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The UK Higher Education After Brexit: The Question of Mobility and Fees

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the most precious people in my life:

To my parents, may they rest in peace and May Allah bless their souls; without whom nothing would have been possible.

For all those I love: to my wife, my lovely children and to all my friends.

To such people, I dedicate such humble work.

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Abstract

Several sectors in the United Kingdom (UK) were affected by Brexit, including Higher Education (HE) that is often regarded as part of the market economy sector. Higher education was particularly affected because of its strong ties with students coming from the Continent. The present study aims to present an understanding of the extent to which Higher Education in the UK is affected by the transformations brought by the Brexit. It is to spot what challenges this sector will face and what measures the authorities will take to appease the risks of those challenges. This study follows a descriptive-analytical method based on chronology to collect and analyse factual data around the UK Higher Education sector from the moment the idea of Brexit crystalized well up to now. Data were collected out of reliable articles, blogs, reports, and websites, then they were analysed chronologically to trace the changes occurring in the higher education sector. The findings of this work showed that the real changes in the UK's higher education started to take place after the exit referendum of 23/06/2016. These findings can be analysed as follows: After having left the European Union (EU) and having lost many EU higher education projects and opportunities, the UK tended to adopt new policies and schemes to compensate for the losses. This chiefly include the Turing scheme as well as the transnational higher education.

Keywords: UK, EU, Higher Education, Brexit, challenges, mobility, Response, Remedies.

List of Abbreviations

Brexit	British Exit (from the EU community)
DfE	United Kingdom Department for Education
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ERASMUS	European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
EU27	EU countries excluding the UK
EU28	European Union including the UK
HE(i)	Higher Education (institution)
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IFS	Institute for Fiscal Studies
OfS	Office for Students
SLC	Student's Loan Company
TEF	Teaching and Excellence Framework
TNHE	Transnational Higher Education
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UK	United Kingdom
UUK(i)	Universities UK (international)

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Before Brexit, the UK was the most preferred destination in Europe for the EU and international students because of the unique and discrete characteristics of the UK higher education at the time. During this period, the EU laws and policies guaranteed the students' mobility within the EU. These laws encouraged students from the EU and even from non-EU countries to move to the UK to pursue their studies. So, large numbers of students came to The UK because of its famous cultural diversity, academic excellence, and the affordable home tuition fees during this phase. Floods of EU students chose the UK since this latter reached the zenith of the development of its higher education at this period due to its membership with the EU. However, when the UK started the process of Brexit, many sectors saw drastic changes and challenges. The higher education was a crucial sector in the UK's history which was also shaken to its foundations by Brexit causing unprecedented changes and challenges. Among the challenges is the restriction of mobility of higher education staff and students who were a source of income to the UK economy. Therefore, the UK found itself obliged to respond to such threats and find remedies for the unusual situation in the

The UK higher education sector witnessed a significant impact because Brexit means limitations or restrictions of the freedom of mobility which was previously enjoyed by both EU and UK students. Also, the EU students will no longer enjoy the UK lower home fees and will be considered as international students. Thus, it is worth and interesting to study the effects Brexit will have on such mobility and lower fees that were the backbone of higher education in the EU. Also, it is important to investigate the responses by the sector to curb those negative effects. So, the problem tackled in this work is how Brexit affected the UK's higher education and how the authorities respond to the negative effects on the sector.

The main objective is to investigate the possible effects of Brexit on Higher Education. More specifically, it is to explore and analyse areas like staff's number, students' numbers and origins, policies, funding and fees, universities, programmes, and freedom of mobility. It also tries to unveil measures taken by the Government as well as the higher education institutions to face such an impact on higher education in Britain after having left the EU. This will finally lead to discovering the current image and state of higher education sector in post-Brexit UK.

Brexit and its Impact on higher education has been tackled by several writings including academic and non-academic research. For instance, Nick Morrison viewed that after Brexit, EU students will no longer be eligible for home fee status (Morrison), which will pave the way for higher fees that would limit the number of students coming to the UK universities. This represented a challenge to students coming to the UK. Jane Playdon also mentioned that “numerous EU students are afraid that their tuition costs would rise because of the United Kingdom's vote to leave the EU (Brexit). The administration has not yet indicated that it intends to raise fees, though.” This statement suggested that post-referendum period led to state of uncertainty. Students were afraid of the unfavourable changes; the government still did not know what to do because government at this phase were negotiating deals with the EU, and the negotiations took longer time to achieve an agreement (Playdon). Thus, it is worth tracing this period of uncertainty caused by Brexit in the field of higher education. At another scale, much has been written about the uncertain future of the HE programme and the anticipated decline in EU student enrolment. Kleibert et al., in “Higher education and Brexit – UK in a changing Europe” (2022), suggested that there is a lot of uncertainty for universities. For instance, things were unclear after the referendum. No idea about whether the UK would continue to adhere to Erasmus programme. No idea about the type of Brexit, hard or soft, with or without deals.

This also showed the after-referendum uncertainty which effected suspense in different fields in the UK's life. So, during this period a focus will be made on tracking what exactly happened in the field of higher education in the UK, and what problems the sector would face, and how it was reacted against the threats or challenges of the time. In addition, Harrison Newsham in an article entitled "The Impact of Brexit on Universities: The Certainty of Uncertainty", published in 2020, suggested that the influence of Brexit on universities nationwide is undeniable; nonetheless, little has been spoken about the subject since the referendum in 2016 (Newsham). This shows that Brexit affected universities and hence the higher education sector. This was, for instance, incorporated in the efforts made by Universities UK (UUK) organisation to fight against threats effected by Brexit on universities. Consequently, there is a need to investigate issues related to universities in this context. Moreover, in an e-Post by Victoria Robinson, she discussed the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which covers short-term professionals mobility, including that of short-term business visitors, business visitors for establishment purposes (i.e., travellers who go to another country specifically to open a business there), intra-corporate transferees, independent professionals, and contractual service providers. The agreement also covers long-term professionals' mobility that is subject to immigration laws (Robinson). Therefore, this work attempts to check where students are classified; will they be controlled by immigration rules since some of them need longer time to complete their degrees? Or by the short-term professionals' rules?

Current research in all and existing literature agree on the fact that Brexit can affect universities, students and the student's freedom of mobility. Hence, this study attempts to further explore these effects to reach a conclusion about the general effect that Brexit may have on the UK's higher education, focusing on three historical periods: pre-referendum period, from referendum to the end of transitional period and finally the period starting from

the official Brexit until now. To reach the objectives of this work, we need to ask the following research questions. The main questions to be asked are: 1- What were the factors that led to the growth of the higher education sector before Brexit? 2-What were the challenges effected by Brexit to the sector of higher education in the UK? 3-How can the higher education sector face the challenges of Brexit aftermath? To reach the research's aim and objectives, this study used a descriptive-analytical approach based on chronology to describe chronologically and analyse the trends and policies in the UK higher education market during three phases: Pre-Brexit, transitional, and post-Brexit periods. This work also tends to describe and analyse the situation of the UK higher education across those periods and in relation to the European Union. The emphasis in this work will be on what has changed in this industry. This change will be deduced through a comparison to be made between the three stages. The Data were gathered for analysis from difference sources: books, blogs, reports, and websites. The collected data were analysed by explaining the changes in the higher education sector, their causes, and effects. Finally, potential Brexit implications on UK higher education will be shown, together with how the sector and the government plan to mitigate the negative effects.

The significance of the study results is of immense importance as it provides general understanding of the situation in the UK's higher education after Brexit. For instance, the Algerian students interested in the UK universities may find valuable and useful information concerning what has changed so far in the UK's higher education sector up to now. Also, the students in our university can use this work as an important source for their further research and work. The body of this paper is organised into three parts. **Chapter One** : it will examine the general state of higher education sector in the UK before Brexit in relation to other EU countries. It will also describe and analyse the factors behind the growth and development of the UK' higher education during this first phase. **Chapter Two: it** will identify and discuss the

changes and challenges that started to affect UK higher education during the period following the 2016 referendum up to the end of transitional period (Dec 31st, 2020). Add to this, it will investigate the government reactions to alleviate the risks of those challenges. **Chapter Three: it** deals with what happened in the UK's Higher education sector after the official Brexit (from 01/01/2021 up to now). This period represents an extension to the second period. So , it will mainly deal with the other measures taken by the UK government to put an end to the severe threats endangering the sector of higher education.

CHAPTER ONE: FACTORS BEHIND THE GROWTH OF THE PRE-BREXIT UK HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.

1.1 Introduction

Across the world, British education is regarded and respected. The United Kingdom stands out among English-speaking countries due to centuries of expertise and innovative teaching methods. That is why the United Kingdom is the second most popular destination for overseas students after the US. Because the United Kingdom is considered the heart of the English-speaking world, overseas students are given excellent English language support to help them complete their studies. Getting a degree in the UK takes less time than in other nations, allowing a student to save money. The UK Higher education sector is one of the most international in the world. Staff members and students from the EU and elsewhere are warmly welcomed. The UK and the success of its educational institutions both benefit from the presence of international students. The UK is the ideal study destination for students from around the world since it offers everything. Cultural diversity, open-mindedness, convenient modes of transportation, academic excellence, and much more. International students have traditionally been welcomed by British universities. Around 300,000 international students' study in the United Kingdom each year.¹ Universities in the United Kingdom provide degrees in a wide range of topics that are internationally recognized. The UK and its institutions have an undeniable reputation for intellectual excellence and quality, offering thousands of degrees to students, and have long been a desirable destination for more than a million international students from all over the world.

¹ (Source: <https://www.goldenchipseducation.com/study-in-europe/67-study-in-the-united-kingdom.html>)

These exceptional characteristics of higher education in the UK were partly due to the EU membership. The UK Higher Education Sector benefited from being a member in the EU. According to the 2015 LSE Report, “proximity, cooperation, and coordination are powerful determinants in the development of modern systems of higher education and research that are fertile for the development of knowledge and ideas.” The EU framework had undeniably affected the evolution and reconfiguration of the UK’s universities, sharpening their competitiveness, and assisting in raising their international reputation. They were successful in getting EU research funds and profited from additional EU benefits such as staff and student mobility, teaching programmes, teaching cooperation, and diploma mutual recognition, allowing staff and new graduates to be immediately marketable. The success of UK academia can be seen in the World Rankings: the quality of research adds to their prominence, and the quality of teaching attracts students from all over the world. “The United Kingdom accounts for 4.1 percent of researchers and 15.9 percent of the world’s most referenced articles.” This also translates into monetary gain.

According to the LSE Report, “universities and colleges across the UK [gained] £3.9 billion in 2015 from sharing their ideas, expertise, and resources with their research colleagues and the wider community.” [...] Furthermore, the EU’s financial contribution aided UK colleges on multiple occasions. For example, the EU saved “the UK research councils while they were trying to recover after the financial crisis of 2008,” and because of this assistance, “research income from the EU at €0.8bn (£0.5bn) in 2013-14 has increased by about 170 percent since 2004-2005.”² Without a doubt, the pre-Brexit UK higher education had discrete features. In this section, the focus is on this period to show and describe the importance of the EU membership and the collaboration between the EU and UK to raise the

² Gromek Broc, Katarzyna. "Brexit And Its Impact on The UK Higher Education Sector and The Rights of Scholars and Students". *UNIO – EU Law Journal*, vol six, no. 1, 2020, p. 33. *University Of Minho*, <https://doi.org/10.21814/unio.6.1.2707>.

UK higher education sector to its highest level and its peak. In the following, some light is shed on the characteristics of UK's Higher Education before Brexit. Some features and aspects that are going to be explored include: Higher education as a source of income, students,' and staff's mobility (Erasmus scheme and Bologna Process), students' origins and numbers (EU and Non-EU students), tuition fees, loans, and interest rates.

1.2 The role of Erasmus in the Mobility of Higher Education staff to the UK

A long-standing political objective of the UK' government is to increase the mobility of higher education within Europe. This goal was already realised in the second half of the 1980s with the Erasmus Programme which served as one of the foundations for the subsequent 1999 launch of the Bologna Process. Through Erasmus scheme, there was an EU freedom of movement, and therefore an easy mobility for both students and staff. (Colucci et al. 5) the Erasmus programme (known as the Erasmus+ from 2014 on) also served as the largest source of financing for the UK's both students and staff. It gives them access to global learning opportunities that have a track record of being valuable in the job market..(Corbett 6). The freedom of mobility was encouraged by both Erasmus and Bologna process. On the one hand, Erasmus worked for the mobility of the higher education staff within the EU28; for the UK outward student's mobility; for inward international students' mobility to the UK. On the other hand, Bologna process benefited the UK's higher education, and it served as a pull-factor for the EU students to the UK.

It is the largest mobility programme, whose name is an acronym for the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, is named after the Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. The Erasmus Programme, which began in 1987, is one of the most popular EU education and training programs. Only 3,244 students participated in the program's initial year, and it was limited to eleven countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. What began as a student exchange program in 1987 has developed into something far larger, enriching the lives of over nine million direct participants in the

following few years.³ The Erasmus Programme (2009–2013) put a strong emphasis on staff and student mobility between universities. it served the following groups : *a-Students*: those who are eligible for the program and are interested can participate in recurring educational programs in a selected nation. They can broaden their horizons, improve their understanding of the foreign language, and learn more about a subject of their choosing in this way. *b-Academic teachers*: one could believe that the Erasmus a student exchange program is solely for students. In the academic community, however, a student is defined much more broadly. Erasmus is the solution for those who are a part of the academic community and would like to expand their competencies and interact with other academics from around the world. One can conduct research, teach, or simply observe academic life at institutions other than their home university.

