

Update: Incoming student mobility in Dutch higher education **2016-17**

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1. Highlights

During the academic year 2016-17 over 112,000 international students studied in Dutch higher education. This is the highest number ever recorded in the Netherlands. This group consists of all bachelor- and master students with a non-Dutch secondary education diploma who enrol for a full degree in public higher education, as well as international students who come to the Netherlands for a shorter period – for exchange, internships, foundation years or independent research.

Of these 112,000 international students, 81,392 were degree students - students who enrol for a full bachelor- or master- degree (public higher education, DUO). At least 11,500 were credit mobile students from another European country, on exchange or work placement in the Netherlands with the [Erasmus+ programme](#). Over 19,360 students were credit mobile who came to the Netherlands from countries outside the EU/EEA for a period of at least 90 days, and were thus obliged to obtain a residence permit for higher education. An unknown number of credit mobile students came to the Netherlands from an EEA/EU country without Erasmus+. This group of incoming credit mobile students is not registered in any administration at national level.

The number of 81,392 international degree students is both the highest total, and the highest annual growth (6,163) ever. This group of incoming degree students had a total number of 164 different nationalities in 2016-17. The relative importance of German and Chinese students has been decreasing, and other countries have become increasingly important since 2010-11. In particular countries of origin in South- and Eastern Europe, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, India and the United States. This means that for the 5th year in a row, the international degree student population in the Netherlands has become increasingly diverse.

Maastricht University has the most international students in Dutch higher education. In recent years, the international student population at Maastricht University has been diversifying in a rapid pace. The Erasmus University Rotterdam and the University of Groningen have shown very strong growth in international student numbers more recently, to now take 2nd and 3rd place. Furthermore, the four technical research universities, the university colleges, the UAS institutions in Fine arts and those in Hospitality have very international student populations (30% > on average).

In terms of newly enrolled international degree students in the Netherlands, master programmes and research universities are becoming increasingly popular, relative to bachelor programmes and universities of applied sciences. Over one in four of all new master enrolments in 2016-17 was an international student – coming from outside the Dutch education system. With master programmes in Engineering and Economy and Business, this is about one in every three new enrolments. And with master programmes in Agriculture this is almost one in every two of all newly enrolled students.

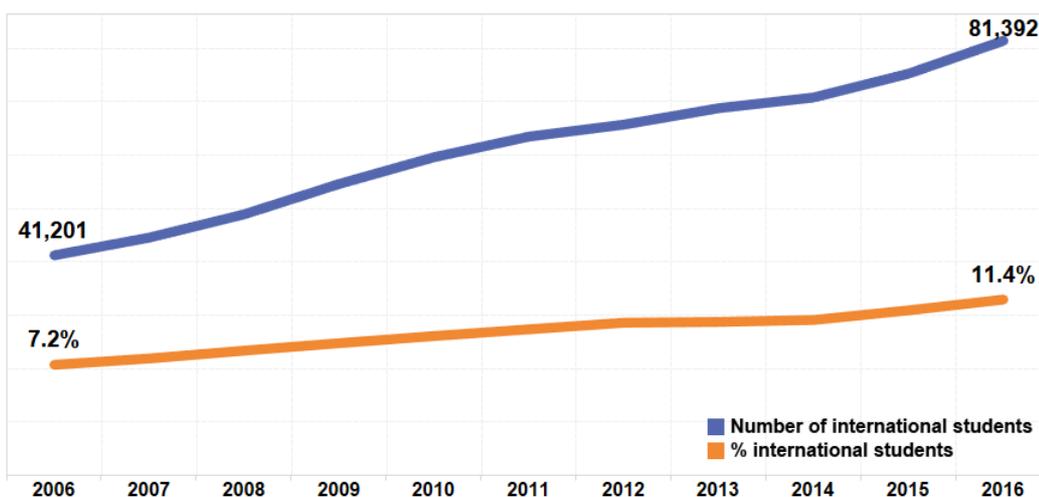
Students from outside the EU/EEA are strongly overrepresented in Msc. programmes in Engineering, Science and Agriculture. Over a ten year period the group of international students from countries with a Neso office show the highest cumulative growth in the number of yearly new enrolments in the Netherlands (150% > since 2006-07).

The numbers of incoming Erasmus+ students and credit mobile students from outside the EU/EEA are also increasing steadily. Among this later group so called foundation years have become relatively popular. PhD students who are registered as employees have in recent years also seen a surge in the number of international PhD students. Four in every nine PhD students in employment now have a nationality other than Dutch. Quite a few of them are likely to have first entered the Netherlands as a talented international exchange-, bachelor- or master- student.

Both international degree students and international PhD students are estimated to have so called stay rates of ca. 38% at five years and 30% a ten years after graduation. With a lifelong stay rate of 25%, using DUO and CBS data and CPB modelling, international degree students contribute at least €1,57 billion extra to the Dutch treasury on a yearly basis. A smaller but similar effect is expected from international PhD graduates. Also, international students in general contribute to the Netherlands knowledge economy through research, innovation and easier transnational cooperation.

