



International Graduate Outcomes 2024



Foreword



Jessica Turner
CEO
QS Quacquarelli Symonds

UK higher education is a powerful and resilient global brand. UK universities have a well-earned reputation for excellence and for teaching and inspiring some of the world's most employable graduates.

The findings from the UUKi – QS International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024 detail the perspectives and experiences of over 10,000 international graduates – and I encourage both universities and the UK government to listen to those voices and act on what they tell us.

There is much to celebrate, with international graduates attracted by the high quality of the UK higher education sector, recognising and praising the excellent learning experience and welcoming environment during their studies in the UK, and going onto fulfilling careers.

There are lessons here too: Most respondents felt that their university could have done more to support their employability and careers with placements, internships and experiential learning.

We are encouraged by the UK government's broad alignment with the conclusions drawn in the Migration Advisory Committee's independent review¹ on 14 May 2024 that the Graduate route visa should remain in place. While revisions of the scheme will be undertaken to address potential misuse of the visa system, this is good news for the sector, students and the UK economy.

This report adds to the body of evidence that international students, who are typically here as temporary residents, bring significant financial, cultural, and intellectual value to the UK—value that continues long after they depart. These benefits drive local economies and support communities across the nations of the UK and we want this report to strengthen that message from the sector to government, including all local MPs.

Improved career outcomes is one of the leading factors influencing the decision to study overseas. A UK degree remains a gold standard qualification, but it is vital that UK universities look to the future – and evolve their curricula and career services to keep pace with the needs of workplaces and employers of the future.



Jamie Arrowsmith
Director
Universities UK International (UUKi)

The UK is a leading destination for international students. Each and every year, we attract talented and ambitious students from across the globe to come and study at our universities, the benefits of which are felt across the length and breadth of the UK.

This is something which we rightly celebrate and is a source of immense pride, but we must also recognise the important responsibility that we all share to maintain this position and ensure the student experience remains first-class.

That is why the findings from the UUKi – QS International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024 are so important. They provide crucial insight into the motivations and aspirations of international graduates who have studied in the UK.

While it is pleasing to see that the quality of our higher education sector remains the key driver of our success, and that international students continue to feel welcome in the UK, it is clear that we need to do more to support international students – particularly when it comes to career advice and support. This is especially important with uncertainty looming over the UK government's commitment to the Graduate route visa and supporting international students to remain in the UK after their studies. We know that the ability to stay and work after graduating is an important factor to lots of international students, so we need to ensure we deliver on that aspiration and support those who give so much to the UK and our sector.

The findings of this report could therefore not be more timely. My thanks go to QS, and to our members, for supporting us with this important research. I hope it will help ensure the UK continues to build on our successes and thrive as a welcoming study destination for international students for many more years to come.



Executive summary

As shifts in policy and perception influence how international students view the UK as a study destination, pressure will emerge for universities to communicate their impact on employability more effectively against increasingly fierce global competition. The gap between the ‘big four’ recruiting markets of the US, Canada, Australia and the UK has closed from over 400,000 to less than 250,000 students since 2017-2018 (HESA; OpenDoors; Erudera; Office for Immigration).

Furthermore, the field is widening with universities in Europe, China, India and the Middle East improving their research quality and setting their sights on growing international student numbers. There are also more existential threats from online and alternative education providers.

The UK boasts a variety of powerfully prestigious and historic destinations. It is home to two of the world’s top three universities and 17 of the world’s top 100 (QS World University Rankings 2024). London is also the world’s best student city (QS Best Student Cities 2024).

International students now have more choices than ever and new tools and technologies at their fingertips to understand how a university can successfully prepare them for a rewarding career.

UUKi and QS have collaborated to gather and analyse data from more than 10,000 international students who graduated from 37 UK universities over the past six years. This study also incorporates valuable insights from British Council² and National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK (NISAU)³ alumni, significantly enhancing the diversity and comprehensiveness of the perspectives collected.

The outcomes reveal deep insight for individual institutions, which has been shared with them directly, but this report unveils detail on a range of important universal themes, from which five key learnings stand out.

Key learnings

1 Students are drawn to the UK by high quality universities

59% of respondents chose to study in the UK because of the perceived quality of the study experience.

The credentials and appeal of UK universities collectively remain undiminished. The majority of respondents report that the reality lives up to the expectation.

2 Universities need to improve career support for international students

53% of respondents identified career support and placements as an area their university could improve on.

Whilst international graduates have been able to leverage the prestige of credentials from the UK's institutions, the practical support they received was widely reported as an area for improvement.

3 The Graduate route visa enables students to continue to contribute to the UK economy

72% of those on the Graduate route visa were satisfied with their job role and benefits, compared to 62% on other visas.

A study from UUKi, HEPI and partners⁴ last year revealed that just one cohort of international students contribute £37.4 billion to the UK economy *before* they graduate. Insight here reinforces HEPI's recent report⁵, illustrating that the Graduate route visa provides a means for their economic contribution to continue after graduation.

4 Graduates support key sectors of the UK economy

60% of respondents still living in the UK surveyed work in small- to medium-sized organisations with the highest percentage employed in healthcare and education.

The data shows that international graduates are choosing to work in sectors where skills and capacity gaps are widely and persistently reported^{6,7,8}.

5 Graduates continue to support the UK on returning home

For 71% of respondents, studying at a UK university means they feel a close connection with the UK and 57% say they're more likely to do business with the UK because of their degree.

Of the large number of graduates surveyed who had returned home, most have done so having formed a deep connection with the UK and with a huge potential of contributing to UK prosperity for generations to come.

Beyond the impact of recent and imminent UK policy upheaval, there is much for British universities to learn and do based on these findings. We provide important recommendations that institutions can immediately action, at the end of this report, including:

Improving career support service offerings

To support international students in their early career journey both in the UK, and in other countries.

Collaborating with employers to ensure skills are embedded in the curriculum

To ensure that universities are developing the capabilities that the UK and their origin economies most need to support forward progress and prosperity.

Working with the government to realise the benefits of the Graduate route visa

To ensure that it helps the UK to remain competitive in the global market for talent, in light of the recent independent review from the Migration Advisory Committee.

Leveraging alumni communities

To share their stories with future students and support them in their aspirations to become lifelong partners to the UK.

Championing the diversity of student and faculty communities

To enhance the role institutions play as knowledge-sharing, multi-cultural microcosms of the complex world we inhabit.

Data from reports like this corroborates the inspiring stories emerging from these communities every day.



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Who completed the survey?

The International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024 was hosted, managed and administered by QS with support from UUKi to recruit partner institutions into the project. It ran from 5 February to 18 March 2024.

Survey demographics

10,500+

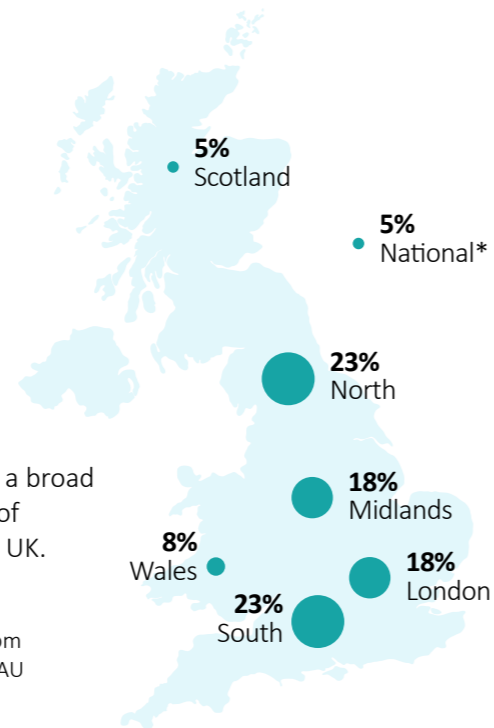
The number of respondents was 10,513 with 196 countries/territories represented.

37

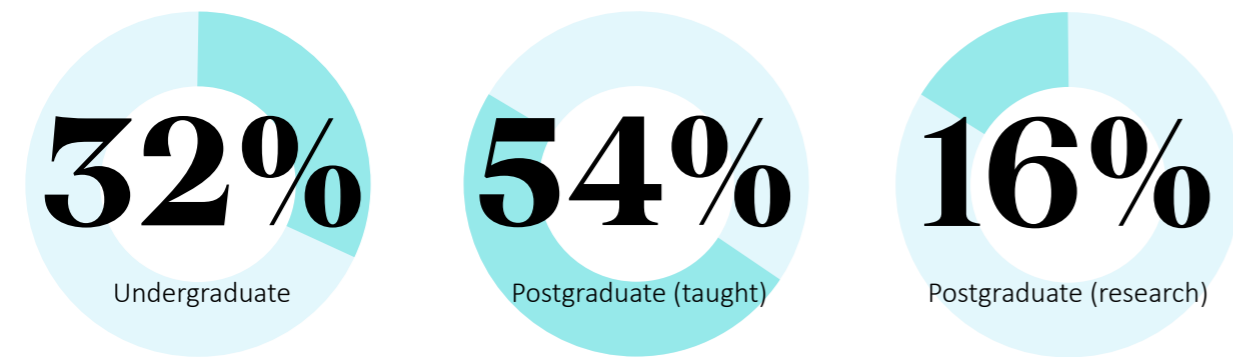
Students graduating from 2019 to 2024, surveyed through 37 partner higher education institutions, the British Council and NISAU.

The report represents a broad geography and range of institutions across the UK.