The Erasmus+ (Erasmus Plus) Programme (2014-2020) replaced the original Erasmus Programme in 2014 and continues to prioritize student mobility in higher education. It also offers chances for vocational students, apprentices, teachers, student workers, and volunteers to study, train, or volunteer abroad. The plus sign in Erasmus+ denotes inclusivity and a wide range of activities for all levels of education as well as staff mobility. As a result, the program, which runs from 2014 to 2020, is inclusive. Additionally, the Erasmus programme encourages the modernization of European higher education by providing funds for collaborative initiatives. Funds can also be granted to higher education staff, teachers, and students to encourage mobility between Erasmus project member countries. The Erasmus (+) Staff Mobility programme is a fantastic way for Higher education staff to get money; to go to a partner university anywhere in Europe; to exchange teaching methods, to share best practises, or to learn from international co-workers. Any permanent employee, academic or administrative, may submit a request under the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility scheme for the

³ "Erasmus+ Explained - Most Asked Questions About the Most Successful European Programme | Erasmus Generation Blog"

purpose of instruction or training. A report by Eurydice, the European network on education policies and systems, observed that “there is a wide understanding among policy makers and actors at the institutional level that the mobility of academic staff is beneficial for improving the quality of higher education and research, developing the circulation of knowledge and supporting student mobility” (“Internationalisation of Academic Staff in European Higher Education ...”)⁴. Staff mobility is a complex phenomenon that can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including academic visits, exchanges, and job opportunities. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) statistics provided in (2014-2015), the number of EU Higher education staff in the UK was totalled at **31,635** while in the same year, the number of Non-EU HE staff was **23,360**. The next year, 2015-2016, the EU staff increased to become **33,755** whereas the non-EU staff reached **24,550**.

These data show that the increase in EU staff is greater than non-EU staff, which explains the fact that this mobility level is due to the freedom of movement between the UK and the EU during the pre-Brexit period. In 2012-2013, With 1,638 applicants, the UK was the top destination for higher education staff training, followed by Spain (1,570) and Germany (1 495). These Staff members of higher education institutions obtained Erasmus subsidies to travel abroad for training, employment, study, or teaching. For the teaching staff, the teaching time must take place at a partner university that has ECHE (Erasmus Charter of Higher Education) accreditation.

The Erasmus programme also contributed to the outward UK students’ mobility. The UK Strategy for Outward Student Mobility seeks to double the proportion of full-time first-degree students with UK citizenship who do abroad placements as part of their higher

⁴ Bonaccorsi, and Biancardi. *Internationalisation of Academic Staff in European Higher Education*. no. 1, 2021, pp. 1–34.

education programmes, from 6.6% in 2014 to 13.2% in 2020. New generations of graduates from around the world will consequently be produced, and all students will be encouraged to pursue opportunities abroad. (“International Universities UK. UK Strategy for Outward Student Mobility 2017-2020. 2017, pp. 1–4”).

Before Brexit, the UK had lower rates of outward mobility than most other EU nations, although having greater rates than other English-speaking nations like the US and Australia. British students studying abroad are vastly outnumbered by foreign students in the UK. A complex interaction of several factors, including declining language proficiency, a lack of opportunities for paid internships, and the perception of lofty standards and marketability of US or other Anglophone educational systems, are contributing to the decline in UK students' outward mobility to other European nations.⁵ Statistically, for instance, only 13,662 UK students participated in the Erasmus scheme in 2011-2012, either for study or work placements, compared to 39,545 students in Spain, 33,363 in Germany, and 33,269 in France. While the United Kingdom receives more than twice as many international students as it sends, France sends 4,305 more students (33,269) than it receives (28,964).

⁵ Centre Sussex. “International Student Mobility.” *Higher Education in Europe*, vol. 2, no. 4–5, 1977, pp. 18–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0379772770020410>.

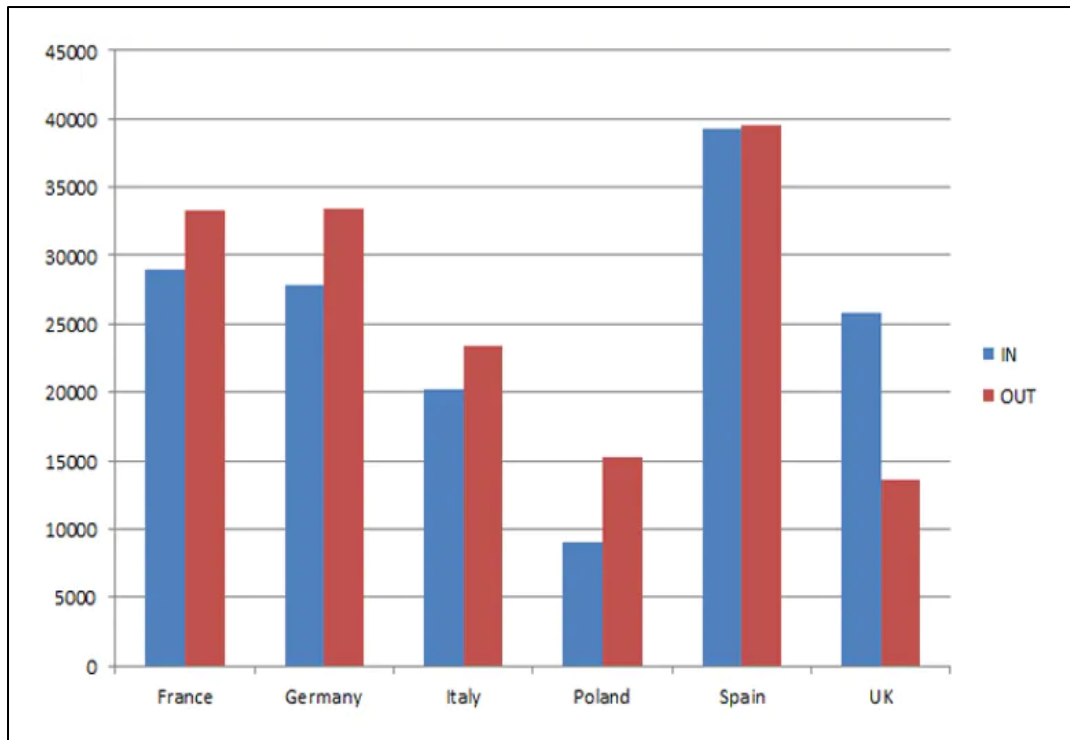


Figure 1 outward students' mobility to the UK

(Source: <https://theconversation.com/uk-students-trailing-eu-peers-on-take-up-of-erasmus-exchanges-26783>)

1.3 Statistics about the evolution of students' mobility to the UK:

In this work the term “international students” includes students from both EU and non-EU countries. Following the 2008–2009 global fiscal crisis, the UK saw a considerable slowdown in the flow of international students. The increase in recruitment was noticeable among non-EU students. However, progress came to a halt between 2010–11 and 2012–13, primarily due to falls in Indian enrolment. Following its zenith in 2013–14, non-EU enrolment then declined in 2014–15 and remained constant throughout the following three years. The total number of international students (EU and non-EU) decreased for the first time in almost 30 years in 2012–13, according to reports. This was primarily related to a decline in undergraduate enrolment from EU countries after tuition fees tripled in 2012–13. In 2014–15, the annual growth of international entrants reached its second low point as fewer non-EU students started their studies in the UK. In contrast to the rapid increase in

worldwide demand for study in Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, and the US, non-EU enrolments remained flat in the years that followed. However, the number of EU students continued to rise, surpassing 2011–12 levels in 2016–17.⁶

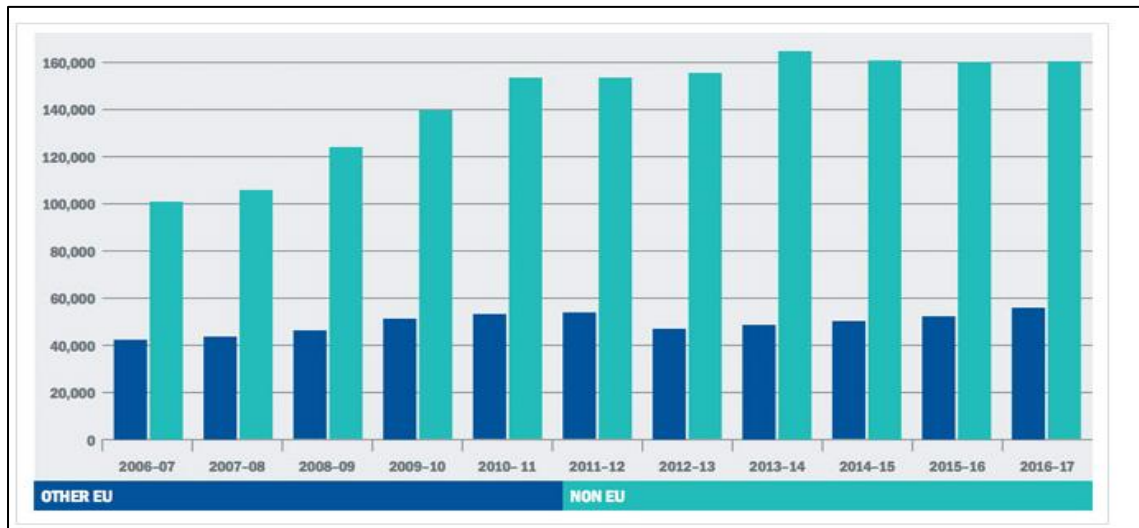


Figure 2 international students' mobility to the UK

Source: HESA Student Record

1.4 The role of Bologna Process in EU28 students' mobility

The Bologna Process, a significant intergovernmental attempt to organise international higher education within Europe, was launched with the Sorbonne Declaration. Its goal was to provide a framework for coordinating diplomas and credits across Europe to remove the obstacle to education caused by variations in national educational systems. Higher education ministers from twenty-nine nations gathered one year after the Sorbonne Declaration to overcome this barrier and created the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The EHEA is a voluntary, regional initiative that now spans forty-eight nations and aims to create comparable, top-notch higher education systems. (Skinner). The Bologna Process is built on

⁶ Ilieva, Janet. "Five Little-Known Facts about International Student Mobility to the UK." *Analytical Summary for UUKi*, 2018, pp. 1–16, <http://hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2018/201804/>.

collaboration between international organisations and governments, universities, personnel, and students from various nations.

Baroness Blackstone, a former minister for higher education in the UK, and ministers from twenty-eight other European nations signed it in 1999. By 2010, it hoped to establish the "European Higher Education Area" (EHEA) and promote greater mobility, enabling students to gain the knowledge and abilities that employers value, including linguistic proficiency, cultural maturity, and increased self-assurance. Additionally, it attempted to harmonise EU-wide higher education systems by fostering cross-regional credit and certification recognition. Moreover, it took funding for mobile students into consideration, most notably during the Nordwijk Bologna seminar on "Designing Policies for Mobile Students" in October 2004.(Bourke 22). It provides for the same tuition for national and international students coming from the EHEA countries (countries that belong to the Bologna Process: 49 EU and Non-EU countries in 2015).

In 1999 the UK was already engaged in actions which would fulfil the Bologna objectives so that the UK HE would not lose out on the potential benefits and opportunities offered by the creation of the European Higher Education Area. Importantly, institutions will be able to raise their European and global profile if the UK higher education sector is securely rooted in the unified European Higher Education Area.⁷ The UK also benefited from Bologna Process Project. It was able to have its cake and eat it, too, at least for a while in European higher education. The UK, one of the four original architects of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), has successfully exported the key elements of its higher education model to other EU Member States and beyond without giving up any authority to

⁷ Bourke, Tish. "Guide to the Bologna Process." *Working for the UK Higher Education Sector*, 2015, <https://www.unl.pt/data/qualidade/bolonha/guide-to-the-bologna-process.pdf>.

the EU level in that regard. This is because the Bologna Process is still formally outside the EU's institutional and legal framework. The UK reaped the benefits of an expanded higher education "market" on which its higher education institutions could successfully compete, at a minimal administrative, political, or other cost, as the participating countries largely 'converged to the UK system, embracing its Bachelor-Master-Doctorate degree structure as well as more implicitly its overall liberal, market-driven approach to higher education'⁸.

Therefore, the UK became the most desired destination for the EHEA students. The EHEA students' mobility to the UK evolved through time. The UK attracted large numbers of students. For instance, The U.K. and Germany, which hosted 129,129 and 95,275 students respectively in 2016, are by far the countries that host the most EHEA students in terms of numbers. However, since 2010, the student populations in several of the other top ten importer nations for EHEA students have been stagnant or even declining. The U.K. and Austria only had 10 percent and 14 percent growth, while France had 1,284 fewer EHEA students in 2016 than it did at the start of the decade.

Overall, there appears to be a distinction between eastern and western EHEA countries, with the latter serving as the primary destinations for international EHEA students while the former being secondary locations. The UK is among the preferable destinations for most of the EU and non-EU students (Roach).

