



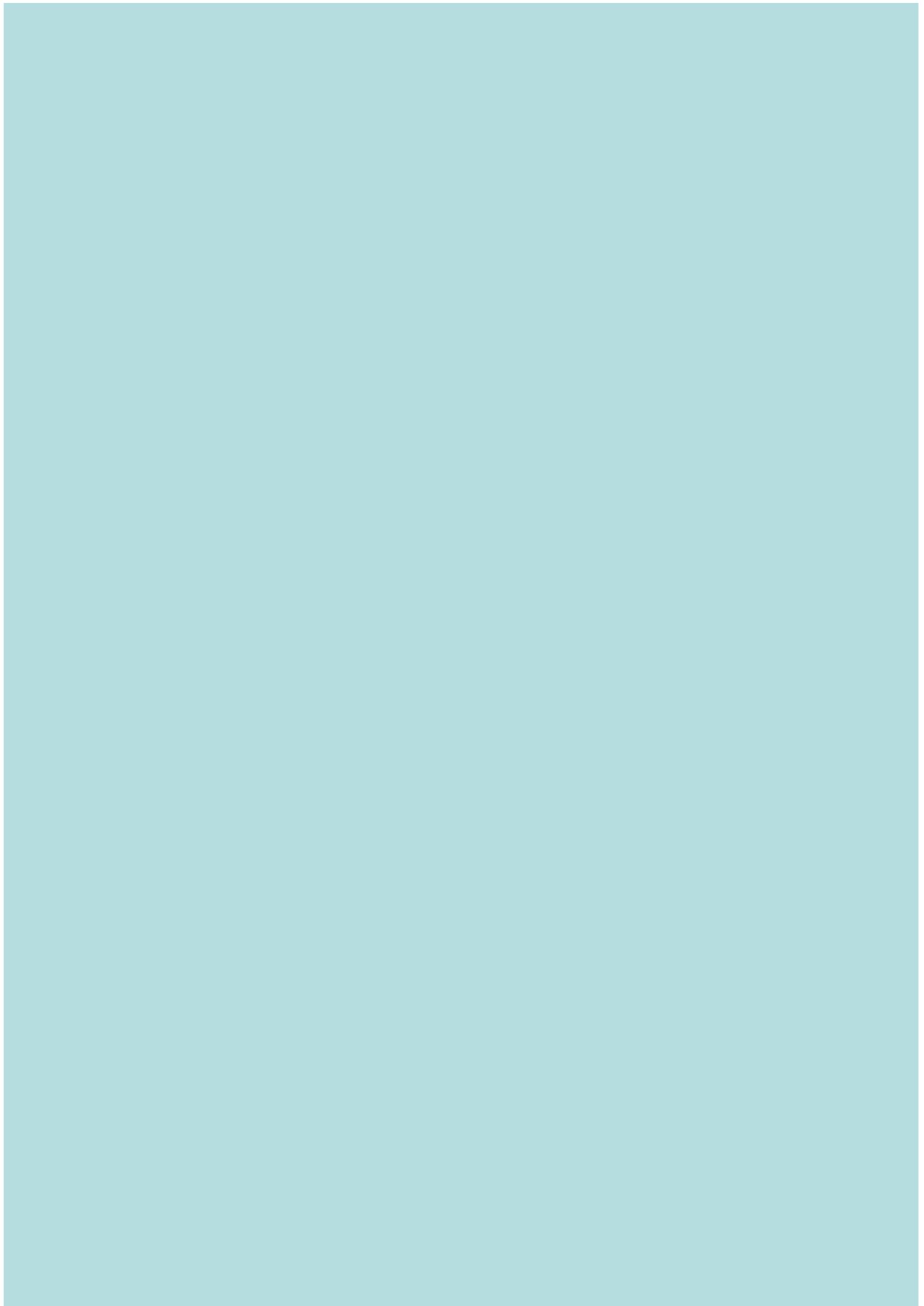
The Significance of International Student Mobility in Students' Strategies at Third Level in Ireland