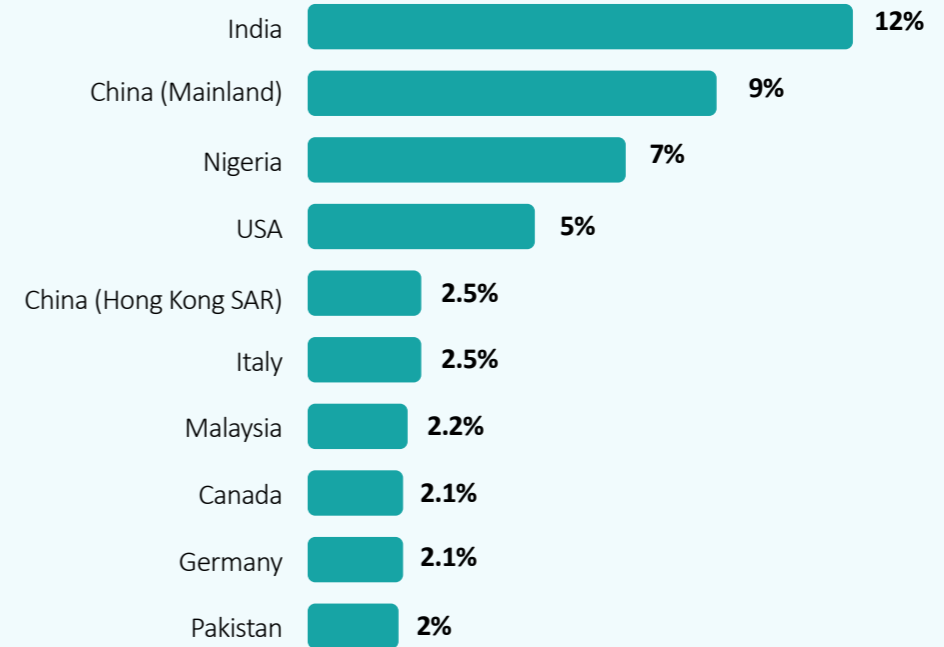
*National percentage represents respondents from the British Council and NISAU



Study level

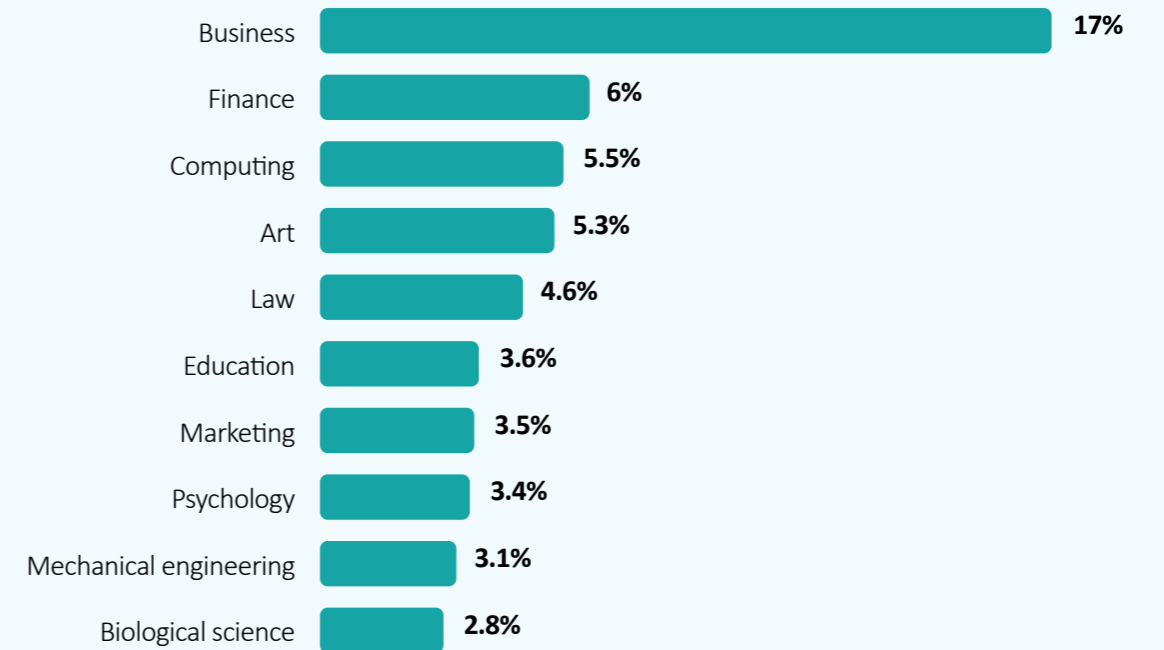


Top 10 nationalities



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

Top 10 subjects studied



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024



**How do
international
graduates feel
about their
experience of
UK study?**

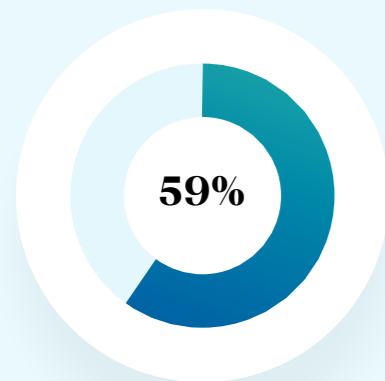
How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Students choose to study in the UK due to the high quality and strong reputation of UK universities

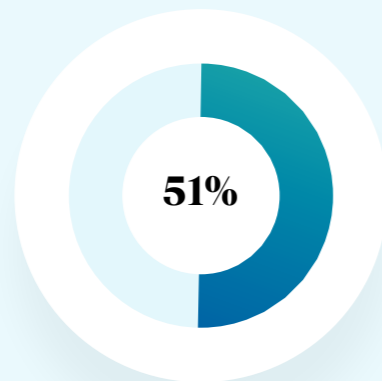
“The UK was extremely welcoming and demonstrated a tolerance which made me feel at ease in its diverse environment.”

A postgraduate data science graduate from India
(International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024)

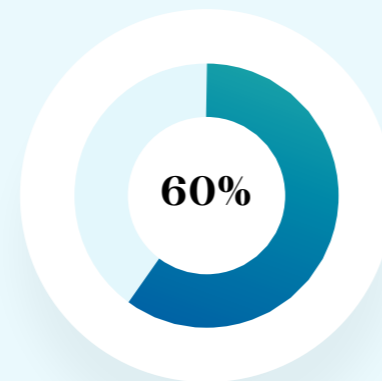
Key findings



59% of respondents say they chose to study in the UK because of the quality of the universities.



When asked which area of their university was performing well, 51% of respondents said the high quality of teaching.



Over 60% described their UK university as 'very good' or 'excellent' for friendliness (63%), diversity (60%) and tolerance/inclusion (60%).

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

The credentials and appeal of UK universities remain important to international students

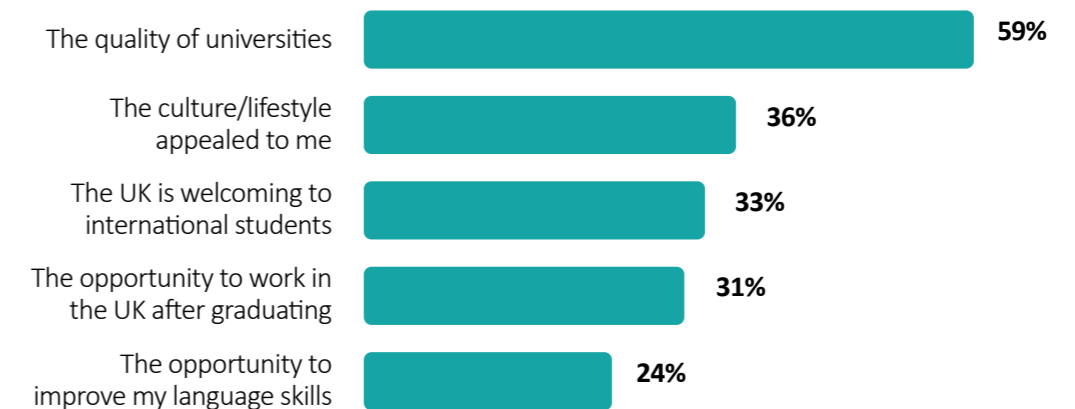
The quality of institutions was the most common reason that respondents chose to study in the UK, followed by the appeal of the culture/lifestyle and the perception that the UK is welcoming to international students. This aligns closely with the findings from the QS International Student Survey 2023⁹, which asked 62,000 prospective students interested in the UK what factors were most important to them when choosing a country to study in – suggesting that UK universities are delivering on what matters most to international students.

Prospective students: What are the most important factors when choosing a country to study in?



Source: QS International Student Survey 2023

Graduates: Which of these are the reasons you chose to study in the UK?



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Quality is a driver for top source markets

Respondents in all but one of the country's top 10 source markets see quality as the key driver when choosing to study in the UK – further testament to the strong reputation of UK universities around the world.

However, there is diversity in secondary drivers across these source markets. For respondents from China and Europe, the opportunity to improve language skills was a significant factor in their decision to study in the UK. Whilst for respondents from India, Nigeria and Pakistan, the perception that the UK was a welcoming destination for students played a greater role in their decision-making. In the US, the comparatively cheaper international tuition fees in the UK were a primary reason for their choice to study in the UK.

Respondents from Russell Group universities also seem to be driven by a broader range of factors – the quality of universities, an appealing culture and lifestyle, and knowing friends or family in the UK all play significantly greater roles in their decision-making compared to non-Russell Group respondents.

65%

When researching where to study, **65% of prospective international students say that high-quality teaching is the most important factor when choosing a course**, a country and university (QS International Student Survey 2023).

In fact, 'high-quality teaching' was the most widely selected answer by all respondents – ahead of student support, research, extra-curricular activities and networking opportunities (amongst others). This reiterates that teaching is viewed as one of the best things about students' university experiences.

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Why did you choose to study in the UK?

- The quality of universities
- The culture/lifestyle appealed to me
- The UK is welcoming to international students
- The opportunity to work in the UK after graduating
- The opportunity to improve my language skills
- It has an affordable cost of studying



How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

The reputation of a university is a key factor for international students looking to study in the UK, more so than the rest of the ‘big four’

UK institutions must focus on maintaining and enhancing their reputation as a good place to study, to maintain this key competitive advantage.

What matters most when choosing a country?

Country	1	2	3
UK	High-quality teaching	Welcoming to international students	Good reputation as a place to study
Australia	Welcoming to international students	High-quality teaching	The culture/lifestyle appeals to me
Canada	Welcoming to international students	High-quality teaching	I can get a visa to work after graduating
US	High-quality teaching	Welcoming to international students	The culture/lifestyle appeals to me

Source: QS International Student Survey 2023

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Graduates praise UK universities for teaching staff and student support

The data shows that students’ expectations are being met, as respondents from across the world praise teaching staff and student support as the top areas their university performed well in.

The **top areas** respondents said their institution performed well in

- 1 Teaching
- 2 Student support
- 3 Networking opportunities
- 4 Extra-curricular activities
- 5 Research
- 6 Value for money
- 7 Onboarding experience
- 8 Career support and placements
- 9 Internship and experiential learning

Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

79% of respondents are satisfied with their university's learning resources

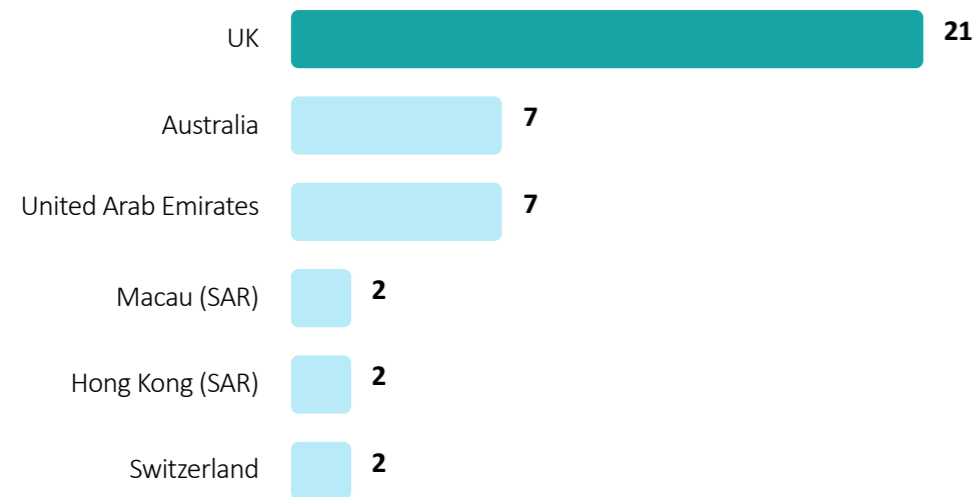
78% felt satisfied with the teaching staff and 77% said that teaching staff made them feel welcomed.