⁸Garben, Sacha. "Articles Special Section-EU Citizenship in Times of Brexit European Higher Education in the Context of Brexit." *European Papers* *Www.Europeanpapers. Eu ISSN*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2018, pp. 1293–317, <https://doi.org/10.15166/2499-8249/271>.

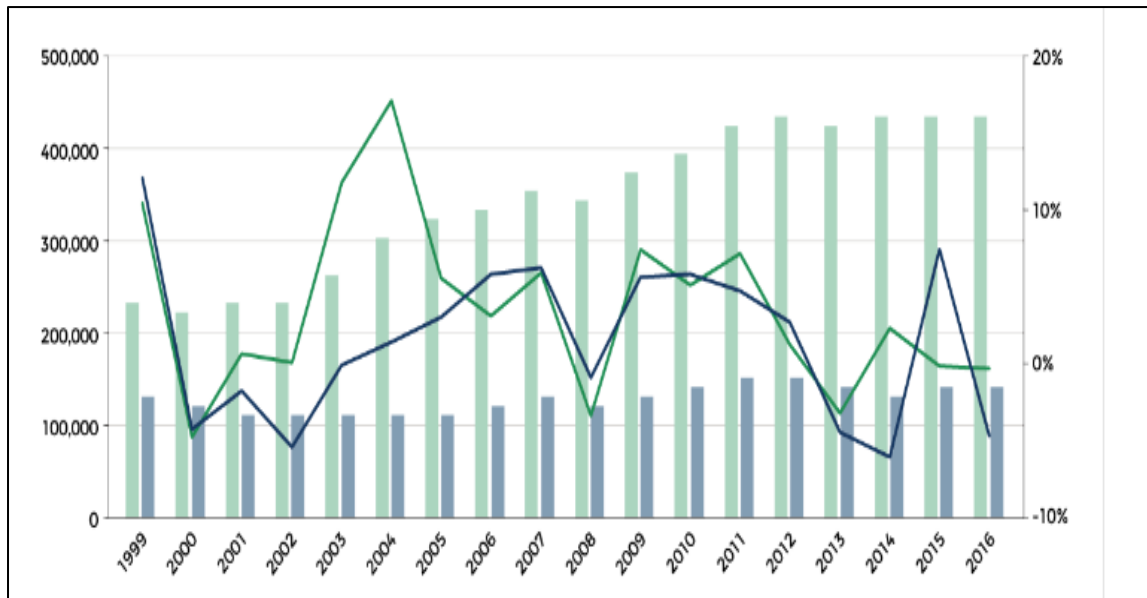


Figure 3 EHEA inbound students' mobility to the UK

(<https://wenr.wes.org/2018/12/student-mobility-in-the-european-higher-education-area-ehea>)

1.5 HE Students' Origins in the UK:

The UK was the preferred destination for students from various parts of the world: Europe, Asia, America, and Africa. According to 2010 estimates, 33,000 UK students are studying abroad while 370,000 foreign students are enrolled in universities in the UK. This disparity indicates that the UK is more of a destination for international students than a source of them, making it the second-most important country in the world after the United States.⁹ Apart from the EU, Asia has by far most students in the UK, followed by other EU nations. Students from Africa come in a distant third, followed by those from the Middle East and North America. In the UK, Australia sent the fewest students.(c 17).

⁹ King, Russell, et al. "International Student Mobility Literature Review - Report to HEFCE, and Co-Funded by the British Council, UK National Agency for Erasmus." *Hefce*, no. November 2010, p. 55, <http://go.international.ac.uk/content/international-student-mobility-literature-review-report-hefce-and-co-funded-british-council>.

The most striking finding is China's enormous significance to UK HEIs when considering the number of international students from outside the EU. 89,540 students from China studied in the UK in 2014–15, compared to only 18,320 from India, the second-largest source nation.¹⁰

According to other latest statistics (by statista.com), the top non-EU students sending countries are as follows: 143,820 students from China; 84,555 from India, 21,305 from Nigeria; 19,220 from the US; 16,655 from Hong Kong; 12,975 from Pakistan; 11,510 from Malaysia; 8,825 from Saudi Arabia; 6,785 from Canada and 6,580 from Singapore.

In fact, the UK universities and institutions attracted large numbers of students from different continents, and Asia took the lion's share of students studying in the UK.

1.6 Higher education Students' funding:

In higher education, "tuition fees" refers to the expenditures incurred by a college or university for the enrolment and instruction of a student, which may also include the cost of the student's health insurance; "tuition fees' loans" in Higher education means a sum of money borrowed by students to finance higher education-related expenses; "Interest rates" are associated with loans. They refer to the additional fee, expressed as a percentage of the loan's principal, that loan providers charge students who borrow money. Interest is applied starting on the day the first payment is made to the student's institution or university. Once the student has finished or dropped out of their study and their salary is above the repayment threshold, they must repay the tuition fee loan and any accrued interest. Many students must work part-time jobs to pay their tuition.

¹⁰ 2017_WP82_An_audit_of_international_student_mobility_to_the_UK3.

Under Tony Blair's Labour administration, tuition fees were initially implemented nationwide in September 1998 to pay for the costs of educating university undergraduate and postgraduate certificate students. ("Tuition Fees in The United Kingdom - Wikipedia").

Universities and colleges charge tuition to fund crucial facets of academic life and courses, as well as essential services related to students' wellbeing and campus life. They typically include Seminars, lectures, and tutorials, course administration fees, access to course-related equipment and facilities (e.g., laboratories, studios), access to university libraries and computer labs, Student assistance services, membership in a student union, field trips required for the completion of a course (travel and accommodation only), and ceremony of graduation.¹¹ Tuition fees and loans differ from one country to another. In some countries they are high like the UK and the US and in others they are low and in others they are free.

Although Britain and the US are known for having expensive university tuition, they are not at the top of the list of countries where parents spend most of their income on their children's higher education for the academic year 2014–2015. The US was ranked sixth for undergraduate tuition fees, while the UK was ranked ninth. Estonia came in third, Romania came in second, and Hungary came in first on this list of nations with higher tuition costs.¹² In another post made by Martin Armstrong on September 17th, 2021 in (statista.com), a latest comparison was made between some countries concerning the tuition fees. The following figure shows the difference in tuition fees charged by public institutions at bachelor level (2019-2020). (Armstrong).

¹¹ "Undergraduate Tuition Fees and Student Loans". UCAS, <https://www.ucas.com/finance/undergraduate-tuition-fees-and-student-loans>.

¹² Brinded, Lianna. "The 11 Most Expensive Countries for A University Education". *Business Insider*, 2015, <https://www.businessinsider.com/expert-market-data-11-countries-where-parents-spend-the-most-money-on-university-tuition-fees-2015-10>.



Figure 4 comparing tuition fees in some countries

(Chart: The World's Highest and Lowest Tuition Fees | Statista).

1.6.1 Evolution of tuition fees, loans, and interest rates in the UK before Brexit:

Higher education finance and student assistance have undergone decades of change and adjustment. Most adjustments to the student financing system have been implemented in response to various funding concerns. The Labour Government first implemented £1,000 per year tuition fees for higher education in 1998. Students paid these fees in full at the start of the academic year. Fees were raised to £3,000 in 2006, and a new system of variable deferred fees and tuition fees loans were implemented. Fees steadily increased by inflation from 2006 until 2012, when the Coalition Government hiked tuition fees to £9,000 per year in response to Lord Browne's independent assessment of the student finance system. This amount

remained stable till the end of 2016.(Hubble and Susan 5).

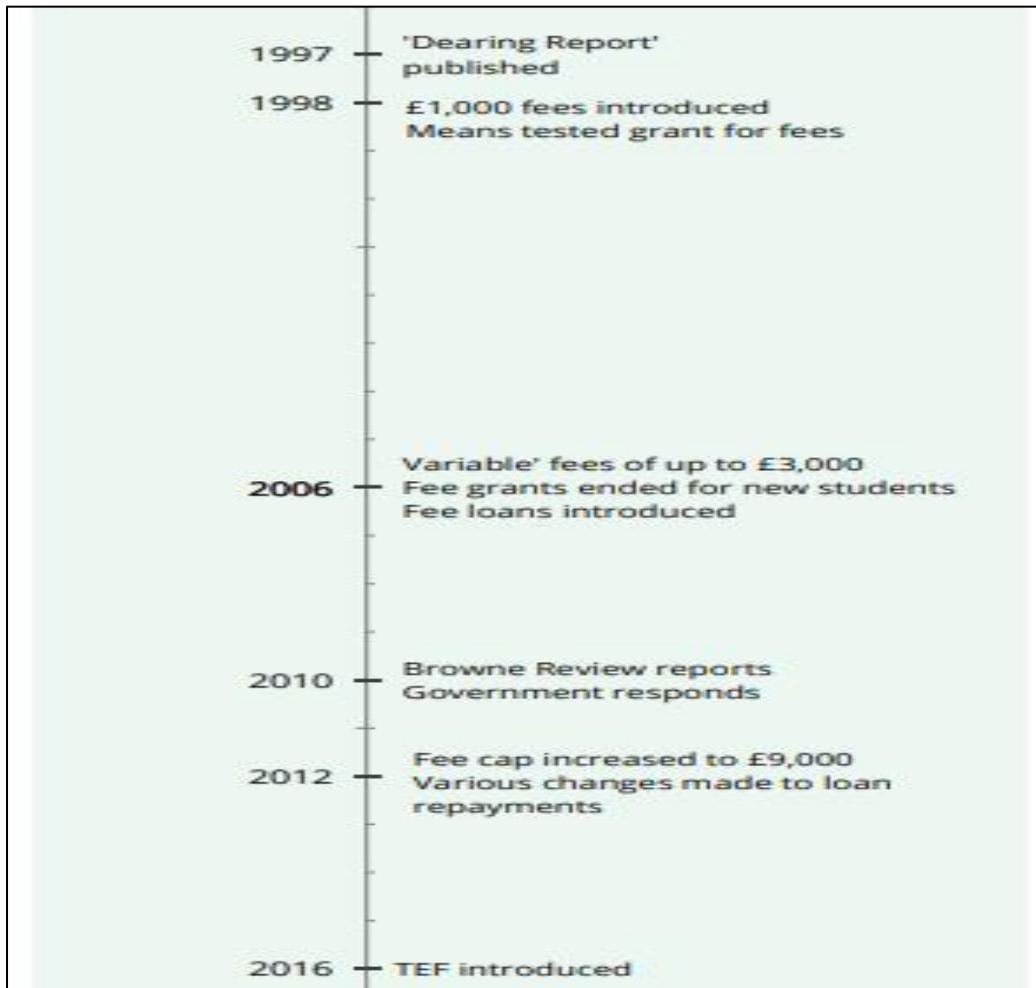


Figure 5 Pre-Brexit Tuition Fees Evolution

(Higher education tuition fees in England (ioe.ac.uk))

The tuition fees, loans as well as interest rates underwent changes through time. In the UK, fees were raised to £3,000 in 2006, and a new system of variable deferred fees or fees loans were implemented. Loans were granted to support and fund students when they cannot afford the high tuition fees of their universities. students return tuition fee loans on a delayed basis after their income exceeded a certain threshold. Government proposed a reformed system of student funding beginning in 2012; these changes were essentially based on the Browne Review's recommendations, with the following modifications: The repayment

threshold has been raised to £21,000 and Loans with variable interest rates were introduced.(Hubble et al. 4).

Although there are multiple student loan providers in the UK, the Student Loans Company (SLC), a non-profit government organisation, is the largest.

When seeking for a student loan, it is quite unlikely that one will discover a lower interest rate than the SLC. As an example of how low student loan interest rates can be: 2009/2010 - 0%; 2010/2011 - 1.5%; 2011/2012 - 1.5%. During the pre-Brexit period, tuition fees and loans were called home fees or loans because EU students can pay the same fees or loans as the UK's students themselves. Being a home country for EU students, the UK attracts EU higher education students with large numbers. EU students preferred the UK to their home countries because of the excellence of higher education in UK's universities. By contrast, international students did not benefit from the 'home fees' system, and they were obliged to pay higher tuition fees if they want to apply for a course in the UK. However, during this time, the number of international students in the UK exceeded those from the EU from one year to another during the period (from 2006-2007 to 2015-2016). This reality was due partly to the fact that international students came to the UK from various parts of the world.

1.6.2 Tuition fees as an income source for the UK economy

To demonstrate how profitable the higher education sector is to the UK economy, we highlight some fascinating statistics as universities consider their financial future. Firstly, Universities make up four times more of the GDP than agriculture does. According to research by Universities UK, in 2011–12, universities made up over £39.9 billion of the GDP. This generated 2.8% of GDP, which is more than four times the 0.6% contribution from agriculture. Secondly, Students contribute £80 billion to the economy. In the UK, student

spending contributes almost £80 billion to economic production, according to a 2013 analysis that the National Union of Students ordered. The University of Birmingham, on the other hand, contributes £530 million to the city's economy, or 2.2% of total wealth creation, which is more than the eight biggest football clubs in the area combined. 2.6% of the GDP and 35,000 employments in Wales are supported by student loan money. Furthermore, it contributes to 1.26% of the Scottish GDP and 109,000 jobs.

