

The state of the UK's global engagement: trends, opportunities and challenges

Centre for Global Higher Education Seminar
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Janet Ilieva, PhD

Director and Founder
Education Insight

Vangelis Tsiligiris, PhD

Nottingham Trent University

Purpose

- Our approach to global engagement in HE is inspired by the UN SDGs: they provide a framework against which to measure how higher education institutions (HEIs) engage globally for the purpose of teaching and research
- The Global Engagement is measured through a composite index, which assesses the state HEIs' engagement across 32 indicators, using statistical information from HESA, OfS, Scival
- The Education Insight Global Engagement Index (GEI) aims to support the development of institutional global engagement strategies
 - It is a tool which aims to support HEIs in quantifying their international activities and measure their success
 - It captures most dimensions of global engagement, which enables HEIs to focus only on areas they consider important
- A limitation of GEI is that it measures only quantifiable activities – our recommendation is always to use it alongside qualitative evidence

Emerging global engagement agenda

- Early stages of international activity concentrated on international student mobility driven by financial motives
- Megatrends (technological acceleration, capacity building, sustainability goals) and systemic events (Global Financial Crisis, COVID-19) have pushed for a more sustainable and broader global engagement agenda
- Critical discourses on the dominance of the “North-to-South” internationalisation model
- Lack of strategic alignment between policy-makers and HEIs
- There has been substantial growth in the number of UK HEIs with a clearly signposted “Global Engagement” strategy, organisation and leadership roles

Examples of the Global Engagement Approach of UK HEIs

University Name	Global Engagement
University of Nottingham	Global Engagement Strategic Delivery Plan to enhance international experience, global curricula, campus culture, international partnerships, international mobility, global reputation
University of Leeds	Global Strategy “We are committed to making a difference to the world we live in. We are an outstanding research university, carrying out world-changing research and innovation through international collaboration to maximise global impact.”
University of Bristol	Developing internationalisation and Global Engagement : Global partnerships, Global academic programme portfolio, Global civic experience, Global student recruitment and support, Global reputation
University of Exeter	Global Strategy : “Through establishing a Global Strategy rather than an international strategy we are reflecting our ambition for two way engagement across the world to drive forward research and education.”
University College London	Global Engagement – “Global Engagement (GE) facilitates and strengthens collaborations between people at UCL and diverse partners across the world. We are driven by the belief that with the right mix of minds, anything is possible.”
University of Sheffield	Global Engagement “As a world-leading university, we believe that creating opportunities for staff and students internationally is the best way to tackle the pressing issues of our contemporary global society.”
University of Edinburgh	Responsible Global Engagement initiative : “Global engagement is at the heart of what we do. Our vision is to make the world a better place and to address tomorrow’s greatest challenges. We work without boundaries to build innovative global partnerships for research, teaching and impact.”
University of Sussex	Global Engagement : Our commitment to internationalisation is reflected in our engagement with partners around the world. At Sussex we are committed to developing and maintaining relationships with a network of partners who share our commitment to building a better world.
King's College London	Global Engagement : Global reach is a core pillar of King’s Internationalisation strategy; it is King’s ambition to engage and work collaboratively in every region of the world, through the development of equitable partnerships with like-minded institutions, membership in university networks, and engagement with key regional and national stakeholders.
University of Birmingham	Strategic Global Engagement : The University collaborates with partners across the world to produce ground-breaking research, deliver innovative teaching, and to create opportunities for students and staff to gain international experience.

Global Engagement

Common themes

Global teaching and research partnerships

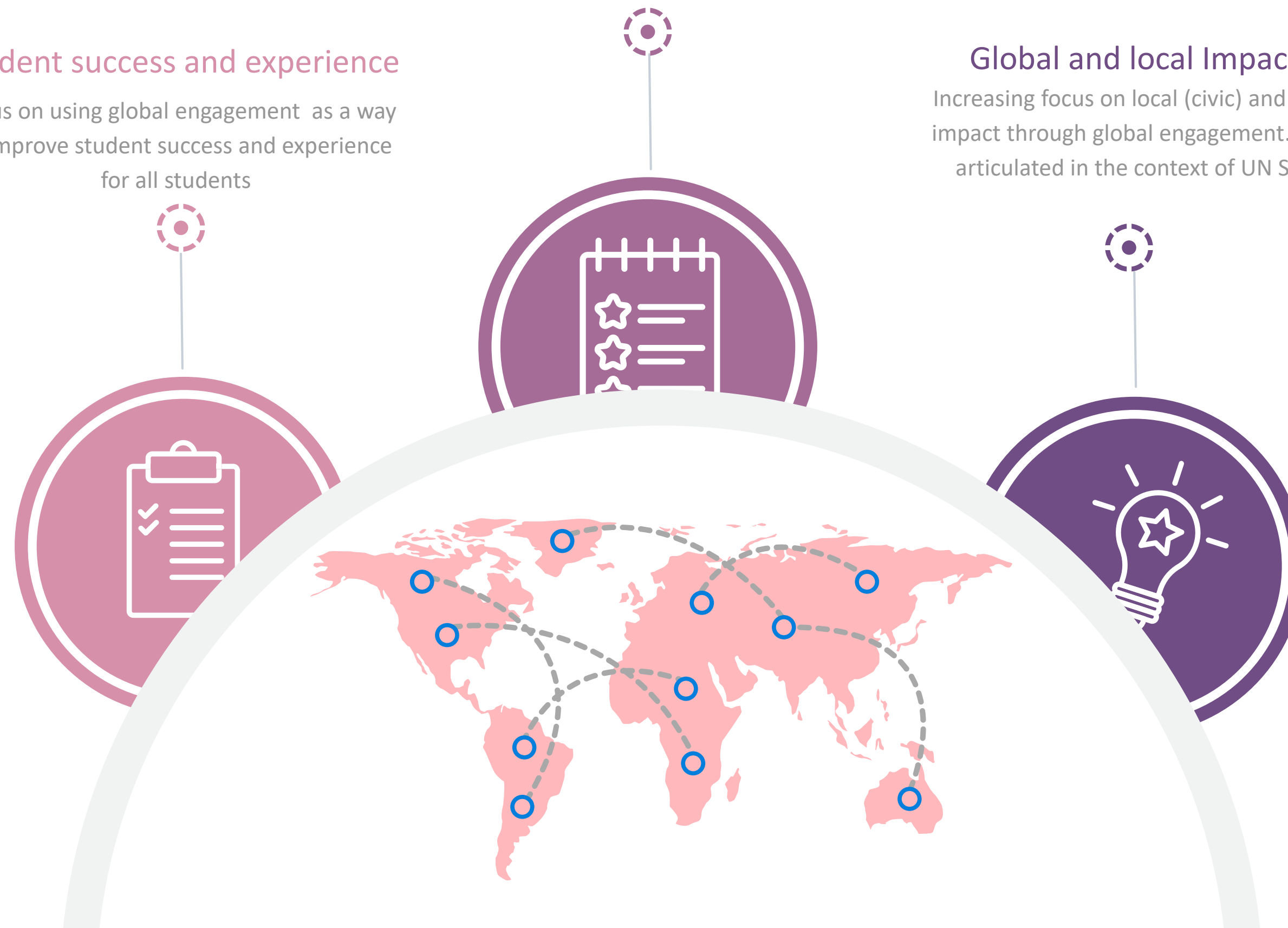
An emphasis on global partnerships with a range of objectives, including teaching, research and innovation

Student success and experience

Focus on using global engagement as a way to improve student success and experience for all students

Global and local Impact

Increasing focus on local (civic) and global impact through global engagement. Often articulated in the context of UN SDGs



