

International student migration to the UK: Training for the global economy or simply another form of global talent recruitment?

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1. Introduction: Scientists and Engineers in the UK

– trends and issues



- Over recent decades UK businesses have invested less in research and development than many other advanced nations
- The UK demand for scientists and engineers has been rising but the domestic supply of new graduates in some areas of science and engineering has been falling or static
- Intervention of the UK government



Increase the proportion of young people in HE

New immigration policy

1. Introduction: Challenges in Measuring Trends



- 🌐 International comparisons hampered by different definitions of ‘student’ and ‘foreign’
- 🌐 Paper uses three sources:
 - UK International passenger statistics
 - Home Office student visa records
 - UK Higher Education Statistics Agency annual reports





2. Students in UK Higher Education institutions

Students in UK Higher Education Institutions, 1995-2004

Year	Total HE students	Postgraduates		Undergraduates	
		Domicile UK	overseas	Domicile UK	overseas
2003/2004	2247440	367275	156550	1580110	143500
2002/2003	2175115	357335	140165	1542515	135100
2001/2002	2086075	349425	120425	1493895	122330
2000/2001	1990625	337335	111365	1422425	119505
1999/2000	1856330	313140	95480	1318530	129180
1998/1999	1845757	314562	88778	1311910	130507
1997/1998	1800064	305069	81932	1281731	131332
1996/1997	1756179	285843	77729	1272272	120335
1995/1996	1720094	287695	82424	1236053	113922

Source : HESA, 2005, 9



2. Students in UK Higher Education institutions

- Not only have overall student numbers risen significantly, but the proportion in S&E has also risen markedly
- However, the picture is uneven by discipline, domicile and level of study



2. Students in UK Higher Education institutions

Student enrolments on full-time first degree HE courses (HEIs only), selected subjects, UK, 1994/95, 1998/99 to 2003/04 (thousands)

	1994/95	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03*	2003/04*
Business studies	90	105	106	107	110	132	135
Engineering	84	77	74	72	73	71	70
Creative art	54	74	76	79	83	96	101
Biological sciences	48	64	65	65	66	89	93
Languages	59	58	58	56	55	73	72
Physical sciences	49	48	47	45	43	46	46
Computer science	36	48	51	57	63	75	72

*A new method of coding the subject of study was introduced in 2002/03, hence figures are not directly comparable to earlier years. (source: [DfES, 2005](#))

3. UK Policies on Labour Migration and International Student recruitment



Immigration Policy Change and Student Migration Policy Change – coincident or linked events?

3. UK Policies on Labour Migration and International Student recruitment



Immigration Policy: ‘The market for skilled migration is a global market...The UK needs a policy that meets modern needs.’ Roche, 2000

International Student Policy: ‘People who are educated here have a lasting tie to the country. They promote Britain around the world, helping our trade...’ Blair 1999

Increasing international students ‘helps our goal to open up opportunities for more people (within the UK) to study’ Blair, 1999

Thus from a positive law to a utilitarian stance on labour and student immigration during the first Blair government.

3. UK Policies on Labour Migration and International Student recruitment



Income to UK HEIs from non-EU domiciled student fees

	Fee income to UK HEIs (£million)
1994/5	455
1995/6	507
1996/7	563
1997/8	622
1998/9	636
1999/2000	672
2000/01	746
2001/02	875
2002/03	1085
2003/04	1275

Source: Universities UK, 2005

University fee bands for selected UK Universities, 2005/6 (£ sterling)

University fees band	Undergraduate UK	Overseas science based
Bristol	1175	11700
Durham	1175	11160
London School of Economics	1175	10980
Manchester	1175	10750
Portsmouth	1175	8700
Sussex	1175	8340

Source: Universities UK, 2005

3. UK Policies on Labour Migration and International Student recruitment



Policy developments :the last five years

Labour Migration

- a) Post-Blair's 1997 election there were an increasing number of immigration schemes to help UK compete globally
- b) 2005 Election pressures
- c) 2006 Five Tier Points System includes students

Student Migration

- a) Study linked to work in the UK (eg 2004 Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme)
- b) 2005 Raising costs of student visas, and tightening-up on students overstaying.
- c) 2006 Five Tier Points System includes students.
Accreditation system for HEIs

3. UK Policies on Labour Migration and International Student recruitment



Policy developments :overview

Labour Migration

From Brain Circulation to
Brain Gain or Brain
Strain

Student Migration

From training and trade
to funding higher
education and skill
recruitment

4. Trends in skilled migration to the UK: from brain exchange to brain gain



Net International Migration to the UK of non-British Nationals (thousands)

	Non-British nationals	British nationals
1995	+127	-52
1997	+106	-60
2000	+220	-57
2001	+225	-53
2002	+244	-91
2003	+236	-85
2004	+342	-120

Source: International Passenger Survey: Office of National Statistics

4. Trends in skilled migration to the UK: from brain exchange to brain gain



Admissions of Work Permit Holders and their dependents to the UK, 1999-2004

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*
Permit for 12 months or more	25,090	36,290	50,280	51,525	44,480	42,265
WP for less than 12 months	28,445	30,785	30,785	34,095	36,870	40,450
Dependents of <u>WPs</u>	22,645	24,970	27,760	34,495	37,830	41,595
Total	76,180	92,050	108,825	120,115	119,180	124,310

Source: Home Office 2005, 18 (NB: excludes EEA citizens)

*Includes nationals of the 10 EU accession countries up until the end of April, but excludes them thereafter.