Thirdly, International students who study in London bring in significantly more money than they spend on public services. The average cost of an undergraduate degree for students from outside the EU attending UK universities is £12,000 per year. According to a 2015 report by London First, a group that advocates for London businesses, foreign students in the city used £540 million in public services like the NHS but contributed more than £2.8 billion to the economy through tuition fees, spending, and providing housing for visiting relatives and friends, for a net contribution of £2.3 billion. (Lock). In another analysis made for a study related to 2014-2015 year, it was noted that the UK's legal industry, the advertising and marketing industry, and the production of air and spacecraft are now outperformed by universities in terms of annual revenue. (Bothwell). Finally, Part of the income generated from tuition fees was invested in the higher education sector, which led to its growth, development, and attractiveness.

1.7 Conclusion

Before Brexit, higher education in the UK was characterised by exceptional features like its quality and rigorous academic standards, which set the UK second to the US as a destination for EU and international students. This attribute is mainly because of these factors: *Freedom of mobility*: students can move freely inward and outward the UK without restrictions or visas. Students' destination countries within the EU are just like their homes, which encourages students' mobility out of their own real home countries. This freedom of mobility in a higher education is guaranteed through a reform programme known as Erasmus (1987), lately known as (Erasmus+ as from 2014). Statistics (see figure p22) showed that students arriving in the UK through Erasmus programme are quite many.

Another higher education policy known as Bologna Process (1999) also called for the freedom of mobility of students and the establishment of the EHEA (2010). *Lower home tuition fees or loans*: Another push-factor for EU students to the UK universities, colleges and institutions is the lower fees and loans which facilitate and support students to start a course and obtain a degree or diploma in the UK. These two factors were the main drivers for EU students to the UK universities before Brexit. So, what happened next? Would EU students go to the UK in same numbers as before the referendum? What would change? What are the factors behind the change? Would be there any challenges for the UK's HE sector in the post referendum era and before the end of transitional period? What measures would be taken by the government and the sector to appease the threats of the challenges if they exist?

CHAPTER TWO: HIGHER EDUCATION DURING THE UNCERTAINTY PERIOD –CHALLENGES AND REACTIONS

2.1 Introduction

The Referendum of June 2016 was about to leave the EU (Brexit) or remain with the EU community. The term "Brexit" is a combination of the terms "Britain" and "exit." It denotes Britain's exit from the European Union. Before Brexit, the UK' relationship with Europe has been indisputably positive for the Higher education sector —both the EU and UK win. However, the Brexit implications can be just as devastating as anticipated before the referendum. One of the major causes of Brexit, according to the "Independent.com" Site, was education: “A new study finds that if Britain's population had been educated to a little higher level, it would have opted to remain in the European Union.” According to University of Leicester researchers, if just 3% more of the population went to university, the UK would not be leaving the EU.

Since the 2016 Brexit referendum and Theresa May's cabinet's formal act of activating article 50 in 2017, the UK has entered a period of negotiations, the outcome of which, as well as the terms of the post-exiting phase, are uncertain at the time. Major concerns in play during this time of uncertainty include the loss of research funding from EU sources, the loss of students from other EU nations, the impact on the sector's ability to hire academic staff from EU nations, and the impact on UK students' ability to study abroad. (Mayhew, 2017). It is obvious that Brexit would significantly alter the research culture, how degree programmes operate and are structured, how the curriculum is designed, how many students are enrolled, and how many staff members there are. Political time of Brexit is precarious because there are so many "unknowns" and because different predictions of what will happen only serve to heighten feelings of dread and perplexity. More than three years after the election, things are

still unclear.¹³ British universities, like other international firms, have benefited from a single market that allows for comparatively free mobility of people (students, lecturers, and researchers). Their future economic operations are now fraught with uncertainties. Universities worry that their ability to entice "customers" (students) and "talent" (teaching and research personnel) from the EU, as well as access resources (e.g., EU research money, Erasmus student mobility financing), may be severely limited in a post-Brexit environment. Institutions that depend on funding from EU sources for their operations, particularly EU research funds and tuition from EU students, are at significant financial danger. Universities have created "EU task forces" in reaction to these uncertainties and developed geographical strategies to address the repercussions of losing access to the EU market.(Kleibert 2020). In brief, in this period the Higher Education sector faced some risks to which the government found itself obliged to react and limit those negative impacts.

¹³ Gromek Broc, Katarzyna. "Brexit and Its Impact on the UK Higher Education Sector and the Rights of Scholars and Students Introduction 1." ® *UNIO-EU LAW JOURNAL*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2020, <https://scramnews.com/tory-brexit-mandate-erasmus/>.

2.2 Challenges Facing UK's Higher Education Sector

Because of the difficulties associated with Brexit and the pressure it will put on mobility between the EU and the UK, it is possible that British higher education will not continue to internationalise, reversing the trend that has been observed since World War II. This would be a regrettable development given the rapidly growing economic globalisation and the inevitable rise of a globalised academic system (Altbach and Teichler 2001, p. 6). Political choices, like the status of tuition fees for EU students after the UK leaves the EU, will have a significant impact on the connectivity and accessibility of UK higher education, at least within its region, which is home to some of the most diverse and research-focused higher education systems in the world. For instance, the UK government's inability to guarantee the tuition fee status of EU students for 2020 entrance has substantial ramifications for UK universities' recruitment plans as of early May 2019. To give students and universities certainty, a long-term tuition charge policy that does not require annual review is essential. (Highman 2019).

A Brexit should be “soft”: a “hard Brexit”, a Brexit without a deal, would severely harm the strongest British industry as well as its higher education sector, where the UK is undisputedly a worldwide leader.¹⁴ Higher education sector has a strong tradition of international cooperation. Higher education institutions in the UK are intricately connected to and collaborate with colleagues across Europe in research and education. The sector must maintain the same prominent level and standard of collaboration. Several issues exist due to the collaborative nature of the higher education sector, which the UK Government is asked to address in its exit negotiations. These dangers include losing the UK higher education sector's standing as a go-to partner in important research, losing access to crucial funding sources that

¹⁴ Marginson, S. “Brexit: Challenges for Universities in Hard Times.” *International Higher Education*, no. 88, Jan. 2017, pp. 8-10, doi:10.6017/ihe.2017.88.9682.

support excellent research, falling further behind rivals in the practise of sending students abroad to complete their degrees, losing EU academics, and seeing a sharp decline in the number of EU students enrolling in UK universities.

2.2.1 Importance of students' and staff's outgoing mobility

Many students in the world opt to study abroad in a country other than their own. This outward mobility has justifiable reasons. Respondents and informants consistently viewed mobility as advantageous and favourable for students or staff: 'Participants get significant long-term benefits. Students who participate in study abroad programmes exhibit greater levels of independence and growth and earn a greater proportion of first- and upper-second-class degrees. (North of England, university before 1992). When they return, they have changed; they have matured, grown more self-assured, and are utterly different people. They claim to have found friends they will retain forever. They have changed the way they view themselves, and they might even alter course. They might suddenly realise that is not what they want to do with their lives; they are going to do something entirely different. But it improves work opportunities as well. Employers today must sort through hundreds job applications, so everything that helps a student stand out as someone with initiative, drive, confidence, and adaptability must be helpful. (J4). The main advantages mentioned or asserted have to do with growth in maturity and self-awareness, cultural enrichment, language learning, improved academic performance, and job advancement.¹⁵

In short, outward mobility is crucial for both EU staff and students. It helps to enrich one's culture; to learn a new language and to get job opportunities.

¹⁵ Centre, Sussex. "International Student Mobility." *Higher Education in Europe*, vol. 2, no. 4–5, 1977, pp. 18–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0379772770020410>.

Additionally, the outward mobility for a country represented an inward mobility for another country. Both the source and destination benefited from this mobility. For instance, the UK depended in her higher education on a staff that came from the EU and other countries. Talented and skilled staff worked in the UK universities and colleges. Losing these skilled labour force would negatively affect the UK higher education sector. Theresa May acknowledged in an open letter that the UK would be "poorer" if EU citizens living in the UK were to leave because of Brexit. The numbers of EU staff working at UK universities are particularly concentrated among academic staff. According to the 2016/17 HESA staff record, 17.4% (35,920) of academic staff are from EU countries, whereas they make up only 6.4% (13, 610) of non-academic staff (HESA 2018). As with EU students, EU academic staff numbers are particularly high at the Russell Group universities. This includes disciplines important to the UK's industrial policy, like science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The UK government claims that 40% of employers have reported concerns regarding a shortage of STEM graduates. The University of Glasgow, LSE and Queen Mary are destinations of choice for EU staff. This would indicate that EU academic staff both: **a]** contribute to the reputation of their UK university through their research and access to European networks of researchers. **b]** are attracted primarily to job opportunities in the more research-intensive universities. (Marginson). Overall, the skilled EU staff working in the UK enhance the image of UK universities and institutions and contribute reputation and attractiveness of the UK higher education.

2.2.2 Restricting staff's mobility and losing EU academics in the UK

Brexit's main aim was to curb the floods of emigration to the UK. Therefore, it limited the movement of EU workers to the UK. This included EU higher education staff working in the UK. EU higher education staff are particularly important for UK research and higher

education institutions. However, Theresa May's government has made it clear that the era of free movement of people between the United Kingdom and the European Union is finished. Migration opposition determined the referendum result. A new migration scheme will be implemented, in which persons of all origins will be treated equally, with a focus on high-skill migration. May also wants to see a considerable drop in the total level of migration into the UK. Both measures, according to the prime minister, are critical to the Conservative Party government's electoral survival. It is unclear what happens to EU students in UK universities. There are currently 43,000 EU employees and 125,000 EU students. However, the Brexit process cannot be finished before March 2019, when most current students will have completed their courses. While EU employees are likely to retain their residency rights, no announcement has been made. Their position may be determined by the successful negotiation of reciprocal rights of residence for UK residents now residing in Europe.

With a "hard Brexit" in which the UK loses access to the European single market, the decision to prioritise stopping EU people movement has serious implications. Support for free movement of people is necessary for even a small portion of the European Union's economies, like in Switzerland and Norway. Finally, with Brexit, new things tended to change. For instance, the number of EU staff present in the UK may negatively change. For example, adapted HESA statistics represented in the following figure show details about incoming Higher Education staff from both the EU and other international countries. The bar graph shows significant rise in the number of non-EU staff from one year to another during the period stretching from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. This explains that the number of staff coming from the non-EU countries was not affected by Brexit at least during the period from the referendum to the end of 2020.

On the contrary, during the same period, the EU Higher education staff in the UK was slowly increasing except in the last year (2020-2021) when it decreased. The data shown on the graph reveal that the UK began to lose EU academics as from 2020-2021.

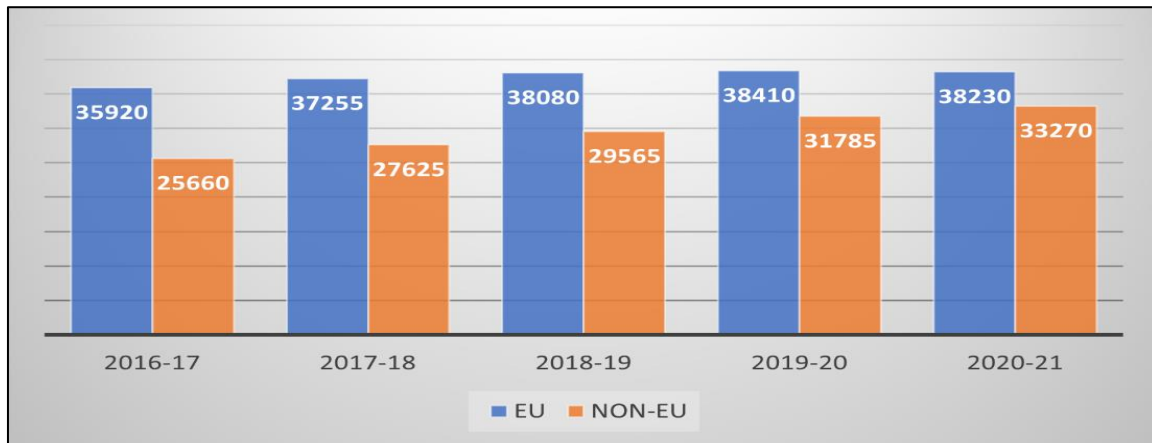


Figure 6 Evolution of International HE staffs in the UK

(Adapted from HESA statistics).

Briefly, the number of EU staff working in the UK began to decrease as from 2020-2021 because of Brexit while the international staff number seamlessly increased.