Structure of the Global Engagement Index

Student engagement – demand side

1 International Student Growth and Diversity

1.1 Market share changes (First Degree; PGT and PGR)

1.2 Proportion of International Students (First degree; PGT and PGR)

1.3 Geographical Diversification (First degree, PGT and PGR)

2. Student Success

2.1 Continuation Rate of First Degree Int'l Students

2.2 Student Satisfaction (NSS) - awaiting

2.3 Graduate Outcomes (omitted – very low GO response rate – 18%)

3. Sustainable development and student recruitment from ODA (excl upper middle-income countries)

3.1 Proportion of Fee Waivers for PhD Students from ODA Countries

3.2 Recruitment from ODA Countries (First degree; PGT and PGR)

3.3 Sustainable development themes in the curriculum

4 Transnational education

4.1 Transnational Education for Capacity Building

4.1.1 Proportion of Postgraduate Transnational Education

4.1.2 Proportion of PG Transnational Education in ODA Countries (excl. upper middle-income countries)

4.2 Delivery of Transnational Education

4.2.1 Proportion of Transnational Education

4.2.2 Proportion of Transnational Education in ODA Countries

5. Study Abroad and Internationalisation at Home

5.1 Proportion of Students with Study Abroad Experience

5.2 Proportion of Modern Foreign Language Students

5.3 Proportion of Incoming Visiting and Exchange Students

5.4 International Themes Within the Curricula

Institutional Infrastructure – supply side

1 Proportion of International Academic Staff

1.1 The Proportion of Non-UK Junior Researchers

1.2 The Proportion of Non-UK Senior Researchers and Professors

1.3 The Proportion of Non-UK Senior Leadership Team

2 Environmental impact

2.1 Sustainability of Institution (People & Planet)

2.2 Staff Air Travel Carbon Footprint per Student

3 International engagement and research

3.1 Proportion of Non-UK HEBCI Income

3.2 Impact of Research Produced in International Collaboration



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Sector-level performance is tracked against 30
measures

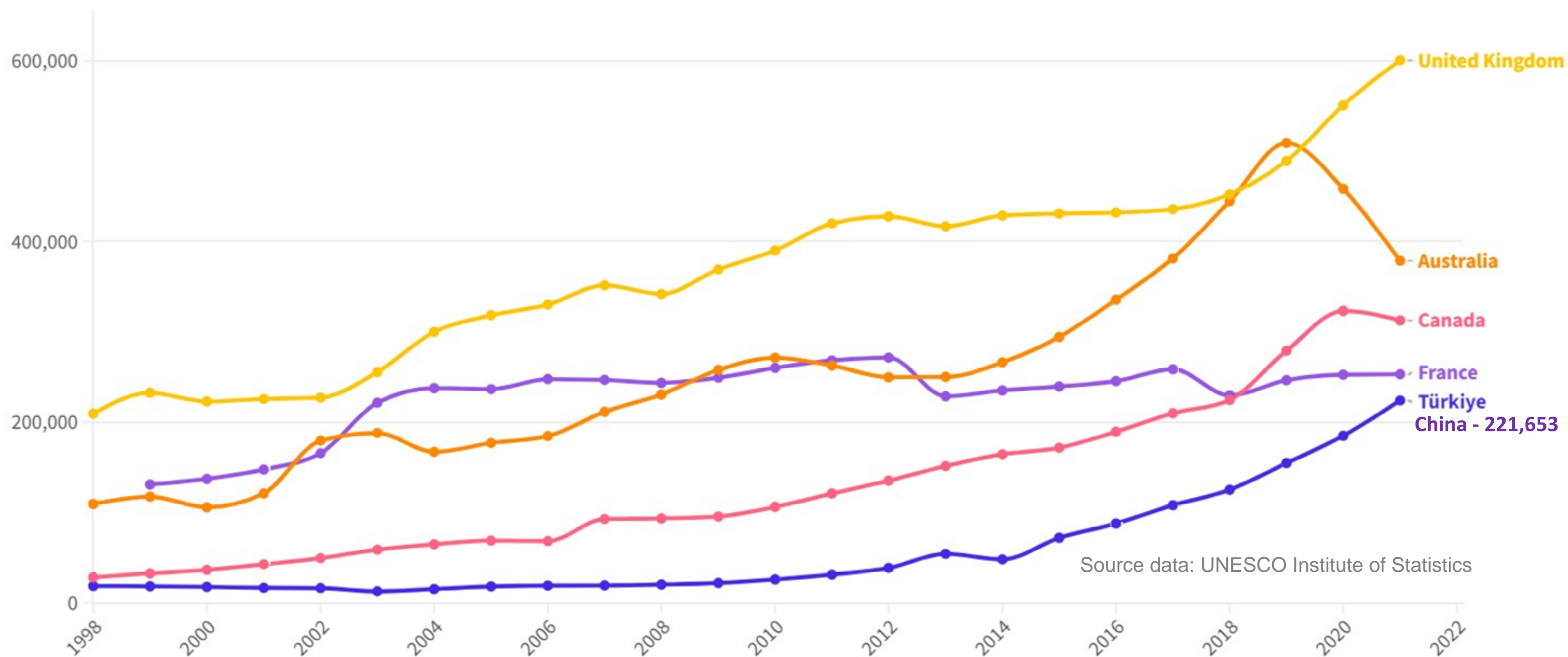
GEI enables monitoring of the UK HE system: Student engagement

Highlights for 2021-22

- There was significant growth in the UK's market share of globally mobile students, but this is balanced with HEIs' geographical diversification of student recruitment
- Notable declines in the international students' success measures – at least the ones we know about. More worryingly, we no longer know about international students' graduate outcomes
- However, the UK is attracting more students from lower-middle-income countries, lower-income and least-developed countries and territories. These increases in the number of PhD students from these countries on tuition fee waivers
- Significant increase in TNE- including postgraduate TNE and that delivered in ODA countries and territories (excl. high middle-income states)
- There is a recovery in non-degree mobility (inbound and outbound) and continued declines across the internationalisation at home metrics, except for international themes within the curriculum

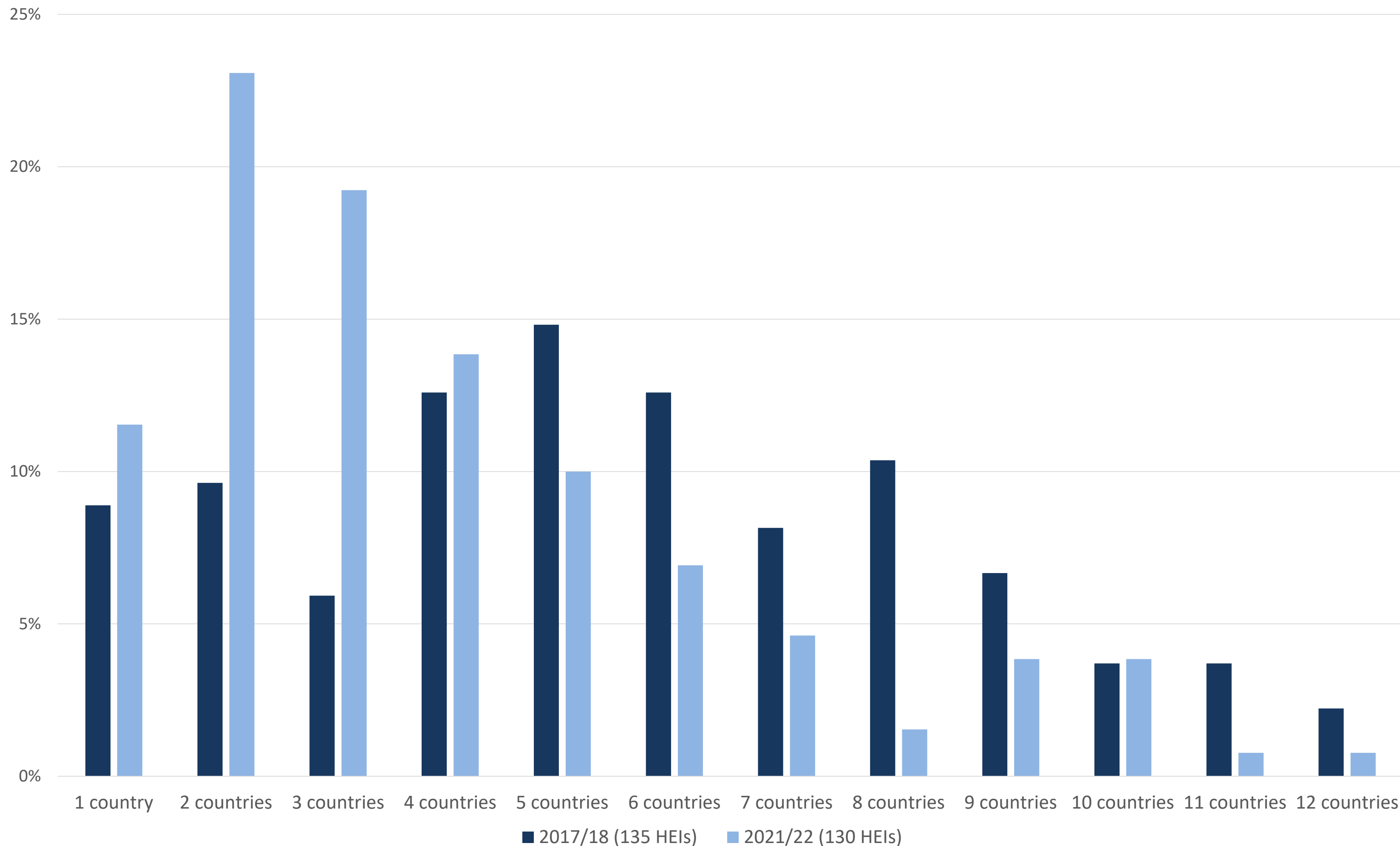
GEI enables monitoring of the UK HE system

