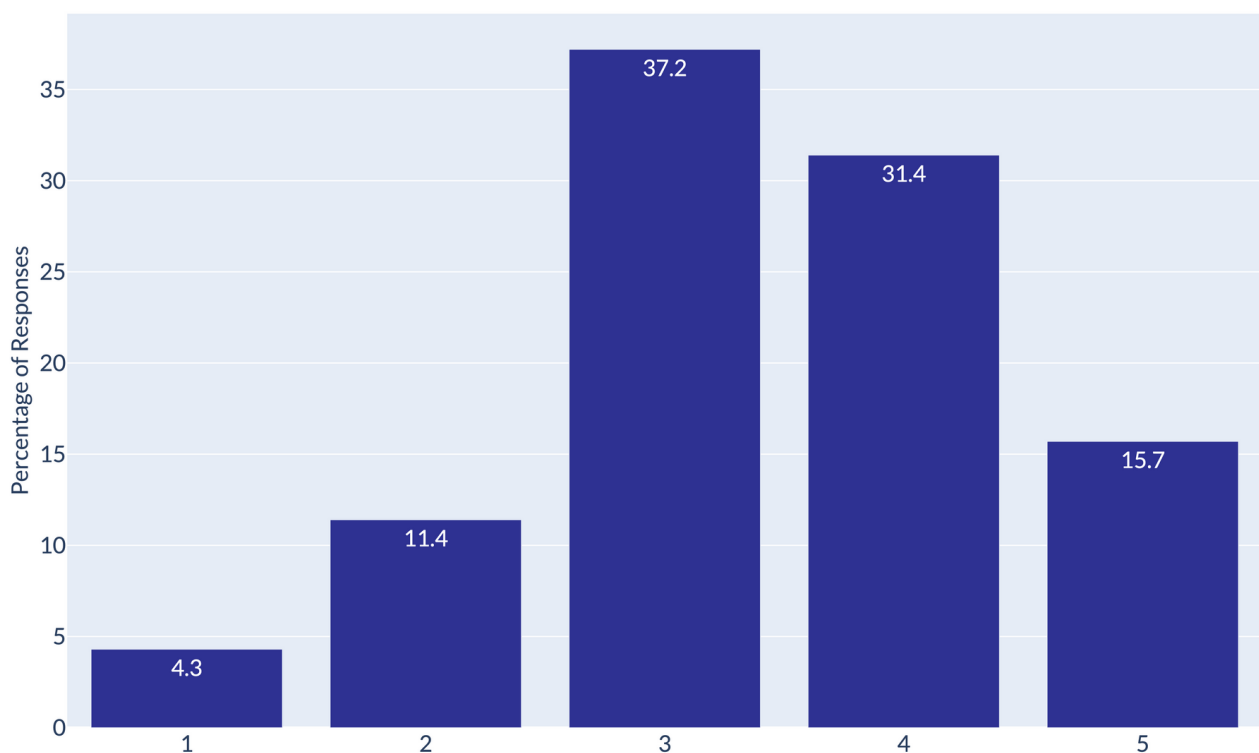


Figure 2.20 - Responses to ‘I received enough support for my mental health while in the UK’ (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with ‘1’ meaning ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘5’ meaning ‘strongly agree’ with the statement ‘I received enough support for my mental health whilst in the UK’. Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 15.7% responded ‘5’, 31.4% responded ‘4’, 37.2% responded ‘3’, 11.4% responded ‘2’, and 4.3% responded ‘1’. These results appear generally positive, though it is likely that the middle-ground answers are inflated by respondents who did not require access to mental health support during their time in the UK. Even still, more must be done to support the 15.7% (73) of students who disagreed with the statement.

Accommodation

The UK, along with many other European countries, is widely considered to be in a student housing shortage, with recent headlines sharing stories of students living in neighbouring cities to their universities or being forced to change their choice of university due to being unable to find or afford accommodation.^{14,15} This crisis can affect international students in different ways than domestic students, and more acutely; they may find it more difficult to secure housing as they are less likely to have an often-necessary UK-based guarantor, and generally will try to arrange accommodation from abroad before arrival, which leaves them vulnerable to scams. One report from NUS found that international students were almost twice as likely to experience homelessness in Scotland compared to domestic students (22% compared to 11%).¹⁶

Quality of Accommodation

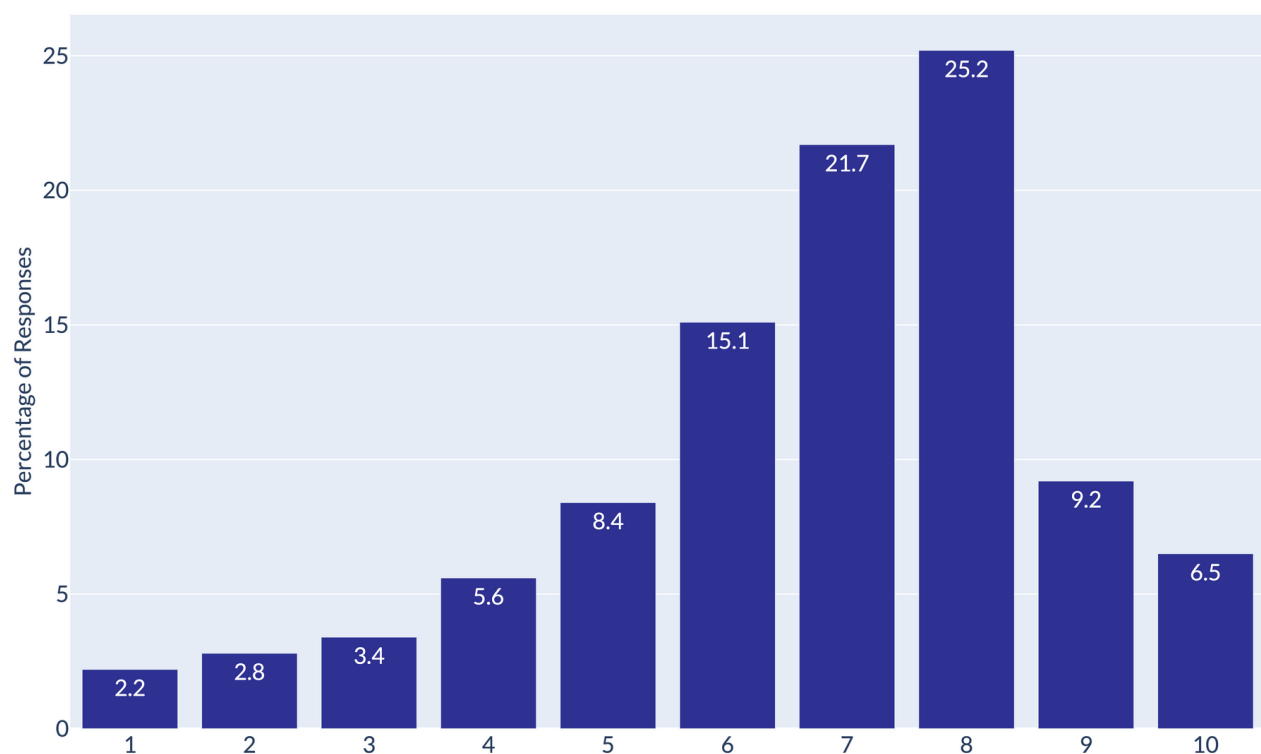


Figure 2.21 - Responses to 'How would you rate your accommodation on a scale of 1 to 10?' (n=465)

The 465 respondents who studied in the UK were asked to rate the quality of their accommodation on a scale of '1' (very bad) to '10' (very good). Almost half (46.9%) rated their accommodation as '7' or '8', with the most popular rating being 8 out of 10.

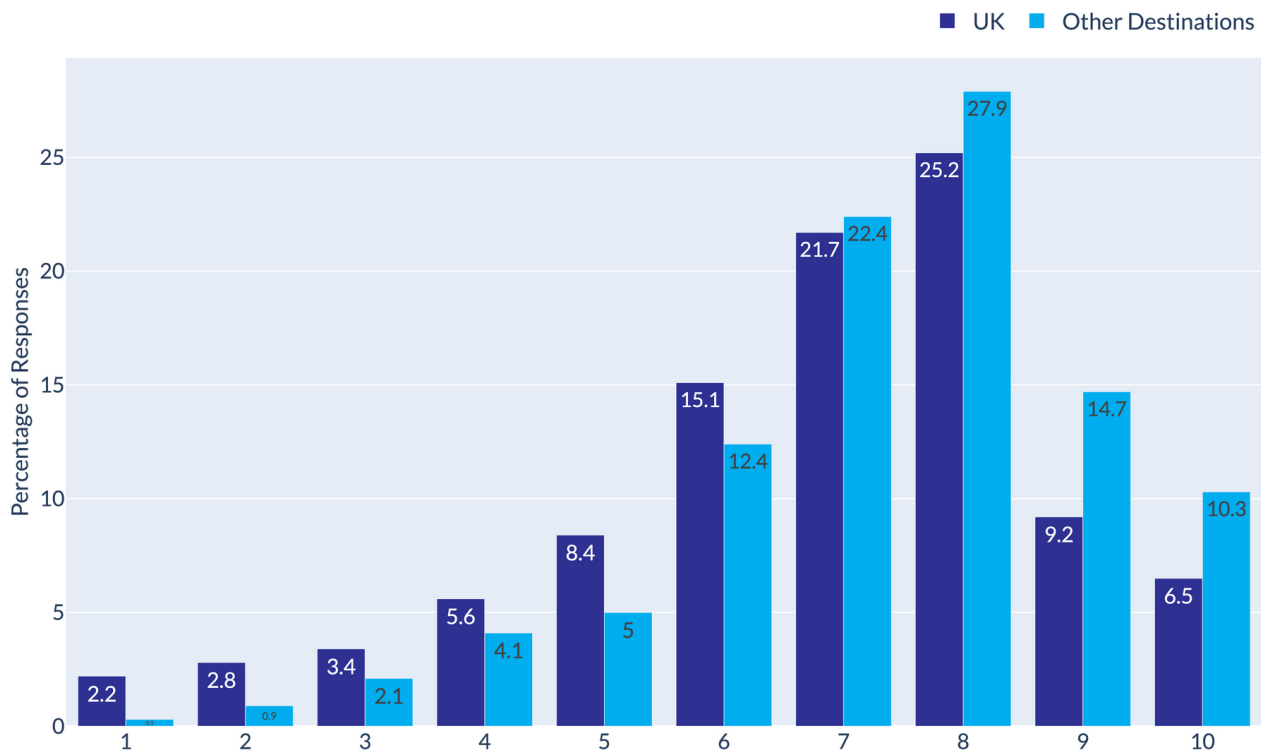


Figure 2.22 - Responses to 'How would you rate your accommodation on a scale of 1 to 10?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

However, when we compare students' satisfaction with accommodation in other destinations, it is much higher than that in the UK.

Of the 340 respondents mobile outside of the UK, higher percentages were given for the four highest ratings ('7', '8', '9', and '10'), and lower percentages were given for the six lowest ratings ('1', '2', '3', '4', '5', and '6'), when compared with those in the UK. In particular, students in the UK were more than twice as likely to rate their accommodation very poorly ('1', '2', or '3') (8.4%) compared to those elsewhere (3.3%).

Support from Host Universities

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I received enough support from my host university in finding accommodation'.

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 17.4% responded '5', 16.6% responded '4', 18.5% responded '3', 14.6% responded '2', and 32.9% responded '1'. Almost one-third of respondents strongly disagreed they were sufficiently supported in finding accommodation by their host university.

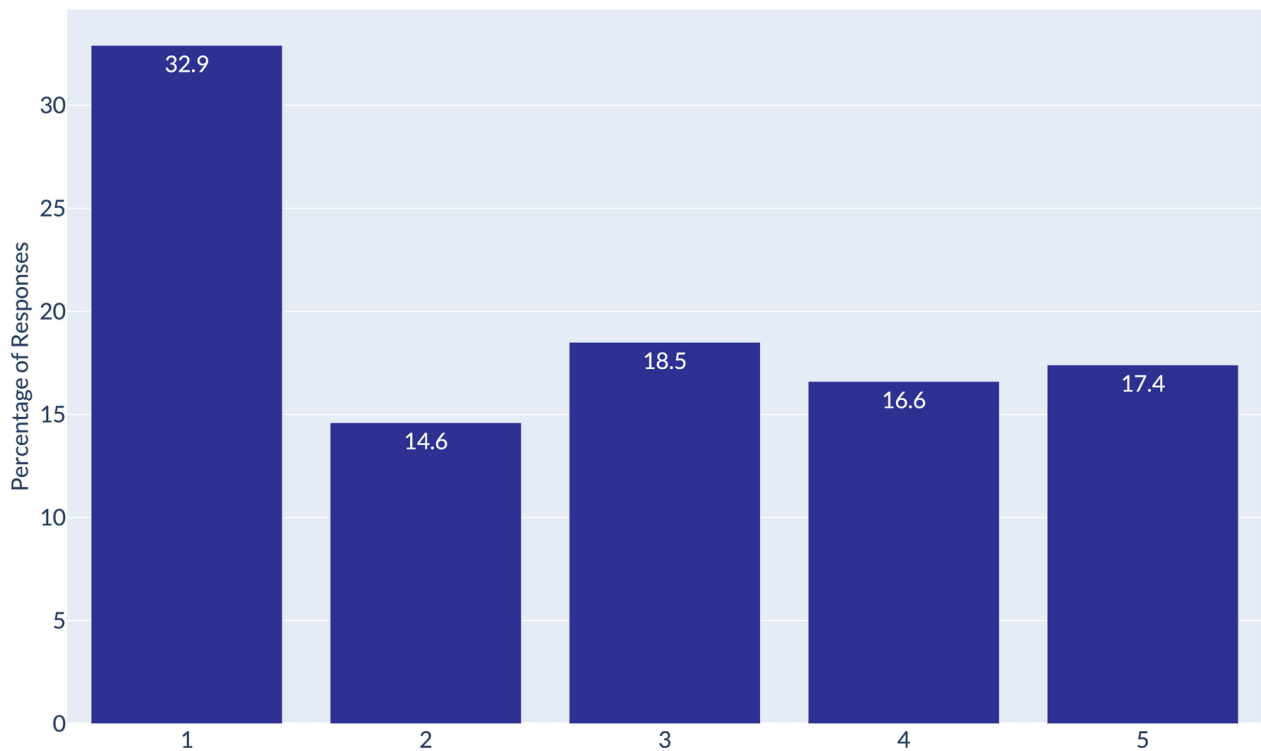


Figure 2.23 - Responses to 'I received enough support from my host university in finding accommodation' (n=465)

In a later qualitative question, respondents could expand on any issues they experienced with accommodation. The lack of support from host institutions is highlighted in many of these responses:

- 'It was very hard to find an accommodation and I didn't receive help at all from the university.'
- 'My university didn't tell us we had to find it ourselves and couldn't come if we did not have accommodation like three months before we got here'
- 'There was very little support for exchange students when it came to finding accommodation. I was promised accommodation at [my host university] upon applying to their exchange program but within two months of my arrival they informed me that I would likely not be receiving accommodation on campus. ... This was a very anxious time that impacted my mental health as I was unsure if I would be able to find a place to live during my exchange and I would have had to spend a large amount of money on hotels or take a semester off if I could not, which would delay my graduation and my future academic plans.'
- 'There was no help from the university at all. In fact, we were specifically instructed - about a month before our mobility, if I'm not mistaken - not to send our applications if we have not had secured accommodation. This caused a great deal of stress...'