2. Incoming degree mobility

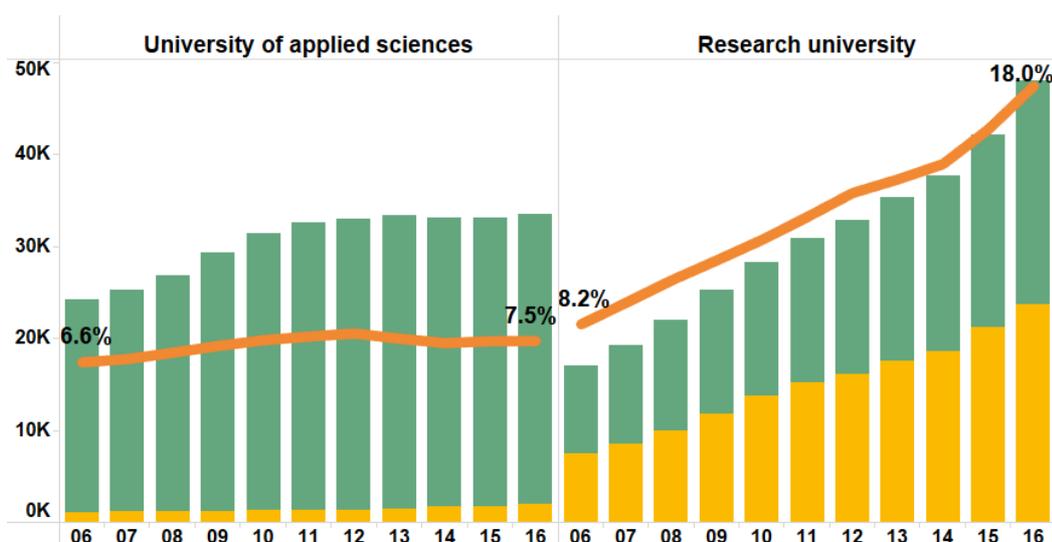
In the 2016-17 academic year, a total of 81,392 internationally mobile students were enrolled in an accredited degree programme in public higher education in the Netherlands. This marked an increase of exactly 6,163 students relative to the previous year and is the highest-ever absolute growth in the total number of international degree students studying in the Netherlands. These international students had a total of 164 different nationalities. This increasingly broad range of countries of origin is boosting diversity in the international classroom, which is a crucial precondition for intercultural learning.



Total number and relative share of international degree students in the Netherlands, since 2006-07.

Remarkably, this strong growth took place almost solely at research universities (wetenschappelijk onderwijs, hereafter 'RU'), where the number of international students increased from just over 42,000 to just under 48,000. The number of international students

at universities of applied sciences (hoger beroepsonderwijs, hereafter 'UAS') increased only slightly, to almost 33,500. In relative terms, 11.4%, or more than one in ten, of all tertiary level students in the Netherlands now are international degree students. This share is much higher in general at RUs (18.0%) and in master's programmes (22.5%) than at UASs (7.5%) and in bachelor's programmes (9.3%).



Total number and share of international degree students, per UAS / RU and bachelor/master, 2016-17.

2.1 New enrolments and bachelor/master

When the focus is narrowed to only new enrolments of international degree students in particular programmes, the upward trend is even more pronounced. The number of new enrolments of international students in public Dutch higher education increased by 3,233 to 35,603, making up 14.8% of all new enrolments. This represents the largest increase in new international enrolments ever in the Netherlands, exceeding the previous record from 2015-16 (+3,151) by almost 100 students.

Both in terms of absolute and relative growth, master's programmes are increasingly popular with international degree students. In 2016-17, 13,620 international master's students made up over 27.9% (one in four) of all new enrolments in these programmes, whereas the slightly more than 21,000 international students enrolling in bachelor's programmes made up 11.2% of all new enrolments in these programmes. Where the makeup of the student population is concerned, master's programmes are therefore internationalising faster than bachelor's programmes.

Policy measure: The Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science has asked the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences to conduct a foresight study on language policy in Dutch higher education. The key question is what criteria Dutch institutions should apply when choosing Dutch and/or English as the language of instruction for a particular programme of study.¹ Insofar as incoming student mobility is scrutinised as a criterion, the

¹ See the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences [project website](#) for more information.

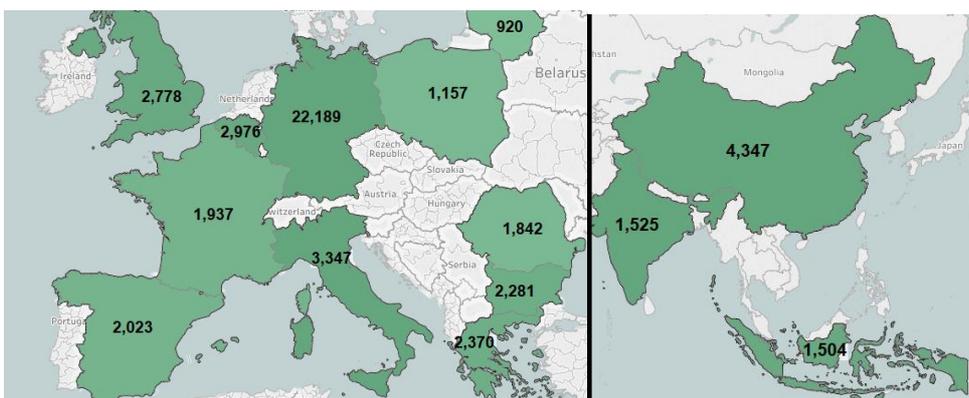
Academy is well advised to differentiate between RUs and UASs, bachelor's and master's programmes, and different fields of study.

2.2 Countries of origin

The total number of German students enrolled at UASs in the Netherlands declined for the fifth year in a row, whilst the number of German students at RUs has started to increase again. With a total of almost 22,200 students, Germany remains by far the most important country of origin, making up around 27% of all international students in the Netherlands (down from almost 40% in 2011-12).² China remained in 2nd place with more than 4,300 students all together. The number of Chinese students at RUs increased and further decreased at UASs, totalling approximately the same as in 2015-16.

Policy measure: In light of the decrease in the number of German and Chinese students at UASs in the Netherlands, these institutions could direct their international marketing and recruitment efforts towards other countries. Central and Eastern Europe look most promising overall (see Section 1.4). EP-Nuffic provides public higher education institutions free access to market information, and as a [paid service](#) offers institutions assistance in mapping the future potential of possible target countries.