There was a significant growth in the UK's market share of globally mobile students in 2021-22



Recent growth was a result of an increasing concentration of international students from a small number of countries

The number of countries making up the majority of full-time first-degree entrants in each HEI

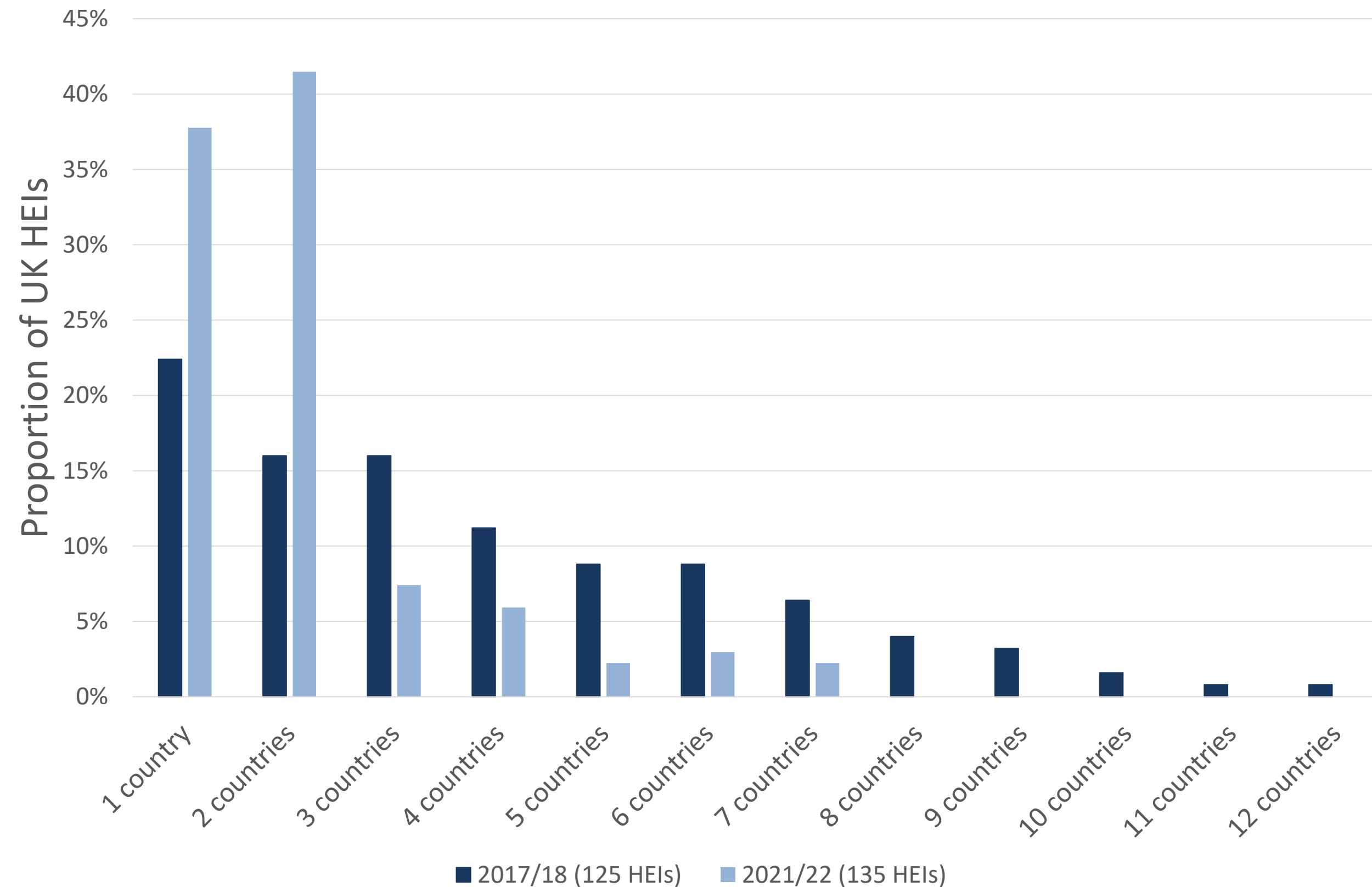


- There was a comparatively balanced distribution of first-degree entrants between 2017/18 and 2020/21
- However, a notable shift in 2021/22 took place compared to previous years

Source: Analysis of HESA Standard Registration Population. Any institutions with fewer than 50 entrants (new students) have been suppressed from this analysis.

There is a very high level of concentration of master's students in just 1-2 countries

The number of countries making up the majority of full-time master's students in each HEI