This can be compared with respondents mobile in other destinations.

Respondents who studied elsewhere also reported substantial dissatisfaction with support from their support university. Of the 340 respondents who were mobile elsewhere, 20.6% responded '5', 14.7% responded '4', 15.3% responded '3', 19.7% responded '2', and 29.7% responded '1'.

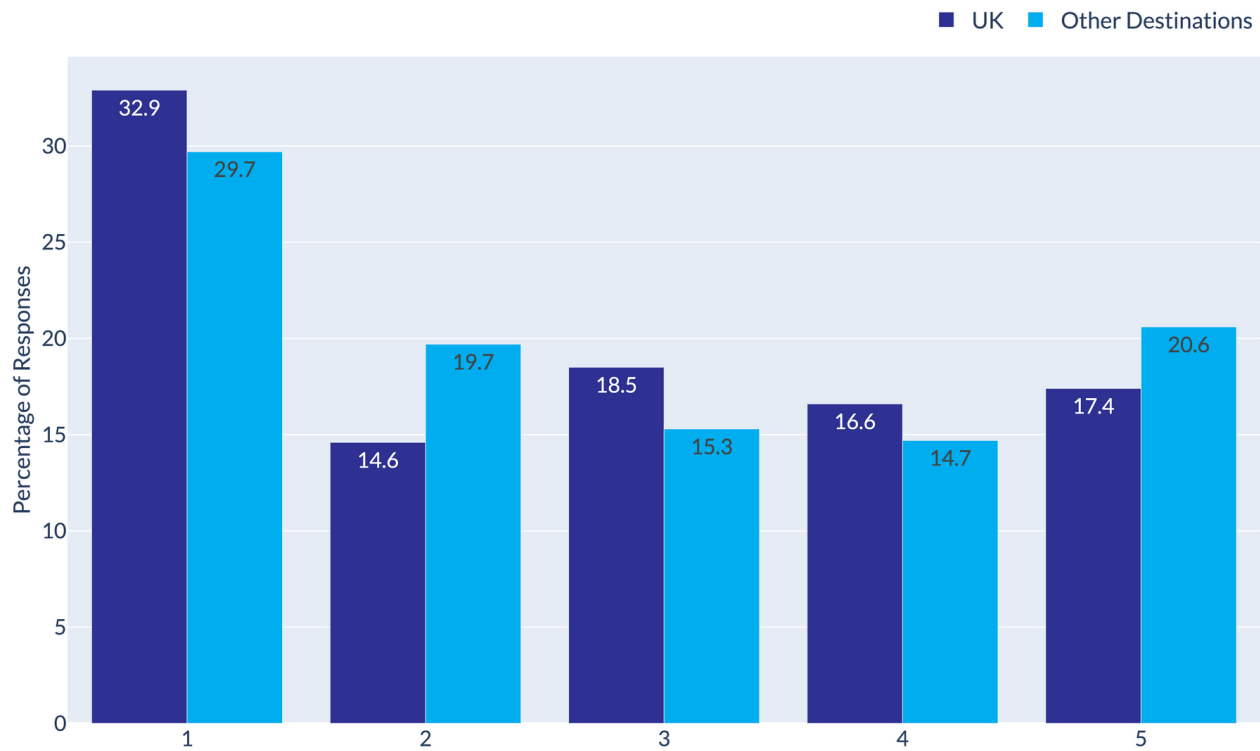


Figure 2.24 - Responses to 'I received enough support from my host university in finding accommodation' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Availability of Accommodation

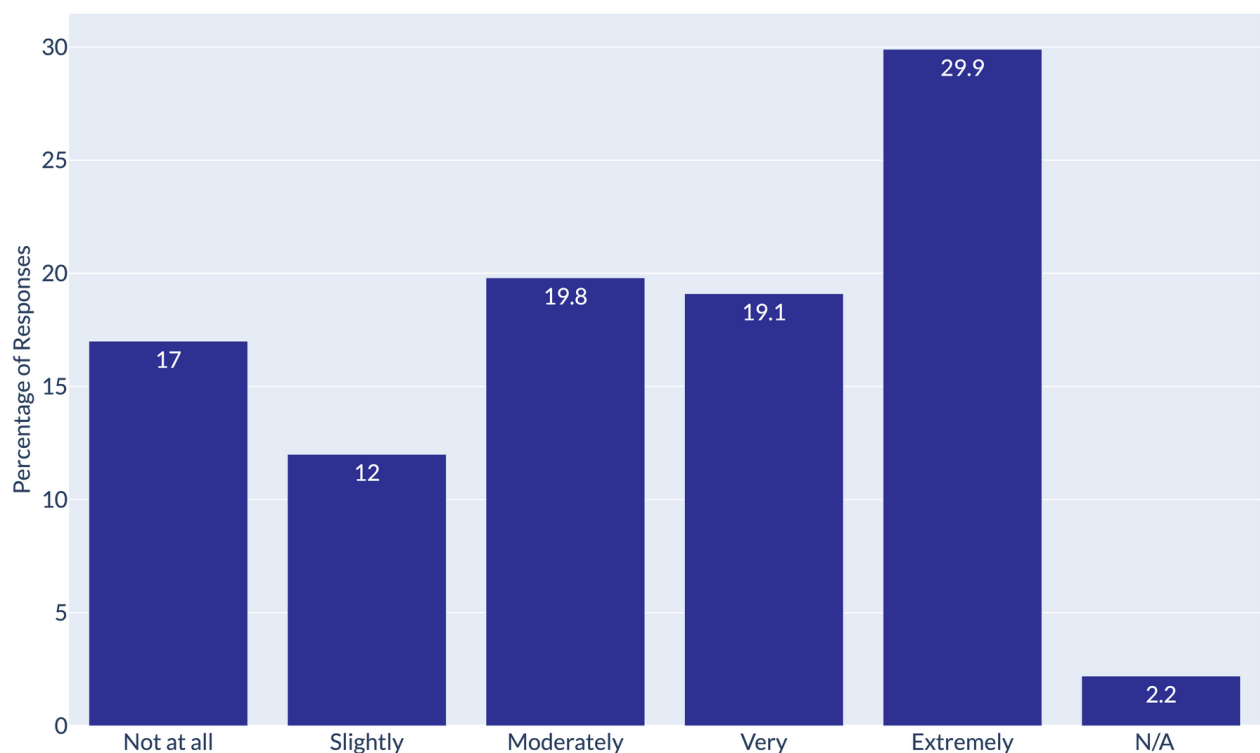


Figure 2.25 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [availability of accommodation] when studying in the UK?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents mobile in the UK, when asked how much of a problem the availability of accommodation was while studying in the UK, 29.9% responded 'extremely', 19.1% responded 'very', 19.8% responded 'moderately', 12% responded 'slightly', and 17% responded 'not at all'. 2.2% responded the question was 'not applicable' to them.

Almost a third of respondents reporting 'extremely' highlights the need for more secure accommodation for international students, who are often at greater risk due to issues such as obtaining a guarantor for private accommodation or finding shorter renting arrangements if on short-term mobility. The UKCISA Annual Policy Review highlights the inadequate supply of accommodation being made available for the ever-increasing numbers of international students coming to the UK.¹⁷ Glasgow, for example, has seen an increase in international student numbers by 80.6% between 2014-15 and 2020-21, alongside lacklustre supply increases (HESA, 2022).¹⁸ Similarly, the need for a UK-based guarantor for many private rental contracts poses a significant issue for international students that only further limits the availability of an already small pool of appropriate accommodation.

The issues of supply are further highlighted by qualitative responses received on this topic:

- 'I had to stay in an airbnb because no flats were available'
- 'Too expensive for my budget, but the only place I could find'
- 'It was only difficult to find a place in Glasgow, so I ended up finding a student accommodation building in Hamilton so I felt a bit disconnected from my university due to being away from campus.'
- 'I had to live away from the city to get my accommodation'

Students mobile in other destinations were also asked how much of a problem the availability of accommodation was for them.

Of the 340 respondents mobile elsewhere, when asked how much of a problem the availability of accommodation was while studying abroad, 12.6% responded 'extremely', 17.4% responded 'very', 27.1% responded 'moderately', 22.9% responded 'slightly', and 18.2% responded 'not at all'. 1.8% responded the question was 'not applicable' to them. Students in other destinations were less than half as likely to respond that accommodation availability was 'extremely' problematic for them.

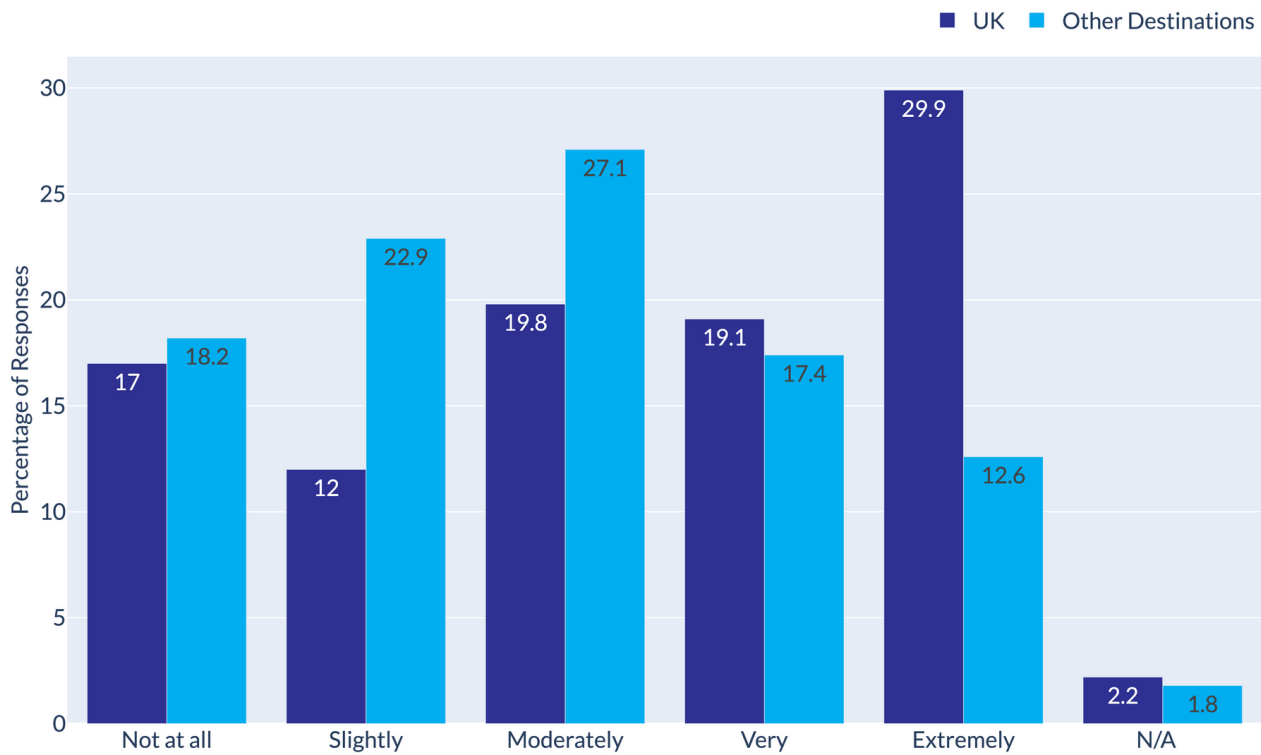


Figure 2.26 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [availability of accommodation] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Price of Accommodation

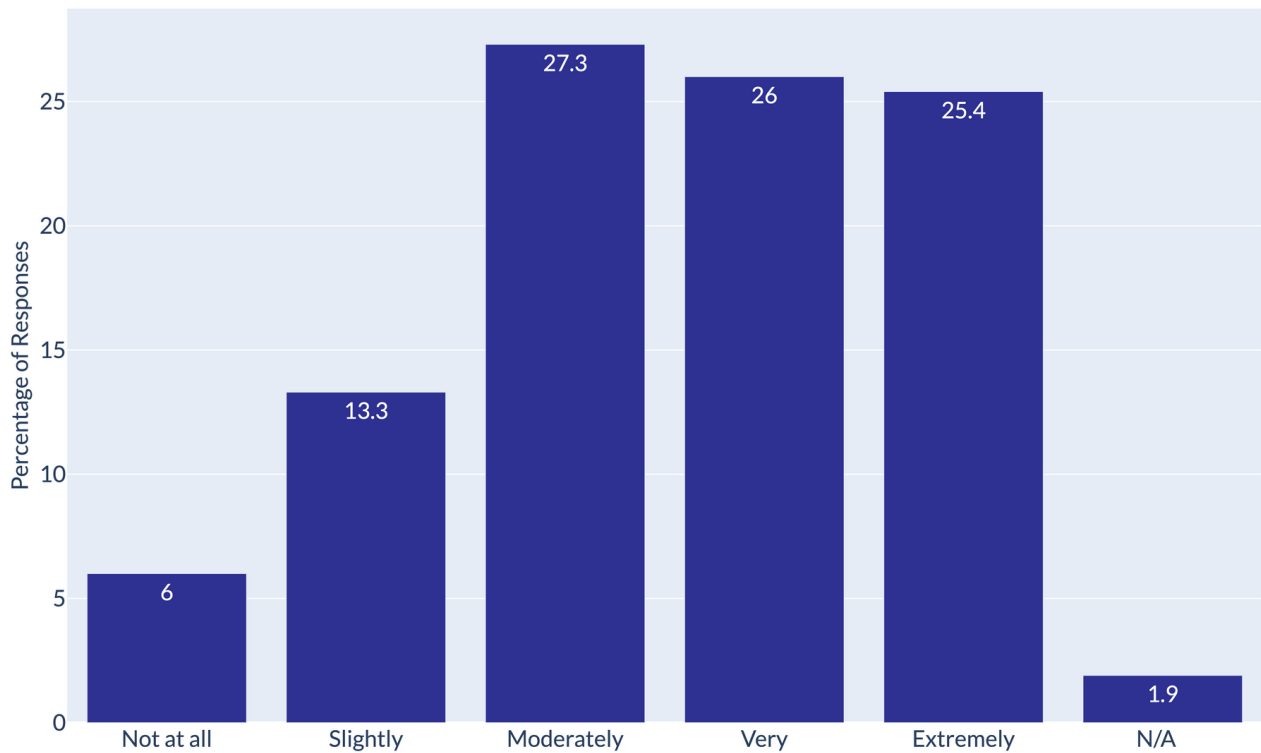


Figure 2.27 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [price of accommodation] when studying abroad?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents mobile in the UK, when asked how much of a problem the price of accommodation was while studying in the UK, 25.4% responded 'extremely', 26.0% responded 'very', 27.3% responded 'moderately', 13.3% responded 'slightly', and 6% responded 'not at all'. 1.9% responded the question was 'not applicable' to them.