The UK performs well internationally in attracting teaching and research staff from across the globe. 89 out of the 90 UK universities which feature in the QS World University Rankings 2024¹⁰ are in the top 500 in the world for International Faculty Ratio – the ratio of international staff to overall staff. The UK is stronger in recruiting international faculty than Canada and the United States, and very close to the average in Australia.

UK universities offer a diverse and inclusive learning environment

UK campuses have a greater ratio of international students to home students than any other country in the world, boasting 21 of the world's top 50 institutions for the International Student Ratio indicator in the QS World University Rankings 2024.

Countries/territories with two or more institutions in the world's top 50 for International Student Ratio



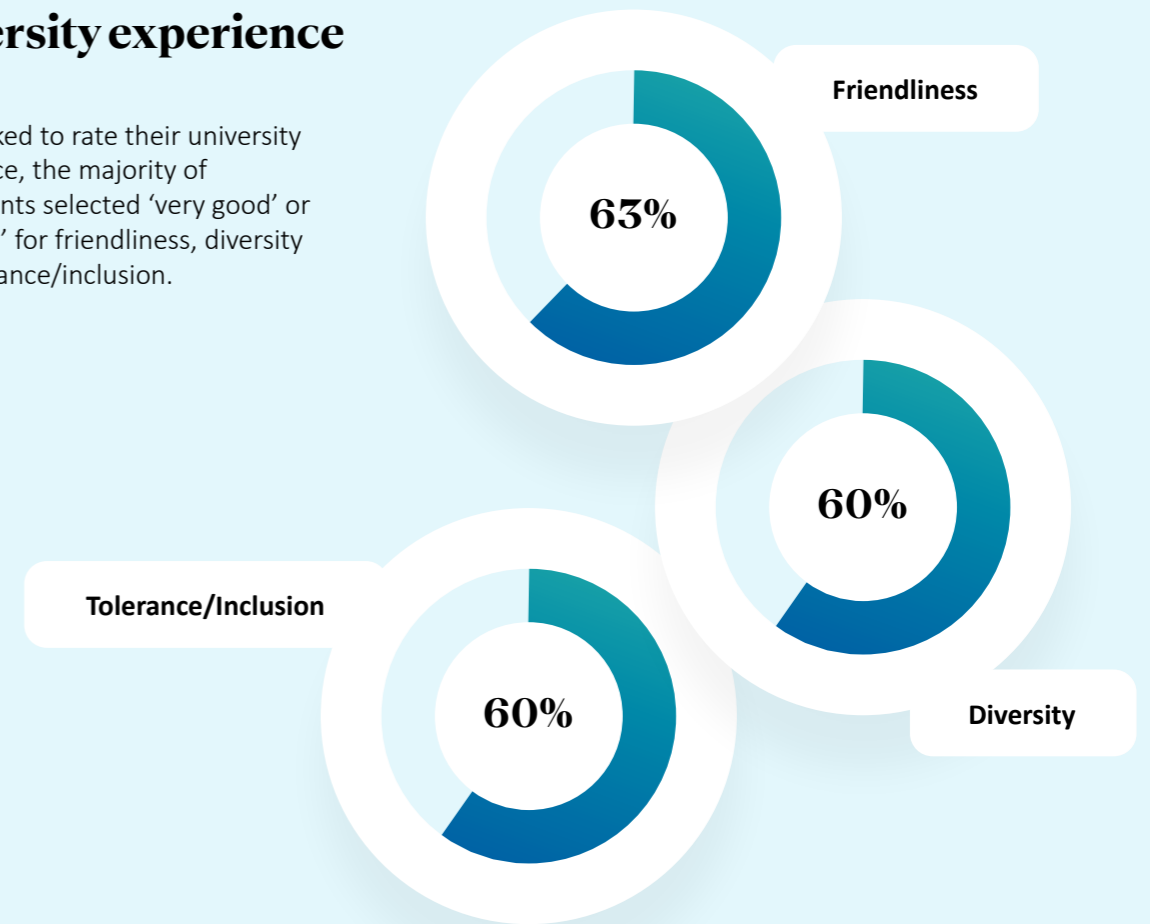
Source: QS World University Rankings 2024

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Diversity and inclusion are key components of the UK university experience

When asked to rate their university experience, the majority of respondents selected 'very good' or 'excellent' for friendliness, diversity and tolerance/inclusion.

% of respondents that selected 'very good' or 'excellent'



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

Many of those in the UK's international higher education sector have passionately championed the #WeAreInternational¹¹ campaign – relaunched in 2023 by UUKi, UKCISA, BUIA, London Higher, British Council and partners across the sector – to reassure international students that they are welcome on campuses and in cities across the UK.

The findings show that the message of openness, diversity and inclusion is met by the reality on campus, with the majority of respondents reporting high satisfaction with these aspects of their UK study experience.

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

Nearly three quarters of respondents say the likelihood of recommending their university to friends or family is 7 or higher, on a scale of 0-10

“My aunt is an alumna and she convinced me to choose the school after I’d shortlisted from schools across various countries.”

A postgraduate business and management graduate from Myanmar (International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024)

38% of respondents are such passionate promoters and advocates of their study experience that they said the likelihood of recommending their university to a friend or family member is highly likely (9 or 10). That figure rises to 57% for 8 or above.

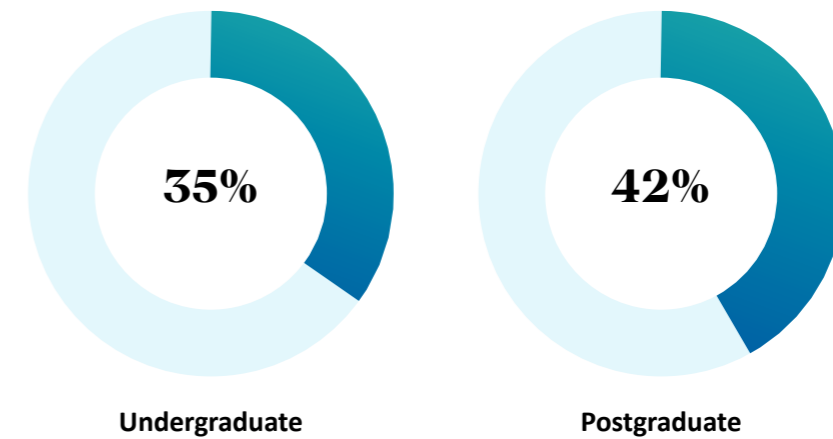
It is the postgraduate experience driving the most positive sentiment, especially when it comes to satisfaction with learning resources, support from their university and feeling welcome. 42% of respondents from postgraduate courses rated the likelihood of recommending their university at 9 or 10, compared to 35% of those who studied undergraduate degrees. 25% of those from postgraduate courses rated their chances of recommending their university at 0 to 6 out of 10 compared to 30% of undergraduate students.

Ensuring international alumni continue to feel connected to the UK and your university after graduation helps build positive sentiment via word-of-mouth

31% of prospective students interested in UK study rated ‘family and friends’ as useful sources of information when researching where to study (QS International Student Survey 2023).

How do international graduates feel about their experience of UK study?

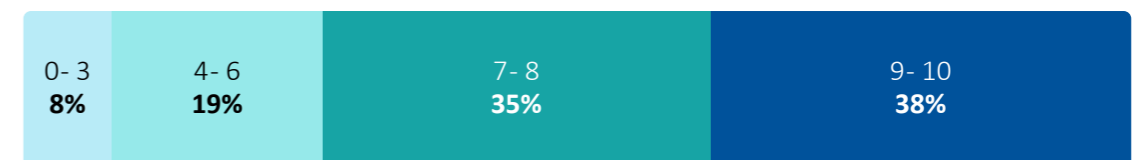
Highly likely to recommend their university:
rated 9 or 10 out of 10



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

How likely are you to recommend your university to a friend or family member?

0 = Highly unlikely 10 = Highly likely



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024



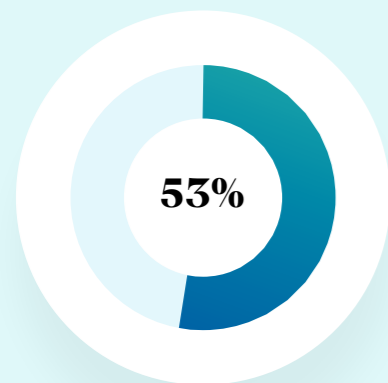
**How do
international
graduates
engage with
university
career services?**

Universities need to improve career support for international students

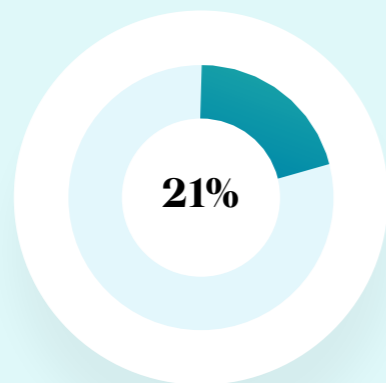
“I was uncertain about uprooting my career and moving abroad, but I was keen to explore a research field that was burgeoning in the UK and gain support to be at the forefront of innovation.”

A postgraduate biological sciences graduate from Latvia
(International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024)

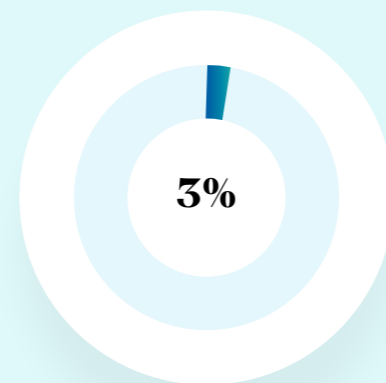
Key findings



53% of respondents identified career support and placements as an area their university could improve on.



Only **21%** of respondents say they used their university's career support service to help them find a job after graduation.



Only **3%** of those in work found a job through their university career support services.

