

Universities UK – Written evidence (TRC0024)

About Universities UK

Universities UK is the representative organisation for the UK's universities. Its mission is to be the voice for universities in the UK, providing high quality leadership and support to its members to promote a successful and diverse higher education sector. With 140 members, and offices in London, Cardiff (Universities Wales) and Edinburgh (Universities Scotland), it promotes the strength and success of UK universities nationally and internationally.

The following submission focuses on answering questions regarding China and Higher Education, as requested by the International Relations and Defence Committee.

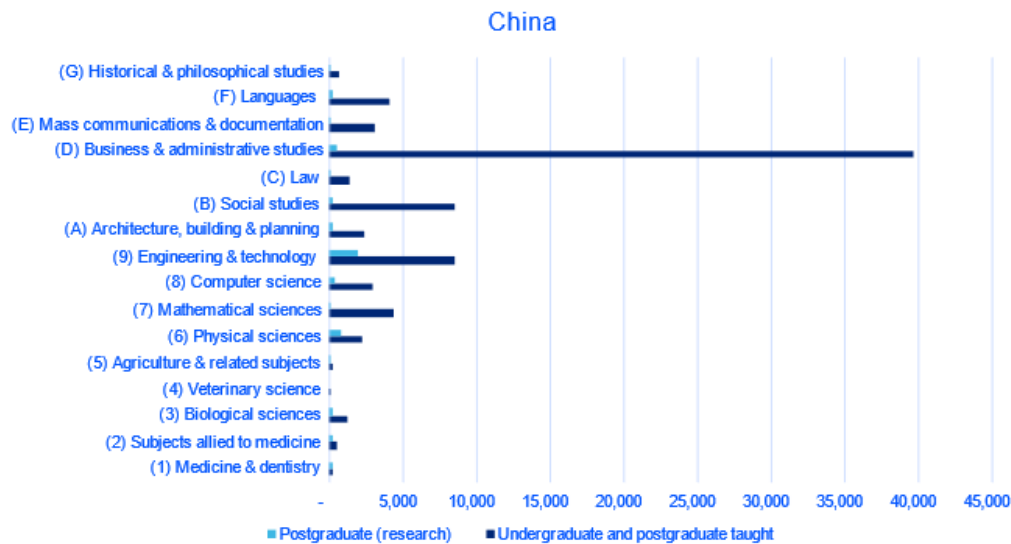
Students from China & tuition fee income

- In 2019/20, there were a total of 141,870 students from China studying in the UK. This compares to 147,800 from EU member states, 55,465 from India and 20,720 from the US¹.
- The number of new students (first year entrants, all levels of study – undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research) from China in 2018/19 was 104,240 compared to 64,115 from EU member states¹. This reflects the tendency for non-EU students to study at PG-level, in particular one-year taught Masters-level courses.
- For a fuller analysis of current and future trends in international student recruitment, and the UK's position relative to other major study destinations, please see our 2020 report, *Why Aren't We Second?*, available at <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/international-student-recruitment-why-aren't-we-second.pdf>
- Internal UUK analysis from 2019 (table below) shows that, in terms of subjects and level of study, students from China are overwhelmingly concentrated in business and administration disciplines, followed by

¹ This data is publicly available: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

engineering. Postgraduate research students are concentrated in engineering subjects, though numbers are an order of magnitude lower.

Student FTE by domicile and subject area, 2017 -18



- It is possible to estimate the total fee income from students from China:
 - The latest education export data available (published by DfE in December 2020 - data from 2018) showed total education exports of £23.3 billion.²
 - Non-EU international student fees for higher education accounted for £5.45 billion of the total.²
 - In 2017/18 there were 107,175 students from China out of a total 326,345 non-EU international students, or 33% of the total.³
 - The total fee income from students from China in the 2017/18 academic year was therefore approximately £1.8 billion.
- In 2017/18, this represented around 4.7% of total sector income (=£38.4 billion) and 9.5% of income from tuition fees and education contracts (=£19 billion)⁴.

² This has been adapted from publicly available data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-revenue-from-education-related-exports-and-transnational-education-activity-2018>

³ This data is publicly available: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

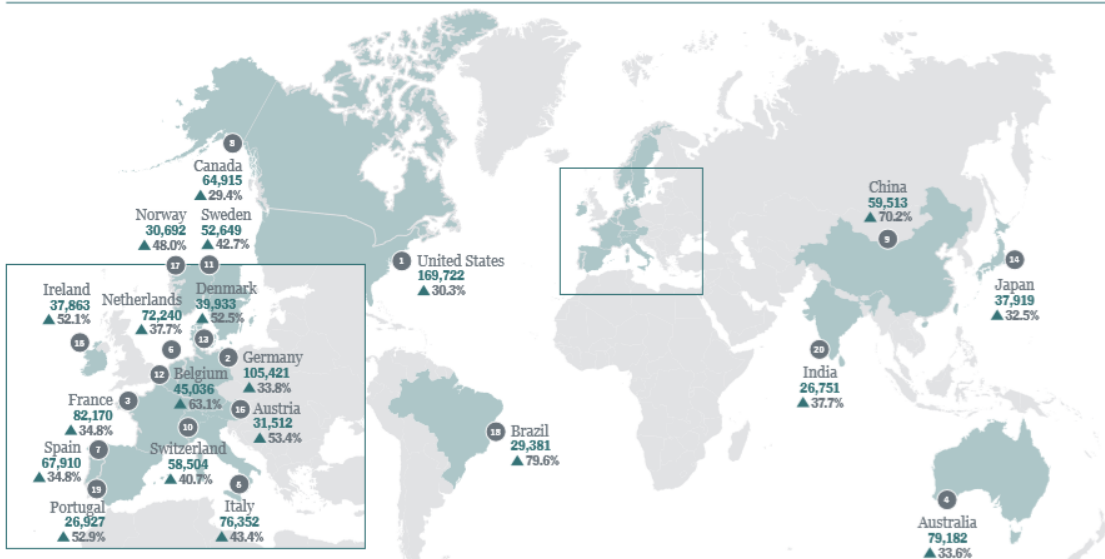
⁴ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/income#summary>