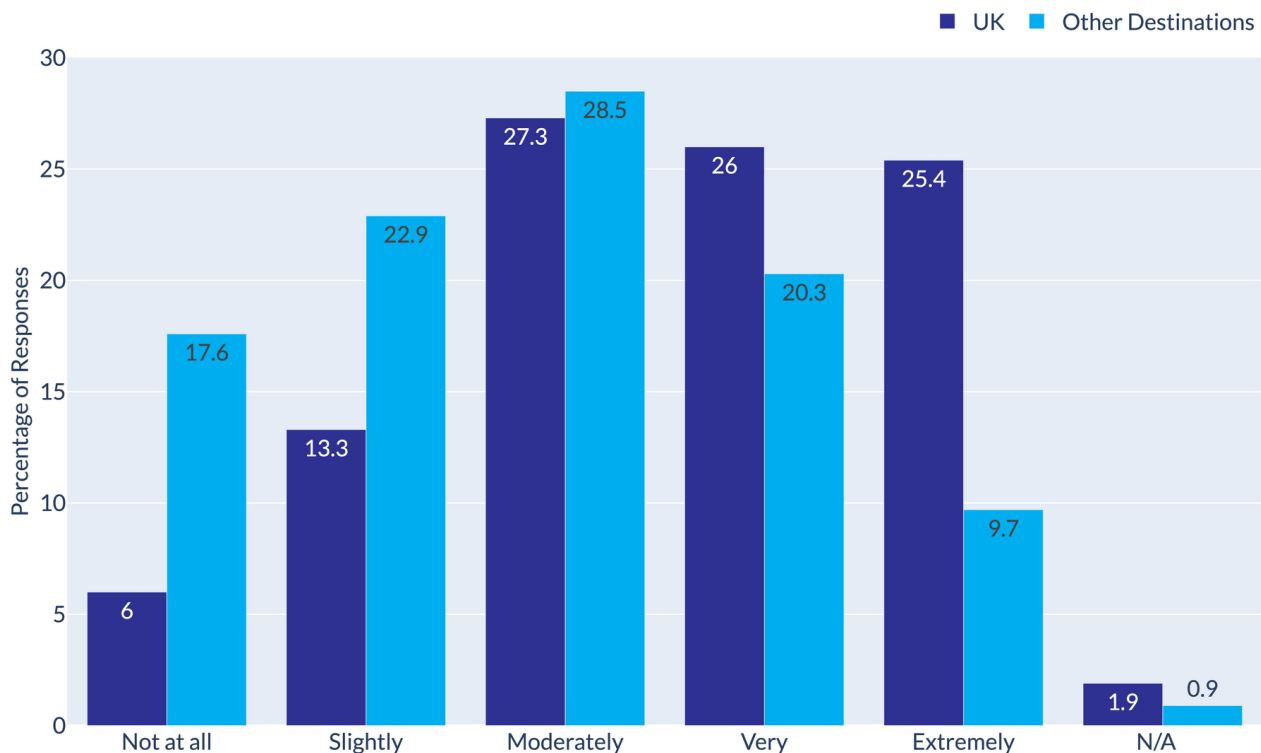


Figure 2.28 - Responses to 'How much of a problem was [price of accommodation] when studying abroad?' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Of the 340 respondents mobile elsewhere, when asked how much of a problem the price of accommodation was while studying abroad, 9.7% responded 'extremely', 20.3% responded 'very', 28.5% responded 'moderately', 22.9% responded 'slightly', and 17.6% responded 'not at all'. 0.9% responded the question was 'not applicable' to them. Students in other destinations were less than half as likely to respond that the price of accommodation was 'extremely' a problem for them.

Monthly Costs

Based on 465 responses from those mobile in the UK, the mean amount spent on accommodation per month was €601.90 per month, with a standard deviation of €230.14. Around half (50.1%) reported spending over €600 per month on their accommodation. Comparably, a recent report into accommodation from ESN and ESU surveying mobility students in Europe puts this figure at just 20%.¹⁹

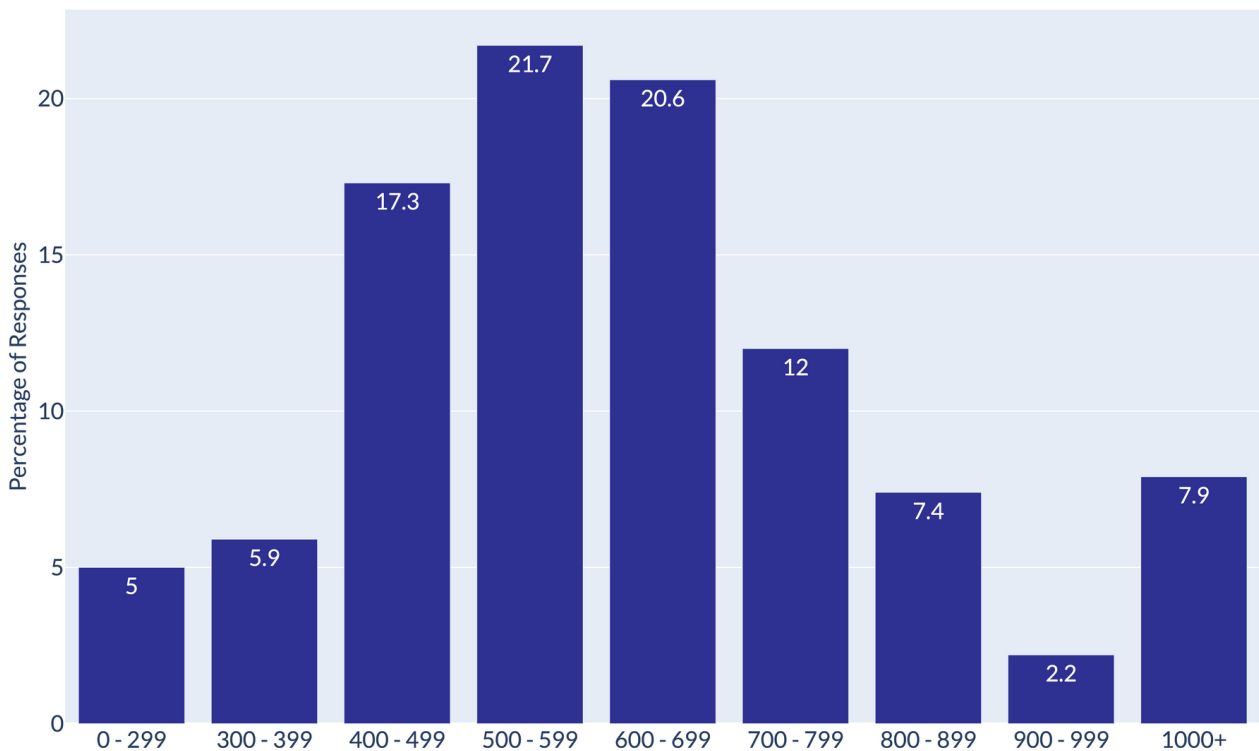


Figure 2.29 - Responses to 'How much did you spend on accommodation a month (in €)?' (n=465)

Specific Issues with Accommodation

Respondents were given the opportunity to expand on other issues relating to their accommodation (outside of the previous questions on price, availability, and support) in an optional qualitative question. 240 responses were received, of which 219 were non-null.



Figure 2.30 - Word cloud of most common words given in open text responses to 'Did you have any specific problems with your accommodation?' (n=240)

As can be seen in the word cloud on the previous page, key themes in the responses were hygiene ('dirty', 'mould', 'smelly'), cost ('expensive', 'price'), and maintenance ('broken', 'bathroom', 'water', 'heating', 'shower').

Some of the responses included:

- 'No heating during the winter, because of broken heating system. But the landlord never came to fix it/ didn't feel responsible for it.'
- 'Ventilation issues which caused some mould in the bathroom as well as a broken heater, making us unable to use the radiators on our floor.'
- 'No sufficient hot water supply and little to no Wi-Fi'

Overall, responses on accommodation do not paint a positive picture of the UK student housing situation for international students. Price and availability, in particular, emerge as extreme issues that respondents in the UK experienced more than in other destinations.

General Issues Experienced in the UK

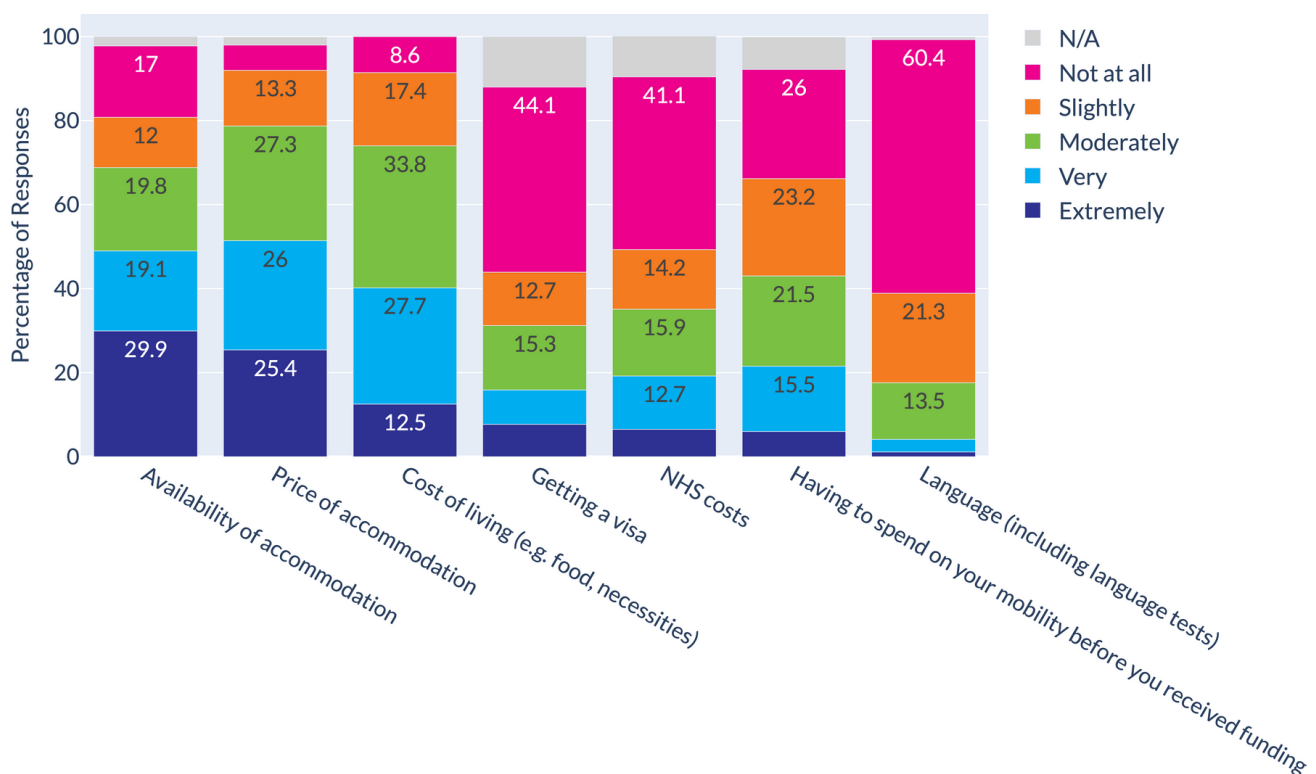


Figure 2.31 - Responses to 'How much of a problem were the following when studying abroad?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents mobile in the UK, the biggest problems experienced in the UK were the price of accommodation, the availability of accommodation, and the cost of living, with 51.4%, 49%, and 40.2% of respondents respectively considering each of these to be 'very' or 'extremely' problematic.

Language including language tests was found to be the least significant problem, with only 4.2% of respondents considering this to be 'very' or 'extremely' problematic.

Respondents were then given the opportunity to expand on other issues they experienced in the UK (outside of those in Figure 2.29). 88 responses were received, of which 56 were non-null.



Figure 2.32 - Word cloud of most common words given in open text responses to 'Are there any other specific problems you had when coming to the UK?' (n=88)

As seen in the above word cloud, 'accommodation' is often mentioned as one of the most pressing issues faced by international students in the UK in recent years - even when students were being asked about issues experienced outside of this. Other keywords highlighted issues relating to studying and bureaucracy in the UK.

Some responses received were:

- 'In addition to accommodation allocation, the course enrolment system at my host university was unclear and troublesome. Many of the courses offered to exchange students were so called high demand courses, which meant that it was extremely difficult to get enrolled on them due to their popularity'
- 'It takes a very long time to get a bank account opened for Internationals in the UK; I would have liked some support from the university in having one opened before I arrived, as I spent the first few weeks of term struggling to pay for food'
- 'I couldn't get a bank account for a long time because I had no residence here, and so I had to survive on cash for the first six months of university which made life really frustrating.'

Discrimination

Here, we briefly analyse respondents' experiences of discrimination in the UK.