In spite of the continuing decrease in German and Chinese students, the number of international students at UASs has remained stable thanks to modest growth in students from many other countries. It is expected that as from 2017-18 the number of international degree students at UASs will start to rise again. At RUs, all top 15 countries of origin show positive growth figures at both bachelor's and master's level. This upward trend at RUs appears to be structural and therefore is not anticipated to change in the next few years.



Top countries of origin of international degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, 2016-17.

The strongest absolute growth in international enrolments is seen among students from Italy. With the number of enrolments from Italy increasing by more than 700 students to total 3,350, Italy has overtaken Belgium as the 3rd main country of origin. Belgium, now in 4th

² See EP-Nuffic (2015) '[Drop in number of German students in the Netherlands](#)' for a detailed analysis.

place, accounted for almost 3,000 international degree students enrolled in the Netherlands in 2016-17. With almost 2,800 students in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom continued its stable growth (+460 in 2016-17), now taking 5th place.

The number of students from Greece (6th place) increased slightly, to almost 2,400, while enrolments from Bulgaria, Spain, France and Romania (7th-10th place, respectively) all grew in the range of 200-400 students, to total between 1,800 and 2,300 students. The number of degree students in the Netherlands from the Neso countries of India and Indonesia (11th and 12th place, respectively) increased to more than 1,500 each. Poland and Lithuania remain stable in 13th and 14th place, respectively, with between 900 and 1,200 students in the Netherlands in 2016-17. Closing the top 15 is the United States, with just over 800 students.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Germany	0	2,490	5,193	8,090	10,078	11,272	11,113	10,483	9,413	8,632	8,643
Italy	0	52	138	244	353	496	724	1,027	1,543	2,160	2,876
United Kingdom	0	45	70	122	215	446	833	1,273	1,512	1,853	2,314
Bulgaria	0	239	543	777	960	1,150	1,192	1,237	1,368	1,591	1,839
Greece	0	63	141	235	470	877	1,336	1,588	1,562	1,623	1,811
Romania	0	89	260	467	666	794	928	1,054	1,176	1,415	1,664
Spain	0	17	65	11	59	135	258	451	737	1,020	1,393
India	0	17	65	144	237	272	309	442	681	1,071	1,294
France	0	-2	34	97	117	233	304	388	562	861	1,195
Belgium	0	23	8	107	214	308	375	540	667	821	1,128
China	0	-143	-65	311	656	979	1,121	1,083	851	953	987
Lithuania	0	23	75	150	298	413	560	749	750	815	833
Indonesia	0	46	-15	-74	-118	-58	-60	-44	88	278	578
Hungary	0	15	41	98	115	137	204	301	370	402	500
Latvia	0	9	41	116	229	319	408	446	462	494	488

Top 15 countries of origin with the strongest cumulative growth since 2006-07 (benchmark). South- and Eastern Europe dominate this trend, together with neighbouring countries (GER, BEL, UK) and South- and South-East Asia.

Overall, the record growth in the number of new enrolments in 2016-17 does not fundamentally alter the geographic distribution of the regions from which international degree students come to the Netherlands. Ever since 2006-07, a solid 75% of this population has come from within the EU/EEA region.³ Within this region, however, Eastern and Southern European countries are becoming increasingly important.

Policy measure: *Although the precise effects of different national and EU-level policies on student mobility patterns are hard to disentangle, the Erasmus+ programme, the Bologna process and the Schengen Zone are considered to be of crucial importance in enabling students to study abroad. If the Netherlands wishes to continue attracting talented international students from the EU/EEA region, policies that sustain and build on these successes should be encouraged.*

2.3 Fields of study

At UASs, the field of study with the highest relative share of international students is Arts and Culture. Over 5,250 international students make up 31.8% of all students in this sector. Here,

³ EU/EEA students are entitled to the same reduced tuition fees as Dutch nationals, are exempt from visa requirements and are allowed to live and work in the Netherlands (or another EU/EEA country) after graduation without legal limitations.

the most popular programmes among international students are Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Theatre and Architecture (fine arts). Traditionally, students from Germany have been the predominant group in this field, but their number has been declining (from almost 1,200 in 2006-07 to just under 650 in 2016-17). Recent years have seen large increases in the number of French, Italian and Spanish students in this field, more than compensating for the decline among German students.

***Policy measure:** With UASs specialising in the arts being one of the most internationalised sectors in Dutch education, as well as having an outstanding reputation internationally, this sector is one of the vital pillars of international student mobility in the Netherlands. Any policy measures directed at limiting student enrolment at or state funding to these institutions would therefore directly affect the degree of internationalisation in higher education. For this reason, a coherent internationalisation strategy must in any case incorporate UASs specialised in the arts.⁴*

In terms of absolute numbers, there are even more international students at UASs in the fields of Economics and Business (over 15,500) and Engineering (over 5,500). Among international students enrolling in Economics and Business programmes, International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) is the most popular, whereas Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is most popular among Engineering students. Compared to Arts and Culture, however, the relative share of international students in these fields is much lower: 9.9% in Economics and Business and 6.3% in Engineering. All other fields of study at UASs have lower numbers and shares of international students. Education has the smallest share, with only 2.7% of students coming from abroad.