2.2.3 Imbalance in UK’s inward and outward mobilities

The UK received more higher education students than it received. This effected imbalance in the sector. The UK encouraged both inward and outward mobility but at various levels especially before the officialisation of Brexit. Firstly, The UK encouraged the inward mobility of students to its territories. In fact, the UK was the magnet pole that attracted worldwide students. Students decided to pursue their studies in the UK because Erasmus programme emphasises advantages like enhanced work opportunities, the acquisition of a second language and intercultural awareness.¹⁶

¹⁶ King, Russell, et al. “International Student Mobility Literature Review - Report to HEFCE, and Co-Funded by the British Council, UK National Agency for Erasmus.” *Hefce*, no. November 2010, p. 55,

Thanks to this programme and others, hundreds of thousands of students from all over the world opted for studying in the UK universities before Brexit. So, what happened to this high-rate mobility and large numbers of students after the referendum and before 2021? It was also agreed that all projects chosen for the Erasmus+ programme 2014–2020 will continue to operate until they are finished. As a result, a number of these ongoing initiatives and collaborations that include UK partners or are accessible to students from the UK will continue in accordance with the terms of the Erasmus+ (2014–2020 programme). (Toffano 2022). This is the main reason behind ongoing EU students' increase in the UK like the situation of the pre-Brexit period. concerning the non-EU students, they continued outnumbering the EU students during this period.

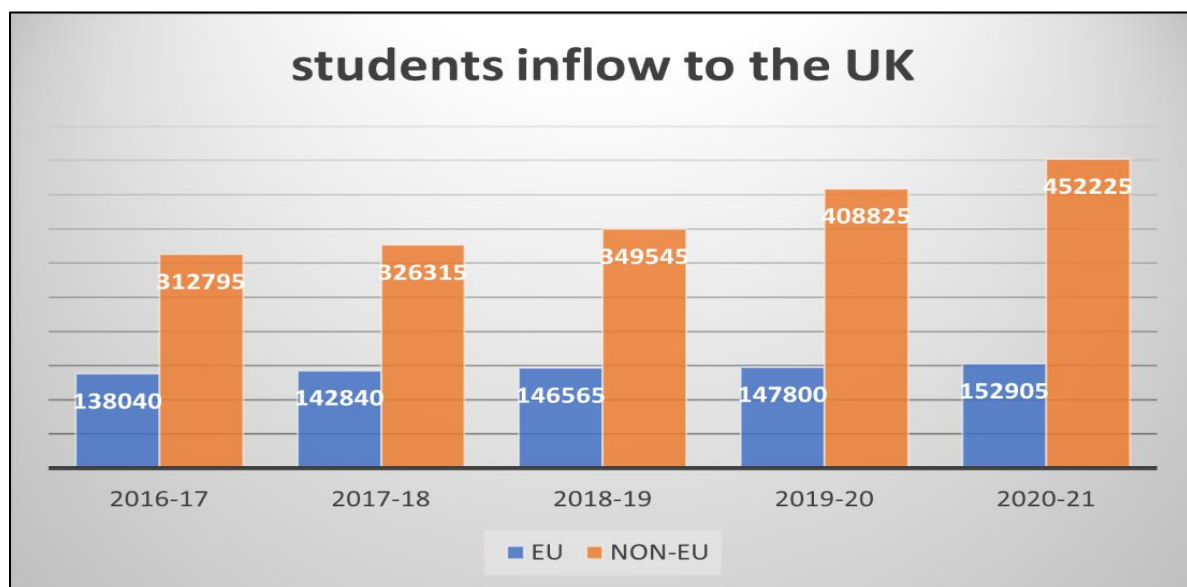


Figure 7: inward students' mobility to the UK

(Adapted from HESA statistics).

The EU's student's mobility to the UK (inward mobility) at this stage seemed not to be affected by Brexit since the UK continued its adherence to the Erasmus cycle (2014-2020) which favoured students' mobility. This mobility continued but at a slow pace. The biggest increase of students at this stage is noticed between the years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 because EU settlement scheme that was implemented to give students living in the UK the last chance to live and study according to the old immigration rules because the situation will change in the next phase. Secondly, the UK also worked for supporting its students to move abroad and study (outward mobility). In parallel with the UK's interest to increase inward mobility of students, it also struggled for improving UK's outward mobility which is important as well. The UK Strategy for Outward Student Mobility seeks to double the proportion of full-time first-degree students with UK citizenship who do abroad placements as part of their higher education programmes, from 6.6% in 2014 to 13.2% in 2020. New generations of graduates from around the world will be thus produced, and all students will be encouraged to pursue opportunities abroad.¹⁷ Universities UK International (UUKi) was given funding by the Erasmus+ programme to operate a project aimed at increasing outward mobility participation through the Higher Education Key Action 3 strand. To conduct this project, the Go International programme collaborated with universities and colleges all around the United Kingdom, demonstrating the strong commitment to mobility from UK institutions.

As for the preferred destinations for the UK's students, the most popular host countries for study placements in 2017–18 were Spain (2,220), France (2,049), Germany (1,302), the Netherlands (812), and Italy (711). The four most popular locations in 2007–2008 were the same nations. In total, UK Erasmus+ students visited 59 distinct host nations in 2017–18,

¹⁷ International, Universities UK. *UK Strategy for Outward Student Mobility 2017-2020*. 2017, pp. 1–4.

including 25 outside of Europe. (Sue et al. 11). According to HESA student record [2017–18], Northern Ireland and Scotland have the highest percentages of mobile undergraduate students enrolled in UK HEIs; with 13.2% of students travelling overseas, Northern Ireland has already surpassed the Go International campaign's goal, and Scotland is extremely close with 11.6% of mobile students. The lowest percentage of mobile students (7.2%) is in England.¹⁸

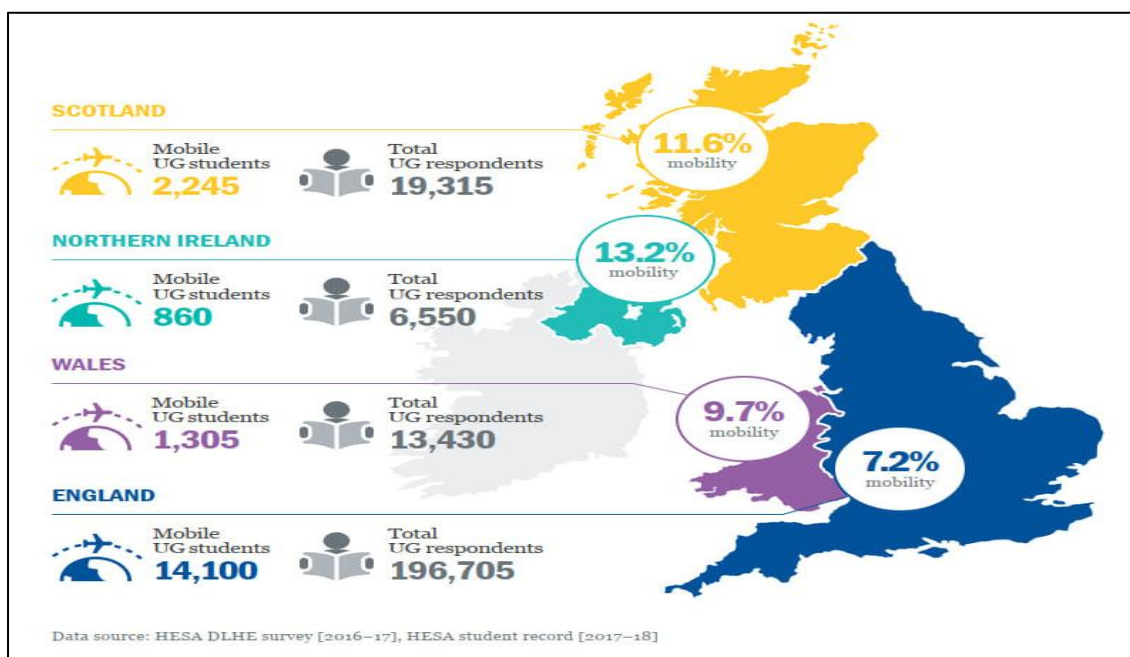


Figure 8 UK outward students' mobility

Source: HESA DLHE survey [2016–17], HESA student record [2017–18]

Thirdly, to compare between the inward and outward students' mobility, the following evidence is an example to show the difference. In 2017, 16,561 UK students took part in Erasmus, while 31,727 EU nationals came to the UK. Also, The UK, on the one hand, has the sixth-highest participation rate in the Erasmus+ programme, according to data from the 2018

¹⁸ "International Facts and Figures." *Nature*, vol. 368, no. 6467, 1994, p. 172, <https://doi.org/10.1038/368172a0>.

call. The information includes study places chosen by higher education students. Less than one-third as many students from the UK participated in Erasmus+ as in the top-performing nations.

On the other hand, it is the most preferred destination in Europe for EU students. This imbalance indicates that the UK is more of a destination for international students than a source of them, making it the second-most important country in the world after the United States. However, outward mobility project requires monitoring due to worries that a low rate may reduce UK graduates' competitiveness in the global and European labour markets, while a high rate may indicate a "brain drain." (King et al. 2010). Finally, Although the popularity of studying in the UK is a good thing, the UK HEIs should use this rise in funding to promote greater international mobility to balance these statistics.

2.2.4 The Problem of Tuition loans and fees increase

The UK home fees remained stable for some time topping at £9,000. However, this changed in 2017. According to an announcement made by Minister of Universities and Science Jo Johnson on July 21 HE tuition will increase to £9,250 starting in the 2017–18 academic year, A rating is given in accordance with Year One of the Teaching and Excellence Framework. (TEF).¹⁹ .Thirty-six institutes of higher education will impose this new, higher cap on all courses, up from the £9,250 headline price that was imposed by 121 of the 123 schools in 2017–18. The entire yearly face value of tuition fee loans is expected to rise from £2.6 billion in fiscal year 2011-12 to £9.0 billion in fiscal year 2017-18, according to the government. This sum has risen as more institutions have charged the maximum fee.

¹⁹ Hubble, and Susan. *Higher Education Tuition Fees in England*.
www.parliament.uk/commons-library%7Cintranet.parliament.uk/commons-library%7Cpapers@parliament.uk%7C@commonslibrary.

From 2017-2018 to 2021-2022, the government were committed to freeze the higher education tuition fees at the cap of £9,250 per year. Tuition fee loans for EU students also increased in this period. The average fee loan given to students in 2012–13 was £4,900. However, in 2016–17, this grew to £5,540. This increase caused higher students' debts: The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) produced a paper titled "Higher Education funding in England: history, present, and alternatives for the future" in July 2107 that examined the effects of reforms to the student assistance system since 2011. The research said that because of the rising fees in 2012, students now graduate with an average debt of £50,000.(Belfield et al. 19)

International students are always not eligible for home fees. Therefore, they pay more. For instance, in the academic year 2019-2020, International students pay a starting annual tuition rate of more than 15,000 pounds, which fluctuates according on the degree. It might reach 35,000 each year at the best universities in the UK. Given these notes, one can note that both home tuition fees and loans increased during the post-referendum period because of the introduction of TEF.

2.3 The sector and government's remedies for the problems

After Brexit, some challenges appeared to the scene. They needed immediate intervention from the government in order not to aggravate the situation in the UK' higher education sector. For instance, to ensure that a successful post-exit settlement for universities is reached, Universities UK kept regular contact with the UK Government, EU authorities, and their European counterparts. Complete access to Erasmus+ and its replacement programme Erasmus, as well as full access to Horizon 2020 and its successor programme Horizon Europe, should be included. The creation of an immigration system by the government that facilitates the recruitment of international students is also recommended.

As a result of the newly emerging challenges to the sector, measures were to be taken by the concerned authorities to deal with the threatening and alarming situation. The UUK and colleges intervened; the sector built new TNHE sites; the government informed students about the EUSS; the authorities froze the fees ...

2.3.1 The UUK and colleges intervention

Both the UUK and colleges contributed to remedy the problems rising in the higher education sector. The UUK is a UK-based organisation that advocates for higher education. Early in the 20th century, vice chancellors of several universities and principals of university colleges met informally to start the organisation. (Wikipedia). It is the collective voice of UK universities on the international stage. It closely collaborates with decision-makers and other key stakeholders to uphold and strengthen the UK higher education sector's position as a global leader. To assist its members and partners, it also organises events, generates insights and publications, shares, and creates opportunities, and brings together regional and thematic networks. UUK spent a lot of time working with its equivalent organisations around Europe to give the UK sector the most up-to-date information. It significantly strengthened the bilateral involvement across the continent since the referendum. It organised high-level delegations to France, Poland, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy, led by Vice-Chancellors. Its representatives travelled to Brussels on a regular basis for high-level and policy-level talks. It is critical that they grasp the mood in EU member states and in Brussels. The information gathered on these travels are relayed to the UK Government and used to inform their own actions. For example, they learnt from numerous stakeholders in Brussels that the UK Government's position on Erasmus was uncertain.

They subsequently wrote to Higher Education Minister Sam Gyimah about this issue, and they also spoke with the new Director-General for Education and Culture at the European Commission to reaffirm the sector's commitment to the programme and to relay the most recent positive statement made by Minister Sam Gyimah, that the government wants the option to participate. One incredibly positive finding is that their greater engagement has resulted in an unbelievable amount of goodwill from the European peers. They recognised the additional benefit of international collaboration and emphasised the need of the UK remaining a full participant of higher education and research programmes. (Kimbell). Overall, the UUK intervened to curb threatening challenges to the UK's higher education, and it received collaboration with its European peers. That intervention would lessen the negative effects on the higher education sector.