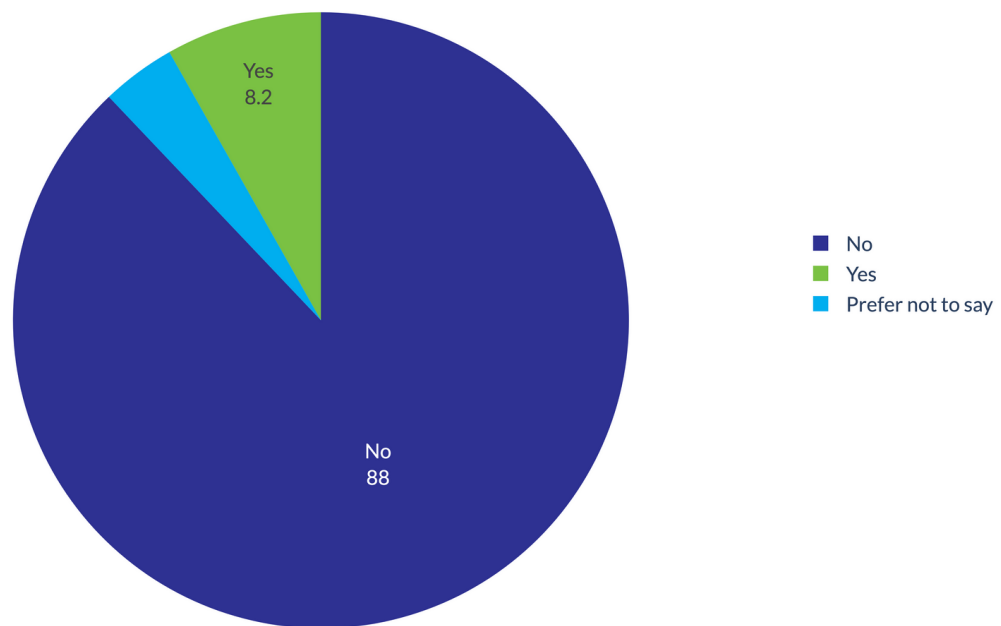


Figure 2.33 - Responses to 'I experienced discrimination while in the UK' (n=465)

Out of 465 respondents mobile in the UK, 88% reported that they did not experience any discrimination during their mobility in the UK, 8.2% reported that they did experience some type of discrimination, and 3.8% preferred not to say.

Respondents were then able to expand on this in an optional qualitative question. 38 responses were received, of which 26 were non-null. Themes given in the responses included race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background.

Some of the responses were:

- 'Racial microaggressions and misconceptions about my country of origin, assuming I am wealthy when I am not, assuming people from my country are terrorists when they are not, shocked at my ability to speak the English language.'
- 'As a working-class person/person from a non-academic background: The cost of living as well as participation in a lot of events was inaccessible to me quite often as I struggled making ends meet, and the university rarely extended a helping hand.'
- 'Discrimination for being differently abled and for being LGBT'

Overall Satisfaction

Enjoyment of Time in the UK

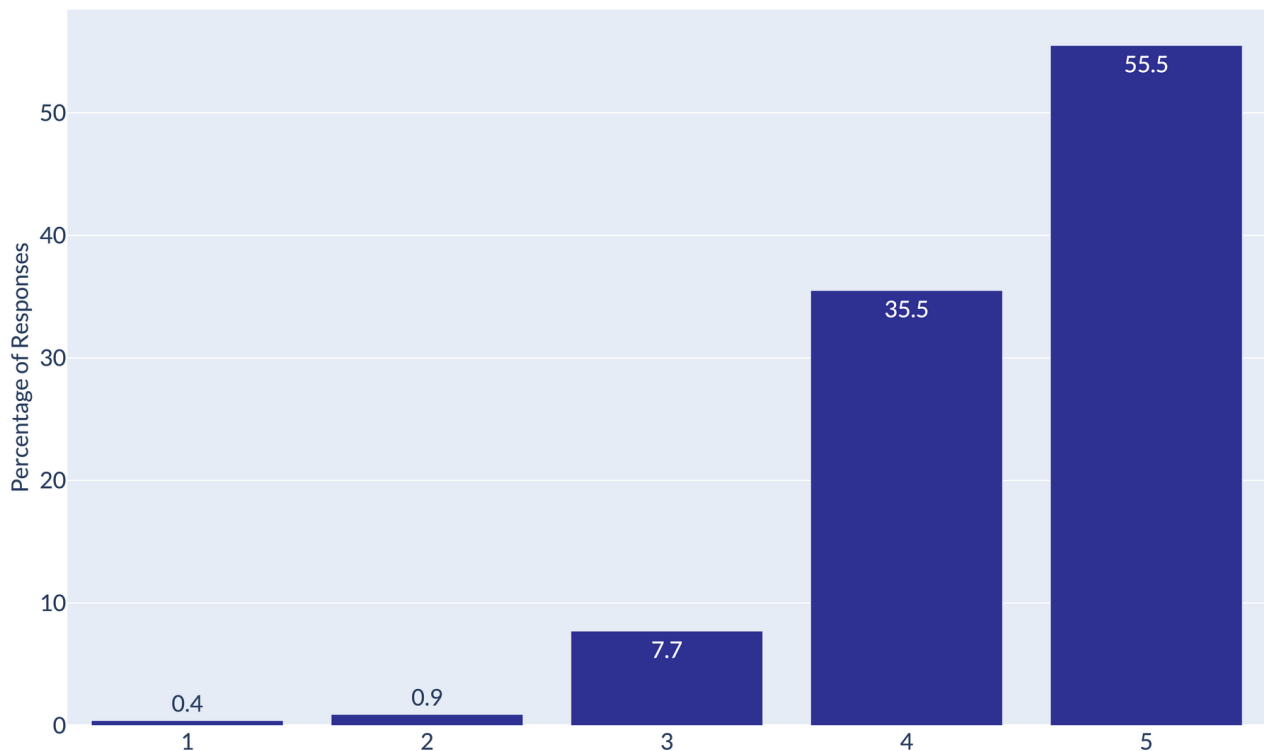


Figure 2.34 - Responses to 'I enjoyed my time in the UK' (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I enjoyed my time in the UK'.

Out of 465 respondents, 55.5% responded '5', 35.5% responded '4', 7.7% responded '3', 0.9% responded '2', and 0.4% responded '1'. Considering '4' and '5' as positive agreement, 91% positively agreed that they enjoyed their mobility in the UK.

Comparing this to the responses of those who were mobile in other destinations. Of the 340 respondents mobile elsewhere, 71.2% responded '5', 24.1% responded '4', 3.2% responded '3', 1.5% responded '2', and 0% responded '1'.

Overall, 95.3% of respondents who studied elsewhere either agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their time on mobility, similar to the UK's figure of 91%.

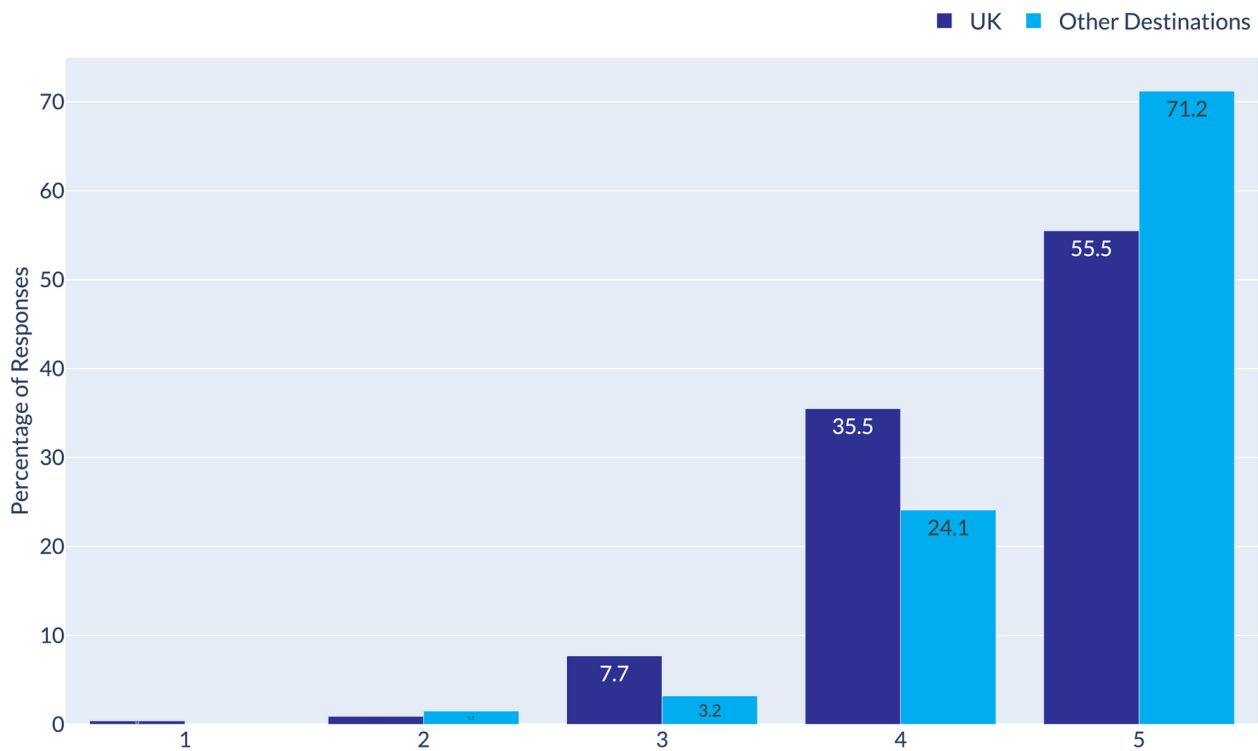


Figure 2.35 - Responses to 'I enjoyed my time in the country I studied in' (n=805 (465 UK, 340 other destinations))

Changed opinion of the UK

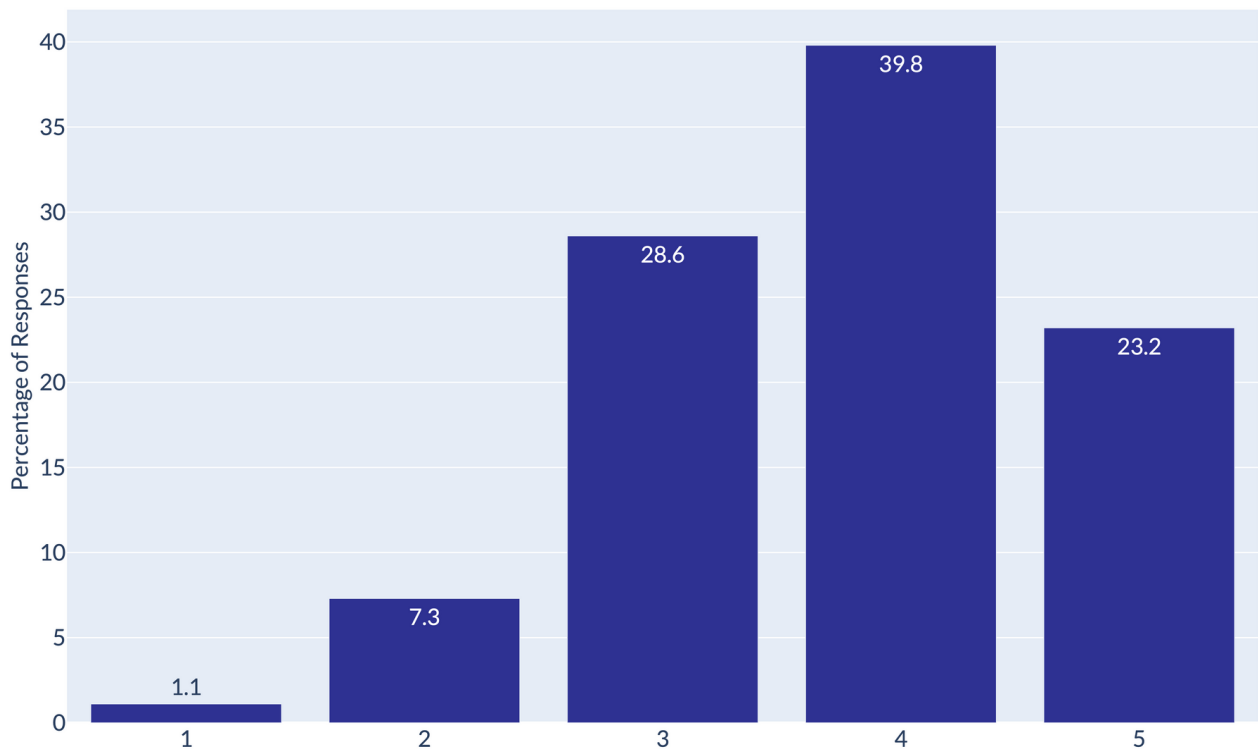


Figure 2.36 - Responses to 'My experience studying abroad changed my opinion of the UK' (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning

'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement, 'My experience studying abroad changed my opinion of the UK'.

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 23.2% responded '5', 39.8% responded '4', 28.6% responded '3', 7.3% responded '2', and 1.1% responded '1'.

Recommendations to Study in the UK

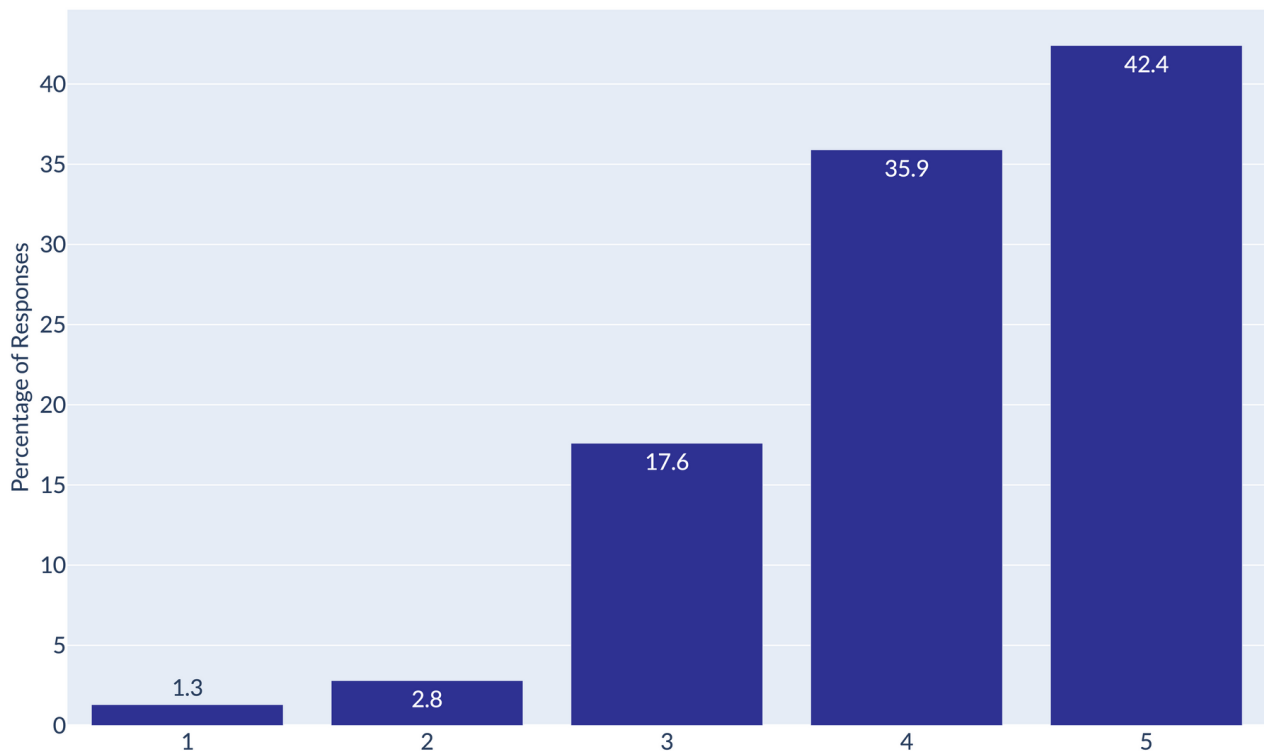


Figure 2.37 - Responses to 'I would recommend studying in the UK to other students (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement, 'I would recommend studying in the UK to other students'.