At RUs, Economics and Business is the leading field of study among international students in terms of absolute numbers (11,380 in 2016-17). Also in terms of relative share, Economics and Business is a very internationalised field, with 28.0%, or more than one in four, students coming from abroad. An even higher share of international students is seen in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. At 38.7%, this is almost two in five. In the Netherlands, programmes in this field are taught mainly at university colleges and consist of broad, intensive bachelor's curricula. Although the relative share of international students in the Liberal Arts and Sciences has remained very constant since 2006-07, the field itself has grown exponentially since then (fivefold increase in students over ten years), meaning that the absolute number of international students has also increased rapidly, from slightly over 300 in 2006-07 to almost 3,600 in 2016-17.

In other fields of study at RUs the number and share of international students varies somewhat, with Education, Healthcare and Law being the least popular. Nonetheless, all fields of study at the RU level are showing a very stable trend over time towards more international students.

⁴ See also Section 1.5 on the most internationalised higher education institutions in the Netherlands.

	University of applied sciences	Research university	
Economy & Business	15,556	11,380	
Engineering	5,545	7,303	
Human & Social Sciences	2,494	9,104	
Arts & Culture	5,266	4,288	
Healthcare	2,106	2,728	
Science		3,781	
Liberal Arts & Sciences	68	3,595	
Agriculture & Environmental Sciences	808	2,500	
Law		3,171	
Education	1,592	107	% internationals
			2.7% 38.0%

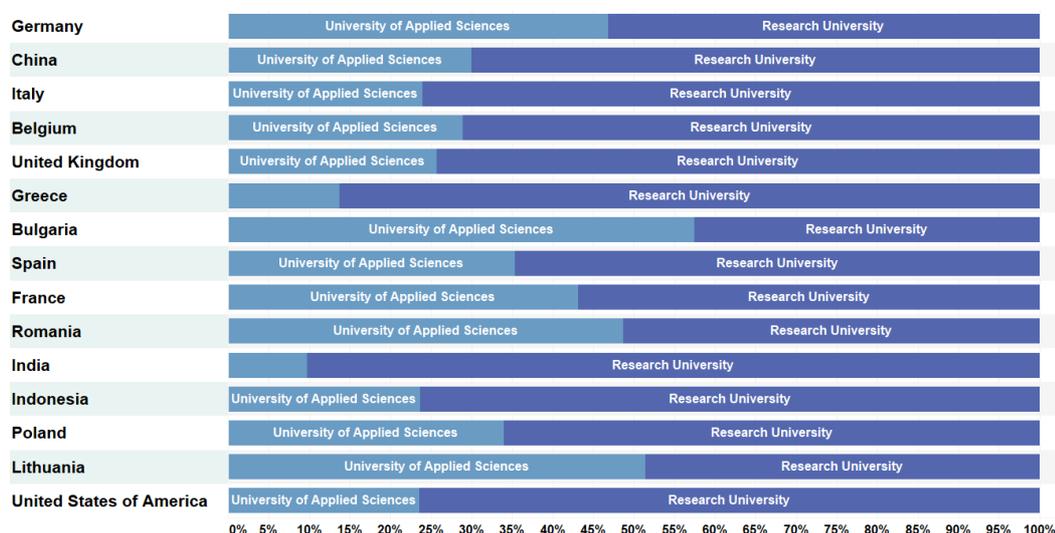
International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, numbers &%, field of study (CROHO), 2016-17.

The most notable increase in international student numbers was in the field of Engineering at Dutch RUs. In 2016-17 this category of enrolments grew by over 600, or 18.6%, making for a total of more than 7,300 international students. By far the largest share was enrolled in master's programmes at one of the three technical universities, in Delft, Eindhoven or Twente. The main countries of origin in this field are China, India, Germany, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Indonesia and Spain. Over half of the increase in Engineering students is attributable to strong growth (+1,000) from Neso countries.

Policy measure: The Netherlands' knowledge economy has a structural shortage of highly skilled technical professionals. The STEM pact (Dutch: [Techniekpact](#)) seeks to address this by strengthening education in science and engineering at all levels, boosting enrolments in science and engineering programmes and better synchronising post-secondary education and the labour market. Recruiting, training and retaining talented international students and graduates in these fields is one way in which internationalisation can contribute to achieving the Dutch STEM pact goals.

2.4 Bachelor/master, fields of study and region of origin

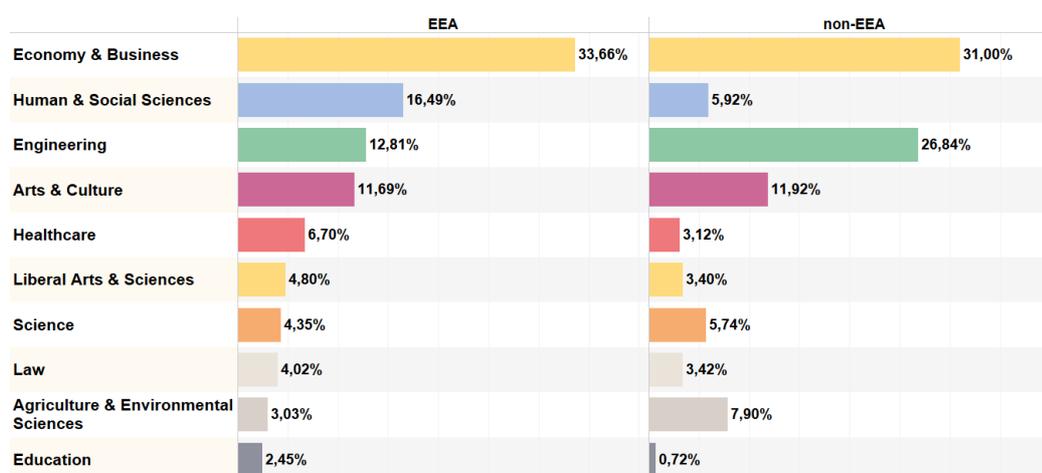
Students from some countries of origin show a preference for programmes at either UASs or RUs. Greece, India, Indonesia and the US are the four top 15 countries with the strongest representation at RUs, while Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania are the three top 15 countries with the strongest representation at UASs.



International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, percentage per UAS/RU per country, 2016-17.

At the RU level, students from some countries furthermore show a preference for either bachelor's or master's programmes. Students from China, Italy, Greece, Spain, Indonesia, India and the US tend to enrol in master's programmes, whereas students from Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Romania, Poland and Lithuania tend towards bachelor's programmes.

In general, students from non-EEA countries are twice as likely as students from other EEA countries to enrol in master's programmes at RUs. Non-EEA students tend to be quite a bit older, with more work experience than their counterparts from within the EEA. Academic culture, EU policies and cost/effort considerations play a big part in this division of preferences amongst different groups of international degree students.



International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, (non-)EEA, field of study, 2016-17.

Students from non-EEA countries are also more likely to enrol in Science programmes and are more than twice as likely to enrol in Agriculture or Engineering programmes. In a recent analysis of the stay rate of international degree students in the Netherlands, it was found

that non-EEA students studying these fields also have the highest rate of staying and working in the Netherlands after graduation, thus making a relatively large contribution to Dutch society, the Dutch knowledge economy and international cooperation. Currently, the brain gain from all international degree students in the Netherlands is estimated at €1.57 billion annually, and non-EEA students, particularly those studying Science, Agriculture and Engineering, account for a large share of this.⁵

Policy measure: Since the end in 2016 of the [‘Make it in the Netherlands’](#) programme, aimed at the retention of talented international students, no new programme has been announced to succeed it. The business case for policies and activities aimed at retention of talented international graduates looks very positive, also according to the [OECD](#). Furthermore, the demand for a follow up programme is high among higher education institutions. If the combined stakeholders could work out a suitable follow up, this would likely contribute to increased knowledge migration and added value for the export-led knowledge and services economy of the Netherlands.

2.5 Institutions

In 2016-17 Maastricht University fortified its lead over all other Dutch institutions in terms of the number of international students enrolled, now totalling almost 9,000 to make up 55.9% of its study body. Where in 2006-07 75% of all international students at Maastricht University were from either Germany or Belgium, their share, though still significant (42.6% and 12.5% respectively), has now dropped as large numbers of students have arrived from Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, China, Greece, Finland and Romania.

The technical research universities in Delft, Twente and Eindhoven and the life sciences university in Wageningen are four specialised institutions known for high-quality research in their respective fields. They attract many talented international graduate students at both master's and PhD level. The total number of international master's students at these institutions combined has more than tripled since 2006-07, from just over 2,250 to over 7,750 students in 2016-17. Delft, Twente and Wageningen each have an overall share of international students exceeding 20%, ranking 4th, 5th and 7th, respectively, among Dutch institutions. With just under 15% of its students coming from other countries, Eindhoven ranks 13th.⁶

⁵ EP-Nuffic (2016), [Analyse stayrate van internationaal afgestudeerden 2007 – 2014](#) (in Dutch).

⁶ For the sake of comparability, this list does not include institutions that enrol fewer than 2,000 students.

1	Maastricht University	8,952	1	Maastricht University	55.9%
2	University of Groningen	5,420	2	Hotelschool The Hague	36.5%
3	Erasmus University Rotterdam	5,289	3	Amsterdam School of the Arts	28.1%
4	Fontys University of Applied Sciences	4,837	4	Wageningen University	23.9%
5	Delft University of Technology	4,795	5	University of Twente	22.7%
6	University of Amsterdam	4,514	6	Erasmus University Rotterdam	21.6%
7	Leiden University	3,566	7	Delft University of Technology	21.6%
8	The Hague University of Applied Sciences	2,884	8	Stenden University of Applied Sciences	21.0%
9	Utrecht University	2,762	9	University of Groningen	19.0%
10	Saxion University of Applied Sciences	2,758	10	ArtEZ Institute of the Arts	16.6%

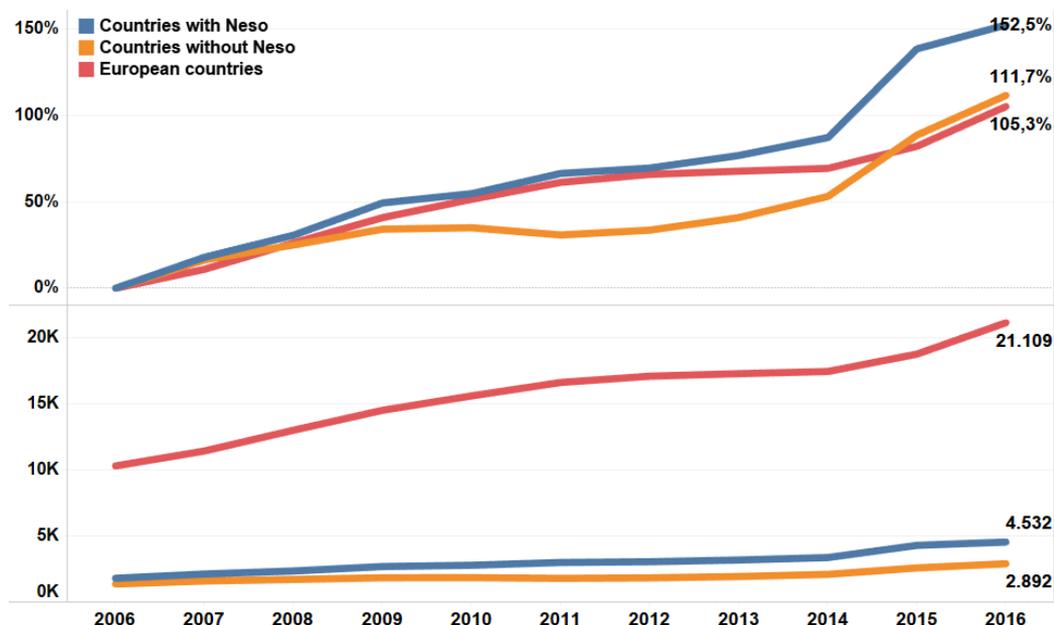
International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, top 10 institutions, 2016-17.

Institutes specialising in hospitality such as Hotelschool The Hague and Stenden University of Applied Sciences also have very international student populations, as do those with a focus on Fine Arts, such as Amsterdam School of the Arts, University of the Arts The Hague and ArtEZ University of the Arts. This applies even more to very small art institutes such as the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Design Academy Eindhoven and Codarts University of the Arts.

Finally, the University of Groningen and Erasmus University Rotterdam stand out as having seen remarkable growth in international student enrolments over the last ten years. Where in 2006-07 less than 5% of the student body at these two RUs came from abroad (from just over 1,000 each), this number has more than five-folded, to 5,300 and 5,400 respectively, by 2016-17, with international students now making up 19.0% (Groningen) and 21.6% (Rotterdam) of their total student populations.

2.6 Countries with a Neso

In the 2016-17 academic year the eleven countries with a Nuffic Netherlands Education Support Office (Neso) had a combined 10,750 of their nationals enrolled as international degree students in financed Dutch higher education. This adds up to a growth of 4,700 students, or almost 80%, since 2006-07. If we zoom out to include students coming to the Netherlands to do exchanges, internships, preparatory years, etc., the number of students from Neso countries has grown by 12,538 students, or 152.1%, to a total of 22,700 over the same period.



Newly enrolled International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands: relative growth (top) and absolute numbers (bottom) in student numbers from EEA vs. non-Neso vs Neso countries (non-EEA), since 2006-07.

Most of this growth can be attributed to students enrolling in RU master's programmes in Economy and Business and Engineering. The combined cumulative growth in international degree students, since 2006-07, is highest for countries of origin with a Neso office (+ 150% >), followed by non-EU/EEA countries without a Neso office (+ 110% >), and EU/EEA countries (+ 105% >). Overall, most newly enrolled international degree students in the Netherlands still come from the EU/EEA.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
China	3,360	3,217	3,295	3,671	4,016	4,339	4,481	4,443	4,211	4,313	4,347
Indonesia	926	972	911	852	808	868	866	882	1,014	1,204	1,504
India	231	248	296	375	468	503	540	673	912	1,302	1,525
Russia	285	288	326	340	357	402	441	517	612	710	721
Turkey	265	320	359	441	442	402	330	305	300	372	496
South Korea	268	267	271	266	272	257	257	289	316	421	591
Vietnam	324	254	246	243	248	257	249	269	283	376	503
Mexico	130	162	162	182	219	237	266	291	309	396	450
Brazil	83	111	113	111	125	126	130	146	197	255	285
Thailand	111	146	154	141	106	90	75	118	129	159	195
South Africa	61	59	65	52	65	67	81	98	105	118	141

International degree students in higher education in the Netherlands, countries with a Neso since 2006-07.

The Neso country with the single largest increase in student enrolments in the Netherlands was Indonesia, whose number grew by 300. With a total of 1,504 students now in the Netherlands, Indonesia is close to overtaking India (+223 to total 1,525 in 2016-17) to become the second main country of origin with a Neso, after China (which has remained stable at 4,350 students). South Korea, Vietnam and Turkey also saw a rise in the number of

their nationals enrolled in the Netherlands (+175, +125 and +125, respectively), and the figure for Russia has remained stable too. Other countries with a Neso increased by smaller margins; the number of students from Mexico, Brazil, Thailand and South Africa each grew by 20 to 50.

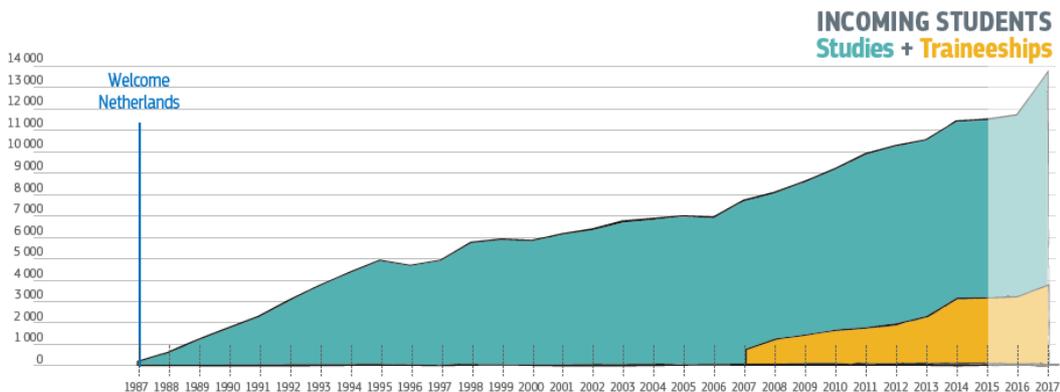
***Policy measure:** The strategic goal of the Netherland Education Support Offices is positioning and branding of Dutch higher education in non-EEA countries with expanding demographics, economics and higher education systems. For the past decade, looking at new enrolments of international degree students, this seems to have been achieved – 40 percentage points difference in relative growth is a significant dynamic. The Neso's play an important role in the internationalisation of Dutch higher education, and should thus be an important building block when formulating future ambitions or devising new long-term strategies.*

3. Incoming credit mobility

3.1 Europe: Erasmus+

The most successful programme in terms of facilitating credit mobility is Erasmus+. Having just celebrated its 30th anniversary, the programme is the most important of its kind worldwide, facilitating the majority of all registered higher education credit mobility between European countries. Since its inception in 1987, more than 9 million Europeans have taken part in the programme, with almost 4.5 million students in European higher education having gone on study exchanges or work placements in another European country through Erasmus+.