As for the colleges, the EU and the UK agreed that the UK could continue to participate in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ until the end of these programmes (December 2020) on the same terms as member states. This signifies that the United Kingdom is an active participant in these programmes. Unfortunately, neither in the UK nor in other European colleges is this fully appreciated. Therefore, universities must ensure that all relevant departments are informed of these arrangements and that this information is widely disseminated in their own national and international networks. UUKi has issued a briefing note outlining the agreed-upon arrangement, which universities are allowed to use in spreading the message that the UK will remain in these programmes until the end.

2.3.2 Adopting Transnational Education (TNE) project.

The global pandemic has highlighted the precariousness of endeavours that rely on the international mobility of employees and students. This has given the community of international education a special chance to re-evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of

transnational operations from a social, ethical, and environmental standpoint. Consequently, The UK adopted the TNE programme because it helped compensate for losses in staff and students' mobility to the UK. TNE (Transnational Education) is the awarding of degrees in a nation other than the one where the awarding provider is headquartered. With TNE, "students can study for a foreign qualification without leaving their native country" (British Council, 2013, p.12).²⁰ Branch campuses, online instruction, distant learning, joint and dual degree programmes are aspects of TNE but are not restricted to them. TNHE (Transnational Higher education) secures engagement with countries with little mobility to the UK, such as Trinidad and Tobago (more than 11,000 TNE students and fewer than 500 studying in the UK); Oman (more than 21,000 students on UK TNE programmes and fewer than 3,000 in the UK); Zimbabwe (over 9,000 TNE students) and Uganda (over 8,000 TNE students). (Ilieva 2018). Also, through the TNE programme, some 49,000 students studied for UK higher education credentials in mainland China in 2019–20.²¹

Within the EU, an important example of the UK's TNE projects in the EU is that the UK set what is known as the Lancaster Leipzig Campus project in Leipzig, Saxony. The inaugural class of students at Lancaster University's newest campus in Leipzig, in partnership with Navitas, arrived in January 2020. In September 2020, Lancaster University Leipzig would admit its first students to its undergraduate programmes. The university currently offers two foundation programmes. The opportunity to earn a full UK degree from a prestigious university while living in continental Europe is provided by Lancaster University Leipzig. With the help of short-term summer programmes and study abroad opportunities, the student mobility will be promoted between the UK and Germany through this cooperation.

²⁰ Tsiligiris, Vangelis. *TNE and Exporting UK Higher Education, Post-Brexit: Opportunities and Challenges*.

²¹ <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/education/higher/TNE>

Additionally, there will be collaboration with nearby Leipzig companies to provide internships, placements, and graduate jobs for both Lancaster UK and Lancaster Leipzig students. (University). Another crucial UK TNE site in the EU was in Greece. Kate Joyce, Director of Higher Education and Science at the British Council, said that “for UK TNE, Greece is a crucial market. With the evolving mechanisms governing our work in the European Union, the British Council is pleased to support UK universities and our Greek partners in creating new frameworks for collaboration. We anticipate that this programme is just the beginning of a series of initiatives that will help institutions in the UK and other European nations fortify their collaborations and take advantage of the opportunities and challenges presented by a more globalised educational landscape.” In fact, Greece is the top EU host country for UK TNE learners, hosting over 14,000 TNE students in 2018–19.²² .All in all, as Eduardo Ramos, head of transnational education at Universities UK International stated: “... and when you look at the figures for UK universities and their TNE activities, the story is one of major growth,” the TNE programme was growing and successful at this phase. (Mitchell).

2.3.3 EUSS informational campaign for EU students and staff

The UK launched the EU settlement scheme, and to make it widely known by all students it made an informational campaign in favour of the EU students. The Home Office introduced the Scheme in 2019 to manage the registration of EU nationals residing in the UK before its withdrawal from the EU.²³ To remain living in the UK beyond 2020, EU, EEA, or Swiss residents who are students, employees, or members of their families must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. The EU Settlement Scheme will continue to be available to anyone

²² 2021, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/press/british-council-announce-uk-greek-strategic-partnership-education>.

²³

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union_Settlement_Scheme#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20Settlement%20Scheme%20is%20a%20scheme,prior%20to%20its%20departure%20from%20the%20European%20Union.

living in the UK as of or before December 31, 2020, if the UK leaves the EU with an agreement. Applications must be submitted by June 30, 2021, for both staff and students. Those who were residing in the UK on the date of withdrawal will still be eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme, but applications must be submitted by December 31, 2020, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. When the UK leaves the EU, with or without an agreement, the ability of Irish nationals to reside in the UK will remain unaffected. Irish citizens do not need to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme, but their non-Irish or non-British relatives will.²⁴ In brief, the intention of launching the EUSS is to ensure that everyone who is qualified to apply for the government's EU Settlement Scheme is aware of the urgency with which they must move before the 30 June (2021) deadline.

2.3.4 Freezing the tuition fees and its impact on HE

For many students could not afford those higher fees, they were compelled to study elsewhere instead of the UK. Consequently, the government were obliged to do intervene. Historically, tuition fees witnessed sharp changes during this phase especially after the introduction of the TEF, which affected EU students' mobility. This led to reconsider the negative effects of those increasing fees. This finally ended with freezing them at a certain level for some of the years to come. This clearly appeared in a Conservative Party Conference in October 2017 when the prime minister declared that tuition would remain at £9,250. The Prime Minister's statement on adjustments to student funding, made on October 2, 2017, was covered in the library briefing document. From another part, University administrators in England have issued a warning that a combination of government budget restrictions and rising inflation will begin to erode the quality of higher education in a sector that has already had to adjust to a decade of funding reductions.

²⁴ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration/information-for-eu-eea-swiss-students>

Real-term revenue reductions are part of the new financial agreement for universities that ministers unveiled last month as part of broader reforms. The £9,250 cap on annual tuition fees has been in place for the previous five years, and it will stay in place till the start of the 2025 academic year. With suggested minimum grades for core GCSE courses for students applying for loans and reforms that will compel graduates with mid-level lifetime earnings to pay back more of their student debts, the shake-up might also decrease the number of school-leavers attending university. However, according to Alistair Jarvis, chief executive of the Universities UK trade association, it will have the opposite impact. “With decreasing funding, it is getting harder for universities to offer the quality or range of programmes that UK universities are recognised for abroad,” says the report. Furthermore, the financial pressures on the industry, according to UCU general Secretary Jo Grady, demonstrate the necessity of providing universities with full public funding. She declared that “the present funding model is not functioning.” It has led to an unhealthy high reliance on fees, student debt, and a broken market system. (Staton). According to the Russell Group, which represents 24 UK universities, the average deficit per undergraduate taught in the UK will more than double from £1,750 in 2021/22 to around £4,000 in 2024/25, with deficits across all subjects, because of rising student demand, rising costs, and frozen tuition fees up to 2024/25. (Frodsham).

2.3.5 Other policies to attract international students:

In addition to the previously mentioned policies, two other ones were adopted to encourage more inflow of international students. Firstly, The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 contains a provision to make universities provide more information specifically for international students. Section 65 of the Act places a duty on higher education providers to publish higher education information and s65(8) states that when the Office for Students (OfS) determines what information are covered by this duty it must include information

which would be helpful to international students. Under s65(9) the OfS may also consider it appropriate to ask providers to supply information on numbers of international students on HE courses. Secondly, on 16 March 2019, the government launched the International Education Strategy which sets out how the Government aims to preserve and grow the UK's share of the global education market. The Strategy aims to: increase education exports to £35 billion by 2030; grow the numbers of international higher education students studying in the UK to 600,000 by 2030; provide a welcoming environment for international students and develop an increasingly competitive offer by: extending the post-study leave period; considering where the visa process could be improved; supporting employment; and ensuring existing and prospective students continue to feel welcome.

2.4 Conclusion

According to the terms of the Withdrawal Accord, an agreement reached between London and Brussels in October 2019, the U.K. departed the European Union (EU) on January 31, 2020, ending its 47-year membership in the EU and institutions that came before it. However, most of the agreements that were in effect while the U.K.'s membership in the EU have been maintained during the post-Brexit transition period of standstill. Therefore, the U.K. must continue to abide by all EU laws and regulations, including those governing freedom of movement, cross-border travel, and personal rights, up to the transition period's end on December 31, 2020. This implies that for businesses and the public, very nothing has changed thus far. The relationship between the EU and UK being unchanged, the EU students' mobility to the UK stayed unaffected by Brexit until the end of 2020, and consequently, the EU students number kept increasing during that period. As for non-EU students, their number continued increasing with higher rates than the EU ones. As for students' tuition fees and loans, they both increased and caused higher education students' debts. The government reaction was to freeze the tuition fees at a cap of 9,250 for the next of five years (until the end of the year 2021-2022). This state of Higher Education in the UK continued until the end of transitional period (December 31, 2020), after which things tend to change.

CHAPTER THREE: FURTHER CHANGES IN THE UK'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR AFTER (01/01/2021)

3.1 Introduction

After the extension periods for negotiations and the transition period, The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on January 1, 2021, and the consequences have been felt in every area, including higher education. Brexit has put an end to the previously enjoyed Free Movement of People by UK nationals in Europe and European citizens in the UK. Following Brexit, EU students wishing to study in the UK must verify they have the necessary visa. The student route visa in the United Kingdom now operates on a points-based basis, and students must complete English language criteria. Students may also be required to show proof of financial stability. There are time limits on when a student may submit these applications, where a student can submit them from, and how long a student can stay on a student visa. Visas must also be purchased, together with a healthcare surcharge and any medical tests required as a condition of admission. It is worth remembering, however, that EU students and their families studying in the UK up until June 30th, 2021, will have the right to reside under the EU settlement scheme. This means they will be able to live in the United Kingdom under either Settled Status or Pre-settled Status. There are also changes for UK students wishing to study in Europe but measuring them is more difficult. Students must now consider the requirements of the country in which they wish to study and may need to apply for residency, visas, and healthcare. It is also envisaged that tuition fees for UK students may fluctuate, albeit this will depend on the country of study.²⁵

²⁵ <https://www.sovereignmagazine.co.uk/2021/07/21/the-effects-of-brex-it-on-higher-education-students-in-the-uk/>

3.2 The effects of EU Settlement Scheme

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is a scheme or procedure launched by the UK Home Office on 21st January 2019 that people must follow to ensure their long-term status in the UK as holders of EU rights. Both restricted leave to enter and remain (referred to as “pre-settled status”) and indefinite leave to enter and remain (referred to as “settled status”) are awarded to successful applicants under the programme. If a person can prove they have resided in the UK for at least five years, settled status may be awarded. But anyone who has resided in the UK for less than five years is given pre-settled status. After five years of residing in the UK, people can seek for established status (rather than 5 years from the date they received pre-settled status).²⁶ All existing students and their families were required to submit an EU Settlement Scheme application to keep these privileges when the UK leaves the EU. If a student arrived in the UK prior to December 31, 2020, the application deadline was June 30, 2021. To be eligible for either status, a student must not have spent more than 6 months outside of the UK in a 12-month period, unless he was away for a compelling cause in which case, he could have taken up to 12 months off in a single instance. Both statuses provide the same status in the UK as that of a UK citizen, including access to the NHS (National Health Service) for medical care. (“EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) – Student Home, University of York”).

A student must be in the United Kingdom by December 31, 2020, midnight, to be eligible to apply for the EUSS. In the UK, there is no set minimum duration. If he lived in the UK for the past six months, he may apply to the EUSS from abroad. If he is not qualified to apply to the EUSS, he might need to apply for a student visa to enter the UK after December

²⁶ *Migrant Children’s Project FACT SHEET EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) Migrant Children’s Project FACT SHEET*. no. December 2020.

31, 2020. This scheme had a clear impact and effect on attracting EU students: According to (HESA 2019-2020/ 2020-2021), the EU students enrolled in the UK universities or institutions were 147,800 in 2019-2020 whereas they were 152,905 in the next year 2020-2021 (the period before the scheme's deadline). Those statistics show an increase in the EU students' number in the UK. This increase resulted from the fact that the EUSS may represent the last opportunity for EU students to stay and study at the UK at ease before measures could be tightened afterwards. Also, since the Scheme's debut in 2019, the Home Office reports that more than 5.4 million EU applications have been submitted.²⁷

3.3 Visa, visa costs and visa extension

As from July 1, 2021, After the EUSS deadline, individuals from the EU, EEA, and Switzerland, as well as their family members, must either have a valid visa or a UK immigration status to enter the country. Without the EU Settlement Scheme, visitors must now enter the UK using a passport rather than a national ID card. Students who enter the UK without a visa are immediately issued a Standard Visitor visa. One is eligible to apply for a standard visitor visa if he is visiting the UK for any of the following reasons: Travel, visiting friends or family, a six-month study period, attending exhibitions or conferences without a formal invitation, participating in sports...

Unless a student have "settled status", it is most likely a student will need a visa to study in the UK. If a student arrived in the UK before 31 December 2020, and a student have "settled status", a student don't need a visa to study in the UK. To be eligible to apply for a student visa, a student needs to be able to score seventy points represented as follows. Fifty points: for "Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies" (CAS). That demonstrates that you have fulfilled the course requirement, accepted qualification requirement, level of study

²⁷ "EU Settlement Scheme awareness campaign launched | nottinghamcvs.co.uk" Nottinghamcvs, 3 Jun. 2021, <https://www.nottinghamcvs.co.uk/news-and-events/news-articles/eu-settlement-scheme-awareness-campaign-launched>. Accessed 19 Sep. 2022.

requirement, and study location requirement. And the last ten points for “Financial requirement.” They concern finances. Except if you are a citizen of a nation that exempts you from presenting documentary proof, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the necessary funds to pay for your tuition, housing, and maintenance (living expenses) in the UK. (“Points-Based System – Study at St Andrews – University of St Andrews”). And ten points: for “English language proficiency.” Students who are joining the university to pursue degree-level studies and who are not native English speakers must demonstrate their English language proficiency. Depending on the level of study and the subject, the university will need higher levels of English competence. Issuing a student visa necessitates costs; a student visa costs £348 if applied for outside of the UK, and a student must pay the same amount for any dependants. (*“The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: An Introduction for EU, EEA and Swiss Students.”*).

A student will need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of a student application, which gives a student access to the UK’s National Health Service on the same basis as a UK permanent resident. A student will receive a 25% discount on the Immigration Health Surcharge. The discounted Immigration Health Surcharge is £470 for Student visa holders. The restrictions caused by students’ visa and its costs led to decrease of EU incoming students to the UK. The government and the sector reacted to this issue by granting visa extension for EU students: as part of a package of government initiatives to increase the number of foreign students after Brexit, international students will be granted visa extensions of up to a year to hunt for employment in the UK. As of now, students are only permitted to stay for four months after graduating, hence this change from the norm. There is no cap on the number of international students who can attend UK universities, the Department for Education (DfE) said while introducing the approach. The post-study leave time will be increased for undergraduate, master’s, and doctorate students to six months and a year,

respectively, to ensure that the UK continues to draw them in and welcome them. “Relax” was the criteria so that international students can stay and work in the UK, according to a report. The declaration suggested the government might also think about “how the visa procedure could be improved for applicants and boosting student employment.”

A global education strategy featuring a 30% rise in international students in UK higher education over the next ten years will be unveiled by the DfE and the Department for International Trade in addition to the extended visas. By 2030, this would increase the number of international students attending British universities from 460,000, including over 140,000 from the EU. This is a lofty goal considering that EU students would have to pay higher tuition after Brexit and won't be able to access student loans.(Adams 1). Many students benefited from the offer of visa extension while others opted for other EU countries.

3.4 Alternatives for EU students after 2021

Since attending university in the UK typically carries a hefty price tag (currently £9,250 per year for undergraduate home/EU students), many students find themselves with significant student loan debt to repay once they have earned their degree and are employed. Other students may even find themselves reconsidering their decision to pursue an academic career altogether. Although having a degree can be immensely helpful and open a wide range of professional prospects for graduates, it is not the only route to a fulfilling career. For instance, other routes can include *Apprenticeships*, which often include professional and academic training and can run anywhere from one to five years. A variety of apprenticeship programmes are offered in the UK for a variety of positions, primarily in industries including engineering and manufacturing, accountancy and finance, marketing, and even the media; *Foundation degree*, whose primary goal is to equip students with the solid foundation and

skillset they need to enter the job. It is typically offered by universities and colleges that have a relationship and is regarded as a level 5 qualification.

Foundation degrees can take up to three or four years to finish when studied part-time, compared to two years for full-time degrees. Although they are not free, foundation degrees cost about £2,600 per year for full-time study, which is significantly cheaper than a bachelor's degree. Part-time education has reduced costs, though they can change depending on the programme; *Securing an entry-level job*, which is an excellent substitute for students who have finished high school or college because it does not require formal credentials. You may not even need to have prior work experience for some of these positions, and you can anticipate receiving professional training that is pertinent to your position for the duration of your employment. Accounting, marketing, teaching assistantships, and IT careers in web development or business analysis are just a few of the disciplines where entry-level positions are available. They are normally open permanently and full-time, while some may operate on a temporary basis or with part-time hours; *Self-employment or doing one's own business*: People with a strong business sense may be able to create a well-thought-out plan for working from home, earning money, and starting their own profitable business. Everyone is naturally born with a special skill (or multiple), but to use those skills for financial gain, another set of skills may be necessary (dedication, commitment, independent ability to think and solve problems). (Megraoui).

For those who can continue their higher education studies in the EU27, and due to mobility restriction and unaffordable higher fees especially after the introduction of TEF, many of them headed for other EU countries instead of the once preferred destination- the UK. In a survey entitled “ EU students much less likely to study in UK without home fee status” published in July 2020, When EU students were asked which other places they would explore if higher education in the UK became unaffordable, the majority preferred European

alternatives. The Netherlands was chosen by half of those polled (49%) followed by Germany (36 percent). Another 19% chose France, while 16% chose Ireland.²⁸

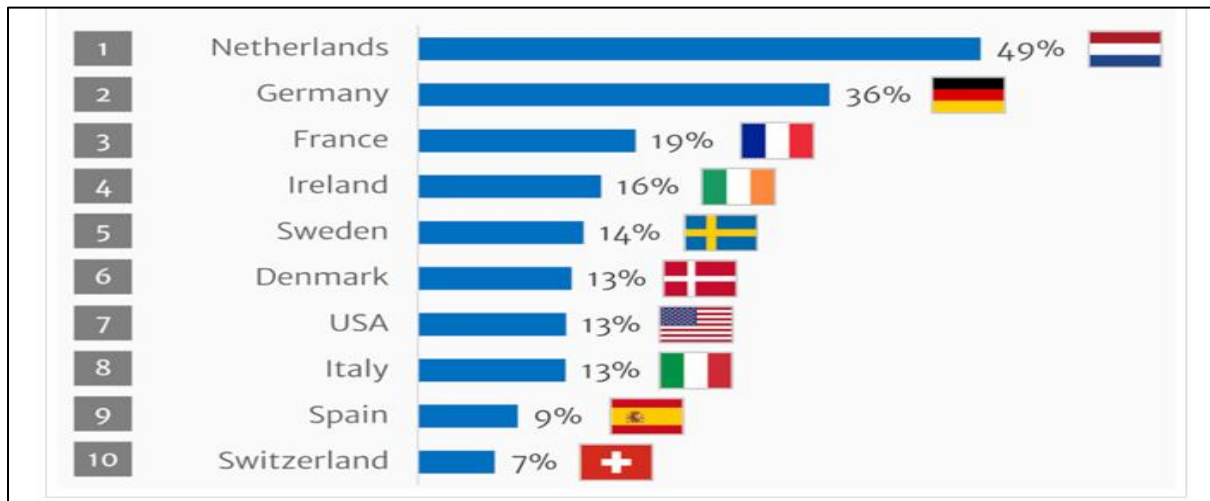


Figure 9 Alternative destinations for EU students

Source: study.edu

3.5 The UK’s substitutes for Erasmus+

After Brexit, The UK was no longer an EU Member State. It has also decided not to participate in the new Erasmus+ programme from 2021 to 2027 as an affiliated third country. The UK will not thus take part in the new programme as a Programme Country. (“Key takeaway messages from discussions between Coimbra Group task group ...”). This UK’s choice is regretted by the European Commission. However, The UK will have some significantly less options for Erasmus+ cooperation projects and exchange in the fields of education, training, students, and sport because of its decision not to participate as an EU Member State. Only a few chances, starting in 2021, will allow UK participation since they are accessible to organisations or people from across the world. Among those chances there were:

²⁸ See: <https://monitor.icef.com/2020/07/survey-eu-students-much-less-likely-to-study-in-uk-without-home-fee-status/>

a- *Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters*: As a member of a global consortium of higher education institutions from across Europe and beyond, UK institutions are eligible to participate in the design and delivery of these Erasmus Mundus joint master programmes. Students from all over the world can enrol in these Erasmus Mundus programmes with the help of EU-funded scholarships. So, UK students will continue to be able to apply for these scholarships, and students from Erasmus Mundus will be eligible to enrol in the programmes at UK universities as well.

b- *Jean Monnet programme*: This initiative aims to advance research on European integration in universities around the world. Universities outside of the EU are the sites of 40% of these projects. This new programme will keep this international component, making it accessible to UK institutions. Some other limited opportunities for mobility between the EU and the UK as a third country may be possible in other actions of the new Erasmus+ programme.

As a compensation for losing the advantages of Erasmus+ programme, the UK tended to establish its own programme: the Turing Scheme. On 24 December 2020, the Prime Minister announced a UK programme to replace the Erasmus scheme – the Turing scheme. It is a student exchange programme established by the United Kingdom Department for Education in 2021 as a replacement for the European Union Erasmus Programme following Brexit. The programme offers financial support for global opportunities in education and training. It opens the possibility for UK higher education institutions to provide their students with life-altering experiences all around the world. The Turing scheme, according to a news statement from the DfE, will fund 35,000 student placements beginning in September 2021. The programme will cost £100 million in 2021–2022; however, future spending reviews will outline funding for the programme for the following academic years. The new programme would be focused on students from underprivileged backgrounds, according to the DfE.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said the following about the programme: Now that the possibility of studying abroad has increased, more students from all backgrounds will be able to profit from the opportunity. We have created a truly global programme that is centred on our priorities, offers real value for the money, and plays a significant role in keeping our promise to advance the United Kingdom.

These chances will help our students and employers alike, as well as enhance our relationships with allies around the world. Vivienne Stern, Director of Universities UK International commented: While we are undoubtedly sorry that the UK will no longer participate in the Erasmus programme, it is significant that the government has committed to a generously financed programme despite present economic challenges. According to a Guardian story, "British colleges may lose out on cash because the new scheme is not likely to pay students travelling to the UK, as Erasmus does today. In an earlier analysis, it was estimated that the UK would lose more than £200 million annually if it stopped participating in Erasmus". The decision to exit the Erasmus+ programme and the form of its successor have been met with disappointment by the Scottish and Welsh governments. To complement the Turing Scheme, the Welsh Government on February 2, 2022, announced Taith, which is Welsh for "journey", an international learning exchange programme. According to the Scottish Government, it will also create its own international exchange programme. The Irish government is putting the finishing touches on a plan to keep Northern Ireland's higher education students eligible for the Erasmus+ programme. (Joe Lewis 5). Since 2014, the value of the programme to the economy has been projected to be worth £340 million yearly, with the government estimating that it generates at least £7 in value for every £1 in public funds it spends. ²⁹

²⁹ Hubble, Sue et al., *The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011*. no. January 2021

Moreover, The Turing Scheme does not cover tuition fees for UK participants who are completing an international study placement. According to Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, the government anticipates that host universities will reduce tuition fees for participants in the new programme. When compared to Erasmus, the Turing Scheme received funding for the following three years, including £110 million for the academic year 2022–2023 at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review in 2021. However, the Erasmus+ budget will increase from €14.7 billion to €26 billion for the 2020–2027 period. According to the DfE, the new scheme performs better than the EU one in year one by more than half. Under the new Turing student exchange programme, 40,000 students and pupils from 150 nations will study and work abroad. 28,000 of these jobs are reserved for university students. According to the DfE, this compared to 18,300 through the EU's Erasmus+ scheme.

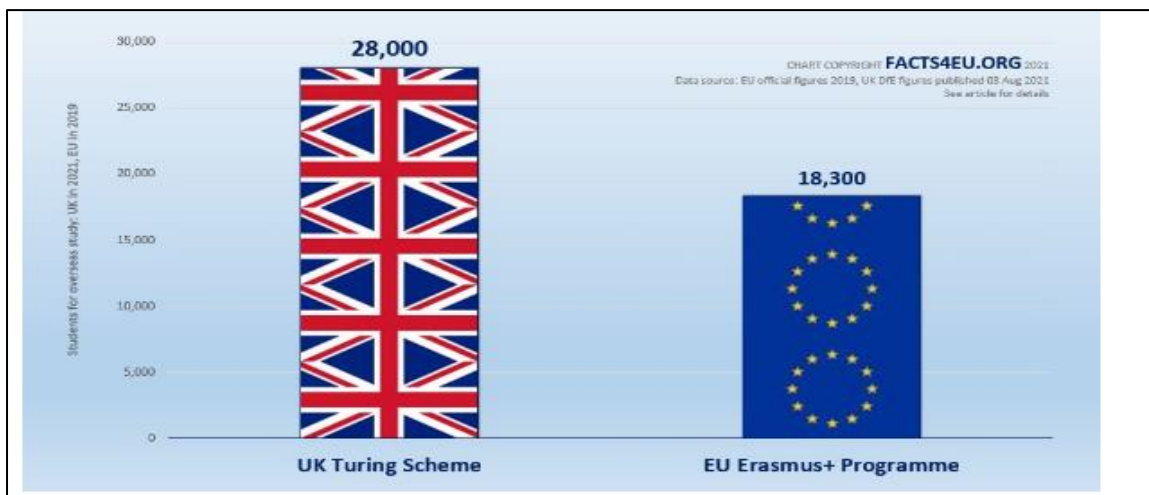


Figure 10 Turing Scheme Vs Erasmus+ for UK students

Source: UK Department for Education statement 03 Aug 2021

3.6 Expanding TNE for UK higher education (TNHE)

A major area of concentration for the UK sector has been the expansion of transnational (higher) education because of its importance in making up for losses in students' recruitment due to the mobility restrictions. This latter has been viewed as an alternative method of

diversifying revenue and raising one's profile abroad during a time when the recruitment of international students has stalled and the UK has lost market share to rivals like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.(Healey 13). UK TNE has been hosted by nations and territories from over the world; Over 225 nations and territories received UK degrees in 2020–21. Asia, which is home to about half of all students, is where most UK TNE is delivered. The EU, the Middle East, and Africa are placed after this. What follows is an example of students' numbers in the hosting countries: China (61,495), Malaysia (48,460), Sri Lanka (37,175), Singapore (27,875), Egypt (23,805), and Hong Kong (22,480) were the countries with the most UK TNE students enrolled in 2020–21. For all UK TNE students, the top five host countries account for 38.9% of the total. ("The Scale of UK Transnational Education").