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 42.4% responded '5', 35.9% responded '4', 17.6% responded '3', 2.8% responded '2', and 1.3% responded '1'.

Overall, more than three-quarters (78.3%) of the survey respondents who were mobile in the UK positively agreed that they would recommend studying in the UK to others.

This was then further explored in an optional qualitative question where respondents were asked why they would or would not recommend studying in the UK to other students. 204 responses were received, of which 203 were non-null. As can be seen in the word cloud on the next page showing the most common words in the open text responses, key themes given as reasoning to recommend the UK as a study destination were overall positive experience, quality of education, and opportunity to practise English.

Conclusions

Throughout this section, we build a rich understanding of respondents' experiences during mobility.

Several results stand out as concerning, particularly those related to accommodation, including the availability and price thereof. These are major issues that can affect international students disproportionately, and based on the results of this report, can affect students in the UK more extremely than those in other destinations and constitute a major barrier to coming to the UK.

Positively, however, respondents are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching, the level of support received, and their social life and integration. The overwhelming majority of respondents enjoyed their time in the UK and would recommend studying here to other students. Despite the barriers and issues mobile students face, respondents seem to have a high level of overall satisfaction with their mobility.

Post-Mobility

In this section, we investigate the respondents' intentions of staying in the UK following their mobility, including the reasons for these.

Intent to Stay in the UK

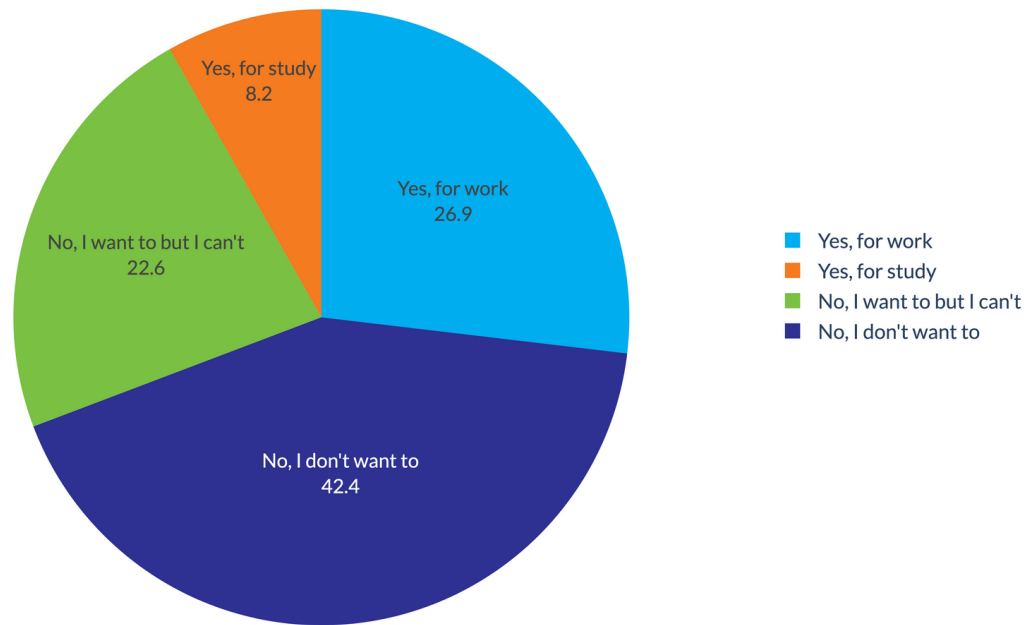


Figure 2.39 - Responses to 'Do you plan on staying in the UK after your study finishes?' (n=465)

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, when asked if they were planning to stay in the UK after finishing their studies, 65% responded negatively, with 42.4% indicating 'No, I don't want to' and 22.6% indicating 'No, I want to but I can't'. 35.1% responded positively, with 26.9% indicating 'Yes, for work' and 8.2% indicating 'Yes, for study'.

These responses were explored in further qualitative questions, in which each type of response could expand on why.

Reasons to Stay in the UK

When asked if they are planning to stay in the UK after their study finishes, 35.1% (163) of respondents indicated 'Yes, for study' or 'Yes, for work'. When asked to further explain in an open-text question 'Why?', 77 responses were received, of which 77 were non-null. As seen in the word cloud on the next page of most common words in the text responses, key reasons cited for respondents' plans to stay in the UK were work and industry opportunities in the UK, the multicultural and international environment, and a love of their time spent in the UK while studying abroad.



Figure 2.40 - Word cloud of most common words given in open-text responses to 'Why? [Do you plan on staying in the UK after your study finishes]?' (n=77)

Some of the responses were:

- 'I feel in love with the UK and its multicultural atmosphere'
- 'International environment, broader spectrum of development opportunities'
- 'I believe there are a lot of great opportunities here for my ideal career path'

Reasons Not to Stay in the UK

42.4% (197) of respondents when asked if they are planning to stay in the UK after their study finishes chose the 'No, I don't want to' option. When asked to further explain in an open-text question, 107 responses were received, of which 106 were non-null.

As seen in the word cloud of most common words in the text responses on the next page, most responses explained that a move to the UK was never planned as they had to finish their degrees in their home universities. Another common theme was Brexit, with some responses declaring that they would prefer to live in a country where they feel more 'welcome' and that Brexit has made studying in the UK 'too difficult and expensive'.

Some of the full responses were:

- 'I came here for a semester abroad not to move here permanently'
- 'With the Brexit now, it's not that interesting for me as an European'
- 'I think it will be troublesome now when the UK is not a part of the EU anymore'



Figure 2.41 - Word cloud of most common words given in open-text responses to 'Why? [Do you not want to stay in the UK after your study finishes]?' (n=107)

Some of the responses were:

- 'I feel in love with the UK and its multicultural atmosphere'
- 'International environment, broader spectrum of development opportunities'
- 'I believe there are a lot of great opportunities here for my ideal career path'

When asked if they are planning to stay in the UK after their study finishes, 22.6% (105) of respondents chose the 'No, I want to but I can't' option. When asked to optionally further explain in an open-text question, 67 responses were received, of which 67 were non-null.

As seen in the word cloud on the next page of the most common words in the text responses, common reasons given were respondents having to go back to their home country to finish their degree, as well as Brexit, visas and costs as the biggest barriers to staying in the UK.

Some of the responses were:

- 'I still have to finish my studies in my home country, but I would love to come back someday, maybe to work or do my masters if I can finance that'
- 'Because I still need to graduate from my home university. Also, it is really hard/expensive to get a working visa as you need a sponsor/a stable job.'
- 'I need to finish my degree back home, because I cannot afford to finish my degree in the UK'



Figure 2.42 - Word cloud of most common words given in open-text responses to 'Why? [Do you want to stay in the UK but can't, after your study finishes]?' (n=67)

Interest in Working in the UK

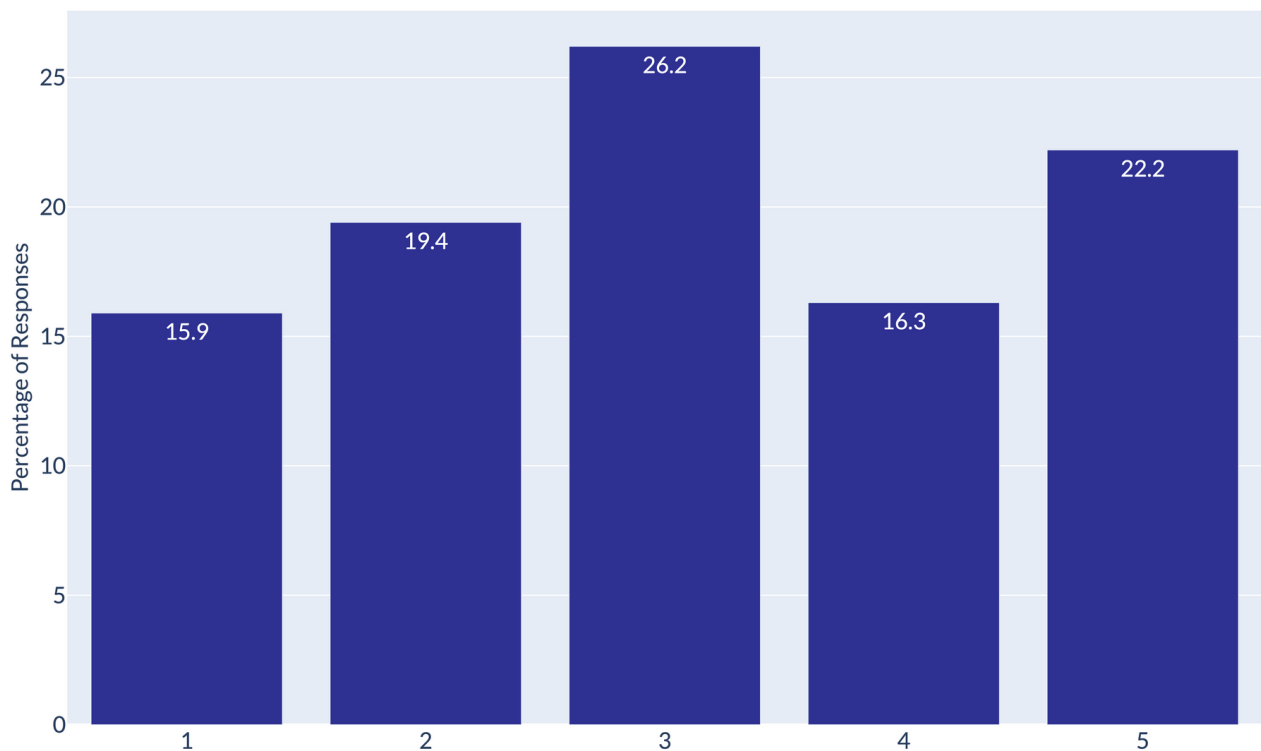


Figure 2.43 - Responses to 'I would like to study in the UK after my study finishes' (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I would like

to work in the UK after my study finishes'. Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 22.2% responded '5', 16.3% responded '4', 26.2% responded '3', 19.4% responded '2', and 15.9% indicated '1'.

Awareness of Options to Stay in the UK

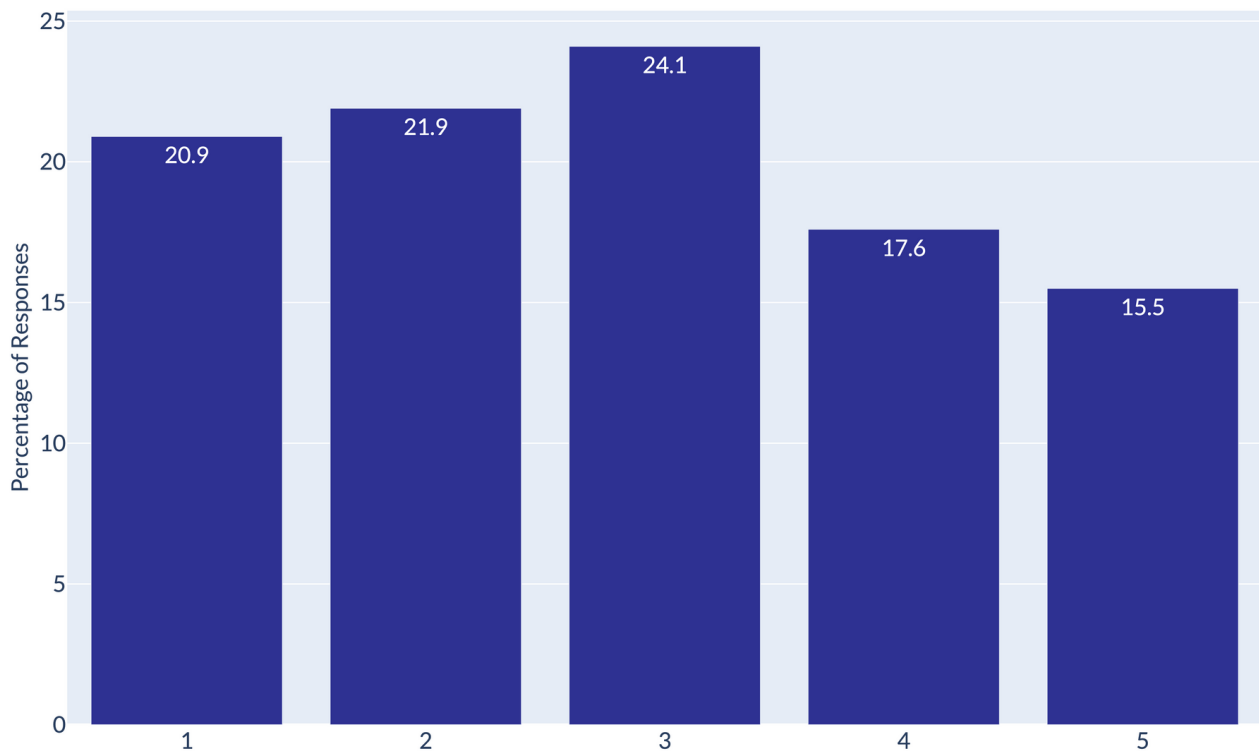


Figure 2.44 - Responses to 'I know what my options are for staying in the UK after my study finishes' (n=465)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I know what my options are for staying in the UK after my study finishes'.

Of the 465 respondents who were mobile in the UK, 15.5% responded '5', 17.6% responded '4', 24.1% responded '3', 21.9% responded '2', and 20.9% indicated '1'. Only around one-third (33.1%) responded positively that they know what their options are for staying in the UK after their study finishes.

Conclusions

Considering the results of this section overall, we see that the majority of respondents do not plan to stay in the UK, despite a majority of students wanting to (considering those who plan to as well as those who want to but cannot).

The most common reason respondents give as to why they will not stay in the UK is simply having to return home to finish their current degrees. However, more notably

if not surprisingly, Brexit and its associated barriers and bureaucracy are also cited as a reason why staying in the UK is not possible or of interest. On top of this, a simple lack of awareness of opportunities to stay in the UK is evident. To make staying in the UK more accessible, more needs to be done to promote routes to stay in the UK.