- An internal UUK analysis from 2019 suggested that approximately 87% of tuition fee income from students from China in 2017/18 was from private sources (that is, students were self-funded).

Research collaboration with China

- Research engagement between the UK and China is now substantial, continues to increase and leads to joint publications of appreciable quality.
- This adds considerably to the UK’s overall research output because purely domestic research is no longer growing and such collaboration enhances the attention given by other researchers, as reflected by citation impact.
- Research collaboration between China and the UK has increased from fewer than 100 co- authored papers before 1990, to around 750 per year in 2000 (about 1 per cent of UK output), 3,324 in 2010 and 16,267 papers (about 11 per cent of UK output) in 2019.
- UK-based researchers collaborated with nearly 60,000 colleagues at Chinese institutions over the period 2014-2019 (see table below) – ranking 9th for the period but increasing by 70%⁵.

FIGURE 25: TOP 20 UK COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 2014-19



- As the data in the below table shows, UK-China co-authored research output increased by 91% between 2014 and 2018 but still represents less than half

⁵ UUKi International facts and figures 2020: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/International/2020/International-Facts-and-Figures-2020.pdf>

the number produced in collaboration with the UK's number one partner, the USA⁶.

Total research outputs (all pub types)						
Total pubs (no author # limit)				UK co-authored pubs (<=100 authors)		
	2014	2018	4Y difference	2014	2018	4Y difference
China	489,061	608,376	24%	7,669	14,636	91%
Hong Kong	19,286	22,663	18%	969	1,421	47%
India	174,961	131,424	-25%	2,097	3,185	52%
Iran	45,603	60,028	32%	685	1,167	70%
Malaysia	28,914	33,550	16%	1,203	1,541	28%
Russia	57,856	103,332	79%	1,540	2,023	31%
Saudi Arabia	18,055	23,536	30%	1,012	1,437	42%
United States	659,588	693,261	5%	(unknown)	32,263	(unknown)

- As highlighted in the table below, UK-China co-authored research outputs have a Field Weighted Citation Index of 2.34, suggesting that these outputs are relatively high impact. UK-China collaborative outputs represent about 6% of UK research outputs⁷.

	2016-18						% total UK outputs	% total country outputs
	Total outputs		Co-authored outputs with UK		UK outputs			
	#	FWCI	#	FWCI	#	FWCI		
China	1,641,230	1.02	38,568	2.34	633,149	1.57	6.1%	2.3%
Hong Kong	66,075	1.76	4,485	3.76	633,149	1.57	0.7%	6.8%
India	482,241	0.82	9,608	3.09	633,149	1.57	1.5%	2.0%
Iran	168,679	1.05	3,502	3.64	633,149	1.57	0.6%	2.1%
Malaysia	96,878	0.98	5,190	2.92	633,149	1.57	0.8%	5.4%
Russia	275,715	0.74	7,841	3.69	633,149	1.57	1.2%	2.8%
Saudi Arabia	66,363	1.51	4,289	3.48	633,149	1.57	0.7%	6.5%
United States	2,047,430	1.42	94,733	2.8	633,149	1.57	15.0%	4.6%

- 52% of all UK-China papers are bilateral, compared with: 27% for UK-US co-authored papers, 28% for UK-Australia papers, and less than 20% for UK papers with major EU nations and other nations in Asia⁷.

⁶ Internal UUK analysis (January 2020). Based on SciVal data.

⁷ Internal UUK analysis (January 2020). Based on SciVal data.

- In terms of overseas income for research, out of a total £6.58 billion generated from research grants and contracts in 2018/19, £571.5 million was from non-EU international sources (charities, industry, and other sources). It is not possible to identify the source of these international investments via the available public data⁷.

Managing risk in internationalisation

- Students undertaking postgraduate courses (taught or research) in certain disciplines will need to first obtain approval via the government's Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS).
- As per the government's [ATAS website](#), this applies to all international students (apart from exempt nationalities) who are subject to UK immigration control and are intending to study at postgraduate level in certain sensitive subjects.
- The subjects covered are those where students' knowledge could be used in programmes to develop Advanced Conventional Military Technology (ACMT), weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or their means of delivery.
- These students must apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before they can study in the UK. This includes students from China and the scheme has now been extended to all researchers (from May 2021).
- In terms of the broader environment, UUK works closely with the UK government and relevant agencies on security-related matters. We and our members have been actively involved with the development, dissemination, and implementation of the Trusted Research guidance. This is highly valued by universities.
- In addition, UUK has developed guidelines on [Managing risk in internationalisation](#) and is currently evaluating their uptake and implementation. Again, this guidance has been developed in close dialogue with the government.

Received 27 April 2021