Gaining the experience and skills to succeed in their chosen career is the driver for many international students to study abroad

58% of prospective UK students say that career outcomes is the most important factor when choosing a university (QS International Student Survey 2023).

The decision to study overseas is a very significant investment and students, parents, families, sponsors and employers have their own expectations of what value for money and return on investment looks like – and how quickly it should materialise.

The findings show that most respondents have stronger career prospects as a result of their UK study experience. However, when asked what their university could do to improve, it was support to find a job that respondents identified most (53%), followed by internships and experiential learning.

The **top areas** respondents believe their institution could improve on

- 1 Career support and placements
- 2 Internships and experiential learning
- 3 Student support
- 4 Value for money
- 5 Networking opportunities
- 6 Research
- 7 Extra-curricular activities
- 8 The onboarding experience
- 9 Teaching

Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024



Fulya
Master's in comparative literature
King's College London
From Taiwan

“Networking was the most valuable lesson I learned while studying in the UK. I took on a role as an intern at a publishing house during my studies and it was one of the most precious experiences. I made friends and gained skills to help me in my career.”



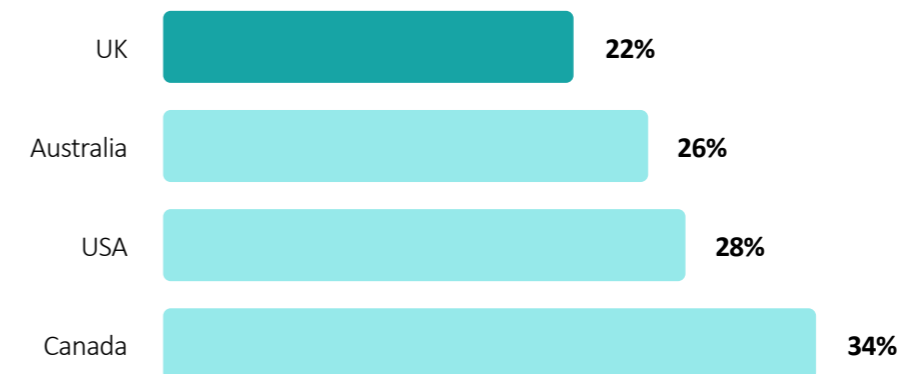
Keshala
Master's in Marketing
Coventry University
From Sri Lanka

“We had a module which required students to take up the role of a marketing manager and make business decisions over the course of an academic semester to experience how they would affect a real-world business and generate reports about our course of action. This immersive experience trains students to be vigilant of minute decisions which otherwise might get overlooked in a theoretical setting.”

There is a strong need for clarity in what career services can offer

There is a gap in the expectation vs reality of what UK universities deliver on career support and it is evidenced at a macro level, with UK universities scoring an average of 22 out of 100 for Employment Outcomes (QS World University Rankings 2024) – lower than Australia (26), Canada (34) and the United States (28).

Average Employment Outcomes score (out of 100)



Source: QS World University Rankings 2024

There is evidence in the data to suggest that those who remain in the UK after graduation gain slightly more from career services such as one-to-one meetings with career advisors and job interview preparation. Those leaving the UK don't have the same awareness and could benefit from more targeted messaging. Those returning to their home country are more likely to want support with internship and experiential learning experiences than direct career support.

Respondents from every major source market told the same story: A UK degree enables greater career prospects but universities could do more to improve on career support, placements, internships and experiential learning. Networking opportunities, value for money and student support were also among respondents' recommended areas for improvement.

The international graduates surveyed feel that UK universities can do more to help them to find a job, and improving employability outcomes and support should be a key strategic focus. When international students are clear on what their career service can offer, they can benefit hugely.

How do international graduates engage with university career services?

Source market breakdown*

Top three things your institution could improve on

Country	1	2	3
China	Internships and experiential learning	Career support and placements	Value for money
India	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Networking opportunities
United States	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Student support/ Networking opportunities
Nigeria	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Networking opportunities
Pakistan	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Networking opportunities

*Top 10 source markets for UK universities according to HESA data 2019-2022

How do international graduates engage with university career services?

Country	1	2	3
Malaysia	Internships and experiential learning	Career support and placements	Value for money
Germany	Internships and experiential learning	Value for money	Career support and placements
Hong Kong (SAR)	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Networking opportunities
France	Career support and placements	Value for money	Networking opportunities
Italy	Career support and placements	Internships and experiential learning	Value for money

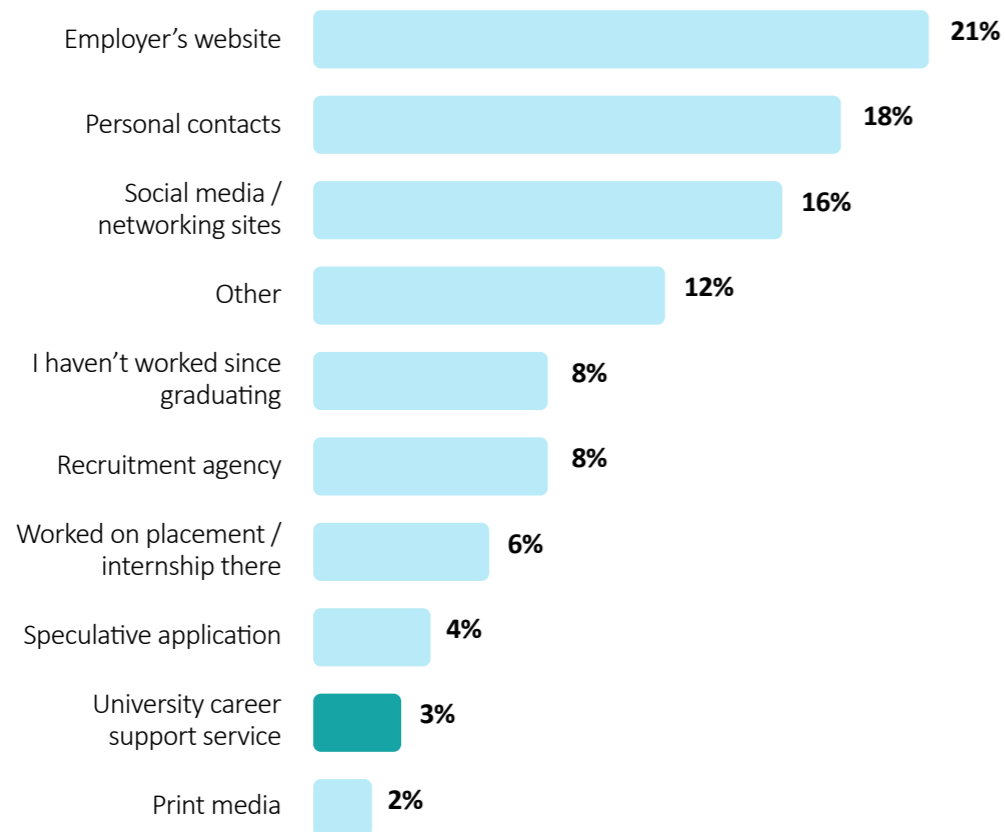
*Top 10 source markets for UK universities according to HESA data 2019-2022

How do international graduates engage with university career services?

The majority of respondents didn't use university career services to support their job search

That is not to say there isn't excellent work and best practice being undertaken by career services and teams across UK universities who support positive graduate outcomes. But it is clear that university career services are not currently how most international students are finding jobs.

How did you find your first job after graduating?

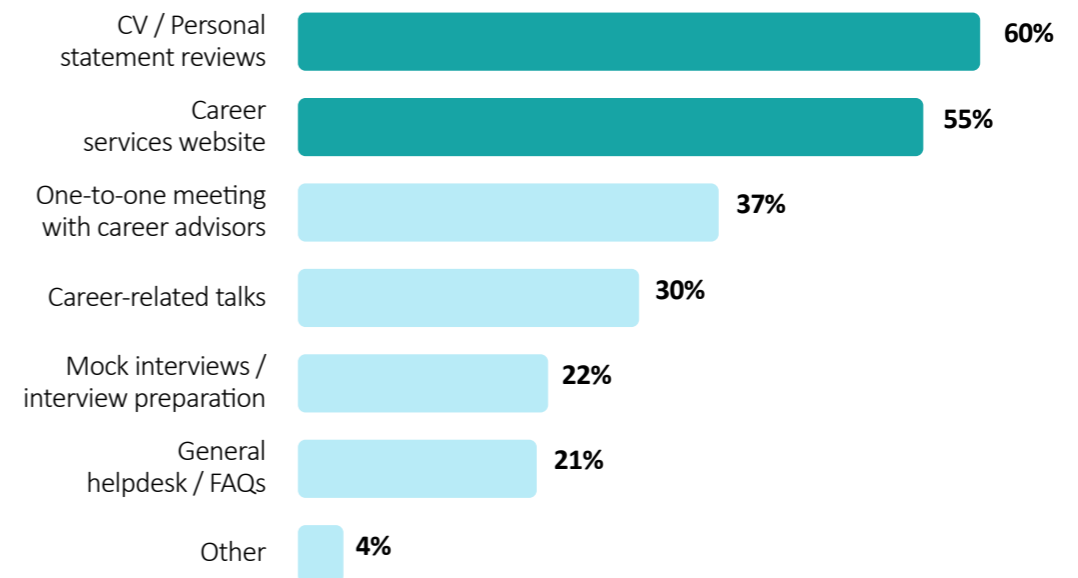


Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

How do international graduates engage with university career services?



Which of the following career support services did you use?



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

The aspect of career support services which international students engage with most is the opportunity for a review of their CV or personal statement (60%).

“The most popular service requested is for information on part-time jobs. Fortunately, we have an on-campus recruitment partner who addresses that need.”

Career support at the University of East London (UEL)



Patricia Stevenson
Senior Professional Placement Manager

Tell us about one of the initiatives you offer to provide career support to international students.

“For the academic year 2023/2024, we launched our International Students Peer Mentoring Scheme specifically to match final year and incoming international students. The scheme provides essential peer support in relation to careers and navigating the UK. We provide training to those acting as mentors, which is a core employability asset, whilst also providing much-needed support and insight to new students. The programme runs once per term in line with the large international intakes.

What are the most popular career services with international students at UEL?

“The most popular service requested, from a career perspective, is information on part-time jobs. Fortunately, we have an on-campus recruitment partner who addresses that need. That’s followed by requests for information on placements, which feeds into students’ desire to develop work-related skills and competences, and the third ranked request is for a CV review.”

Do your students have access to platforms/databases to apply for jobs and internships in the UK and overseas (including in their home country)?

“UEL has invested in a platform that supports students to source work or placement opportunities globally with access to more than 16 million jobs and internships. We also use Forage, a virtual work experience platform, along with an experiential learning platform that allows students to participate in real-world projects from global contributors. And last but not least, we have our Career Zone platform that enables students to source placement, internship and job opportunities in the UK and abroad.”