As one of the original architects of the programme, the Netherlands saw student participation in Erasmus+ rise quickly over the initial ten years, from just under 1,000 incoming students annually in 1987 and 1988, to more than 5,000 in 1995-97. Since 2011 this number has exceeded 10,000 a year. The majority of Erasmus+ students, around 77%, come to the Netherlands to do a study exchange; a smaller share come to do a work placement. In 2015-16, a total of over 11,500 European students came to the Netherlands for one of these forms of credit mobility. This figure is almost identical to that for [outgoing credit mobility through Erasmus+](#), resulting in relatively balanced mobility at the national and institutional level.



Erasmus+ incoming students, 1987-2014. Projections 2015 – 2017 made on budget allocation basis.

Although more than half of all credit mobility in Europe takes place within the Erasmus+ framework⁷, this still leaves a substantial number of credit mobile students studying abroad within the EU who are not registered in any national administration.⁸ The annual [student housing monitor](#) published by the KENCES foundation estimates that in the Netherlands this groups amounts to 2,000 to 3,000 students yearly. Due to uncertainty margins, however, this group is not included in the total 112,000 international students (degree and credit mobile) who studied in the Netherlands in the 2016-17 academic year.

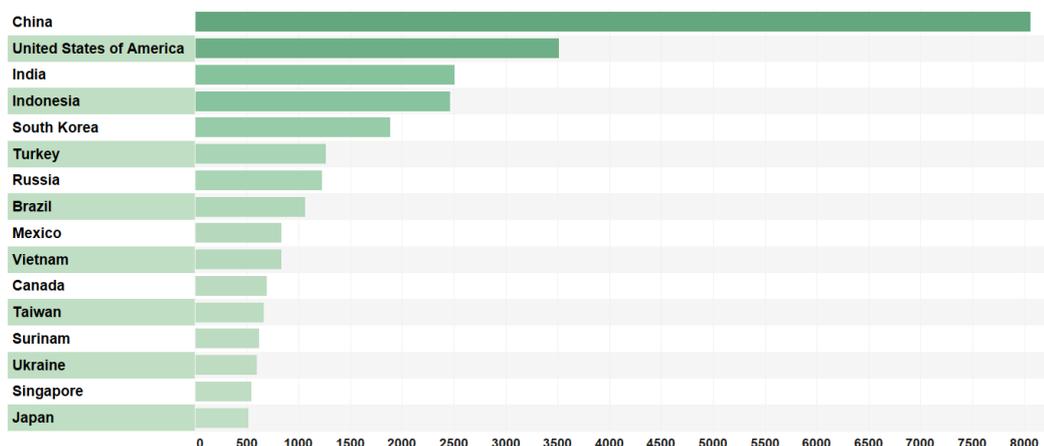
Policy measure: *the largest share of incoming credit mobile students consists of students coming with Erasmus+. With the Erasmus+ budgets increasing from 2017 onwards, institutions and government in the Netherlands should prepare themselves for hosting an increasing number of incoming Erasmus+ students. Providing these students with adequate and flexible housing is among the key concerns, according to housing branch organisation KENCES.*

3.2 Other regions of origin: non-EEA

Although Erasmus+ also facilitates student exchanges with non-European partner countries, most students from outside the EU/EEA come to the Netherlands by different routes, resulting in differing mobility patterns. With the entry into force in 2013 of the Dutch [Modern Migration Policy Act](#) (MoMi), a new registration system was introduced for non-EU/EEA nationals who are in the Netherlands on a student residence permit to study in Dutch higher education. All international students from non-EU/EEA states who come to the Netherlands for any form of higher education for at least 90 consecutive days (within a 180-day period) need to obtain a residence permit and be registered for their entire stay. IND (Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service) figures from 2013-16 encompass all degree and credit mobile students from non-EU/EEA countries, including those doing placements, exchanges, preparatory years and language courses, in both public and private higher education.

⁷ Source: [Eurostudent V synopsis of Indicators](#), p. 198, table 10.5.

⁸ Although Erasmus+ also facilitates student and staff mobility between European programme countries and non-European partner countries, the vast majority of student mobility takes place between programme countries, and mainly within the EU/EEA zone. See: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/participating-countries>.



Non-EEA citizens with study related residence permits for the Netherlands, per nationality (min. 500), 2016.

Judging purely from the numbers, the MoMi policy seems to be paying off for Dutch higher education. The number of non-EEA nationals residing in the Netherlands on a student residence permit has grown spectacularly by over 9,500 students, from 27,000 in 2013 to over 36,400 in 2016. The vast majority (more than 90%) of these students come to the Netherlands to do a degree programme, exchange or preparatory year at a public higher education institution. One form of incoming credit mobility that has taken especial flight in recent years is the preparatory year, also called foundation or pathway programmes. Providers such as the Holland International Study Centre offer programmes with a duration of six to twelve months for international students who want to improve their English, research methodology skills (statistics, GMAT) and/or general academic skills in order to be admitted to a Dutch research university or university of applied sciences.