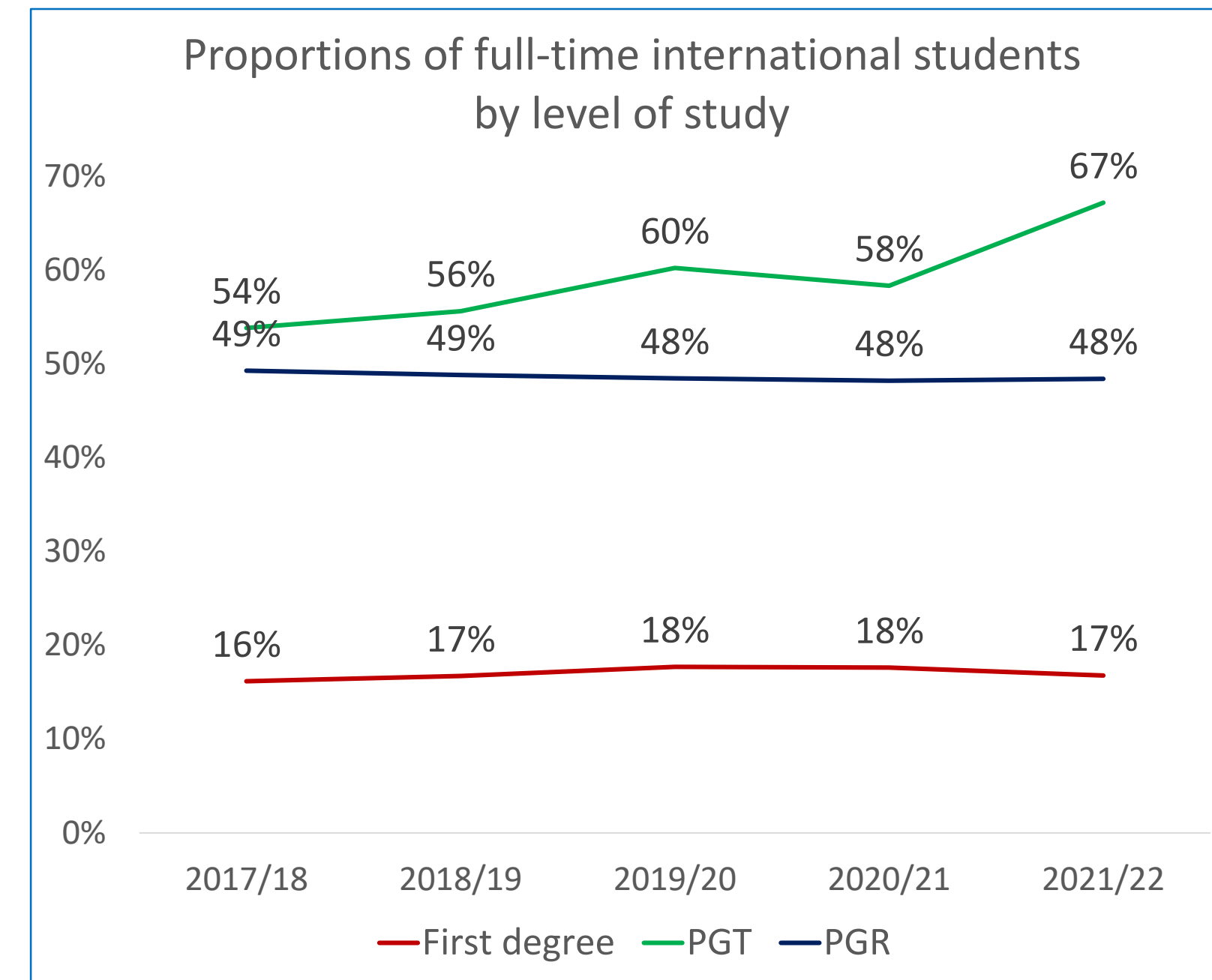


- Almost four-fifths of all HEIs in 2021/22 recruited more than half of their master's entrants from 1-2 countries:
 - The proportion of HEIs sourcing at least half of the masters from one country increased from 22% in 2017/18 to 38% in 2021/22
 - whereas those recruiting from 2 countries increased from 16% to 42% over the same period

Source: Analysis of HESA Standard Registration Population. Any institutions with fewer than 50 entrants (new students) have been suppressed from this analysis.

Summary: international student recruitment

International Student Growth and Diversity	2021-22
Proportion of fulltime International First Degree Students (fulltime)	▼
Proportion of fulltime international PGT Students	▲
Proportion of fulltime international PGR students	■
Market share changes - fulltime International First Degree Students	▼
Market share changes - fulltime International PGT Students	▲
Market share students - fulltime international PGR students	▼
Geographical Diversification of fulltime international First Degree students	▼
Geographical Diversification of fulltime international PGT students	▼
Geographical Diversification of fulltime international PGR students	▼



Source: Analysis of HESA Standard Registration Population.

Legend	
Decline	▼
No change	■
Increase/improvement	▲

The shift in the student recruitment markets is affecting the students' success measures

International students in the UK have a low non-continuation rate

- ❑ The UK has a great competitive advantage over other countries regarding students' high completion rates.
- ❑ International students have a low non-continuation however, this has changed significantly over the past few years. If China is excluded from the non-EU data, the non-continuation for non-EU rises to 8.3 per cent.

Students' domicile/entry cohorts FT first degree	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
UK	6.8%	7.7%	6.6%	7.7%
EU	5.1%	6.5%	6.5%	8.2%
Non-EU	3.0%	3.9%	4.9%	6.4%

Source: Analysis of HESA Standard Registration Population.

International students' satisfaction with their academic course (NSS) – break in the time series because of NSS changes in England in 2023

For England, we are substituting the question of overall satisfaction with Q9: “How well has your course developed the knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?”

Impact of the pandemic on last year's level of satisfaction with the academic course – the importance of this area will grow

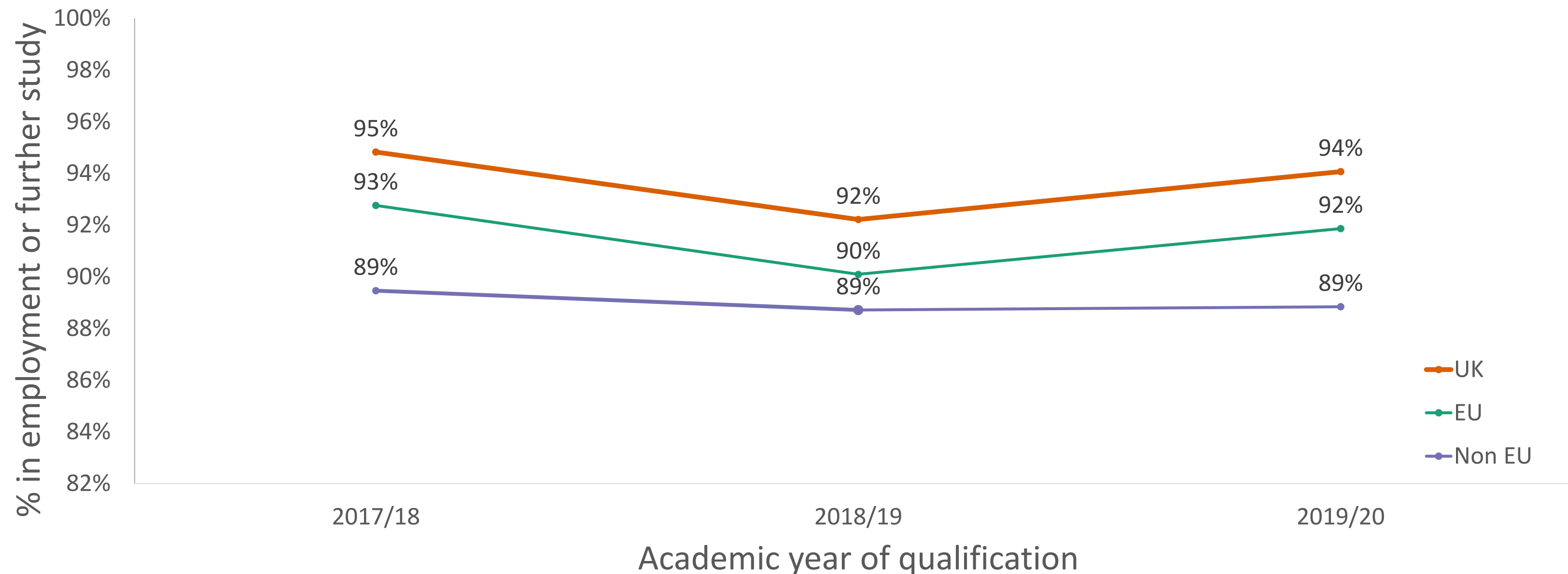
Region of domicile	Q27 Agreement Rate (2019)	Q27 Agreement Rate (2020)	Q27 Agreement Rate (2021)	Q27 Agreement Rate (2022)	Q32 Scotland, Wales and NI; Q9 for England 2023
EU (excluding UK)	81.28%	80.33%	75.15%	77.04%	-
Rest of World	84.05%	83.74%	77.74%	80.06%	-
UK	83.76%	82.68%	75.20%	75.80%	-

Data sources: 2019, 2020 and 2021 NSS results; Analyst: Office for Students, Information for Students Team

Response to FOI request

Graduate Outcomes – discontinued time series because of a very low response rate of 18% (down from 36% in the previous year)

UK students have the highest proportion of students in employment or further study



Source: HESA Graduate Outcomes data. Calculations are based on all first-degree qualifiers to UK institutions who have known outcomes on the Graduate Outcomes Survey

Summary: Student Success

2. Student Success	
<i>2.1 Continuation Rate of First Degree Int'l Students</i>	▼
<i>2.2 Student Satisfaction (NSS) - awaiting</i>	
<i>2.3 Graduate Outcomes (omitted – very low GO response rate – 18%)</i>	?

Legend	
Decline	
No change	
Increase/improvement	

The drop in graduate outcome responses poses serious concerns about universities' commitment to graduate outcomes of international students.