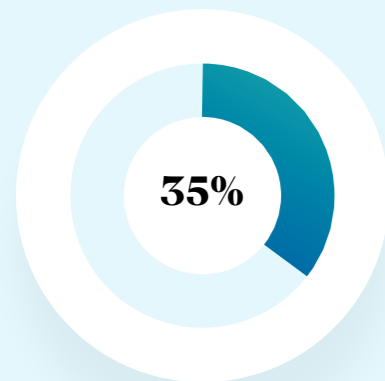
What is the impact of the Graduate route visa?

The Graduate route visa enables students to continue to contribute to the UK economy

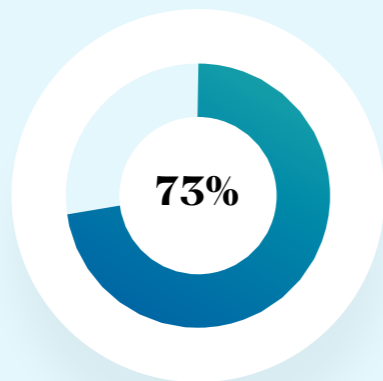
“The availability of the Graduate visa helped me gain professional experience and made me choose the UK for my education.”

A postgraduate engineering student from Nepal
(International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024)

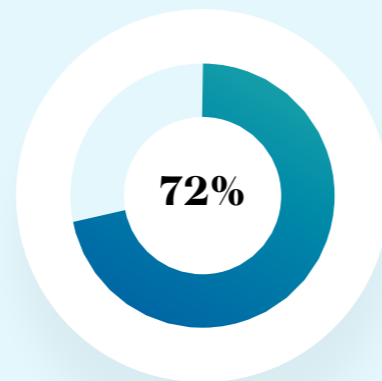
Key findings



Since 2021, **35%** of respondents who remained in the country after graduating used the Graduate route visa.



73% of those who stayed in the UK via the Graduate route visa were satisfied that it met their expectations.

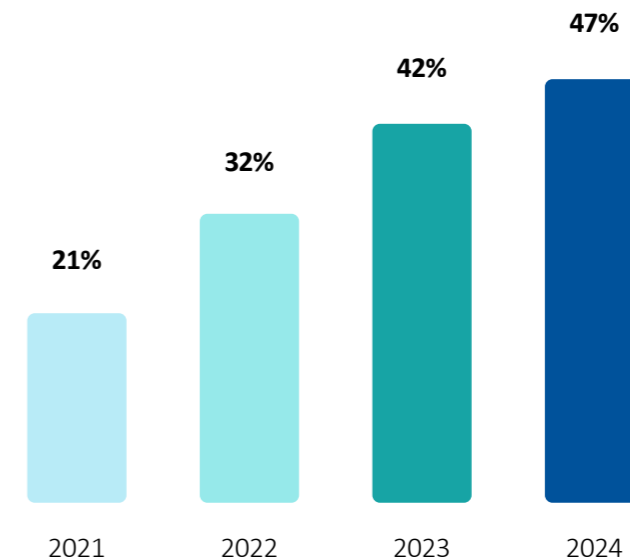


72% of those on the Graduate route visa were satisfied with their job role and benefits, compared to 62% on other visas.

The Graduate route visa has delivered a net economic contribution to the UK economy of more than £62 billion

In July 2021, the much-anticipated Graduate route visa was launched. UUKi modelling in March 2024¹² suggested that this has played a very significant role in making the UK a more attractive study destination, which has helped contribute to an estimated 632,000 additional international enrolments.

The proportion of respondents who have remained in the UK using the Graduate route visa has more than doubled since 2021



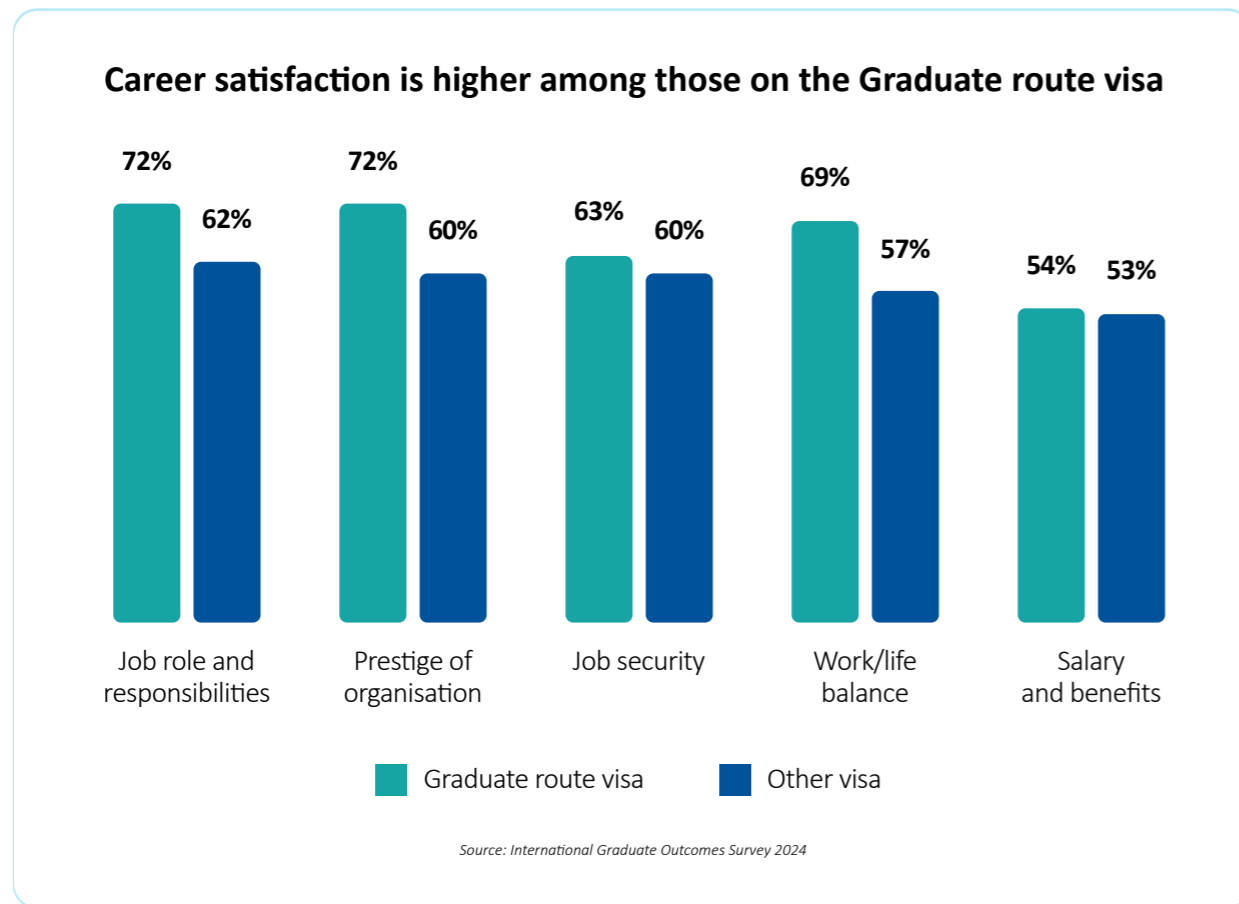
Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

What is the impact of the Graduate route visa?

Students who remain in the UK on the Graduate route visa are more likely to be satisfied with their careers

In fact, 72% of those on the Graduate route visa are satisfied with their current job role and responsibilities, and the prestige of the organisation they work for, building the UK's reputation for strong employability outcomes.

The findings show that the Graduate route visa has enabled students to achieve their career objectives while also establishing and nurturing positive relationships with UK employers, supporting the competitiveness of the UK in the global economy.

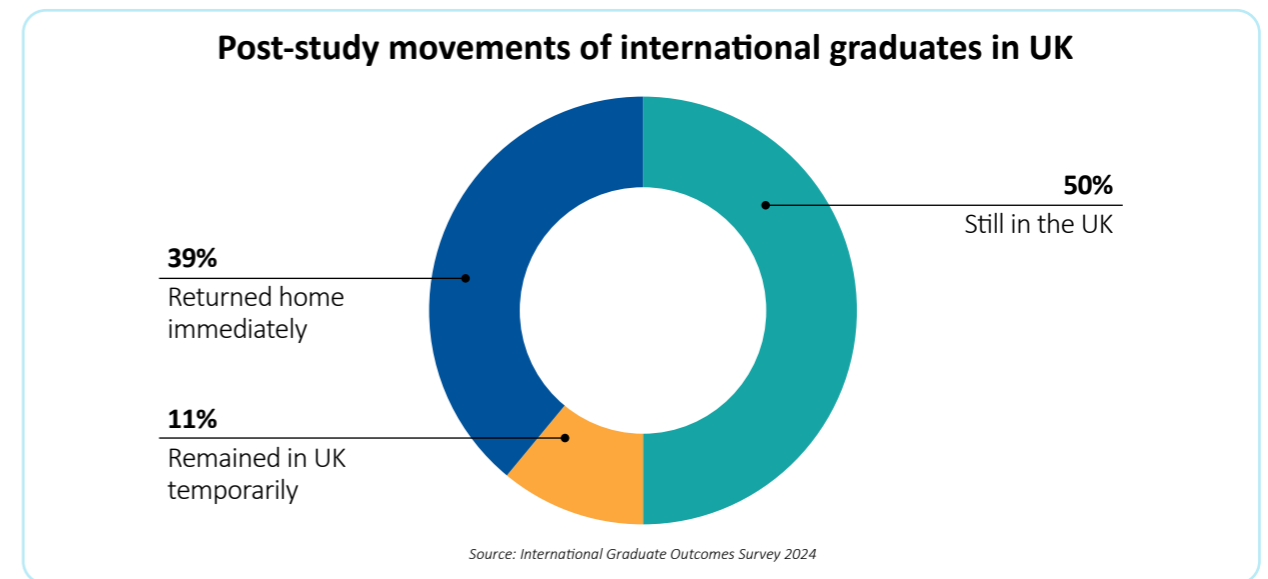


What is the impact of the Graduate route visa?