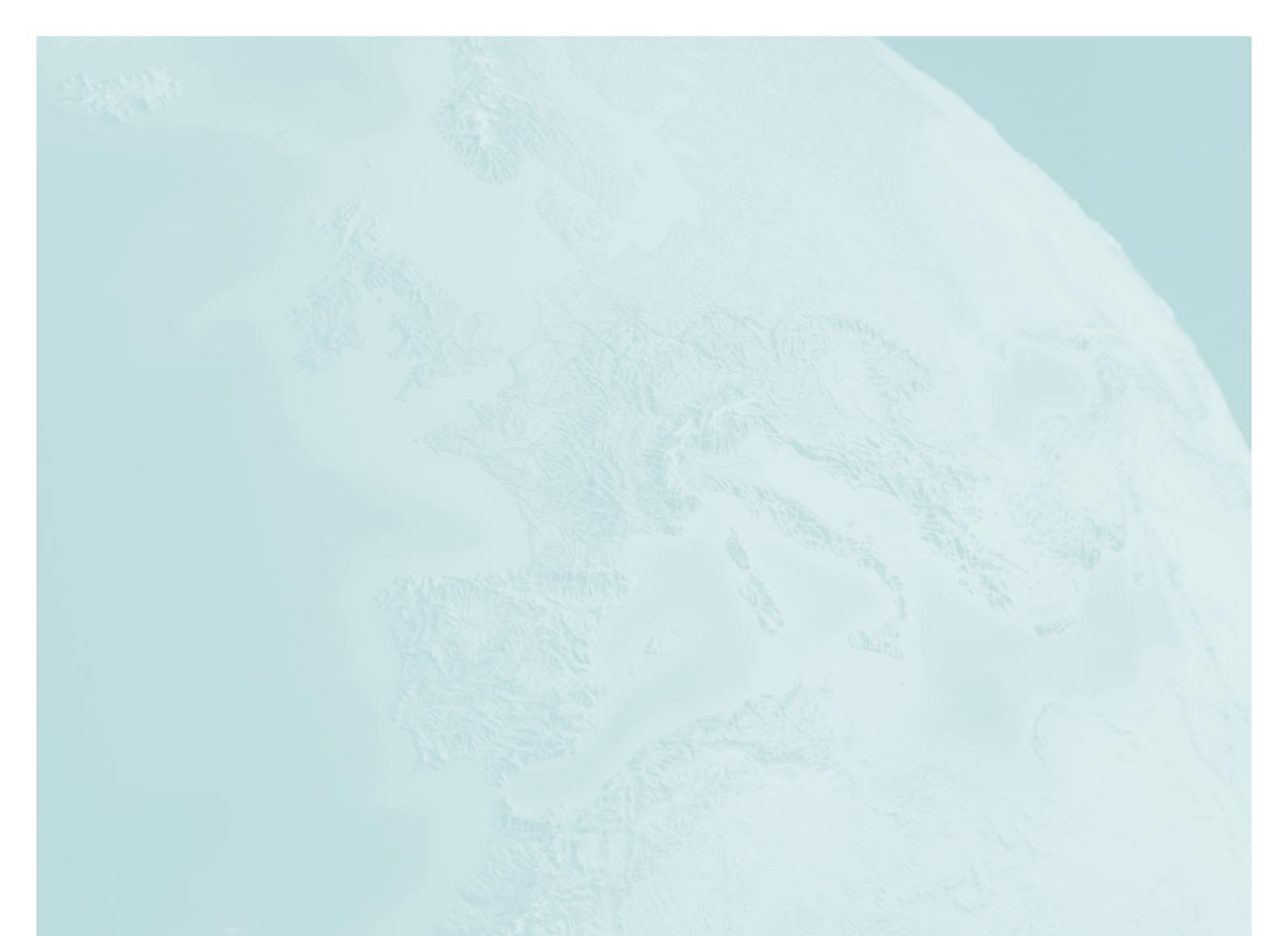
Dr Aline Courtois

NUI Discussion Paper No. 1



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland





The Significance of International Student Mobility in Students' Strategies at Third Level in Ireland

NUI Discussion Paper No. 1

Dr Aline Courtois

National University of Ireland Dr Garret FitzGerald Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Social Sciences 2014-2016

Centre for Global Higher Education, University College London Institute of Education

a.courtois@ucl.ac.uk



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

ISBN 9780901510730
© Dr Aline Courtois

CONTENTS

TABLES AND FIGURES	3
---------------------------	----------

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
------------------------------	----------

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
----------------------------	----------

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	8
2.1 Internationalisation of higher education and student mobility: changing motivations and implications	8
2.2 International student mobility and inequality	9
2.3 Degree and credit mobility	13
2.4 Erasmus	15
2.5 The state of research in Ireland	18

3 ERASMUS AND IRELAND IN NUMBERS	21
3.1 Statistical information on student flows to and from Ireland	21
3.2 Erasmus flows	23

4 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH	28
4.1 Rationale	28
4.2 Research questions	28
4.3 Methodology	29
4.4 Profile of respondents	31

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES	34
5.1 A positive experience for most	34
5.2 Motivations to go abroad: a disconnection between student and institutional strategies?	37
5.3 The effects of mandatory participation	40
5.4 Limited choice of destinations	41
5.5 Teaching and learning: unequal experiences and outcomes	42
5.6 Other issues	43

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	45
6.1 The policy framework	45
6.2 Institutional strategies	45
6.3 Inequalities between institutions: partnerships	49
6.4 Inequalities between Erasmus and non-EU exchange	52
6.5 A loosening of the traditional exchange framework	54

7	CONCLUSIONS	58
8	RECOMMENDATIONS	59
	REFERENCES	61

TABLES

Table 1	Change in destination countries for Irish students 2001-2012	26
Table 2	Trends by language spoken in destination country	26
Table 3	Type of programme	31
Table 4	Gender of respondents	31
Table 5	Destination country of respondents	32
Table 6	Subject area of respondents	32
Table 7	Overall impression of the experience	34
Table 8	Students' social circles abroad	35
Table 9	Students' motivation to go on a year abroad	38
Table 10	Students' views of the compulsory nature of participation in study abroad	40

FIGURES

Figure 1	Trends in student mobility to and from Ireland 2001-2015	22
Figure 2	Evolution of Erasmus outgoing numbers from Ireland 2001-2013	23
Figure 3	Outgoing Erasmus students by subject area (2001-2002)	24
Figure 4	Outgoing Erasmus students by subject area (2011-2012)	24
Figure 5	Destination countries for Irish students in 2014	25
Figure 6	Number of outgoing students per Irish HEI 2012	48
Figure 7	Outgoing Erasmus students as percentage of undergraduate student population per Irish HEI 2012	48
Figure 8	UK partnerships by rank bracket (source: Courtois, 2018a)	50
Figure 9	Non-EU partnerships by rank bracket (source: Courtois, 2018a)	51
Figure 10	Four types of exchange (source: Courtois, 2017)	56

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DES	Department of Education and Skills
DCU	Dublin City University
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IAU	International Association of Universities
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
ISSE	Irish Survey of Student Engagement
MU	Maynooth University
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
NUIG	National University of Ireland Galway
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
THE	Times Higher Education
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UK)
UCD	University College Dublin
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on a two-year study entitled 'The Significance of International Student Mobility in Students' Strategies at Third Level in Ireland' conducted under the NUI Dr Garret FitzGerald Post-Doctoral Fellowship for the Social Sciences. A number of academic papers based on this study have been published (Courtois, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) and two additional papers are currently in review. The present document reports on specific aspects of the research that have been identified as being of interest to higher education institutions in Ireland.

The motivation for the study was a concern about the lack of research on the experiences of Irish students engaging in short-term mobility for studies, in a context where Irish higher education institutions are encouraged to increase outgoing numbers. The study employed a principally qualitative methodology. It was based on documentary research, a questionnaire and in-depth interviews with staff and students engaged in outgoing mobility or returning from a sojourn abroad.

According to the study, outgoing student mobility brings a number of benefits at individual, institutional, national and regional levels:

- Students reported increased self-confidence, autonomy, intercultural and interpersonal skills. A number of students reported increased confidence in relation to academic progress and career prospects.
- Returning students were more aware of the international presence on their campuses. Potentially, this can help improve the experience of incoming international students.
- Mixed or negative experiences of the support structures at continental universities made students more appreciative of their home institution. Returning students reported being inclined to recommend their university to potential incoming students.
- Several students reported being inclined to promote Irish culture and their home country in general.
- Students developed a deeper understanding of the European project and several were drawn to the idea of European careers.

The year or term abroad is a positive experience for the vast majority of students. For many, it is an opportunity for independent living, travel, discovery and building international networks. Students value the experiential learning provided by the experience.

Students for whom the year or term abroad is mandatory are more likely to report mixed or negative experiences. However, the majority of these students still report having a positive experience.

Returning students were more aware of the international presence on their campuses. Potentially, this can help improve the experience of incoming international students.



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of specific issues emerged:

- Students were satisfied with the support provided by their international office at home but generally dissatisfied with the administrative and support services at their host university.
- The main source of dissatisfaction was with the academic aspect of the experience. Students reported significant issues in relation to access to modules, inadequate level (in particular, modules offered only to international students that proved unchallenging or irrelevant to their course of study) and lack of academic support at the host institution. A minority of students reported that the experience was detrimental to their academic progress.
- There are significant discrepancies between the international programmes and destinations offered by Irish higher education institutions in terms of quality and institutional support.
- The cost of the year abroad still represents a significant barrier for some students; the format of the 'add-on' year (where a three-year degree becomes a four-year 'international' degree by the addition of an academic year abroad) is problematic in this respect.

The study indicates that despite the perception that the year abroad is above all an opportunity for leisure, discovery and self-development; and/or a strategy for CV-enhancement; students place a high value on academic and cultural learning and have high expectations in this respect. These expectations are not always met.



Students place a high value on academic and cultural learning and have high expectations in this respect.

In relation to the objective of increasing outgoing numbers, three main risks were identified:

- Unless better resources are invested (both by Irish institutions and their partners), quality issues may become more prevalent, in particular with Erasmus destinations and/or destinations in countries that focus on a commercial approach to incoming student mobility.
- The shift away from the principle of exchange as an academic experience and the growing focus on lifestyle and employability in the promotion of exchange will not appeal to all students and will potentially exclude those with limited financial means.
- The diversification of destinations comes with a marked stratification between the more prestigious (often non-EU) and less prestigious (often Erasmus) destinations; this is amplified by different levels of resources allocated to some programmes compared to others, and by the limited access that some students have to specific programmes.

The main challenges for Irish higher education institutions are:

- To ensure that partner universities offer students a positive academic experience
- To invest resources commensurate with the continued expansion of outgoing numbers
- To provide financial and logistic support to disadvantaged students, who are currently underrepresented in exchange programmes
- To consider the implications of the growing stratification of exchange destinations for equality in higher education
- To address the risk of faculty being left out of, or becoming disengaged from the organisation of mobility programmes and other internationalising activities
- To ensure that economic rationales do not dominate internationalising activities as this carries a risk of compromising scientific and cultural benefits, and has implications for equality and diversity.

Structure of the report

Section 2 presents the background to the study, with a particular focus on definitions and relevant literature. Section 3 gives an overview of available statistical information on student mobility to and from Ireland. Next, Section 4 describes the research undertaken, including a summary of participants' profiles. Section 5, based principally on interview data, gives an overview of students' motivations and experiences and highlights the issues that need to be addressed to improve the student experience abroad. Section 6 focuses on institutional approaches to outgoing student mobility, with a discussion on the disparities from one institution and one programme to another, as well, as on how the organisation of exchange programmes has changed over time. Section 7 presents the main conclusions and Section 8 proposes recommendations for the attention of educators, higher education managers and policy-makers.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 Internationalisation of higher education and student mobility: changing motivations and implications

Internationalisation has been characterised as one of the most significant transformations in the landscape of third-level education worldwide. Definitions of internationalisation in higher education vary and are the object of much policy and scholarly debate. A useful starting point is the widely used definition proposed by Jane Knight:

Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education (Knight, 2003a).

Internationalisation is a multi-faceted process. At institutional level, it may include research collaboration (in the form of cross-national research teams and co-authored publications), harmonisation of institutional structures and degrees, joint degrees, cross-national academic exchange, recruitment of international staff, staff participation in international conferences, internationalisation of the curriculum, bi-lingual education, international accreditation, setting up campus branches abroad, etc. The expansion of multinational education businesses may also, in a way, be considered as part of the phenomenon. One of the most visible (and measurable) features of internationalisation is the cross-border movement of students. While it is not a new phenomenon – students, as well as scholars, have always crossed borders – it has greatly expanded over the last two decades and is set to continue growing. It was estimated that in 2015, five million students were studying outside their home countries, twice the number in 2000 (ICEF, 2015).

Internationalisation and student mobility are not spontaneous phenomena nor the mere product of individual mobility decisions. Student mobility is driven by families, institutions, states, and supra-national agencies such as the EU (Collins et al., 2014). The shape taken by internationalisation (including whether the emphasis is placed on one aspect or another) depends on which rationales drive internationalising efforts. Jane Knight and Hans de Wit (de Wit, 1999; Knight, 2003b) list four different types of policy rationales for internationalisation:

- Socio/cultural rationale: national cultural identity, intercultural communication, etc.
- Political: foreign policy, national and regional identity, technical assistance, national security etc.
- Economic: economic growth, competitiveness, labour markets etc.
- Academic: institutional profile, international dimension of teaching and research etc.

These rationales are not mutually exclusive and may co-exist. However, as detailed in the next section, the economic rationale is increasingly significant. As such, the internationalisation of higher education has become an important strategic goal for institutions and nations alike. It has opened up a space for the emergence of numerous publicly and privately funded student recruitment agencies, consultancy businesses and interest groups with an interest in advancing commercial internationalisation. International education, understood as the provision of education to international students (whether within national borders or abroad via campus branches or online courses), is thus considered as an export industry.

International student mobility is in constant transformation, as student flows change alongside regional power shifts and/or in response to strategic policy-making at regional, national and institutional levels. In particular, student mobility has shifted from being a phenomenon driven by (1) individual motives (including migration strategies aiming at permanent settlement in the home country and/or personal cultural motivations), (2) scientific and cultural cooperation between institutions and countries, and (3) diplomatic links between ex-colonising countries and their former colonies; to a phenomenon that is (1) constrained by increasingly complex and restrictive immigration policies that ignore and limit individual aspirations and (2) increasingly driven by economic rationales at institutional, national and regional or supra-national levels.

Consequently, there is a risk that economic drivers increasingly obscure and threaten (1) scientifically and culturally motivated exchange and collaboration, (2) development goals, and (3) diversity and equality in higher education access and outcomes both in sending and receiving countries. This latter aspect is of particular interest to the study and is explored in more detail below.

2.2 International student mobility and inequality

On the one hand, international student mobility has the potential to increase educational opportunities for students in the developing world, and more generally in places where the development of higher education systems has not kept up with the increase in demand:

- Through university partnerships and with the support of scholarships and bursaries, student mobility programmes can be an instrument for capacity-building in developing countries. They encourage knowledge flows between countries and strengthen cross-institutional research collaborations, with potential benefits at both institutional and national levels.
- Historically, student mobility has allowed economically privileged but underrepresented or oppressed groups (women, Jewish people) to circumvent obstacles in their home countries (Karady, 2002). Recent research suggests that it may still be the case; for example, student mobility allows young women to escape countries where they are denied educational opportunities due to gendered norms, such as family expectations of early marriage (see Martin, 2017 on Chinese students in Australia).

However, international education researchers are increasingly concerned with the limitations and risks associated with the manner in which internationalisation has evolved in recent decades.

From the 1970s onwards, two leading receiving European countries, France and the UK, began to implement policies restricting immigration and consequently the right of foreigners to study in these countries (Slama, 1999; Perraton, 2014). Incoming student mobility was framed as a threat in need of regulation. In France, these measures heralded what Serge Slama called 'the end of the foreign student', namely the end of free movement and individual mobility for studies, and the beginning of an era of regulation and subjection of student mobility to national imperatives.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After this first shift, internationalisation took a commercial turn with the introduction of differentiated fees for international students in many countries. Combined with (1) reductions in state funding for higher education, (2) growing demand for higher education worldwide, and (3) increased status differentiation of higher education institutions under the effect of, among other factors, international university rankings, the introduction of differentiated fees has paved the way for a commercial approach to internationalisation, where international students are viewed primarily as a source of revenue.

Thus, since the late 2000s/early 2010s, the work of Jane Knight – a leading scholar in the field and early supporter of internationalisation – increasingly reflects growing concerns about the ‘unintended consequences’ of higher education internationalisation. These include, most notably, commercialisation in its various forms, the emergence of diploma mills, brain drain detrimental to sending countries and increased institutional competition (instead of cooperation) in the era of international university rankings. She argues that these phenomena pose a direct threat to the capacity of international education to produce the positive outcomes with which it is commonly associated (Knight, 2009, 2013).

Thus, scholars increasingly argue that these new trends in internationalisation potentially pose a threat to equality and meaningful diversity in higher education, in particular for the following reasons:

- Cross-border student flows reflect and reproduce regional imbalances because developed, English-speaking countries dominate the ‘market’. In addition, these flows have historically reflected – and to some extent continue to reflect – the subordinate position of former colonies, with implications in relation to the direction of knowledge flows, and brain drain. The logic of prestige and financial calculations increasingly overcomes the logic of aid to development that used to underpin exchange and was sensitive to the impact on sending countries (Khoo, 2011). In addition, the discourse of recruiting ‘talent’ for the knowledge economy, which underpins internationalisation efforts, obscures the impact such recruitment has on the phenomenon of brain drain from poorer countries. For these reasons, contemporary forms of internationalisation may reinforce rather than address these historical imbalances, potentially countering the development potential of internationalisation: (1) institutions in developing countries may not benefit from internationalisation to the same extent as others; (2) the domination of English-speaking countries in research may not be challenged; (3) the benefits of internationalised research may not spill over to all involved countries equally and some countries may be left out; (4) visiting staff and students from developing countries may be framed as having less value and potential; and (5) brain drain from developing countries may continue. These risks and issues do not stem from internationalisation alone, rather they are the product of broader geopolitical and economic imbalances that current trends in internationalisation may fail to address and perhaps exacerbate.
- Under the influence of international rankings, competition has accelerated, leading to a marked stratification of destinations (Marginson, 2016). The race for status amplifies existing inequalities between institutions. ‘Selective affinities’ in university partnerships reflect and reinforce existing status hierarchies between institutions (Ballatore and Blöss, 2008). In this context, universities are not equal partners but competitors. Within national systems, efforts are made to encourage a differentiation of higher education institutions, with a view to producing a small number of ‘world-class’ universities that will help enhance the international profile of the country as an

international education destination but that will also deprive other national institutions of resources (this is the case in the UK with the REF system and in Germany with the 'Excellence Initiative' [Maesse, 2017]). The trend towards competition has several implications: (1) Where resource allocation depends on performance, it increases inequality between higher education institutions nationally; (2) it increases the stratification of higher education systems internationally; (3) it reinforces elitism in international mobility by making select institutions more selective (and often more expensive) and (4) the individual benefits of mobility are more differentiated as a result, with some destinations becoming distinctly more prestigious than others.

- Commercial internationalisation prioritises privileged overseas candidates over their less privileged counterparts. Measures to increase participation from disadvantaged groups typically target the local population and do not apply to international or potential applicants (Tannock, 2013). In other words, institutional approaches to recruitment differ markedly between recruitment at national level (where efforts are made to widen participation by targeting underrepresented groups) and international recruitment (where it has become acceptable to focus on recruiting economically advantaged students). This is another aspect of inequality.
- International student mobility offers opportunities to seek and maintain positional advantage. These opportunities come at a price and are more easily accessible to the privileged (Brooks and Waters, 2009). By investing in international mobility, some students may acquire prestigious credentials inaccessible to others. Therefore, the existence of an international higher education market exacerbates inequality by encouraging and making possible the deployment of socially unequal strategies. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities, care responsibilities, etc., are excluded.
- National immigration law and regulations around access to work or healthcare further undermine international students' status inside and outside the university, leading to increased economic, social and psychological vulnerability (Marginson et al., 2010). Generally speaking, international students are more vulnerable to exploitation in various areas (accommodation, work) compared to local students, who are better supported through family networks etc.
- The fact that students cross borders to study may suggest that 'their' education system is inferior; consequently they may be constructed as 'suplicants, strangers, outsiders, consumers, social isolates and people in learning or linguistic "deficit"' (Marginson, 2013: 9). Where they are recruited to enhance the international profile of an institution, they may be viewed as symbolic capital as well as economic resources, a de-humanising, reductive view associated with what has been termed 'neoliberal multiculturalism' (Melamed, 2011; Mitchell, 2003). Non-white students in particular are at risk of racism or neo-racism (Lee and Cantwell, 2011; Robertson, 2011).

The existence of an international higher education market exacerbates inequality by encouraging and making possible the deployment of socially unequal strategies.



2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Thus, the emergence of an international higher education market, characterised by marked status differentiation between institutions, and in which higher education becomes commodified, has implications for equality across various dimensions. In relation to the connection between socio-economic circumstances and individual mobility, Foskett (2010) argues that the 'global market in higher education' has made discernible three distinct 'tiers' of internationally mobile students:

- The 'top tier' is a globally mobile student elite, undeterred by high tuition fees, visa restrictions or travel costs. These are free to choose the most prestigious destinations.
- The second tier consists of less privileged students who, due to budget limitations, need to calculate precisely (or speculate on) the costs and benefits of mobility in order to improve their employment prospects.
- Below is a third tier of students who are either not mobile at all, or whose mobility is limited to neighbouring and low-cost destinations.

Thus, even within the (relatively privileged) field of international mobility for studies, the ability to be mobile and the experience and benefits of mobility are very much tied to socio-economic circumstances. To these must be added gendered (e.g. care responsibilities) and ability-based barriers to international mobility as well as issues related to immigration regimes. As noted by Sara Ahmed and others, our relationships to mobility are shaped by these structural inequalities (Ahmed, 2012; Ong, 1999). Issues limiting the equal exercise of 'choice' in education (Lynch and Moran, 2006) also exist in the international higher education market.

Nonetheless, the aspiration to be internationally mobile is spreading far beyond the small elite who traditionally had exclusive access to it. The desire for 'cosmopolitan capital' as a means to improve employability is widespread (Rivzi, 2011: 698; Sidhu, 2006). In times of uncertainty, when 'the degree is not enough' (Tomlinson, 2008), acquiring cosmopolitan capital may be perceived as a way to maintain or gain positional advantage. For privileged students, the decision to take advantage of opportunities abroad may be a manifestation of privilege and appear to be non-instrumental (Waters and Brooks, 2010). For less privileged students, the cost-benefit calculation is more explicit, for the investment is more important (Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2017).

However, budget limitations and/or an imperfect understanding of the 'market' may lead students, in particular those located in the second and third tiers identified by Foskett (2010), to miscalculate the benefits of their investment. One such example is given by Wagner and Garcia (2015) in their study of Mexican students choosing an MBA education in France. A French MBA has little value in the Mexican labour market dominated by holders of North-American diplomas. In this case, Mexican students find themselves worse off in career terms than if they had not travelled at all. Studying in France was until recently a good investment for students from specific Eastern European and Northern African countries, where the legal or civil service system was modelled on the French system (Karady, 2002), but this is changing due to the increasingly hegemonic position of English-speaking destinations. The destination matters; benefits differ accordingly, but student choices are conditioned by their socio-economic circumstances and differentiated access to information.

Thus, in some ways, the internationalisation of higher education comes with risks. In particular, it creates new forms of stratification between institutions, and allows the more privileged students to benefit from a market (or quasi-market) situation (Atherton, 2013; McCarthy and Kenway, 2014). This is the case for sending countries such as China (Kim, 2015) but is true as well for students from receiving countries such as the UK (Brookes and Waters, 2009). It is therefore imperative that educators, university administrators and policy-makers pay attention to this phenomenon.

2.3 Degree and credit mobility

At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between various forms of student mobility. One important distinction is the one between degree (also known as spontaneous) mobility and credit (also known as institutional or institutionalised) mobility.

Both the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2006) and the OECD (OECD, 2006) define mobile or internationally mobile students as those who have crossed a national border and moved to another country with the objective to study. Thus, internationally mobile students are a distinct sub-group of the broader category 'foreign students'. Foreign students are those who are not citizens of their country of study, but some of these may not have moved to their country of study with the sole purpose of studying there. In practice however, many countries use citizenship, or lack thereof, as a defining characteristic of internationally mobile students. According to the IAU (2015), internationally mobile students also include students enrolled on distance-learning programmes. Degree mobility is defined as:

the physical crossing of a national border to enrol in a degree programme at tertiary-level in the country of destination. The degree programme would require the students' presence for the majority of courses taught. Degree mobile students are enrolled as regular students in any semester/term of a degree programme taught in the country of destination, which is different from their country of origin ... with the intention of graduating from the programme in the country of destination (European Commission, 2015a: 6).

By contrast, credit mobility is defined as:

temporary tertiary education or/and study-related traineeship abroad within the framework of enrolment in a tertiary education programme at a "home institution" (usually) for the purpose of gaining academic credit (i.e. credit that will be recognised in that home institution). Graduates who have had a credit mobility stay are graduates of [their home institution] (European Commission, 2015a: 8).

To distinguish between credit and degree mobility, it is often assumed that students who have been enrolled in a course of study abroad for at least one year are planning to study a full programme and are therefore engaged in degree mobility.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The literature identifies a number of differences between (as well as within) these two categories:

- From an institutional perspective, attracting degree mobile students is more lucrative because in many jurisdictions they pay tuition fees. By contrast, exchange students only pay fees (if any) at their home university, provided the exchange is reciprocal as is the case under Erasmus and other exchange programmes premised on reciprocity.
- The population of degree mobile students is more eclectic and differentiated socially, compared to Erasmus students, who tend to be relatively homogeneous not only socially, but also in terms of age and academic level (Erlach, 2012).
- Degree mobile students are more oriented towards later occupational mobility compared to those engaging in credit mobility; in other words, degree mobility is more commonly associated with mobility/migration strategies, compared with credit mobility (Carlson, 2011; Wiers-Jensse, 2008). In countries where such systems are in operation, only degree students are targeted by 'two-step' immigration processes while exchange students are considered as short-term visitors with no claim to citizenship.
- Erasmus and other exchange students are limited in their choices by institutional frameworks and in particular by the partnership agreements signed by their home universities. Generally speaking, exchange students can only choose from a list of host destinations established by their own institution. In addition, certain programmes may not allow students to take time abroad (this is the case for instance for some courses accredited by a local association). Places on exchange programmes may be available only to students with the best results; or they may be allocated by staff with limited input from students.

Compared with students who engage in degree mobility, exchange students can hardly be considered as 'free movers' and are relatively limited in the range of privileged strategies they can deploy. Going back to Foskett's (2010) three-tier model, we may assume that the more privileged 'top tier' is more likely to engage in degree rather than credit mobility. Furthermore, Wächter (2014) argues that student flows move in different directions depending on whether these engage in credit or degree mobility. Degree mobility is generally from countries with underdeveloped higher education systems and moves towards countries with better provision. On the other hand, credit mobility is based on the principle of equivalence and is more likely to take place between institutions that are relatively similar. This leads Wächter (2014) to argue that degree mobility is 'vertical' (more unequal) while credit mobility is 'horizontal' (less unequal).

On a more practical level, credit mobility does not impact students' credentials in the same way as degree mobility does because students will be awarded a degree from their home institution regardless of where they took their term or year abroad. Credit mobility takes place over a shorter period of time, typically a term or academic year, and as a result requires fewer economic and social resources, compared to living abroad for the whole duration of a degree. Under the Erasmus programme, the cost to the student is reduced by a grant, which usually covers travel and a small proportion of living costs (some students engaged in degree mobility may also benefit from scholarships allocated by their home or host country but these tend to be very selective).

Finally, research indicates that motivations to do with lifestyle and consumption play a significant role in intra-European mobility for credit (Rodriguez, Bustillo Mesanza, and Mariel, 2011; Van Bouwel and Veugelers, 2013). By contrast, degree mobility is understood to be motivated mainly by the appeal of 'top-quality' institutions (Rivzi, 2011; Sidhu, 2006). Rankings have more impact on degree-mobile students' decisions and destination choices.¹

Credit mobility is therefore a specific phenomenon within international student mobility. It is understood to be more 'horizontal' compared to degree mobility and to be underpinned by motivations that are less explicitly instrumental. Consequently, and with notable exceptions (e.g. Ballatore, 2013), it is less frequently examined from the perspective of privileged strategies.

2.4 Erasmus

In Europe, credit mobility is commonly associated with the Erasmus programme. The Erasmus programme has been a significant driver of student mobility in Europe. Launched in 1987, it has since enabled over 3 million students to study abroad. Erasmus has evolved over time to include graduate students, work placements, academic staff and so forth, while offering a broader range of destinations. Under the current programme, Erasmus+, it is hoped that by 2020, 20 per cent of European students will have had an experience abroad as part of their studies (Council of the European Union, 2011).

For students enrolled on undergraduate courses in their home countries, Erasmus gives access to some of the perceived benefits of international mobility. The Erasmus programme allows students to spend a semester or a full academic year in one of 34 participating countries without paying additional fees to the host institution. Participating students receive a small grant, which covers some of their travel and accommodation costs. Typically, students take up modules equivalent to those they would have studied at home and accumulate credits (ECTS), which are then transferred back to their home university and count towards their final degree grade.

Since the 1980s, the goals and scope of the Erasmus programme have changed significantly. Originally, the rationale for the programme was based on the idea of mutual understanding and cooperation between European nations, with a strong focus on intercultural communication. Sofia Corradi, a key figure in the design of the Erasmus programme (she was nicknamed 'Mama Erasmus'), wanted an exchange system based on voluntary self-selection and supported by grants (Nørgaard, 2014). Corradi wanted participation to be entirely voluntary and unhindered by financial issues. This system, based on the notion of mutual recognition, was designed to enhance students' intercultural experience by exposing them to a familiar academic content (namely in the disciplines they studied at their home institution) but presented through unfamiliar local norms (in particular, through another language). The idea of mutual recognition is slightly different from the principle of equivalence (on which the ECTS system is based): it is based on the principle of trust between institutions, rather than on quantitative appraisals of course and module content.

¹ Santiago et al (2008) note that typically, candidates for study abroad programmes choose their country of destination before they choose a particular institution. This is particularly the case for undergraduate students, for whom lifestyle issues are important, while postgraduate students are more likely to consider institutional reputation first (Woodfield, 2012, p. 119).

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The programme has evolved significantly since the 1980s. In particular, it has been 'massified', namely extended to much larger numbers of students, and its rationale is now expressed in economic rather than cultural terms. The Bologna process is usually recognised as one of the most significant instruments in this major shift in the way European higher education is understood (Bruno, Clément, and Laval, 2010). The Bologna process, initiated with the Bologna Declaration in 1999, aimed to harmonise qualifications across the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) and triggered a series of reforms at national and regional levels. The process was instrumental in shifting the framing of student mobility from a focus on cultural exchange to economic competitiveness and employability. In this context, student mobility is now explicitly framed as a way to address economic issues at regional level, in particular youth unemployment and the declining competitiveness of European higher education, research and industry.

Thus, the main aims of the new 'Erasmus+' programme launched in January 2014 are to help combat youth unemployment, supply employers with adequately skilled workers, modernise European universities and enhance the economic competitiveness of Europe (European Commission, 2016: 7). This departs significantly from the discourse of intercultural communication and cooperation that characterised the early presentations of the programme (Nørgaard, 2014). Today, European-wide evaluations of the Erasmus programme tend to focus on employability and skills such as adaptability, flexibility, problem-solving abilities and so forth (see for instance EC, 2014; Janson, Schomburg and Teichler, 2009).



Participants in the Erasmus programme tend to be from middle-class backgrounds. They are also younger, have better academic results, and are more likely to have previous international experience.

Researchers who have analysed European policy over time note that the language of social justice and equality has almost disappeared from policy documents on student mobility (Hadfield and Summerby-Murray, 2016; Dvir and Yemini, 2017). A range of programmes has been established to redress inequality in access (for instance, specific programmes for students with disabilities; differential grants based on the cost of living in destination countries; etc.). However, for most participants, the Erasmus grant only covers a portion of the costs associated with a term or year abroad (typically, the cost of flights and little else). Consequently, it is too low to equalise access in any meaningful way. As large-scale quantitative country-specific and European-wide studies have stubbornly demonstrated over time (e.g. Geehards and Hans, 2013), participants in the Erasmus programme tend to be from middle-class backgrounds. They are also younger, have better academic results, and are more likely to have previous international experience (Ballatore, 2011, 2013). A recent study focused on Germany suggests that in fact, the social selectivity of the Erasmus programme has increased, rather than decreased, over the years (Netz and Finger, 2016).

Interestingly, in Beerkens et al.'s recent comparative study of seven countries (2016), home ties and lack of interest emerge as the strongest predictors of non-participation; but arguably socio-economic circumstances play a significant role as well (and the two are connected; for instance, 'home ties' may be a euphemism for caring responsibilities). The programme and accompanying grants do not sufficiently address the needs of many non-traditional students, in particular mature students with families or more generally students with disabilities, health problems and/or caring responsibilities.

What motivates students to participate in the Erasmus programme today? In a 2014 European-wide survey, at least 80 per cent of respondents reported that the following motivations to engage in Erasmus mobility for studies were 'very important or important' (EC, 2014: 73):

- Opportunity to live abroad
- Opportunity to learn/improve a foreign language
- Opportunity to develop soft skills i.e. adaptability, taking initiative, proactivity
- Improve and widen my career prospects in the future
- Enhance my future employability abroad
- Possibility to choose a study programme in a foreign language
- Opportunity to experience different learning practices and teaching methods.

However, large-scale surveys are limited in what they can tell us about motivations as they tend to impose a certain language on respondents (in this example, the language of employability and soft skills may not have been chosen spontaneously by respondents) and therefore may fail to capture nuances. In this case, it is interesting to note that the motivation 'Expected a "relaxed" academic term/year' was rated as 'very important or important' by slightly less than 40 percent of students. By contrast, more academic motivations such as 'Opportunity to follow different courses, not available in my home institution' and 'Good alignment of the courses abroad with the curriculum at home institution' were rated as 'very important or important' by between 60 and 70 percent of the survey participants. This suggests that students may have very different motivations but that overall, academic motivations are still very important in their decisions – as the present study suggests is also the case for Irish students.

The benefits of Erasmus to students are widely promoted through EU publications, ESN (Erasmus Student Network) activities and various local initiatives. Drawing from various sources, it is possible to summarise them as follows:

- Language skills
- