Student Destination Survey
2018-19

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Executive summary

- Responses were received from 470 Cambridge schools. This was a significant increase on last year’s survey, which received 324 responses.

- The traditional English-speaking countries of UK, USA, Canada and Australia remain the most popular destinations for Cambridge International students, but there are some clear trends that show the range of destinations students are considering is changing and becoming broader.

- The UK is less likely to be chosen as a study destination by European students concerned about Brexit, though this issue is less likely to affect the wider international student community. Canada and the Netherlands are emerging as popular international study destinations, and in general many teachers report a diversifying of the countries in which students are prepared to consider studying.

- Indian teachers report an increasing trend for liberal arts subjects, but elsewhere science and technology are the most popular areas.
Key facts & figures
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- It is estimated that 93% of Cambridge students progressed to university in 2018*.
  - An estimated 54% of the cohort progressed to a university in their own country*
  - An estimated 39% of the cohort progressed to a university outside their own country*

- In 2018, it is estimated that 53% of Cambridge students went on to attend a top-500 ranked university, compared to 44% in 2017**. This is a significant increase (in 2016 this was recorded as 41%).

- In 2018, Cambridge students progressed to at least 463 of the world’s top 500 universities (compared to progressing to 310 in 2017).

*Figures based on the findings from 394 Cambridge schools with a combined student cohort of approximately 22,275 students.
**Estimated that 11,785 students out of 22,275 went on to attend a Top 500 university, as defined by the QS world rankings.
Key trends
50% of schools say the trend for their Cambridge students going to university outside their own country is increasing.

These figures are almost identical to those coming out of the survey of 2017 destinations, suggesting there is not much change in current trends.

The regions that have the biggest percentage of schools who say that the trend is increasing are:

- South Asia 73% (69% in 2017)
- Middle East & N. Africa 63% (71% in 2017)
- Pakistan 63% (72% in 2017)
Countries in order of popularity with Cambridge students

- Numbers shown are based on calculated estimated number of students attending university in each country, based on the response of the available school sample.

These numbers are based on a survey of 470 Cambridge schools. The total number of Cambridge students who attend university in these countries will be much higher.
Due to a change in survey methodology, this year we are able to show for the first time whether Cambridge students in these destination countries are generally coming from within the country, or from overseas.

These numbers are based on a survey of 470 Cambridge schools. The total number of Cambridge students who attend university in these countries will be much higher.
Trends in student destination country: 2018 vs 2017

- Comparison to last year’s data shows that UK has decreased in popularity.
- Pakistan appears to show a significant increase but this may be explained by a greater proportion of responses from Pakistan in this year’s survey compared to last year’s.
- Both India and Pakistan now appear in the top 4 destinations for the first time.
## Top 3 destinations by school region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School region</th>
<th>Most popular university destination</th>
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<th>3\textsuperscript{rd} most popular university destination</th>
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<td>SE Asia &amp; Pacific</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
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Reasons for studying in top 4 destinations

- USA, Australia & Canada are most attractive for future job opportunities/career prospects
- UK is most attractive for university reputation
- Canada scored relatively highly on value for money compared to other destinations.
- These findings are broadly the same as the 2017 survey, suggesting little has changed year on year in the reasons students are attracted to these destinations.

Data labels in chart show absolute number of responses
Respondents were asked to choose the 5 most popular subjects for students to study at university.

Engineering was the most popular subject, followed by business & management, medicine, and accounting & finance.
Most popular subjects – year on year trends

- There is little change in the top subjects, although medicine is now more popular than accounting & finance.

For purposes of comparison, data shows percentage of schools who selected subject as one of the top five their students go on to study.
For university destination countries where English is not the first language, respondents were asked what the language of study was on the courses their students progressed to (NB, more than one language could be selected). The table shows the % of schools who had students progressing to the destination country saying that at least some of their students went on to study in English in their university destination country.

Note that this is the % of schools who say that their students study in English in these countries, not about the number of students.
Studying in other languages

For university destination countries where English is not the first language, respondents were asked what the language of study was on the courses their students progressed to (NB, more than one language could be selected). The table shows the % of schools who had students progressing to the destination country saying that at least some of their students were studying in languages other than English.

Note that this is the % of schools who say that their students study in a language other than English in these countries, not about the number of students.
Changes in student destination or subject

Trends remain similar to those observed last year.