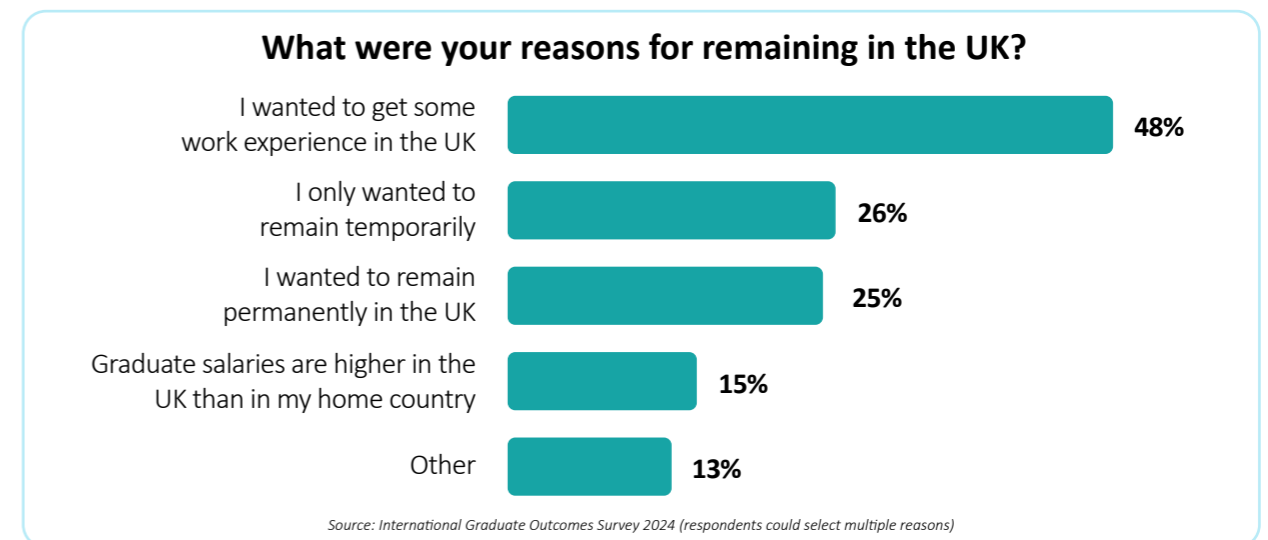
Nearly two-fifths of respondents returned home immediately after graduating

International graduates place a high value on the standard of UK education and the opportunity to gain work experience in the UK. As such, it is no surprise that 50% of respondents surveyed were still living in the UK, though a sizeable proportion returned home immediately after their studies.

75% said they wanted to remain in the UK temporarily and 25% had ambitions to remain permanently. 15% said graduate salaries in the UK were higher than in their home country.



The most common incentive for remaining in the UK was to gain work experience



“We have introduced a workshop on the Graduate route visa which helps international students explore and understand their options.”

Career support at the University of Westminster



Tracey Wells
Careers and Employability Service Manager

Tell us about some of the initiatives you offer to provide career support to international students.

“We provide career- and job-hunting-related specialist resources as well as Virtual Skills Academy workshops and talks targeted at international students to enable them to research and apply for career opportunities, both in the UK and in their home country. These are specifically tailored to their needs covering topics such as visa options, international job hunting and searching for part-time jobs. One of our Careers Consultants participates in offer-holder and welcome events for international students to ensure they access career support as early as possible, supporting their transition to the UK.

“International students at postgraduate level can also participate in pre-arrival online employability activities. Undergraduate and postgraduate international students also have access to all the wide-ranging support that is available for all Westminster students, including individual career advice and guidance for up to three years after graduation, access to job and internship opportunities, skills development workshops, and a range of events enabling students to meet employers.

“The University also holds a series of inspiring talks where alumni come to the University to advise current students on many aspects of careers and employability.”

Are there ways in which you have adapted your career support services since the introduction of the Graduate visa route?

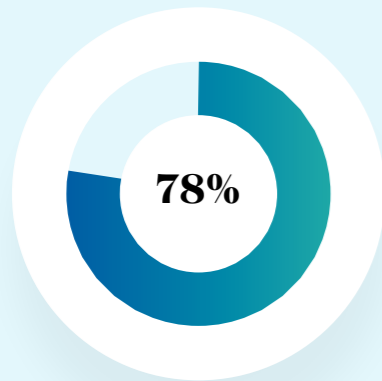
“Working with an external partner, we have introduced a UK Career Ready platform which students can access before they start their studies. This enables them to prepare for the UK job market, whether they are looking for a part-time job, or graduate roles with early deadlines. We have also introduced a workshop on the Graduate route visa which helps international students explore and understand their options.”



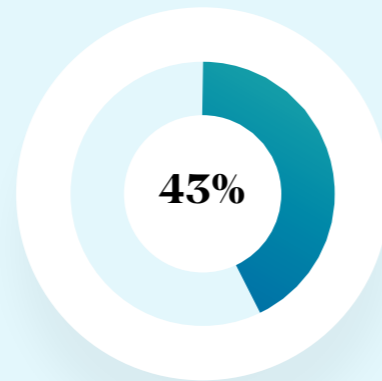
What jobs have international graduates achieved?

Graduates support key sectors of the UK and global economies

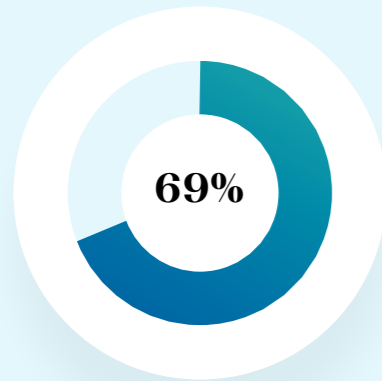
Key findings



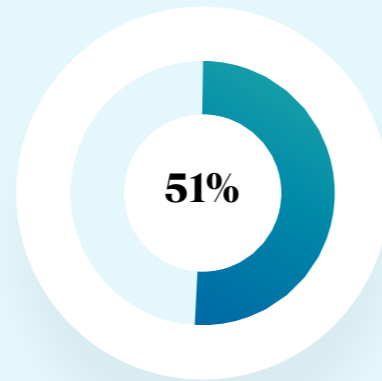
78% of respondents who remained in the UK after graduating found work straight away – significantly higher compared to those who returned home at 61%.



43% of respondents remained in the UK and began full-time, part-time or temporary employment.



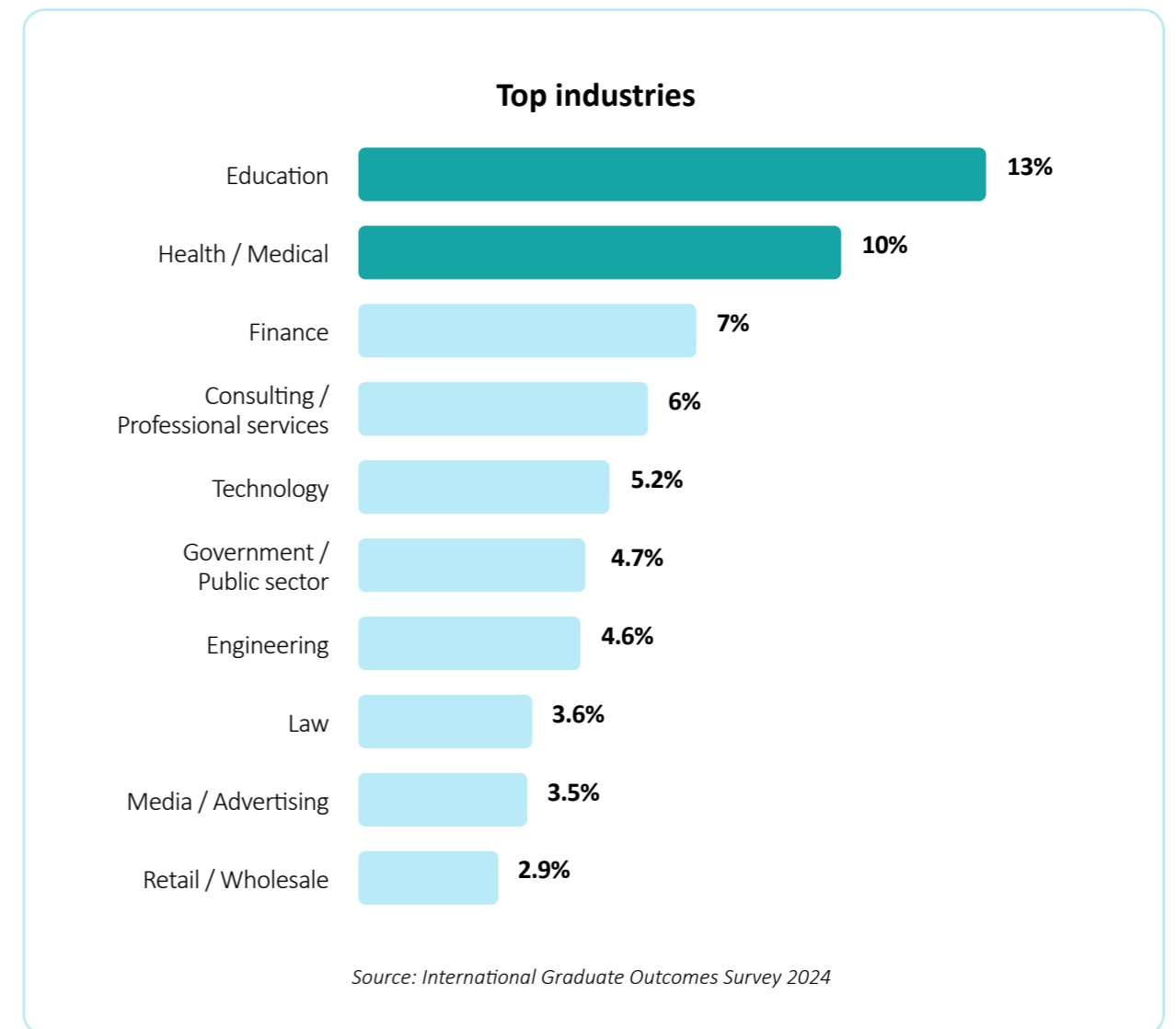
69% of respondents found work straight away after graduating – this was slightly lower for undergraduates at 60%.



51% of respondents work in small- to medium-sized organisations with the highest percentage employed in healthcare and education. This percentage increases to 60% for those working in the UK.

International graduates generally find work quickly after graduating and respondents are mostly satisfied with their jobs

It is encouraging that graduates from different countries find roles in a diverse range of sectors, types of organisation and sizes of organisation. Education and healthcare are the top two industries that respondents chose to work in, two sectors which are vital to UK and other global economies.



What jobs have international graduates achieved?