It has become very unfeasible to study or find entry-level work in the UK, due to visa requirements, tuition fees, and very high costs of living.

Mobility Perceptions

This section highlights the perceptions of studying in the UK from students who have not been mobile in the UK, both from those who were mobile in destinations other than the UK and from those who were non-mobile. Here we investigate respondents' interest in studying or working in the UK, as well as their awareness and perceptions of whether this is possible for them, including motivations to study in the UK and perceived barriers to doing so.

Mobility Perceptions

Interest in Studying in the UK

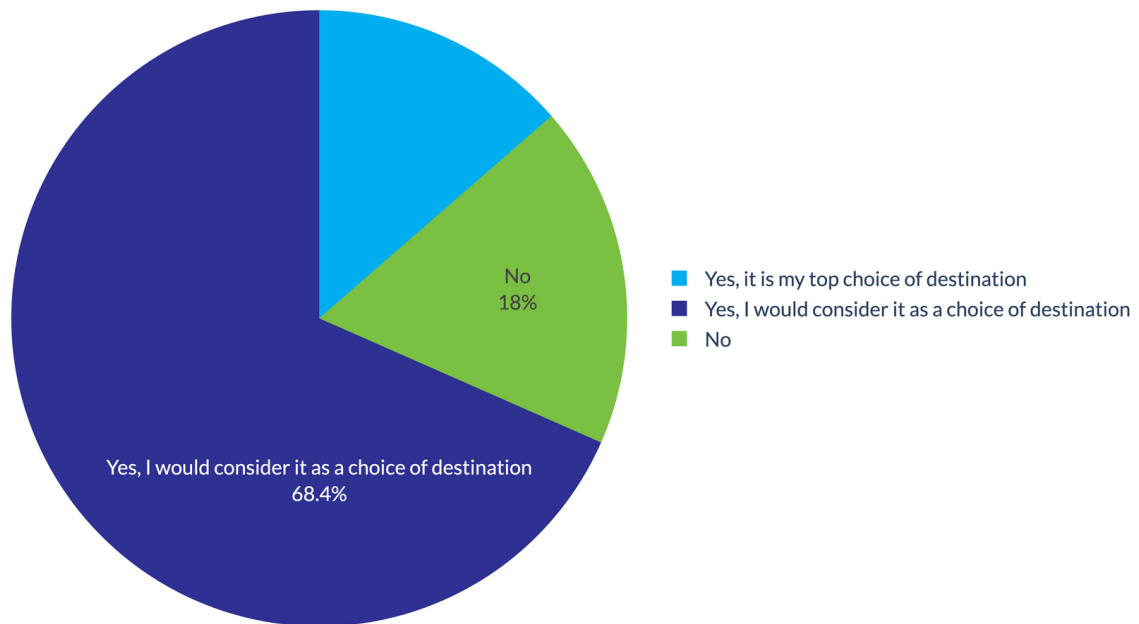


Figure 3.1 - Responses to 'I would like to study in the UK' (n=538)

Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 82% indicated that they would like to study in the UK, of which 13.6% cited the UK as their top choice of destination and 68.4% said that they would consider it as a choice of destination. 18% of respondents indicated they would not be interested in studying in the UK.

Respondents were then asked about the factors that influenced their interest or lack thereof in studying in the UK.

Motivating Factors for Respondents Interested in Studying in the UK

Based on 441 responses who indicated they would like to study in the UK, the most important influencing factors for those wanting to study in the UK were the degree offered, the university the respondent would attend, and the cost of studying, with more than 50% of respondents considering each of these reasons to be 'very' or 'extremely' important.

The distance to travel from home was found to be the least important factor, with only 23.1% of respondents considering this to be 'very' or 'extremely' important.

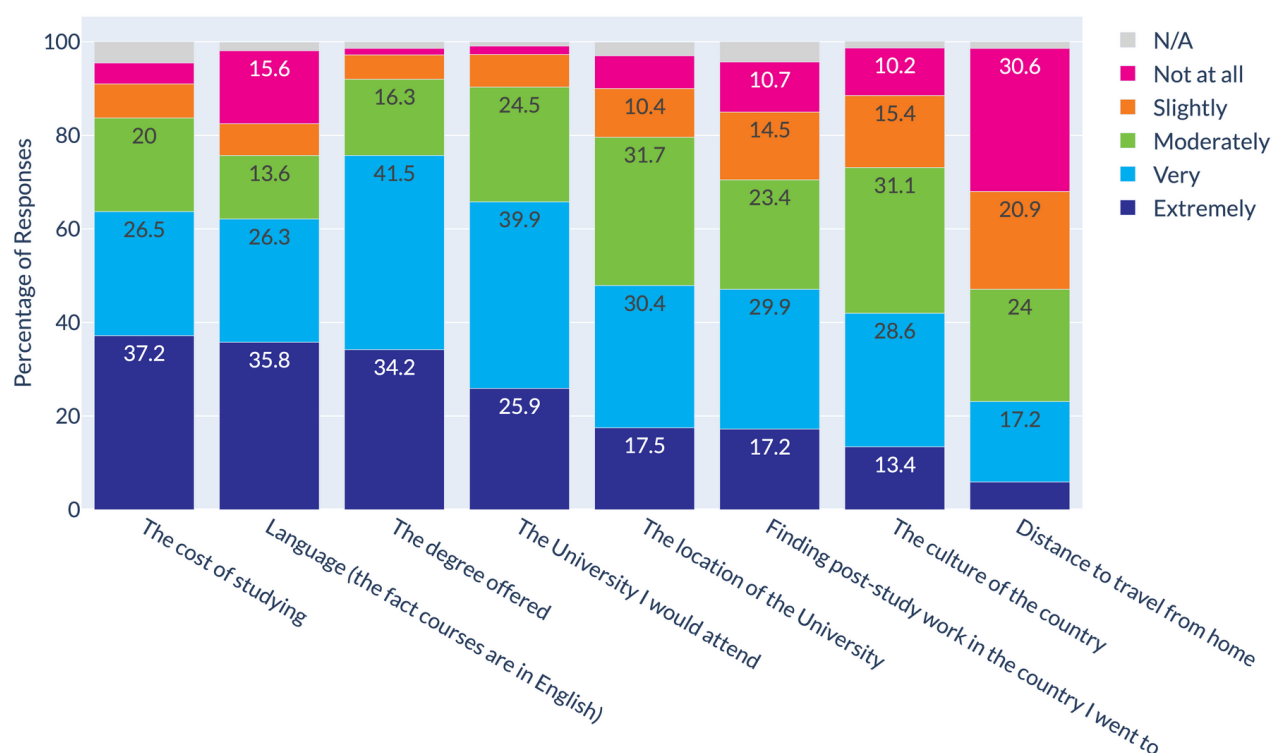


Figure 3.2 - Responses to 'How important are the following factors in wanting to study in the UK?' (n=441)

Influencing Factors for Respondents Not Interested in Studying in the UK

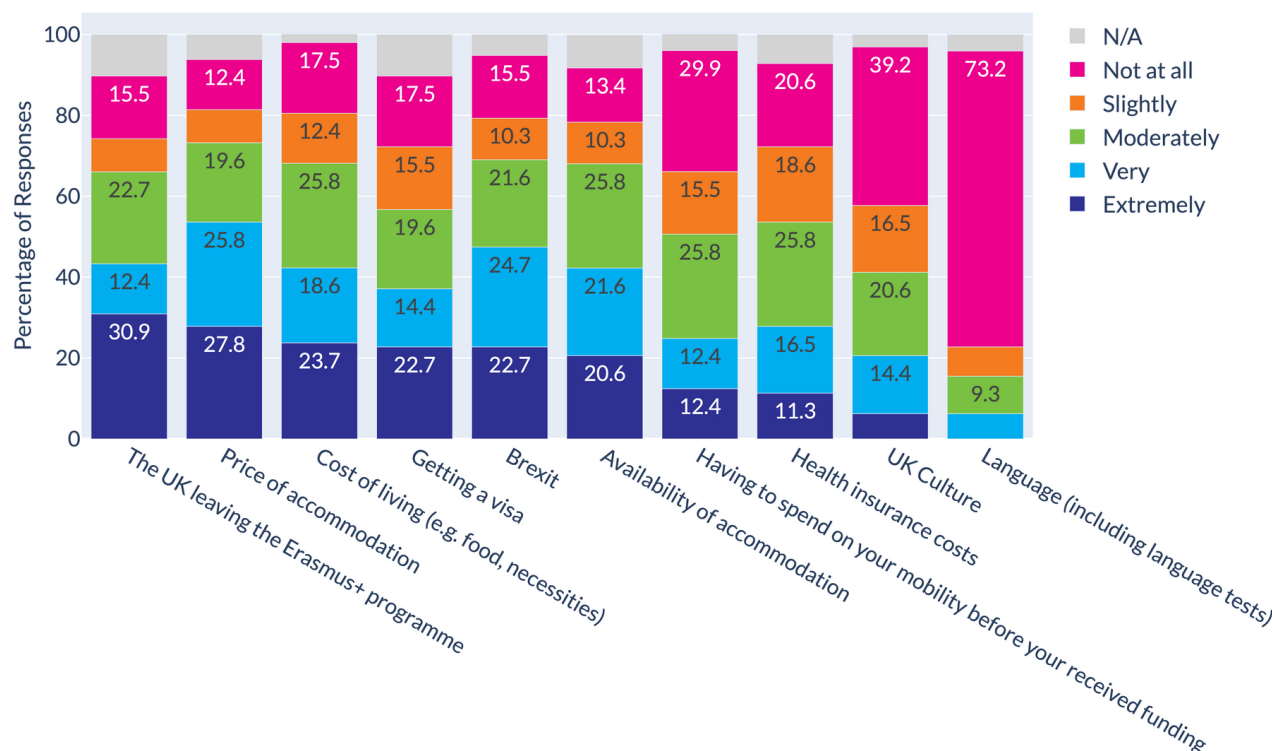


Figure 3.3 - Responses to 'How much do these factors influence your choice on not wanting to come to the UK?' (n=97)

Based on 97 responses who indicated they would not like to study in the UK, the most important influencing factors for those not wanting to study in the UK were the price of accommodation, Brexit, and the UK leaving the Erasmus+ programme, with 53.6%, 47.4% and 43.3% of respondents respectively considering these to be 'very' or 'extremely' important. Language (including language tests) was found to be the least important factor, with only 6.2% of respondents considering this to be 'very' or 'extremely' important.

The same set of respondents were then given the opportunity to expand on why they did not want to study in the UK. 12 responses were received, all of which were non-null.

Some of the responses included:

- 'There are so many cities where you do get the Erasmus funding and a lot of these cities are also really exciting to study. So my preference would definitely shift towards cities that do have the erasmus'
- 'I think the UK is a good place to study for people wanting to improve their English. Also social life at uni is well established and can aid with integrating foreign students. But money can be a large barrier'
- 'Since Brexit, the UK seems even further away than before (because of money, distance, mentality...)'

Knowledge of Options to Study in the UK

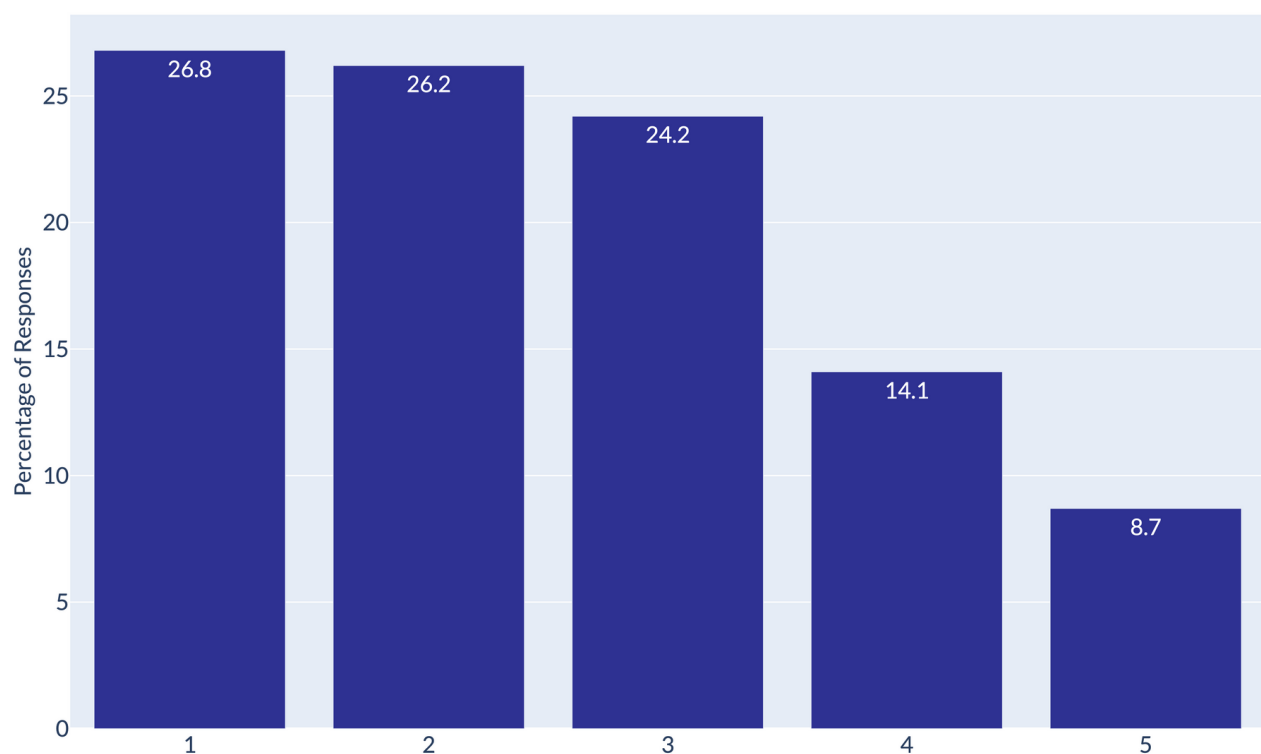


Figure 3.4 - Responses to 'I know which exchange programmes are available to me to study in the UK' (n=538)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I know which exchange programmes are available to me to study in the UK'.

Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 26.8% responded '1', meaning they strongly disagree they know which exchange programmes are available to them to study in the UK, 26.2% responded '2', 24.2% responded '3', 14.1% responded '2', and only 8.7% responded '5'. Considering responses '4' and '5' as positive agreement, only 22.8% positively agreed that they were aware of the exchange programmes available to them to study in the UK.