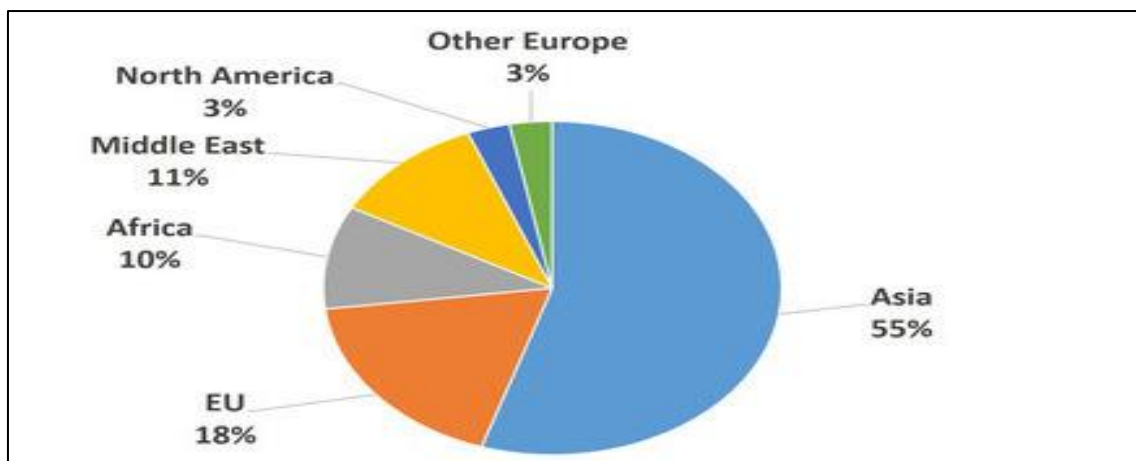


Figure 11 Hosting territories for UK TNHE

Source: HESA

When the three major distance learning providers are excluded, TNE student's enrolment has increased by 60% in the EU during the past four years after the referendum. To lessen some of the more unfavourable effects of Brexit, it is believed that this is mostly motivated by a desire to fortify relationships and set up roots on the continent. New campuses for Coventry University in Wroclaw, Lancaster University in Leipzig, Queen Mary University of London's

campus in Malta, and Northumbria University's campus in Amsterdam are just a few developments that seem to suggest that expansion could continue.

Moreover, many of the 215 million students who are geographically immobile could welcome the chance to study for an internationally recognised certification offered by a prestigious foreign university in their own homeland. This enormous untapped market is what has motivated UK institutions to fund TNE initiatives.(Healey 14). However, the environment for TNE post-covid has altered. To support the newly reinvented world of teaching and learning, secure and dependable global connectivity is essential, no matter where students are in the world. The UK government's International Education Strategy can be aided by digital technology and data. Universities should seize the new opportunities that the digital transformation of this industry might bring. (Wilkinson). According to (Statista 2022), the number of students enrolled in higher education in the United Kingdom in 2019/2020 and 2020/2022 is 2.53 million and 2.75 million, respectively, with the UK's students included. Other statistics showed that in 2020-2021 there were about 510,835 students included. Other statistics showed that in 2020-2021 there were about 510,835 students were studying for a UK degree overseas.³⁰ And now more than 700,000 students from all around the world are pursuing UK university degrees abroad. Some people choose to study for a UK qualification at home, while others choose to go abroad. Students who select this route gain access to the best educational materials available anywhere in the globe, receive comparable academic support services, and travel abroad.³¹ In addition, some information on students pursuing UK higher education overseas through online learning or transnational education (TNE) programmes was provided by HESA. The data on TNE only

³⁰ "International Facts and Figures 2022." <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/international-facts-and-figures-2022>, Accessed 15 Jul. 2022.

³¹ "UK transnational education | British Council." <https://www.britishcouncil.my/study-uk/uk-transnational-education>, Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

includes students engaged in distance learning or TNE courses and excludes those enrolled in a typical UK course but unable to travel to the UK due to the epidemic.

The number of TNE/distance learning students increased significantly in both EU and non-EU regions, with overall enrolments up 8% annually in the EU and 14% abroad in non-EU nations. The increase was not restricted to a single type of study; both in-person and online learning opportunities saw significant growth. The pandemic is also a factor in the surge in TNE, as travel restrictions and lockdowns have made studying for a UK degree at home more appealing. Although the overall enrollment statistics are encouraging, with online enrollments making up for a reduction in onshore migration, a closer examination of the variations between nations reveals that the headline figures may not fully reflect the situation. Due to changes in the UK's post-study visa policies, some nations have had rapid growth, which hides significant losses in other regions of the world where the epidemic was of greater concern. The UK's comparatively excellent result was influenced by the fact that it continued to accept overseas students while its main rivals either shuttered completely or partially. Overall, the recently revealed data is highly encouraging and shows that the Covid-19 pandemic did not have the disastrous impact on the enrollment of overseas students at UK universities in 2020–21 that many had predicted. (Prest). These statistics showed an increase in TNHE students' number, which suggested the UK's interest in promoting and expanding TNE project abroad.

3.7 Conclusion

With Brexit now a reality, demand from EU international students to the UK is predicted to fall over time. This means that the UK will grow more reliant on non-EU overseas students, creating a far more competitive playing field, as shown by the data. To sustain its dominant market position, the United Kingdom will need to be nimble, initiative-taking, and innovative. Responding to the demands of potential overseas students will be critical for UK universities. Non-EU international students, for example, place a higher emphasis on in-country post-study career options than their European counterparts. This implies that there should be a greater emphasis on post-study work possibilities for overseas students. Inviting more highly trained graduates into the British workforce would be a wise step for the economy, which could use a boost. Finally, while the UK is likely to lose EU students because of Brexit, Ireland is likely to gain. In truth, Ireland is an excellent alternative for European students looking to enhance their English, study at world-class universities, extend their cultural experiences, and stay near to home. None of the other major English-speaking destinations supply all these advantages. (Clemens).

For the UK to attract both EU and international students, it adopted new policies: granting visa extension to attract more international students and encourage inward mobility. Also, the EU settlement scheme served much as push factor for EU students to move and study in the UK because it presented for them the last opportunity to study or live in the UK before measures get tougher. These two policies worked for the enhancement of inward mobility of students to the UK universities and institutions. With respect to outward mobility, the UK implemented the Turing Scheme. It is a one-way programme concentrating on the UK's students studying abroad and not the opposite way. Indeed, this scheme exclusive focus on student outward mobility stands for a loss of opportunities for EU higher education teaching staff as it does not support inward mobility. Nevertheless, it allows UK's students to

earn grants to be able to travel internationally. It also helps in covering costs like living costs. However, the Turing Scheme is not without its detractors, with many arguing it falls short in scope and vision compared to its European contemporary. (Walsh). That is because it is a one-way scheme (it only supports UK outward students' mobility).

The decision to exit the Erasmus+ programme and the form of its successor have been met with disappointment by the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish governments. Thus, the Welsh Government debuted Taith on February 2, 2022, with the tagline "bring the world to Wales and take Wales to the world." The word "journey" in Welsh is "Taith," and that means that Wales cordially invite others to join them on a journey. It is an International Learning Exchange Programme (ILE) for Wales, alongside the Turing Scheme. The programme will make it possible for students and staff, both natives of Wales and those who come to the country to study or work, to continue to gain from international interactions in a manner comparable to the opportunities made possible by Erasmus+, both inside Europe and outside of it. The Welsh Government will invest £65 million in the new programme, which will run from 2022 to 2026. The programme will offer money to students, staff, and learners in universities, further education, vocational education, adult education, youth work settings, and schools so they can complete a term of structured learning or work experience abroad and set up strategic relationships.

Reciprocity will be one of the program's guiding principles. The programme will cover all expenditures associated with the inward mobility of students, teachers, and young people from partner organisations overseas as needed. This will make it possible for partnerships that have already been set up through Erasmus + to continue and contribute to the formation of new ones, enhancing Wales's worldwide reputation and supplying possibilities for individuals who will gain directly from them. Over the course of the first four years, the programme seeks to provide 15,000 Welsh participants with opportunities for international

mobility exchanges, with 10,000 of those participants travelling to Wales to study or work. With a funding from a £65 million investment, this will provide students, young people, teachers, and staff with possibilities from the 2022–2023 academic year until 2027. Also, with sponsored activities beginning in 2022–2023, Cardiff University has committed to take on the comprehensive development of the programme over the following 12 months, collaborating with an advisory board including partners from the education and youth sectors.

Yet, Welsh institutions will still be able to take advantage of Erasmus+ exchanges that were postponed from last year owing to the pandemic while also being eligible to take part in the UK Government's Turing Scheme in 2021/2022. The new programme will then fill up the holes left by Turing, most importantly by committing to long-term funding, keeping the idea of two-way exchanges, and incorporating youth work.³² From another side, according to the Scottish Government, it will also create its own international exchange programme. And as for Ireland, prior to the 2023–24 academic year, the Irish government is putting the last touches on a plan to keep Northern Ireland's higher education students eligible for the Erasmus+ programme.

³² "New International Learning Exchange programme to make good the loss of Erasmus+" | GOV.WALES." <https://gov.wales/new-international-learning-exchange-programme-make-good-loss-erasmus>, Accessed 8 Sep. 2022.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the effects of Brexit on the UK's higher education sector and the measures taken by the government to avoid its negative consequences. It is based on a qualitative, descriptive-analytical method as well as chronology to analyse the data gathered. These data were collected from various sources including reports, articles, and websites. The data gathered were related to the period spanning from some time before referendum of June 23rd well up to now. Through the results gathered, it can be concluded that Brexit has considerable effects on higher education in the UK. These effects started to emerge just after the referendum to reach their peak after the end of transitional period on December 31st, 2020. This dissertation has demonstrated and shown how Brexit affects the higher education in the UK, and how this latter has responded so far to limit the threats or the negative effects. To support this view, the work goes across three periods: pre-Brexit, transitional and post-Brexit periods. Each period was explored separately. Then a comparison was made between them to trace and find any changes in the sector, and finally deducing the impact that Brexit will possibly have on the UK's higher education. Before Brexit, The UK's higher education system was at its peak owing to its membership with the EU.

Consequently, many EU and non-EU higher education students and staff found the UK's universities to be the most alluring and appealing. Because of initiatives like Erasmus and the Bologna Process, students can travel freely from and to the UK without meeting limitations or requiring visas. The lower home fees and loans at the time served as another incentive for those students to move to the UK. This being the case, the UK was chosen over every other EU nation as the preferred study location. This period was included to show the general and normal state of UK's higher education as well as the factors lying behind the growth and development of such sector before Brexit. Then comparison will be made with all

the three periods to figure out the changes in the sector. During the second period, some of the agreements that were in effect while the U. K's membership in the EU have been kept like Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) that supported students' mobility. Others changed and led to challenges for the sector. To name but a few, the drop in number of EU higher education staff in the UK and the increase in tuition fees are examples of such challenges. The UK, thus, was compelled to respond to them by taking some measures like adopting TN(H)E projects in the EU and freezing tuition fees. As from Jan 1st, 2021, with Brexit now as a reality, demand from EU international students to the UK is expected to fall over time. Responding to the demands of potential overseas students will be critical for UK universities. Inviting more highly trained graduates into the British workforce would be a wise step for the economy. Apart from Ireland, which stayed an excellent alternative for European students looking to enhance their English and study at world-class universities, the UK faced new challenges: inability to attract large numbers of EU students unlike before Brexit. The visas and the costs hindered and discouraged the incoming of EU students to the UK.

As a result, a chance was given to the students living in the UK before the end of the transitional period to benefit from the EUSS and avoid the visa restrictions. Another initiative by the UK government to attract EU and international students is promoting and developing the TNE market by setting up more sites in the EU and non-EU countries. The TNE project was launched to compensate for the UK higher education losses in students' mobility. As for the UK' students, the government developed a new scheme that will support its students abroad and increase their competitiveness in the European job market. This scheme known as Turing scheme encourages outward UK students' mobility, but it does not support the inward mobility. This latter was compensated for by setting up and developing TNHE sites in the EU countries. However, the situation in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is different from England. Each adopted its own programme instead of Turing Scheme in England. The Welsh

government introduced Taith as a global learning exchange programme. The Scottish Government has stated that it will likewise develop its own international exchange scheme, and a strategy to maintain Northern Ireland's higher education students' eligibility for the Erasmus+ programme is being finalised by the Irish government. Overall, the situation in UK's higher education has changed after Brexit. New challenge emerged in the sector. The government adopted new policies to overcome the difficulties of post-Brexit period.

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