**UK – The Brexit Effect & high prices**

Brexit remains an issue for the UK with many teachers observing that students are looking to other EU countries because of the uncertainties of Brexit – the Netherlands seems to be the country with most to gain from the current uncertainty. Both UK teachers who responded also reported that students currently within the UK are also looking outside the UK at more international options. High prices at UK universities are another reason for students looking elsewhere. However, teachers in countries outside the EU are less likely to report Brexit as an issue.

**US – has The Trump Effect peaked?**

In last year’s survey many teachers have commented on the ‘Trump Effect’ deterring applications – this year there was only one teacher from Pakistan who mentioned it as an issue. However, ease of visa processing does mean that Canada and Australia sometimes is preferred over the USA – although there are evidently still lots of students attracted to studying in the US.

This year The Netherlands has become hugely popular with over twenty applicants exceeding the UK which was the previous top choice. The reason behind that is high quality education at a very low cost and a number of my students hold European passports. If there is a no deal Brexit I believe that this may have an effect on next years intake as the prices will not be as competitive. The US has taken a massive nose dive for my students. *Zimbabwe*

More students prefer to find alternatives to the UK higher education system due to the uncertainty from Brexit and prefer to go to other HE systems within the EU. *Cyprus*

Students now prefer to apply to countries like Australia and Canada as work visas and PR are easily processed post the completion of their degrees than USA and UK. *India*
The rise of Canada

Canada continues to increase in popularity, mainly as a consequence of more favourable immigration policies, and ease of visa processing.

Netherlands popular

Anecdotally, those European students who are considering alternatives to the UK due to Brexit are looking to the Netherlands as a possible alternative, due to English speaking courses and perceived value for money.

Science and technology subjects increasing

There was less feedback on subject trends, but where they were mentioned teachers observed increasing interest in science and technology fields.

There were several teachers from India, however, who noted a rise in students opting for liberal arts courses.

Some of my students prefer Canada as a first choice destination to the United States as it was previously. Ghana

The Netherlands is becoming increasingly popular - value for money. Less interest in the US and UK. Indonesia

All students interested in UK univs apply also to other countries, mainly Holland. Romania

I have noticed that more students want to opt for technological fields and also there was a lot of interest for aerospace and aeronautical engineering. The field of psychology is also getting more and more interest. Students want to apply to untapped regions like Netherlands and Sweden or places like Germany where they would be able to afford education if they meet the language requirements. Furthermore, students tend to apply to regions like Turkey and Hong Kong more because of scholarship opportunities and affordability. Pakistan
Individual universities
Top 20 university destinations for Cambridge students

1. THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER (225)
2. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (200)
3. UCL (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON) (198)
4. KING'S COLLEGE LONDON (KCL) (197)
5. FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY (176)
6. IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON (175)
7. THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK (174)
8. UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA (164)
9. LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (LUMS) (158)
10. *NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST) ISLAMABAD (144)
11. THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM (138)
12. UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (136)
13. LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (LSE) (133)
14. UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE (129)
15. DURHAM UNIVERSITY (127)
16. UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH (125)
17. *INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (IBA), KARACHI (123)
18. *THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD (112)
19. *UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA (110)
20. UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL (109)

16 out of the top 20 appeared in the same list last year.

Variations in the list compared to 2016 are likely to be as a result of differences in the sample – particularly the higher number of survey responses from Pakistan.

Universities which appeared in the 2016 Top 20 but have now moved down are:
- University of Cape Town
- McGill University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Sydney

* Denotes universities that have entered the Top 20 this year.
Spotlight on top Cambridge markets

Nepal, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Egypt & Spain are excluded due to very low sample sizes.
Schools in Pakistan

60 schools responded

Top 3 destination countries
1. Pakistan
2. United States
3. UK

Top 5 universities
1. Lahore University Of Management Sciences (LUMS)
2. National University Of Sciences And Technology (NUST) Islamabad
3. Institute Of Business Administration (Iba), Karachi
4. Dow Medical College
5. Ned University Of Engineering And Technology

Top 5 subjects
1. Accounting & Finance
2. Business & Management =2
3. Engineering =2
4. Computer Science & IT
5. Medicine

Comments & trends
- Diversifying the countries where students look to go to university due to cost of traditional UK & US destinations.
- Increasing interest in technology/engineering

Students are applying more to countries in South East Asia because it is closer, cost effective and because they feel that the world's economic power is slowly shifting away from the United States and Europe towards these regions. Students are also applying to Turkey because it is much cheaper compared to western countries and there are cultural similarities. Pakistan

Over the years I have seen my students more aware of programs other than just Engineering and Medicine. They are now applying to more bold programs like International Relations and Law etc. I believe that this trend has changed with the help of the universities and their visits to our country, where they explain to our students the prospects of studying different programs. This definitely builds interest in their minds. Pakistan
The table shows the number of schools who indicated the percentage of their students who went to study STEM subjects in Pakistan, and also the % of those students who were female.