Policy measure: *Current Dutch immigration policies focus on welcoming and retaining highly qualified international talent to strengthen the Dutch knowledge economy. Since the introduction of MoMi, student residence permits processes have become much more smooth. However, hurdles remain, such as the high fees for the orientation year residence permit and varying requirements as regards registration in the municipal Persons Database (BRP). These mobility obstacles or 'mobstacles' need to be addressed to keep the Netherlands attractive as a knowledge country. Also, effective national and institutional policies aimed at retention of talented international graduates should also encompass stimulating and facilitating measures (e.g. Dutch language courses for internationals, career services).*

4. Incoming PhD students

In 2015, four out of nine (45%) PhD students who were registered as employees in the Netherlands had a foreign nationality. This has increased from less than three in nine (33%) in 2005. While the number of Dutch PhD students in the Netherlands remained almost perfectly stable in the last decennium, the number of international PhD students increased

with about 75%. Prospects are that in the near future half of all PhD students in the Netherlands will be international PhD students.

The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis also conducted a [study on the stay rate and economic impact](#) of international PhD students in the Netherlands. Conclusions were that international PhD students in Science, Engineering and Health have higher than average stay rates, and that international PhD graduates in general often find paid employment in the private sector, e.g. in Research & Development. International PhD graduates are thus likely to have a very positive impact on the Dutch knowledge economy and innovation.

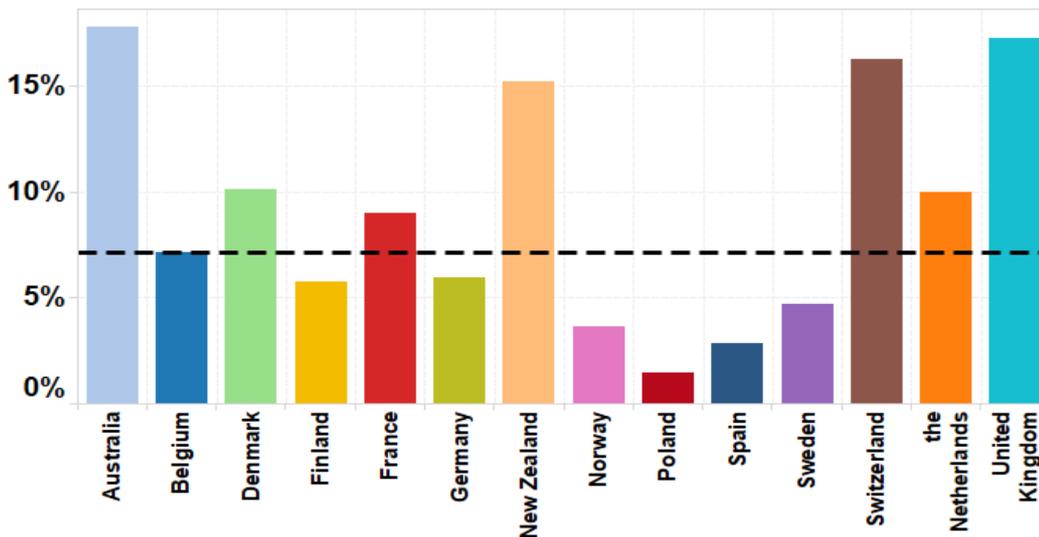
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	7729	7760	7701	8017	8320	8567	9009	9027	9018	9031	8995
Dutch nationality	5136	5150	4969	4963	4925	4951	5124	5059	5004	4970	4998
Non-Dutch nationality	2331	2595	2732	3054	3395	3616	3885	3968	4014	4061	3997
Unknown	262	15									

Top 10 nationalities	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
German	257	310	353	410	465	481	523	533	554	539	538
Chinese	239	296	329	350	359	377	387	419	445	428	414
Italian	124	142	159	206	233	264	285	282	319	334	376
Indian	114	129	136	168	207	232	248	260	258	289	306
Iranian	30	56	77	126	172	189	219	224	241	264	242
Greek	41	47	54	68	79	88	104	114	139	155	164
Spanish	73	74	68	57	65	64	74	92	124	140	147
Russian	80	71	78	77	82	91	98	112	118	114	119
Turkish	66	93	125	144	204	208	208	199	155	125	112
French	76	83	85	90	92	89	92	100	92	91	95

International (foreign) PhD students in The Netherlands, 2005-2015 (Source: VSNU, WOPI)

5. International context

Looking at the international context, the Netherlands is performing well on incoming degree mobility. The percentage of international students in the Netherlands (11.4%) is almost double the OECD average of 6%. In 2013-14, the Netherlands thus did better in terms of incoming degree mobility ratio than some of its direct OECD peers.



International degree students as a share of the total student population, selected countries & EU average in 2013-14

In a decade, the Netherlands market share of all degree mobile students worldwide has increased from 1.5% to 2%. Anglo-Saxon (Commonwealth) countries still have much higher shares of incoming degree students, mainly due to quality of education, programme language and immigration policies. The Dutch situation is best directly compared to France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. The Netherlands ratio for incoming / outgoing degree mobility is about 1 to 4.5, in 2013-14.

Direct comparisons of incoming credit mobility streams are difficult, due to a lack of central registration of incoming credit mobile students in European countries (EU, Schengen). The Netherlands is [an average participant](#) in Erasmus+ (HE, KA1) compared to other countries in the programme. Judging by the [overwhelming importance](#) of Erasmus+ in outgoing credit mobility streams from European countries, it seems likely that the Netherlands scores relatively high on incoming credit mobility.

Within the OECD area, the share of international students is highest at PhD level. The Netherlands stands at the top of the list of countries with most international PhD student bodies, together with Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium, France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Policy measure: the Netherlands is performing very well on incoming student mobility. In terms of incoming student mobility ratio's and global market shares the Netherlands' position is improving steadily. It seems that the [Study in Holland](#) promotion and institutional recruitment efforts have been adding value to the Netherlands proposition of high quality education and research, English language programmes, a high standard of living and good labour market prospects.

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