4. Trends in skilled migration to the UK: from brain exchange to brain gain



Selected origins of Admissions to the UK with Work Permits, 2004

	Long term permits*	Short term
India	10,200	6,960
USA	4,540	13,100
South Africa	2,720	1,550
Philippines	2,670	505
Australia	2,100	1,290
Bangladesh	1,780	385
Japan	1,570	830

(Source: Home Office, 2005, 34)

5. Trends in student migration to the UK: from training to skill recruitment



- General trends evident from the International Passenger Survey
- Trends in student migration as recorded by the UK Home Office

5. Trends in student migration to the UK: from training to skill recruitment



Student flows (all categories of study) to and from the UK by citizenship in thousands, 1975-2003

Years	British Citizen			Non-British Citizen			All Citizens
	Inflow	Outflow	Balance	Inflow	Outflow	Balance	Balance
1975-79	30.5	30.8	-0.1	122.8	52.2	71.9	71.6
1980-84	35.3	35.7	-0.3	103.3	89.3	14.0	13.5
1985-89	51.6	51.1	0.6	139.0	97.5	41.4	42.0
1990-94	55.9	61.5	-5.5	169.0	136.2	33.0	27.4
1995-99	44.7	64.2	-19.6	314.3	129.3	184.9	165.4
2000-03	35.0	56.2	-21.2	359.0	136.4	222.6	201.4
Total	253.0	299.5	-46.1	1207.4	640.9	567.8	532.1

Source: Office of National Statistics, 1992-2003.

Note: It should be noted that while most rows in the table relate to a five year period, the last flow is for a four year period because the 2004 flow data had not been released at the time this report was being prepared.

5. Trends in student migration to the UK: from training to skill recruitment



Selected channels of migrant entry to UK in terms of those given leave to enter (thousands)

	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004**
Students*	272	339	369	319	294
Working holiday makers	46	36	42	46.5	62
Spouses and fiancés	30	29	30	31	35
Au pairs	15	12	13	15	6
Settlement on arrival	2	3	2	3	5
Work permit holders*		81	86	81	83

Source: Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 2005, 17. The home office provides data for other channels not included above.

*Students and Work permit holders excluding dependents, **From May excludes nationals of ten East European states that became members of the EU from 1st May 2004

5. Trends in student migration to the UK: from training to skill recruitment



Admissions of students excluding EEA nationals by nationality, 1998-2004

	1998	2000	2002	2004*
Europe	71,500	69,800	76,000	37,100
Americas	82,800	99,100	101,000	92,700
Africa	16,400	20,300	27,600	24,700
Indian sub-continent	7,800	10,400	19,600	31,200
Rest of Asia	84,300	110,000	141,100	104,700
Oceania	1,900	2,000	2,300	2,300
Other	1,500	900	1,200	1,000
All nationalities	266,200	312,500	368,800	293,700

Source: Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 2005, 18.

*From May excludes nationals of ten East European states that became members of the EU, from 1st May 2004

5. Trends in student migration to the UK: from training to skill recruitment



Decisions on applications for an extension of leave to remain in the UK and settlement (excluding EEA nationals), 2000-2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Decisions on students	70,600	83,200	121,700	184,800	149,400
Decisions as a ratio to student admissions the previous year	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:2

Source: Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 2005, 20.

*From May excludes nationals of ten East European states that became members of the EU, from 1st May 2004

6. Analysis of student immigration



6. Analysis of student immigration



All HE students by gender, mode and domicile 2003/04

	UK	Other EU	EU accession countries	Other EEA countries	Other Europe	Africa	Asia	Australasia	Middle East	North America	South America	Non-EU unknown	Non-UK sub-total	Total
Full-time	1134905	65010	4965	3395	5930	20020	99545	1325	8760	14830	2765	785	227340	1362245
% by domicile	83,3	4,8	0,4	0,2	0,4	1,5	7,3	0,1	0,6	1,1	0,2	0,1	16,7	
Part-time	812475	24530	2335	590	2430	6655	22160	895	4155	7345	1250	370	72720	885195
All students	1947385	89545	7300	3985	8360	26680	121705	2220	12920	22175	4015	1155	300055	2247440
% by domicile	86,6	4,0	0,3	0,2	0,4	1,2	5,4	0,1	0,6	1,0	0,2	0,1	13,4	