Perceived Accessibility of Studying in the UK

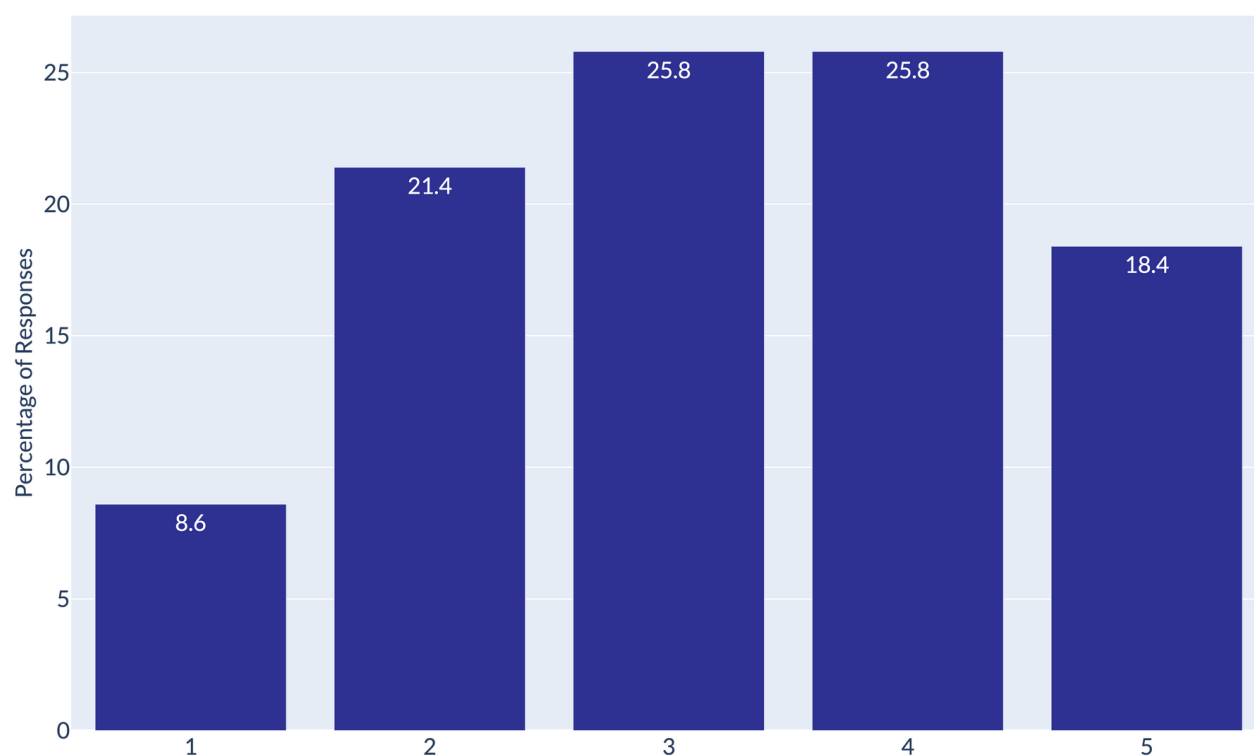


Figure 3.5 - Responses to 'I feel that studying in the UK is possible for me' (n=538)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I feel that studying in the UK is possible for me'.

Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 18.4% responded '5', meaning they strongly agreed that they felt studying in the UK was possible for them, 25.8% responded '4', 25.8% responded '3', 21.4% responded '2', and 8.6% responded '1'. Considering responses '4' and '5' as positive agreement, only 44.2% positively agreed that they felt studying in the UK was possible for them, compared to 82% who responded they would like to study in the UK in an earlier question.

Perceived Barriers to Studying in the UK

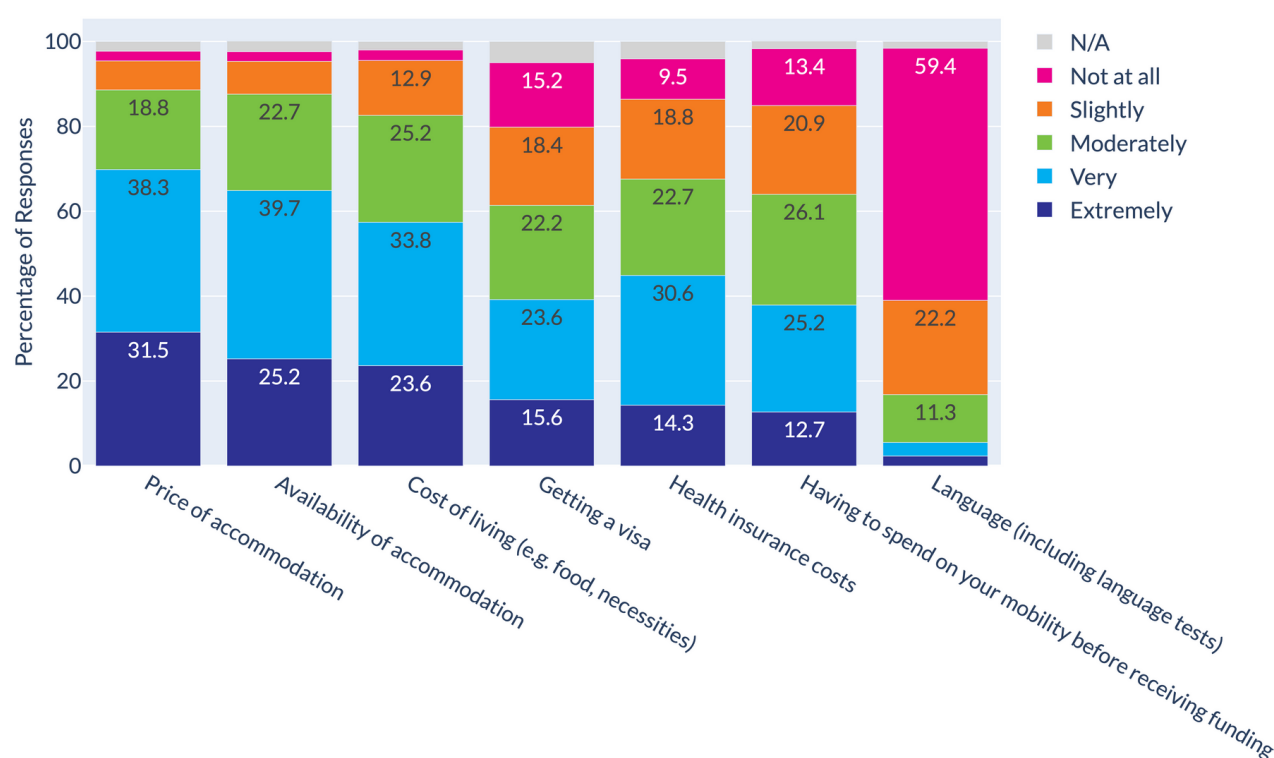


Figure 3.6 - Responses to 'How much of a barrier are these factors to coming to the UK?' (n=538)

Based on 538 responses, the biggest perceived barriers to studying in the UK were the price of accommodation, the availability of accommodation, and the cost of living. When asked how much of a barrier various issues were in coming to the UK, more than 50% of respondents answered 'very' or 'extremely' for each of these. This correlates with the experiences of mobile students in the UK who, in an earlier question, reported these three issues as the biggest problems they faced while in the UK.

Language and language tests were considered the lowest barrier, with only 5.5% of students responding 'very' or 'extremely'.

Perception of the UK as Welcoming

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I think the UK is a welcoming place for international students'. Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 22.3% responded '5', meaning they strongly agreed that they think the UK is a welcoming place for international students, 35.7% responded '4', 29.6% responded '3', 8% responded '2', and 4.5% responded '1'.

Considering responses '4' and '5' as positive agreement, 58% positively agreed that they think the UK is a welcoming place for international students.

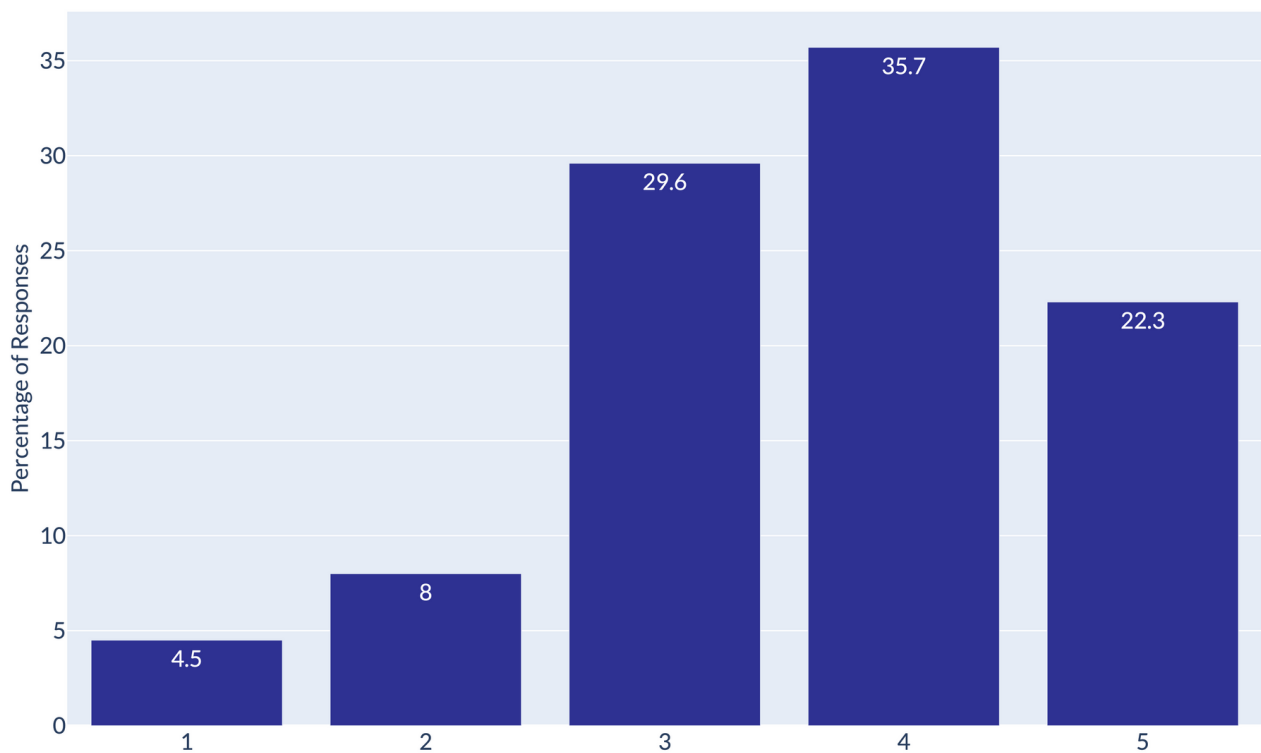


Figure 3.7 - Responses to 'I think the UK is a welcoming place for international students' (n=538)

Interest in Working in the UK

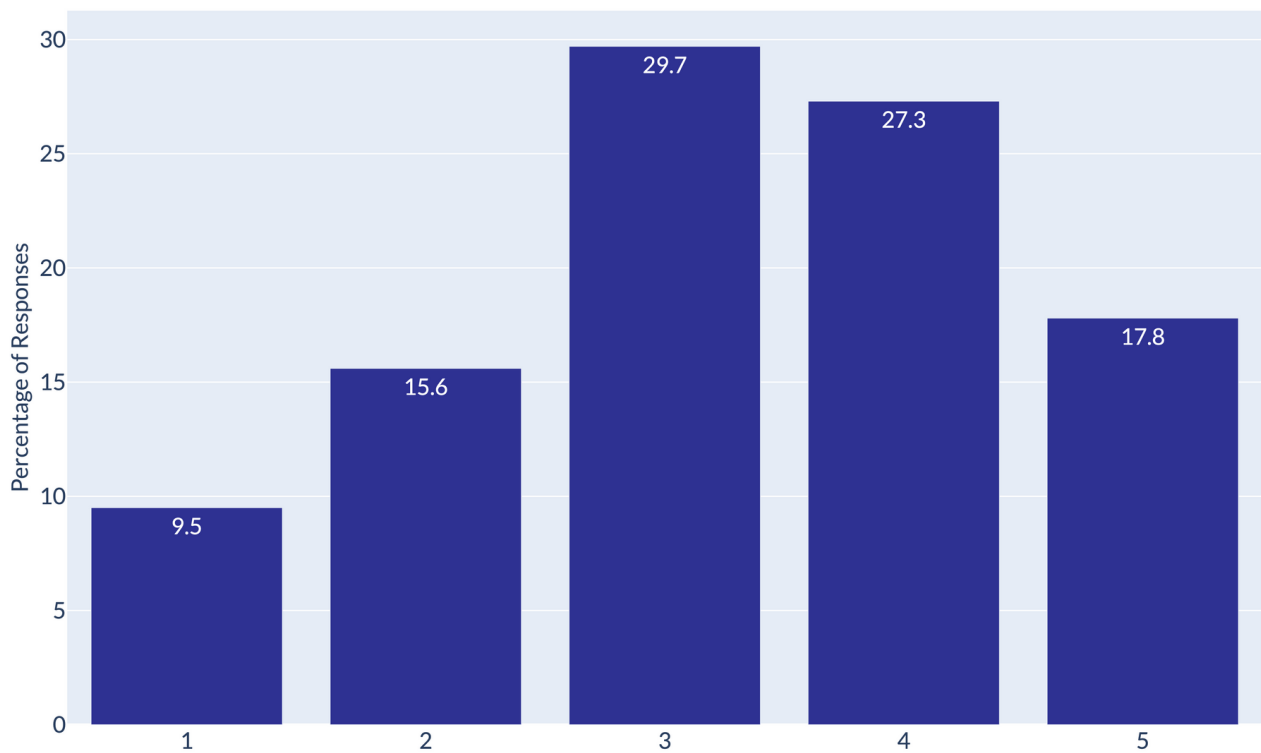


Figure 3.8 - Responses to 'I would like to work in the UK' (n=538)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and 5" meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I would like to work in the UK'.

Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 17.8% responded '5', meaning they strongly agreed that they would like to work in the UK, 27.3% responded '4', 29.7% responded '3', 15.6% responded '2', and 9.5% responded '1'.