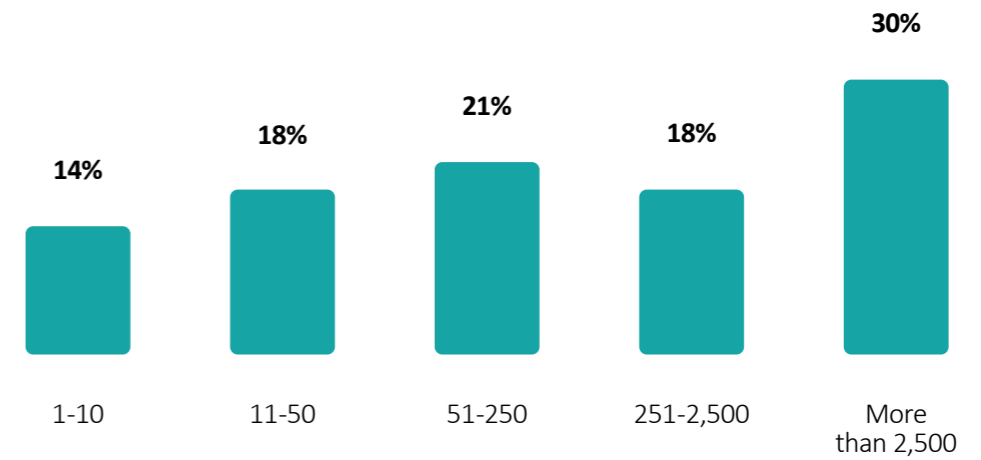
78% of those who remained in the UK after graduating found work straight away

Over half of respondents work for a private business, followed by 29% in a government or public sector organisation. Just 2% of respondents have started their own business.

The size of organisations varies greatly, with a steady split between those that work in small organisations of 1-10 staff members (14%), to those in larger companies of 251-2500 members (18%). The largest segment of respondents work in companies of more than 2,500 people (30%).

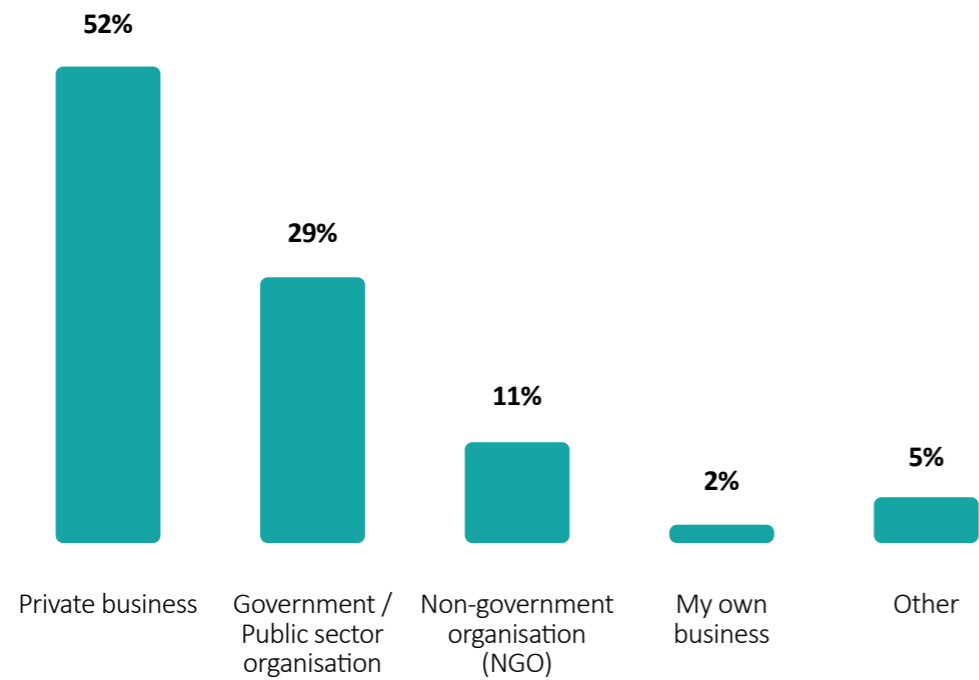
What jobs have international graduates achieved?

How many people are employed by the company you work for?



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

What kind of organisation do you work for?



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024



Mari
Master's in
International Relations
King's College London
From Japan

"I wanted to take my new international experience back to Japan where I could bring all my newfound knowledge and perspectives to my home city. The knowledge and skills I gained from studying in the UK are useful in business consultancy, to formulate business strategies which need to consider geopolitical risks. Having improved my English language skills while studying in the UK, I'm in a better position to liaise with clients around the world and to work with international businesspeople in Japan."

What jobs have international graduates achieved?

Those on the Graduate route visa and still in the UK earn less on average than those on other visas

There are also indications that those who remain in the UK after graduating are earning more than their counterparts who return home – those who remain earn on average £35,600, compared to only £31,100 for those who return home.

Average salary of a postgraduate international graduate

£33,300

Average salary with GRV

£29,200

Average salary without GRV

£36,900

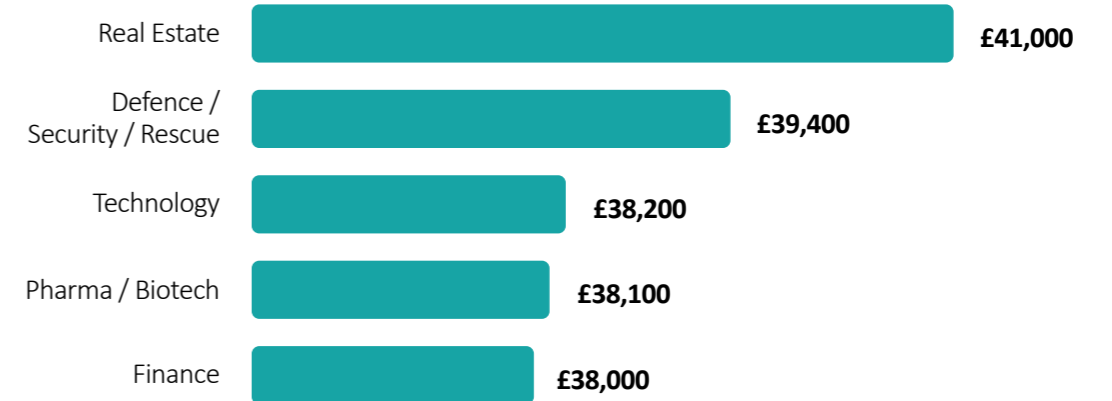
Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

This is understandable given the Graduate route is intended as a means to support those early on in their careers to look for work, rather than those moving straight into a job post-graduation. Those who have job offers, and which meet the salary threshold, would be more likely to opt for a Skilled Worker visa, over the Graduate route. The data is further testament to the importance of the Graduate route visa in engaging employers in international education, as it appears that, despite earning less, those on the GRV are still more satisfied with their employer performance across a range of aspects.

There are also significant variations in earnings depending on which sector graduates are employed in. **Real Estate, Security, and Technology have the highest paid graduates**, with respondents in Telecoms, Hospitality and Retail on the lowest salaries.

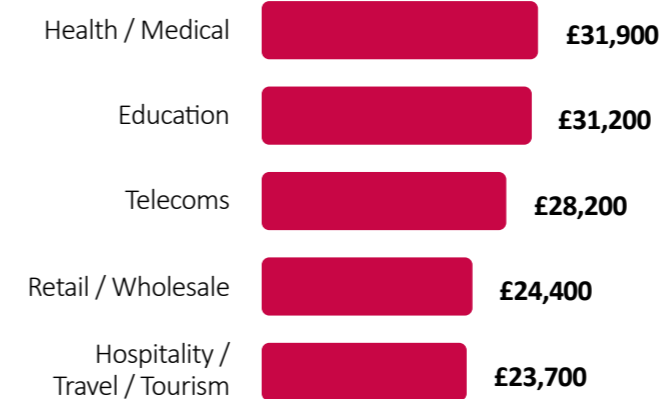
What jobs have international graduates achieved?

Highest salary by sector (GBP)



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

Lowest salary by sector (GBP)



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

Perhaps surprisingly, there is very little variation across different study levels in terms of the earning potential of graduates. For undergraduates, the average salary was £31,600, compared to a comparatively modest £33,300 for postgraduates.

What jobs have international graduates achieved?

There is considerable variation among the career experiences of international graduates from different countries

Respondents from China, India, Hong Kong (SAR) and Europe tend to work in larger companies, whereas graduates from smaller markets are more likely to work in mid-sized companies, like Colombia (40% working in companies of 51-250 employees), Nepal (33% working in companies of 51-250 employees), and Myanmar (38% in companies of 51-250 employees).

Typical graduate job role by country

Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

India		China	
Company size	More than 2,500 employees (35%)	Company size	More than 2,500 employees (45%)
Type of organisation	Private business (68%)	Type of organisation	Private business (54%)
Industry	Health/Medical (11%)	Industry	Finance (18%)
Satisfaction with opportunities for career progression	64%	Satisfaction with opportunities for career progression	65%
Satisfaction with job role and responsibilities	77%	Satisfaction with job role and responsibilities	72%
Satisfaction with salary and benefits	62%	Satisfaction with salary and benefits	61%

What jobs have international graduates achieved?

Nigeria		Malaysia	
Company size	More than 2,500 employees (33%)	Company size	More than 2,500 employees (36%)
Type of organisation	Private business (49%)	Type of organisation	Private business (72%)
Industry	Health/Medical (39%)	Industry	Engineering, Education (11%)
Satisfaction with opportunities for career progression	59%	Satisfaction with opportunities for career progression	59%
Satisfaction with job role and responsibilities	71%	Satisfaction with job role and responsibilities	76%
Satisfaction with salary and benefits	52%	Satisfaction with salary and benefits	54%

“We deliver specialised sessions and resources aimed at helping international students understand the UK labour market and guiding them on effective job searching strategies.”

Career support at the University of East Anglia (UEA)



Evan Hancock

Associate Director of Graduate Success (Careers Service)

Tell us about some of the initiatives you offer to provide career support to international students.

“Our ‘Connect with Careers: International’ initiative delivers specialised sessions and resources aimed at helping international students understand the UK labour market and guiding them on effective job searching strategies. We also focus on equipping them with the skills needed to excel in networking, both in person and on platforms such as LinkedIn. Specifically, we also give practical advice on the timings of Graduate Scheme recruitment, understanding UK cultural nuances and recruitment practices – particularly with employers focusing on evidence and example-based skills – and ensure our international students feel confident presenting themselves in application and interview.”

What are the most popular services with international students at your institution?

“From a career service point of view, international students frequently favour one-on-one appointments with a professional adviser, participating in mock interviews and opportunities to connect with potential employers at events. Additionally, they have a strong interest in workshops focused on CV support, particularly understanding the differences between UK CVs and their home countries. International students actively use our part-time job vacancies search as well as attending events that are tailored to student work opportunities. It’s something that we’ve seen an increase in across our service from international students looking at gaining employment and skills whilst they study.”