Source: HESA, 2005, 10

6. Analysis of student immigration



Non-UK Non EU Higher Education students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in Higher Education Institutions, 1999/00-2003/04 by subject area

Year	Total Non EU (all disciplines)	Total non EU Medicine / Science/ Engineering		Total non EU in Other disciplines		Total non EU in Science and engineering		
		Total Number	As a % of total non EU	Total number	As a % of total Non EU	Total Number	As a % of total Non EU	As a % of all students Science/Engin
1999/2000	122150	41850	34,26	80300	65,74	32180	26,34	7,77
2000/2001	136285	49720	36,48	86565	63,52	37615	27,60	8,49
2001/2002	152630	56005	36,69	96625	63,31	42480	27,83	9,36
2002/2003	184685	67825	36,72	116860	63,28	53350	28,89	10,51
2003/2004	210505	76660	36,42	133845	63,58	61045	29,00	11,23

Source: HESA

6. Analysis of student immigration



Non-UK EU Higher Education students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in Higher Education Institutions, 1999/00-2003/04 by subject area

Year	Total EU students (all disciplines)	Total EU Medicine / Science/ Engineering		Total EU in other disciplines		Total EU in Science and engineering		
		Total Number	% of total EU	Total Number	% of total EU	Total Number	% of total EU	% of all students Science/Engin.
1999/2000	102530	37590	36,66	64940	63,34	30930	30,17	7,46
2000/2001	94570	37395	39,54	57175	60,46	30340	32,08	6,84
2001/2002	90130	35540	39,43	54590	60,57	28440	31,55	6,27
2002/2003	90575	36615	40,43	53960	59,57	29360	32,42	5,79
2003/2004	89540	35590	39,75	53950	60,25	27945	31,21	5,14

Source: HESA

6. Analysis of student immigration



UK Higher Education students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in Higher Education Institutions, 1999/00-2003/04 by subject area

Year	Total UK students (all disciplines)	Total UK Medicine / Science/ Engineering		Total UK disciplines Other		Total UK Science and Engineering		
		Total Number	% of total UK	Total Number	% of total UK	Total Number	% of total UK	% of all students Science/Engin.
1999/2000	1631700	571850	35,05	1059850	64,95	351260	21,53	84,77
2000/2001	1759755	635640	36,12	1124115	63,88	375340	21,33	84,67
2001/2002	1843310	654575	35,51	1188735	64,49	382805	20,77	84,37
2002/2003	1843310	654575	35,51	1188735	64,49	424805	23,05	83,70
2003/2004	1947385	773035	39,70	1174350	60,30	454740	23,35	83,63

Source : HESA

6. Analysis of student immigration



Non-UK domiciled students in 2000/01 and 2003/4 for selected origins (Top 10 origins in 2003/4)

Domicile	2000/1 total	2003/4 total	% change
Total non-UK domiciled	230870	300060	+30.0
All European Union countries*	94575	89545	-5.3
Greece	31150	22825	-26.7
Republic of Ireland	13510	14715	+8.9
Germany	11370	12095	+6.4
France	9950	11295	+13.5
USA	9425	13380	+42.0
China	12095	47740	+294.7
India	4875	14625	+200.0
Malaysia	10005	11805	+18.0
Hong Kong	8335	10575	+26.9
Japan	6470	6395	-1.2

Source: HESA, 2005, 36

*European Union countries defined in terms of the 15 countries that made up the EU in 2000/1. Figures include specific countries such as France and Greece listed lower in the table.

7. Discussion and Conclusions



- UK student and labour immigration policies are linked by a shared utilitarian view of international mobility
- During the Blair years the increase in international student numbers has helped finance UK HEIs, but it has also increasingly become a tool for recruiting foreign-domiciled S&E students into the UK labour market

7. Discussion and Conclusions



How do the data relate to the literature?

- a) Research literature assesses SIM in relation to:
 - i) student perceptions and choices – expression of a desire for ‘lifestyle experiences’
 - ii) globalisation of education, and iii) first step in a skilled international migration path (King et al)
- b) Weakness of the traditional human capital model explanations of the ‘geography of flows’
- c) Very limited alternative theorisation exists. Why?

7. Discussion and Conclusions



Many drivers of international student migration

- political events (eg 9/11) may cause temporary cyclical effects, but do not account for structural trends
- policies of competing economies matter in understanding flows to any one receiving state
- globalisation of higher education matters (structurally uneven supply). Global demographic as well as economic forces impact on supply of ISM.
- socio-cultural influences shape choices of destinations (language, class reproduction, experience etc)
- global competition for talent is driving the switch from ‘migrating to learn’ to ‘learning for migration’. It supports the global labour market capture of selected skills (such as S&E)