We have excluded the data from the analysis to avoid misinterpretation based on limited data.

Sustainable development and ODA recruitment (ODA excludes upper middle-income countries)

3. Sustainable development and student recruitment from ODA (Lower Middle Income, Low Income and LDCs)

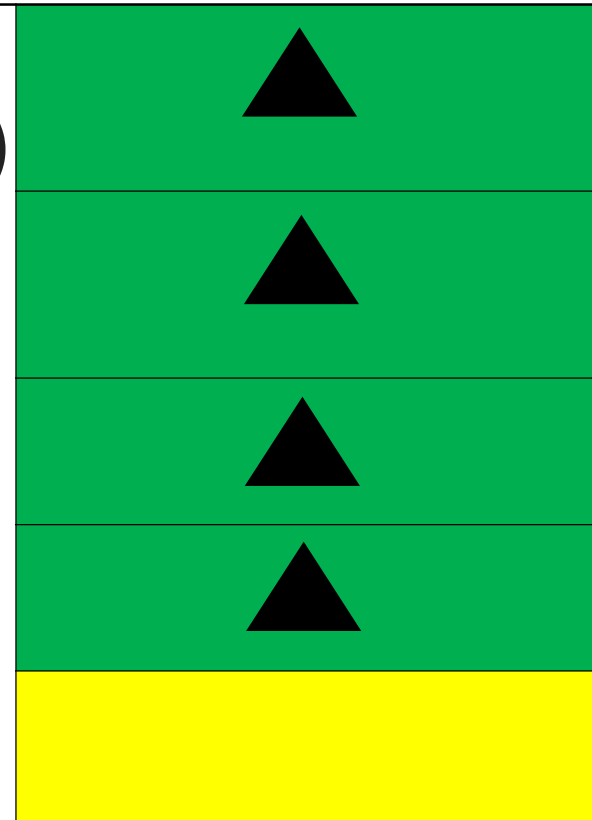
The proportion of Fee Waivers for PhD Students from ODA Countries (excl upper middle-income countries & territories)

Recruitment from ODA Countries of full-time First Degree students

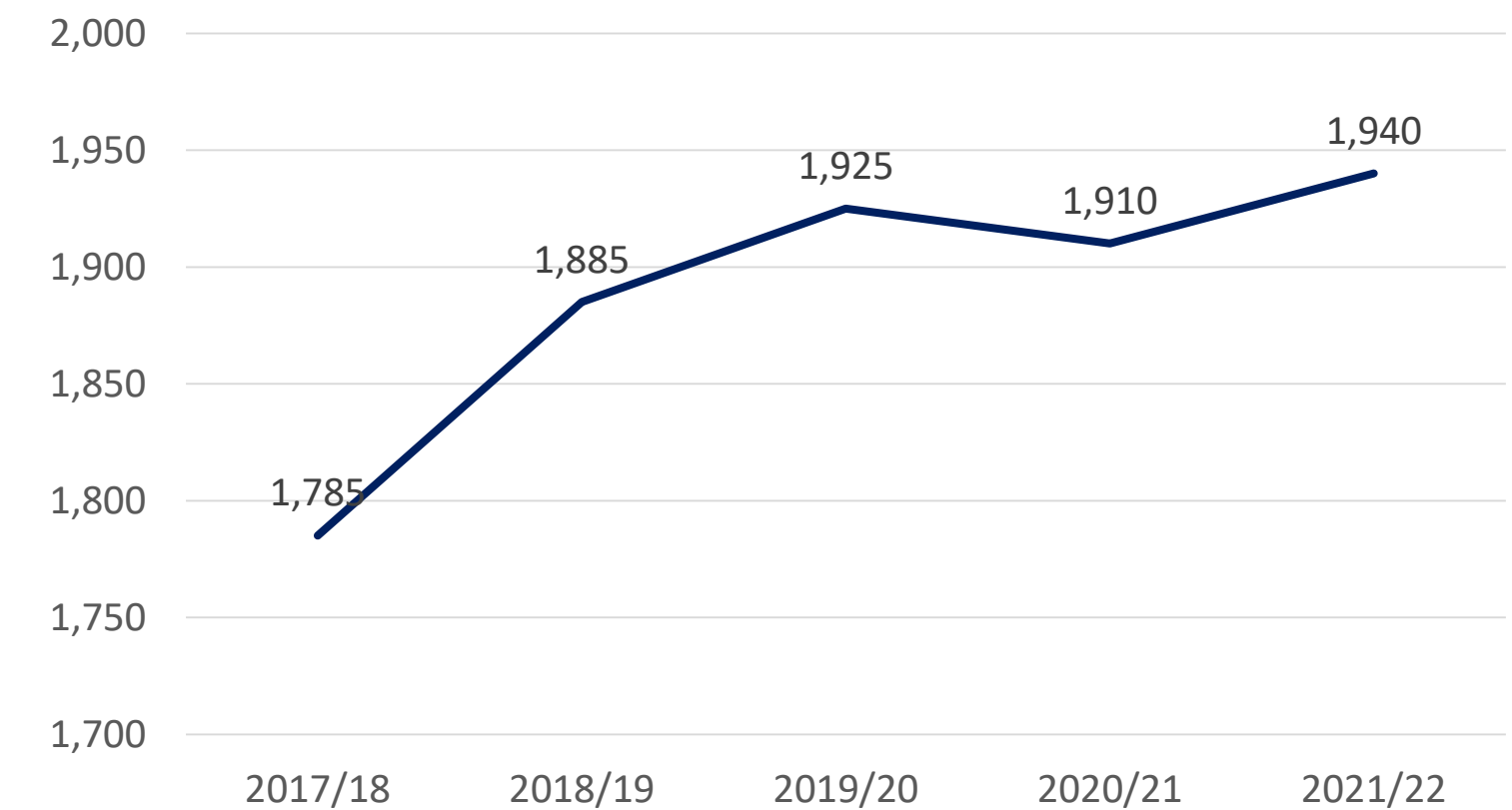
Recruitment from ODA Countries of full-time PGT students