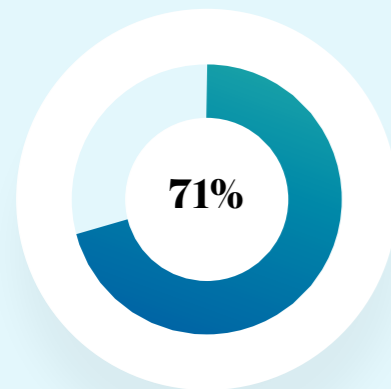
**How do
international
graduates
influence global
perceptions
of the UK?**

Graduates support key sectors of the UK and global economies

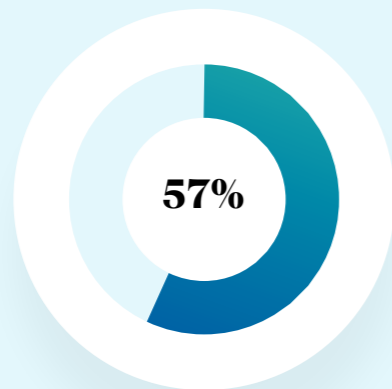
“My learning experience [in the UK] has made me more ambitious to create a new business here. I’d like to help others in the UK, and really achieve something for both me and them.”

Siri an MBA student from India

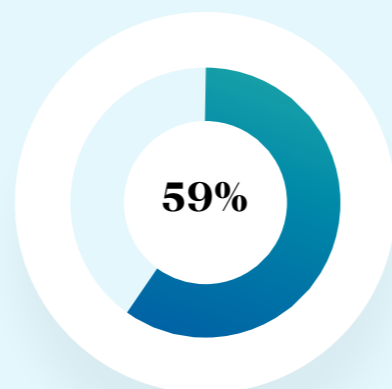
Key findings



71% of respondents feel a close connection with the UK.



57% of respondents are more likely to do business with the UK because of their degree.



59% are more likely to do business internationally.

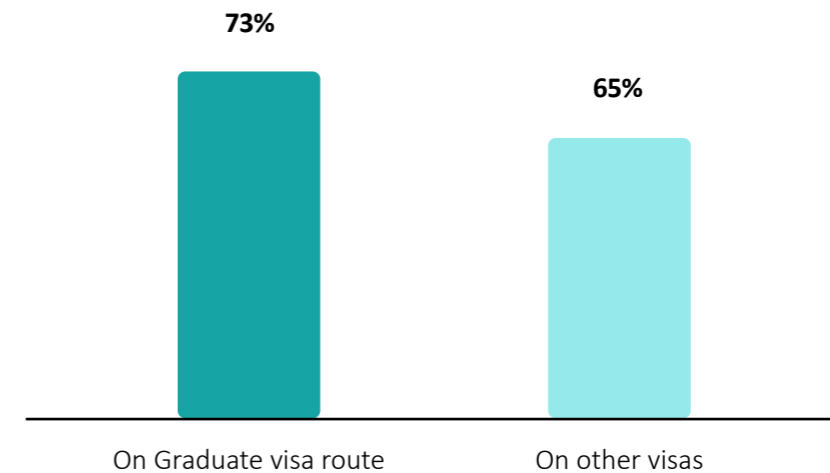
International graduates are powerful ambassadors for UK higher education

There is no doubt that international graduates are a major contributor to the UK’s reputation and soft power influence. Many respondents feel they have far stronger prospects as a result of their UK degree and are satisfied with their salary and potential for career progression.

Those that remained in the UK on the Graduate route visa are more likely to feel a connection to the UK (73%) and do business with the UK (59%) than those who remained in the UK on other visas.

“I feel a connection with the UK”

Number of respondents who agree or strongly agree



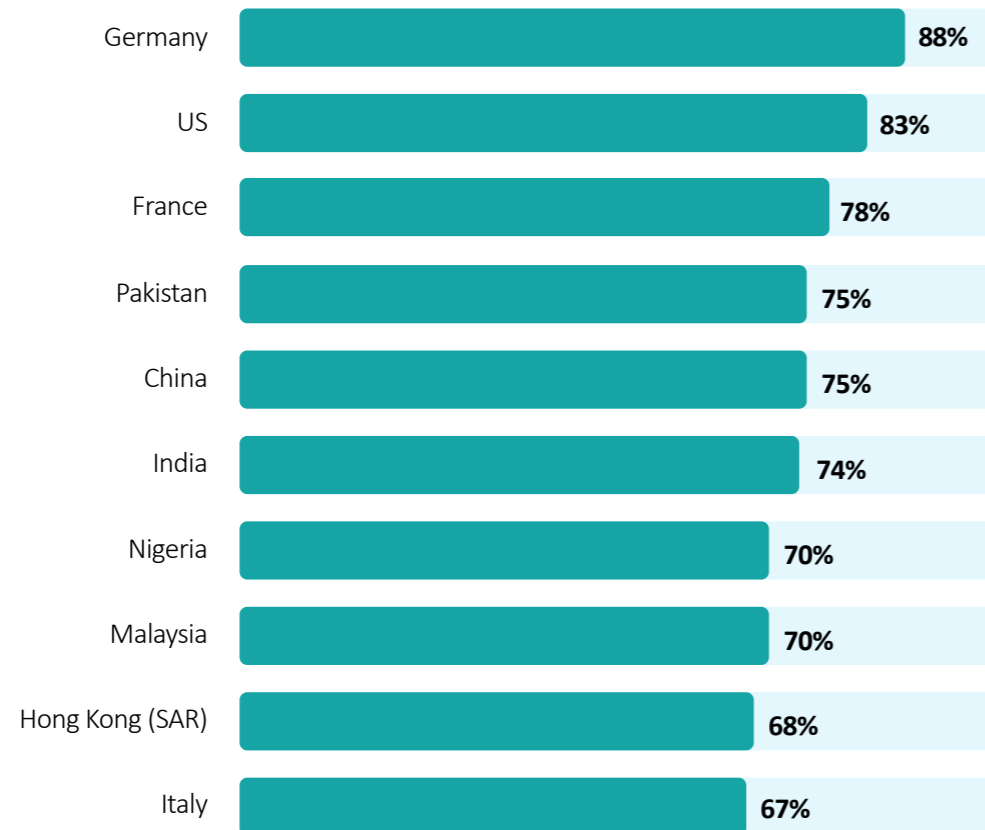
Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

How do international graduates influence global perceptions of the UK?

More work is needed to support international graduates from all countries to feel that their UK degree is enabling their career potential

There is some disconnect between perceptions of the UK brand among established, larger markets and newer or smaller ones. Respondents from Germany (88%) and the US (83%) most consistently feel a connection with the UK, but as the leading origins for international students, it is encouraging to see China (75%) and India (74%) amongst the top five. UK universities must ensure that international students are aware of the wealth of career support services on offer, particularly focusing on the career benefits of a UK degree.

Which graduates feel the strongest connection to the UK?



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024 using top ten UK source markets from HESA data 2019-2022

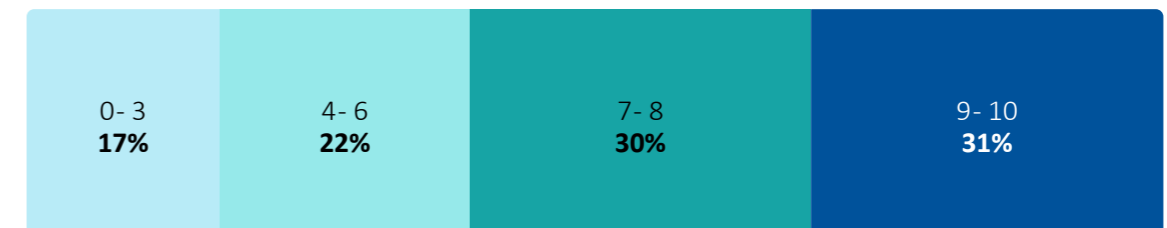
How do international graduates influence global perceptions of the UK?

Almost two-thirds said that studying in the UK had a significant influence on their ability to get their current job

61% of respondents think that studying in the UK had a significant influence (rating 7 or above for satisfaction) on their ability to get their current job. The picture is slightly more positive in STEM areas with respondents from degrees in energy (72%), engineering (70%) and technology (68%).

To what extent do you think your studies in the UK influenced your ability to get your current job, on a scale of 0-10?

0 = No influence 10 = Extremely influential



Source: International Graduate Outcomes Survey 2024

Conclusion

International graduates clearly value their UK study experience, recognising that the high-quality learning experience opens doors for positive career outcomes and progression. Most international students find a job soon after graduating and are satisfied with their role and benefits.

Whether or not students choose to stay in the UK to work, what matters most to them is the quality of educational provision – and how it supports their career ambitions. Wherever they choose to work, international students feel that UK universities could improve their career support services and placement opportunities.

The Graduate route visa has helped to strengthen positive connections between international students, employers and universities. Those who have remained in the UK through post-study work are most likely to work in education and healthcare and to work in SMEs, making a vital contribution to UK society and driving UK economic growth.

Those who have studied in the UK feel a strong and positive connection to the country and are significantly more likely to do business with the UK, highlighting the valuable soft power value that UK higher education contributes to the UK's economy and reputation.

References

- 1 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6641e1fbdd01f5ed32793992/MAC+Rapid+Review+of+Graduate+Route.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/>
- 3 <https://www.nisau.org.uk/>
- 4 <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/05/16/international-students-boost-uk-economy-by-41-9-billion/>
- 5 <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2024/05/07/new-research-reveals-the-benefits-of-the-graduate-route-visa/>
- 6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65eed7215b6524100bf21a76/SME_skills_horizon_2024.pdf
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- 12 <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/graduate-visa-critically-important-uk>

Key recommendations

1 Improve career support service offerings

Support international students in their early career journey, both in the UK and in their home countries. Raise awareness of the breadth of services and support offered by career service teams and help more international graduates benefit from the guidance, training and advertised job roles available.

2 Collaborate with employers to ensure skills are embedded in the curriculum

Improving your employer engagement will help ensure your career support services are preparing students with the skills that employers value most, and will ensure that your university develops the capabilities that the global economy needs to support progress and prosperity.

3 Work with the government to realise the benefits of the Graduate route visa

The data shows that the Graduate route visa is an important factor in the UK's competitiveness as a study destination. Without a strong post-study work offer, UK universities, campuses and cities will attract fewer international students – and UK campuses, cities, universities and the UK economy will be worse off in every sense.

4 Leverage alumni communities

Share their stories with future students and support them in their aspirations to become lifelong partners to the UK. Graduates from India and China are more likely to be advocates for the UK than graduates from smaller markets. Universities should ensure they're supporting alumni communities globally to nurture their connection to an institution, city and the UK.

5 Champion the diversity of student and faculty communities

Ensure international students know that they are welcome in UK cities and on UK campuses. The ability to celebrate diversity and make international students feel welcome is a clear strength of the UK sector.



We thank our partners at the British Council, NISAU and the 37 partner institutions who supported this report.

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