Opinions of the UK Post-Brexit

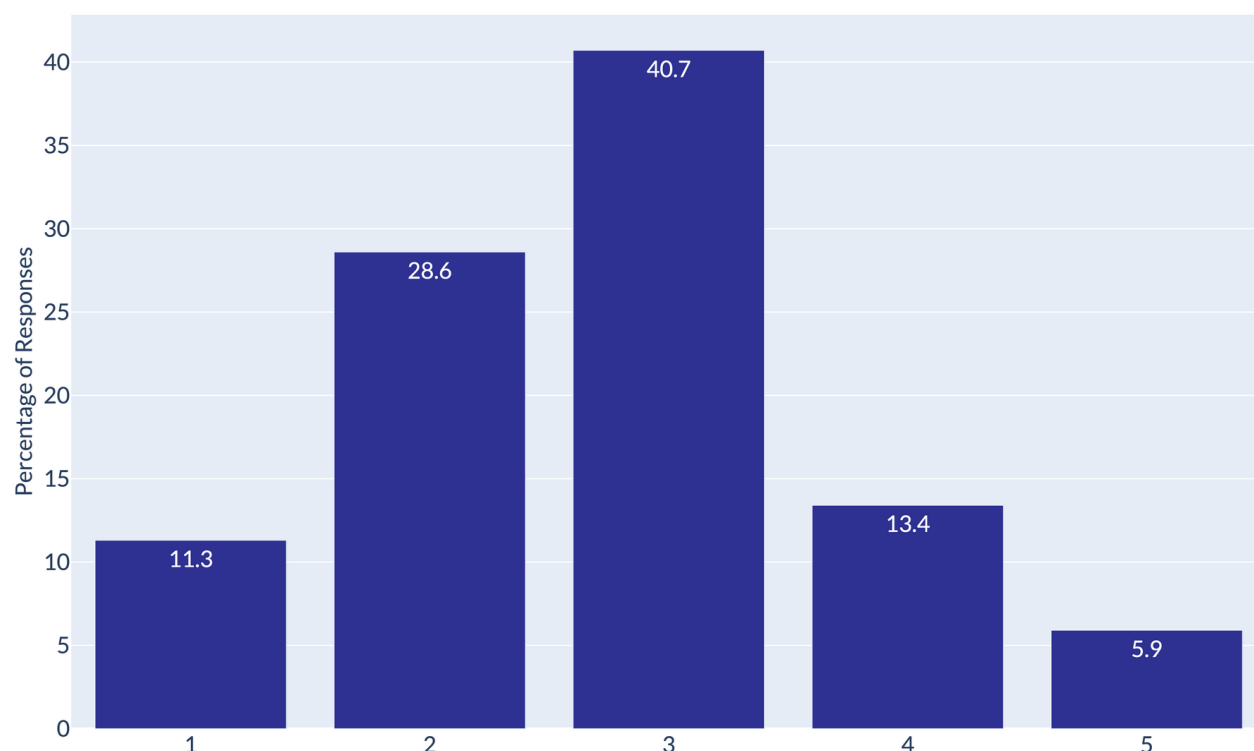


Figure 3.9 - Responses to 'My opinion of the UK has changed since it left the EU' (n=538)

Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point scale (1-5), with '1' meaning 'strongly disagree' and '5' meaning 'strongly agree' with the statement 'My opinion of the UK has changed since it left the EU'.

Of the 538 respondents who were not mobile in the UK, 5.9% responded '5', meaning they strongly agreed that their opinion of the UK has changed since it left the EU, 13.4% responded '4', 40.7% responded '3', 28.6% responded '2', and 11.3% responded '1'.



Brexit has created a number of obstacles for UK students and EU-based students hoping to study in the UK.

Response to 'Why [has your opinion of the UK changed since it left the EU]?'

Respondents were then given the opportunity to expand on why their opinions had changed. 170 responses were received, of which 166 were non-null (excluding responses such as 'N/A', '-', etc.)

As seen in the word cloud below, the general sentiment of responses was that the UK leaving the EU had made the prospect of studying in the UK more expensive and complicated.



Figur 3.10 - Word cloud of most common words given in open text responses to 'Why [has your opinion of the UK changed since it left the EU]?' (n=170)

Many of the responses mentioned visas and the added immigration process for EU citizens following Brexit:

- 'It has pushed away many people, students and workers alike. I nearly got a job in the UK but the visa process was so long and expensive that I had to give up and find somewhere else.'
- 'I really like UK and I was considering doing my master there. However, for me as an EU citizen the necessity to get visa, inability to work and generally having to navigate all the new and changing immigration policies just makes the overall bureaucratic'
- 'It is becoming harder and harder to come to the UK and I am slowly abandoning the idea of coming to study there to avoid all the paper problems that I would face otherwise.'

As well as financial barriers including tuition fees and the cost of living:

- 'Basically, the reason why I wouldn't like to study or work in the UK anymore (it was my top destination before it left EU) is because of the financial difficulties, finances are much more higher than they were before brexit'
- 'Since I'm a student from Switzerland with Brexit It's really hard for me to afford the tuition fees even though i would love to do a master's there'
- 'For me, the original plan was to study in the UK but with the Brexit the tuition fees were too expensive and i wouldn't be able to support my living there financially.'

An issue which is compounded by a lack of funding through programmes such as Erasmus+:

- 'I don't know much about the previous and current situation unfortunately but I have a feeling that after the UK left EU, it lost a lot by becoming less accessible to internationals and not being a part of the Erasmus+ programme.'
- 'Now that they left the EU, I see my friends struggling a lot (no Erasmus scholarship)... abd it's only for rich students'
- 'More expensive, harder to get erasmus grants'

And finally, changes in perception of the UK as open:

- 'It feels as if the UK has taken a step away from the rest of Europe and as such is less welcome to EU citizens.'
- 'I consider the UK to be more closed to foreigners now.'
- 'It gives me the impression that the country is not open to multiculturalism'

Conclusions

Considering the results of this section overall, we gain a clearer picture of the attitudes of those who have not been mobile in the UK.

Positively, the UK is generally viewed as a welcoming place for international students, and there is still significant interest in studying in the UK. However, it is perceived as overly complicated and expensive to do so post-Brexit, and there is a lack of awareness of exchange programmes to facilitate mobility to the UK.

In particular, the need for a Student visa for visits of longer than six months is seen as a major barrier, both financially and bureaucratically, with multiple qualitative responses detailing they were interested in coming to the UK until beginning of the visa process. High costs of living and tuition fees are also seen to be very offputting to potential mobility, and the lack of funding for inward mobility since leaving Erasmus+ makes the prospect of moving to the UK unattainable to many.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and policy recommendations seek to synthesise the above findings into key areas, directed towards both government and institutions, where the international student experience in the UK can be improved.

Accommodation Support

The findings of International Student Perspective UK suggest that international students face significant challenges with accommodation. They are likely to experience issues with housing availability and express the cost of accommodation as a significant barrier to studying in the UK. Whilst this remains an issue for many students in Europe at the time of publication, the results of this report indicate that international students in the UK experience these pressures to a substantially greater degree than international students elsewhere.

Notably for institutions, almost one-third of respondents strongly disagreed that they received enough support from their host university when finding accommodation. Qualitative answers provided by students for this report illustrate a strained housing market that discriminates against international students who are too often left without guidance.

As such, universities must do more to ensure there are appropriate structures in place to support international students, who are more likely to experience housing insecurity due to issues with guarantors, funding, and short-term availability.

Recommendations

1. Universities must guarantee accommodation for all international students alongside first-year domestic students.

The current housing market is volatile, and international students are more likely to be victims of accommodation scams as a result. Currently, most universities only guarantee accommodation to students paying overseas tuition fee rates, meaning those on short-term mobility, who are already susceptible to availability issues as a result, miss out. No student should be forced to live in inadequate housing a significant distance from campus, as this report has found. Universities guaranteeing incoming students places in reasonably priced university or private student residences would alleviate two of the most pressing issues international students face.

2. Dedicated university staff should provide specific advice for issues international students face with housing.

With almost one-third of respondents stating they strongly disagreed that they received enough support from their institution when finding accommodation, universities must pledge to do more to support students moving to their city from abroad. Qualitative answers in this report suggest international students face significant stress when finding accommodation, even worsened when, for example, “we were specifically instructed - about a month before our mobility, if I'm not mistaken - not to send our applications if we have not had secured accommodation”. Simple guidance and support must be readily available.

3. Universities should provide guarantor services for international students, directly or through partnerships.

As noted, international students are more likely not to have a UK-resident guarantor, which is often necessary to secure student housing. This can exacerbate both the issue of lack of the availability of accommodation (as landlords prefer to rent to those with guarantors) and of the price of accommodation (as students are instead asked to pay exorbitant deposit amounts equal in value to months of rent). Universities should support international students in finding guarantors, either by acting as guarantors themselves (such as UCL's Rent Guarantor Scheme) or by partnering with services that act as guarantors.

Visas

International Student Perspective UK finds that visas remain a significant barrier to studying abroad in the UK. International students studying in the UK report significant challenges with their visas, with the majority of those staying for more than six months, in particular, stating it to be a problem when moving here - significantly more than their counterparts elsewhere.

This is driven by a lack of support when applying and often significantly misguided and incorrect information given by universities, particularly with regard to Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) documents. Cases that involve institutions stating visas are required when they are not, as well as instances where the university does not provide the correct information in time for visa processing, are too common. A number of students reported problems with the practicalities of visa applications, including the cost and time it took to hear a response.

In addition to these practical issues, international students from elsewhere report increased bureaucracy involved in moving to the UK as a barrier to them potentially studying here, damaging the UK's brand as a higher education destination. The visa

process must be accessible and sufficiently advised.

Recommendations

1. The government should extend the period in which students can study in the UK on a Standard Visitor visa from 6 to 12 months.

Extending the period in which students can study in the UK on a Visitor visa ensures applications and their associated costs become less of a barrier to studying in the UK. Those studying in the UK on a Student visa were significantly more likely to report visas as a problem than those on a Visitor visa - freeing those who are on full-year exchange from this bureaucratic burden should be a high priority. With those who do not study in the UK perceiving visas to be a barrier to doing so, this change would encourage the UK's openness as a study destination.

2. Universities need to provide support and advice that is accurate and up to date.

This report has found that international students are subjected to consistent misadvice from institutions, potentially endangering their studies. According to the qualitative data, significantly fewer international students in the UK would have had issues with their visas if their universities had provided accurate information. International Student Perspective UK implores institutions to do so consistently and empathetically, recognising that the visa process can be a stressful period for prospective students.

3. Universities must commit to sending CAS documents immediately after offers to study are confirmed.

Too many students are at risk of not starting their studies due to delays relating to CAS documents. This is an entirely preventable factor, and universities must dedicate additional resources to ensure it is not a long-term problem.

4. The government must consider the possibility of short-term employment in any changes to visas.

Many respondents to this survey noted that they required a Student visa in order to work in the UK (which allows them to do so for up to 20 hours a week during term time). Whilst advocating for an increase in the visa period to 12 months is important to reduce barriers to studying here, this change should consider the impact on students who need to work part-time to fund their studies and not exclude them from doing so. Any change to the Student visa should not increase the financial burden on international students.

Programmes for Inward Student Mobility

Following the UK's withdrawal from Erasmus+, non-UK students are unaware of the mechanisms in place to support their study here. Whilst many international students not studying in the UK have a desire to potentially do so, they are unaware of what options are available for them and see increased bureaucracy post-Brexit and the lack of Erasmus+ funding as a barrier to this end. Existing research serves to demonstrate the changing dynamics of European students studying in the UK, characterised by a decreasing interest, but we must continue to promote and create possible routes.⁷ At the time of writing, this promotion is insufficient.

Recommendations

1. Government, universities, and organisations must work together to improve the promotion of the current mechanisms in place to study abroad in the UK.

Less than one-quarter of respondents positively agreed that they were aware of programmes available to them to study in the UK. As such, prospective host universities must do more to ensure students are aware of study abroad opportunities at their institutions, working with international institutions to this end. Similarly, greater student-facing promotion of the likes of Taith and, hopefully, the Scottish Education Exchange Programme must be a priority. A collaborative approach across the sector is needed.

2. The UK's branding as a study destination should focus on what matters to students.

International students in the UK and those elsewhere highly value the fact UK courses and society use the English language and the quality of degrees offered at our institutions. The current promotion of the UK fails to significantly focus on these factors in an attempt to shift from current negative perceptions around price and feasibility.

3. The government must investigate the reciprocity of the Turing Programme.

The UK leaving Erasmus+ was noted by respondents as the biggest influencing factor to not study in the UK, and various respondents wrote in qualitative responses that the lack of Erasmus+ grants to study in the UK would make the prospect financially infeasible for them. Additional further research must be made into the long-term viability of Turing's outbound-only system - at present, its exclusivity acts as an embodiment of increasingly entrenched ideas on studying in the UK's openness and feasibility.

Public Availability of UK International Student Experience Data

At present, there is insufficient consistent public data on international students in the UK. This report serves to provide an outline of how student voice can be better understood in order to make informed policy recommendations. Existing literature within the sector is, at present, too focused on factors that impact institutions - whilst information on changing attitudes of potential students is important, for example, reports often fail to recognise the issues facing international students on a day-to-day basis.

International Student Perspective (ISP) UK presents the value of researching the views of a diverse range of international students across the UK candidly in order to determine the extent to which support structures succeed and fail. ESN UK implores the sector to ensure that future research into similar topics gathers student insight in order to contextualise data and to ensure that student voice is not lost within an increasingly complex policy arena.

Recommendations

1. Reports such as ISP UK must be readily accessible for institutions and the sector to understand the international student experience.

This report has provided valuable direct insight into the experiences of international students in the UK. More specific research into the likes of accommodation, the impact of visas, and institutional support would provide universities and stakeholders with a greater depth of understanding to deal with current issues.

2. Organisations and universities must increase cooperation in order to assess the international student experience fully.

The diversity of responses in research such as this is incredibly important to ensure we obtain a broad overview. The respondents for this report were primarily sourced from ESN local organisations, and while sample characteristics show a variety of backgrounds, future research must acknowledge students from a greater range of backgrounds. Universities, student-facing organisations such as ESN UK, and stakeholders must work together to ensure the views of international students across the country are better represented than they are currently.

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About ESN and ESN UK

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the key volunteer student organisation in international Higher Education in Europe, with over 15,000 members in more than 1000 Higher Education Institutions in 44 countries across Europe and beyond. ESN supports the educational, social and cultural integration of international students and provides practical information about various exchange programmes for incoming and outgoing students. The mission of ESN is the enrichment of society through international students, and its activities comprise hundreds of projects developed at local, national, and international levels.

Erasmus Student Network United Kingdom (ESN UK) is the national branch of ESN in the UK, a registered Scottish charity (SC051188) operational across England, Scotland, and Wales. Active since 1991, our mission is to promote and support the internationalisation of Higher Education, fostering student mobility and internationalisation at home. We aim to provide opportunities for intercultural understanding and self-development under the principle of 'students helping students'.

ESN UK works in the interest of international students who are spending parts of or their entire formal education at a Higher Education Institution in the UK, UK students who spend parts of or their entire higher education at a Higher Education Institution abroad, and those who cannot access a period abroad. We are working on a volunteer basis in 15 Higher Education Institutions in the UK through our local associations ('sections'). All the sections of ESN UK together help over 10,000 exchange, full-degree international, and local students every academic year.

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