Recruitment from ODA countries of full-time PGR students

Sustainable development themes in the curriculum



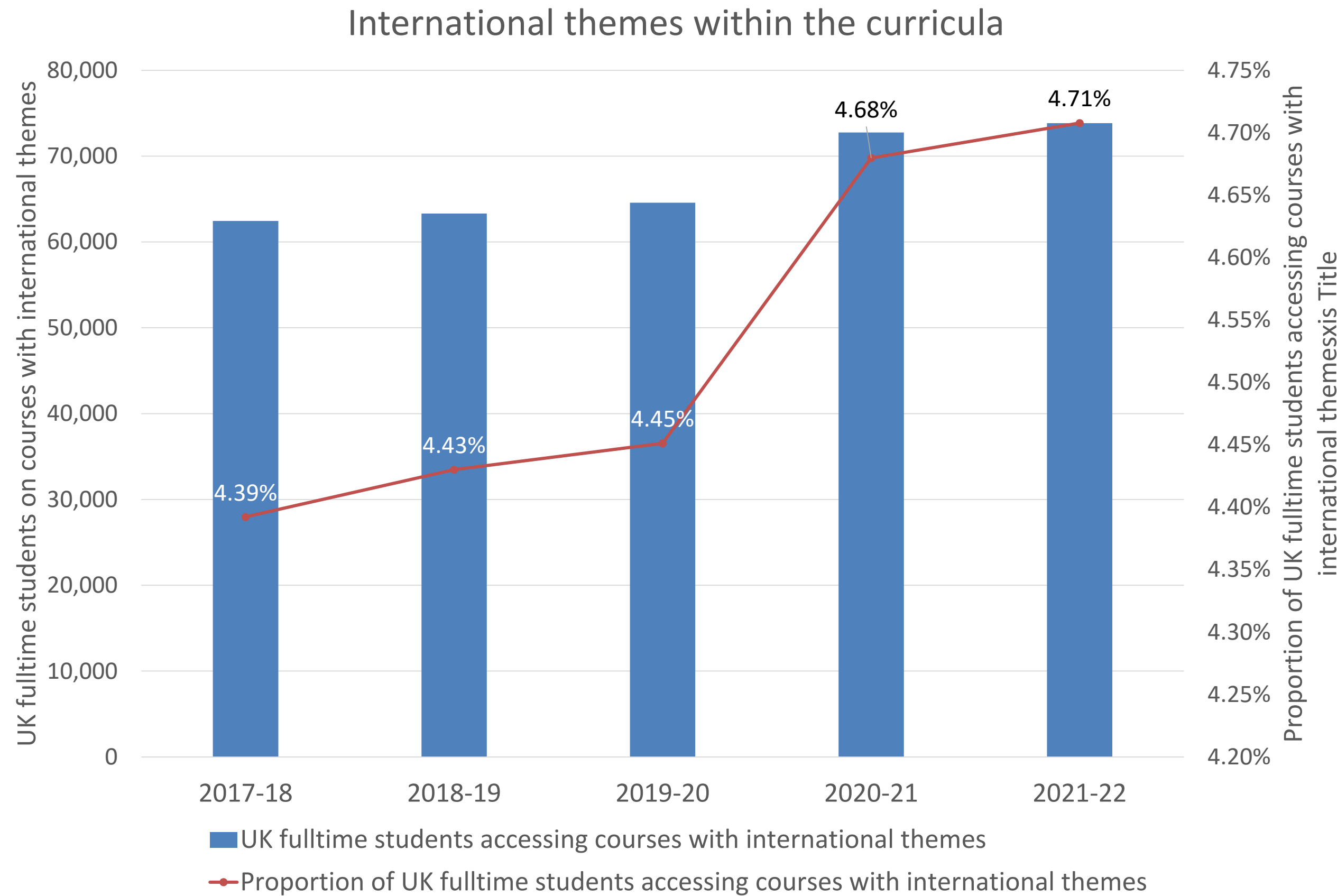
Tuition fee waivers for PhD students from Lower Middle Income, Low Income and Least Developed Countries



HESA Student Record data, and OECD DAC recipients (excl upper middle-income countries).

- Methodological change – until 2020, all ODA countries were included
- This year, the county list excludes High Middle-Income Countries
- Strong performance across most areas

International themes in the curriculum (test-phase)



- While this metric is in an experimental phase, there is an indication that HEIs are strengthening the courses that have international themes.
- There is a continuous increase in UK students accessing such courses.

Data source: HESA Student Record, HESA Course titles database.

Non-degree mobility and internationalisation at home

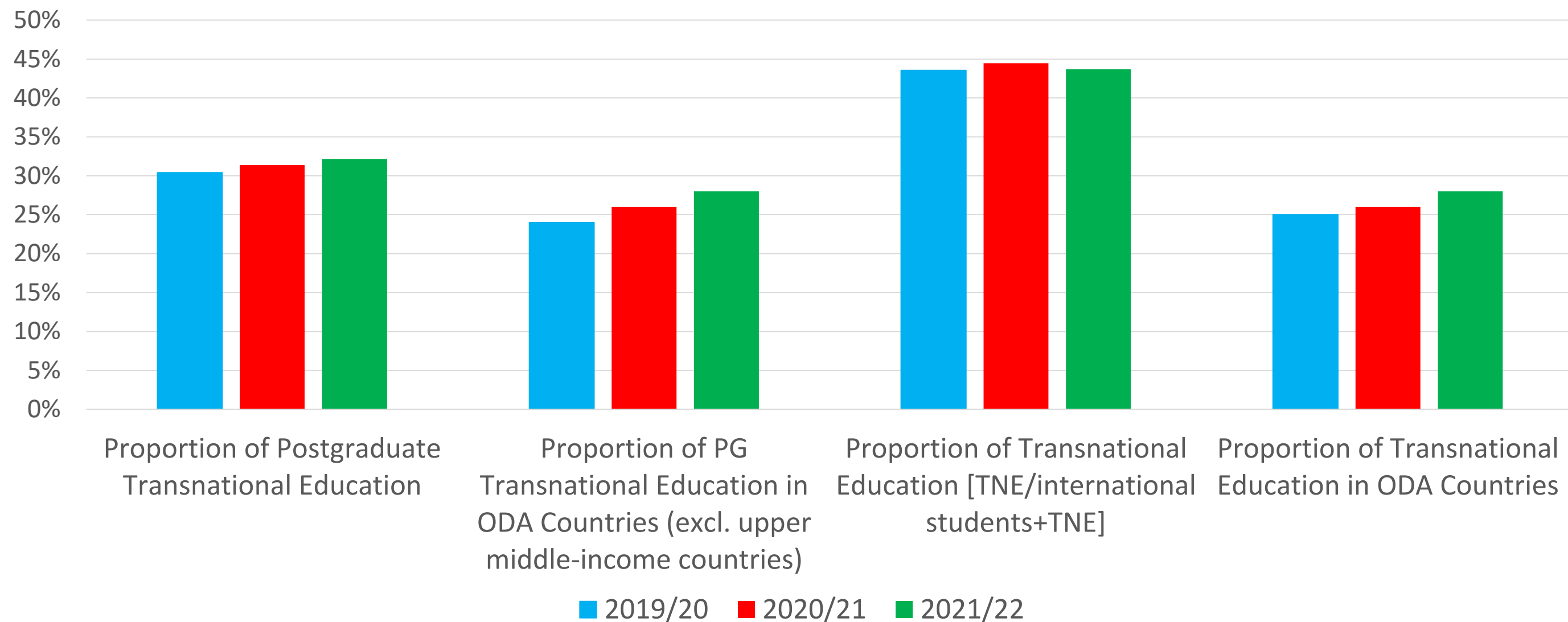
Study Abroad and Internationalisation at Home	
Proportion of Students with Study Abroad Experience	▲
Proportion of Modern Foreign Language Students	▼
Proportion of Incoming Visiting and Exchange Students	▲
International Themes Within the Curricula	▲

- Most measures look positive, however, inbound and outbound non-degree mobility declined significantly during the pandemic. Study abroad and IVES are below their pre-pandemic levels
- Continuous declines in Modern Foreign Languages – for longer than we have data for
- International themes in the curriculum had strong growth over the pandemic, presumably making up for the lack of student mobility

Transnational education

<i>Transnational Education for Capacity Building</i>	
Proportion of Postgraduate Transnational Education	▲
Proportion of PG Transnational Education in ODA Countries (excl. upper middle-income countries)	▲
<i>Delivery of Transnational Education</i>	
Proportion of Transnational Education (TNE/international students + TNE)	■
Proportion of Transnational Education in ODA Countries	▲

- TNE continues to grow alongside international student mobility in the UK
- UG constitutes the majority of UK TNE provision. However, PG is growing steadily.
- 1/3 of all UK TNE is delivered in ODA* countries

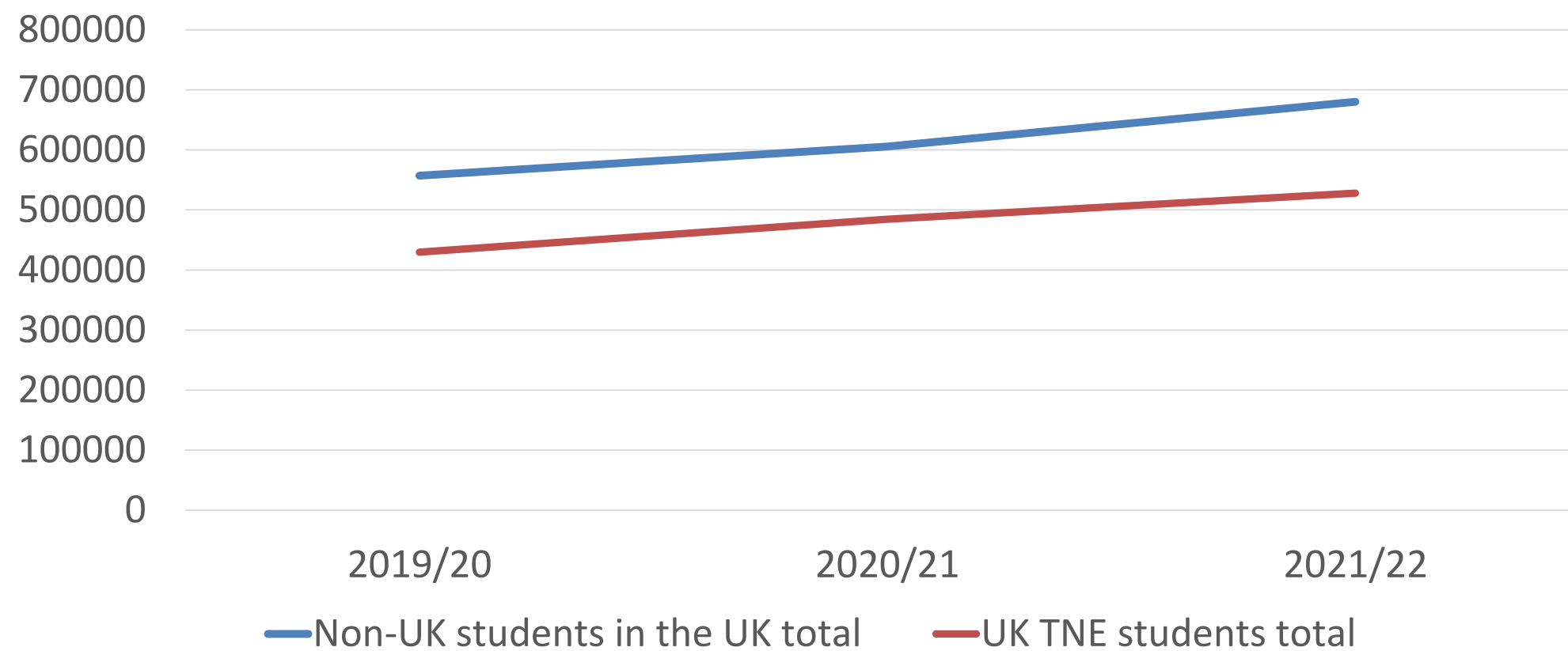


Data source: HESA Student Record
 *OECD maintains a list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipient countries, which are eligible for receiving development aid (list excludes upper middle income countries).

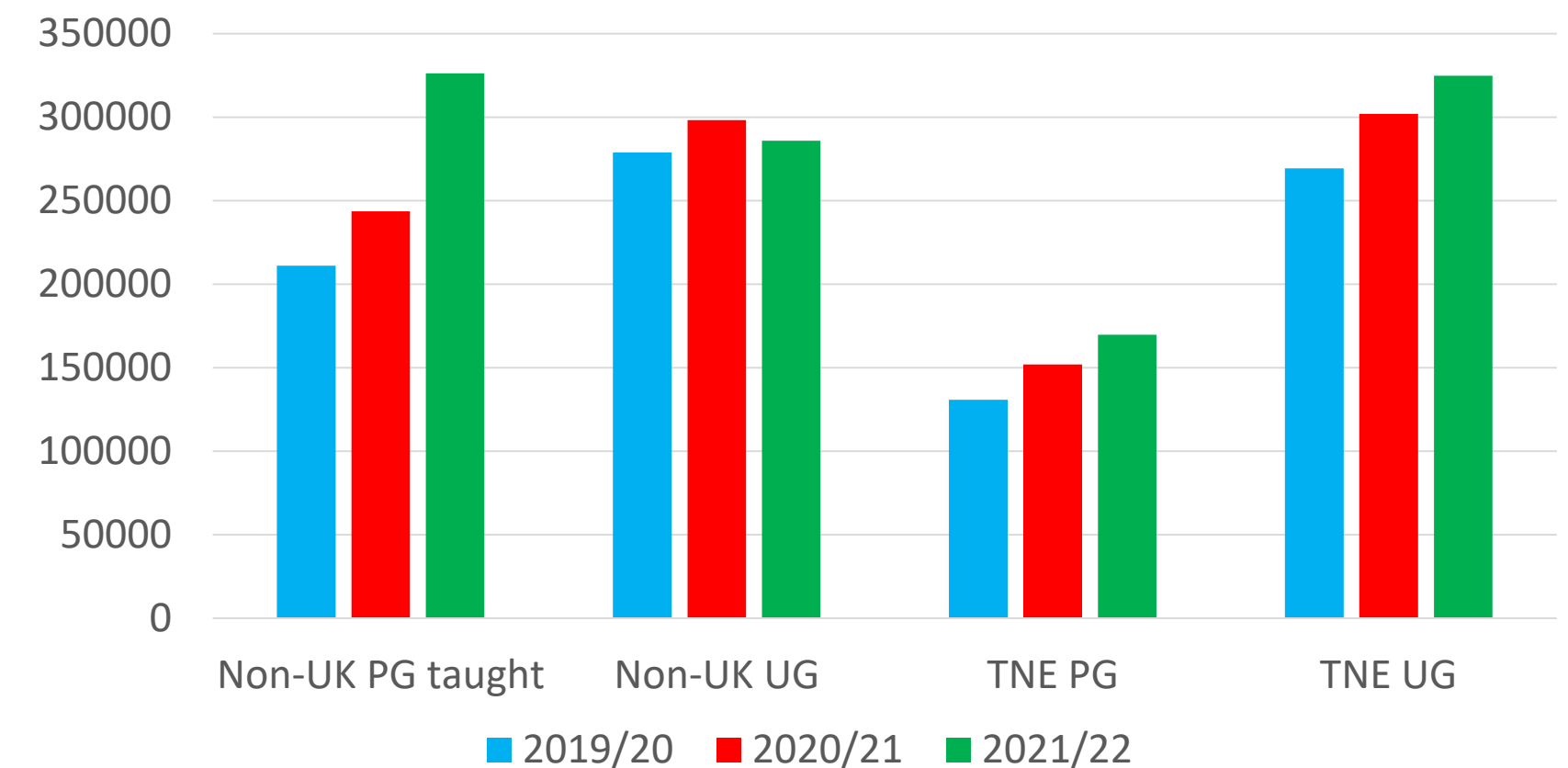
Transnational education

- Favourable changes in the regulatory environment of UK TNE partner countries
- TNE contributes in increasing access to HE, especially for disadvantaged groups of the society (e.g., Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- Growth in the capacity of local HE systems that allows the development of more equitable partnerships
- TNE increasingly takes a more inclusive approach with an increasing emphasis on impact (www.TNEImpact.org)
- However, the dominant approach continues to be “export” and “trade” led.

International students in the UK vs UK TNE Students (2019-2022)



UG and PG breakdown





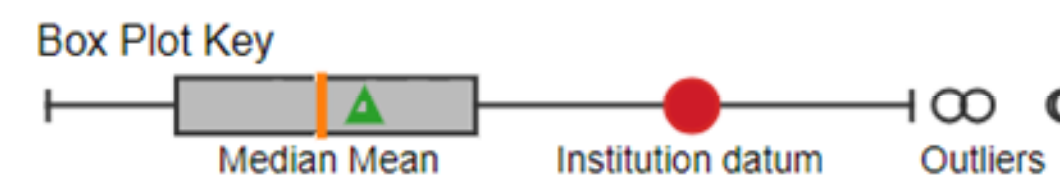
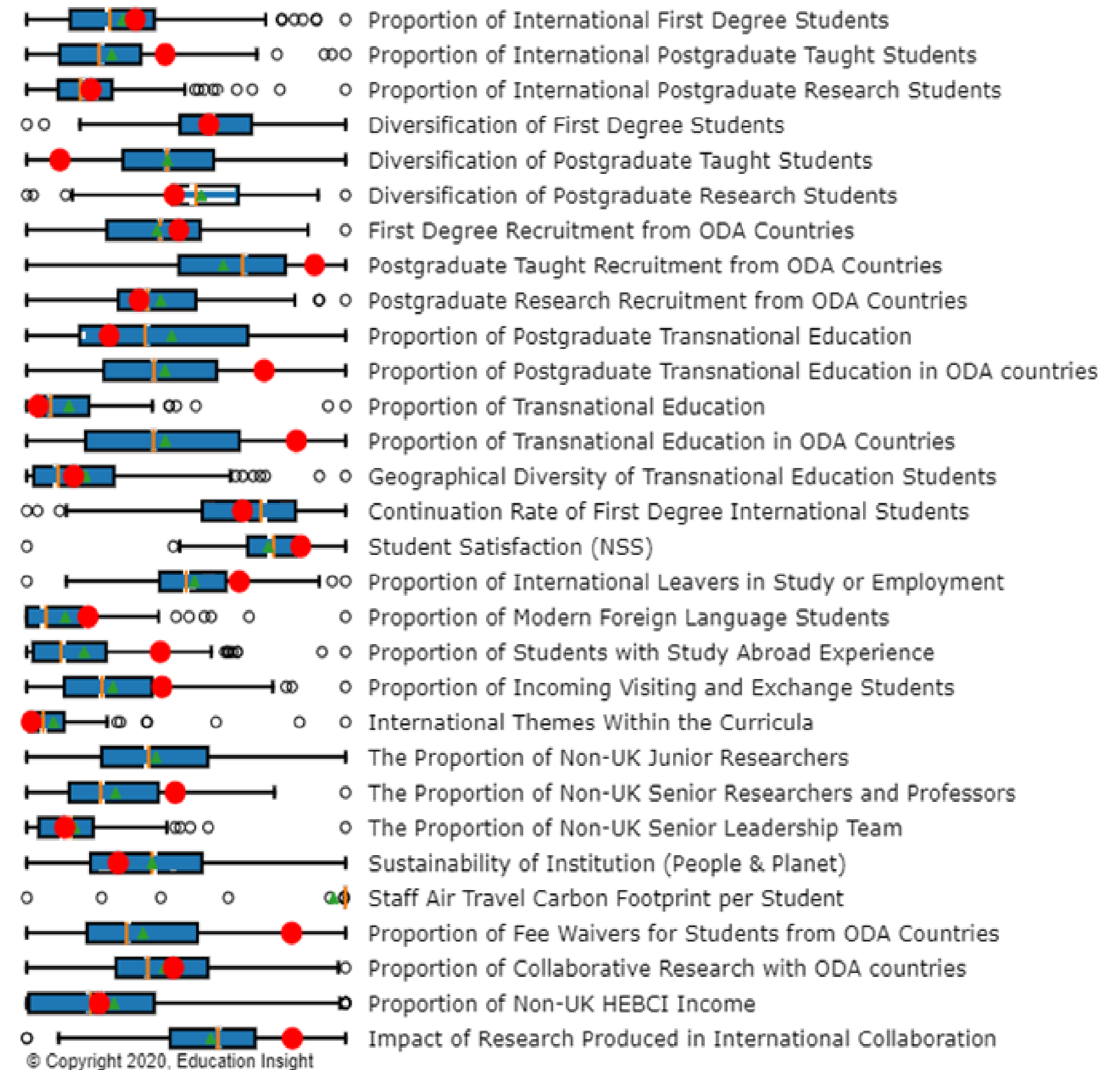
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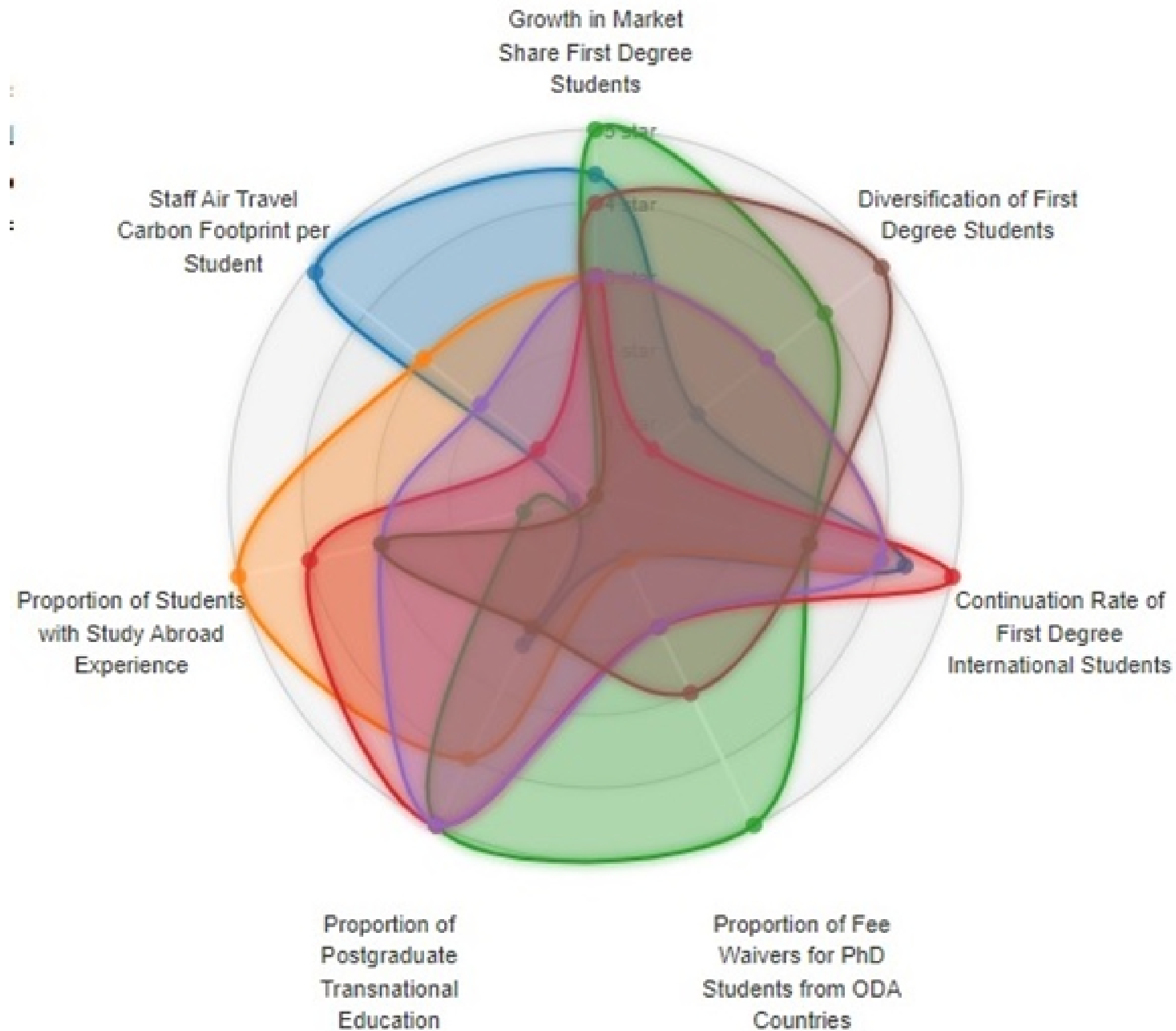
GEI enables HEIs to measure the success of global engagement strategies over time and benchmark their performance against peers

Diagnostic assessment of Global Engagement strategy

- Strong performance across most student engagement areas
- Strong engagement with ODA countries:
 - Student recruitment
 - TNE in ODA countries
 - Tuition fee waivers for ODA students
- Very strong on MFL and study abroad
- Highly impactful research produced in int'l collaboration
- Room for improvement in:
 - Diversity of the student body at masters' (2/3+ from one country) and PGR level
 - Continuation rate for the 2020/21 cohort



Benchmarking institutional performance



- A comparison tool allows to benchmark institutional performance against a peer group of institutions
- And to focus only on the categories that matter
- For details, visit the [GEI website](https://www.educationinsight.uk/gei/index.html)
<https://www.educationinsight.uk/gei/index.html>



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Thanks!

janet.ilieva@educationinsight.uk

vangelis.tsiligiris@ntu.ac.uk

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