A majority of schools said that between 25-50% of their students study STEM subjects; and also that less than 10% of these students are female.
### Schools in Malaysia

12 schools responded

#### Top 3 destination countries
1. Malaysia
2. UK
3. USA

#### Top 5 universities
1. Imperial College London
2. Help University
3. King's College London (KCL)
4. UCL (University College London)
5. Monash University Malaysia

#### Top 5 subjects
1. Engineering
2. Accounting & Finance
3. Medicine
4. Law
5. Economics

#### Comments & trends
- Fewer students interested in the UK
- More students looking at China
## Top 3 destination countries
1. India
2. USA
3. UK

## Top 5 universities
1. Symbiosis International University
2. Nmims University
3. Amity University
4. Ashoka University
5. Manipal Academy Of Higher Education

## Top 5 subjects
1. Business & Management = 1
2. Engineering =1
3. Computer Science / ICT
4. Economics
5. Accounting & Finance

## Comments & trends
- Trend towards liberal arts and diversifying away from traditional science courses – looking more at psychology and social studies
- US & UK remain main choices but students also looking to other countries, such as Canada.

Most students are now seeking options in countries close to home (India) Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong, Japan. *India*

We have noticed that the trends are changing from science to other streams. Many students are now opting for commerce and humanities stream. *India*
### Top 3 destination countries

1. USA
2. Canada
3. UK

### Top 5 universities

1. Florida State University
2. University Of Florida
3. University Of South Florida
4. University Of Miami
5. Georgia Institute Of Technology (Georgia Tech)

### Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Business & Management
3. Medicine
4. Biological Sciences
5. Nursing & social work

### Comments & trends

- Few, if any, changes reported.
### Schools in China

#### Top 3 destination countries
1. UK
2. USA
3. Australia

#### Comments & trends
- Increasing interest in the USA
- More diversity in choice of course

#### Top 5 universities
1. Ucl (University College London)
2. The University Of Warwick
3. The University Of Manchester
4. Imperial College London
5. University Of Toronto

#### Top 5 subjects
1. Engineering
2. Business & Management
3. Economics =3
4. Mathematics =3
5. Accounting & Finance

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Comments from China:
- Applying U.S. is still the majority of students' top choice. However, the percentage has been declined from 70% to around 50% of all students. Applying UK and Canada is increasing. Applying Hongkong is increasing. *China*
- Students choose a more diversified range of programmed than before. Now they were given more freedom to choose what they are interested and parents respect and support their choice. I have more students choose psychology, geography, law, veterinary and the like that are not so popular before. *China*
## Schools in Indonesia

20 schools responded

### Top 3 destination countries

1. Indonesia  
2. USA  
3. UK

### Top 5 universities

1. Binus University  
2. University Of Melbourne  
3. Universitas Pelita Harapan (Uph)  
4. University Of Indonesia  
5. Bandung Institute Of Technology (Itb)

### Top 5 subjects

1. Computer Science / ICT = 1  
2. Engineering = 1  
3. Business & Management  
4. Economics = 4  
5. Medicine = 4

### Comments & trends

- Few trends observed.
Progression
The majority of schools were not aware of any problems experienced with using Cambridge International qualifications for university application.

The main issues were difficulty in providing results information to universities in time and recognition of Cambridge IGCSE English qualifications to meet language requirements.
How schools track their students
67% of schools maintain an alumni network
78% of schools maintain a record of student placements.

Does your school maintain a record of students placements?

- Yes: 78%
- No: 22%

Base: 442 schools
The survey shows a lack of awareness and usage of the Cambridge recognitions database.

Less than a third of respondents had used the database, and 40% said they were not previously aware of it.

These results are broadly the same as the findings from the previous years’ survey, suggesting there has been little progress in increasing awareness of the recognitions database.
Demographics
Responsibility for advising on higher education

- Yes, this is my job: 132
- Yes, in addition to another job role: 240
- No, but another member of staff in my school has this responsibility: 64
- No, we do not have a member of staff responsible for advising students on higher education choices: 34
Thank you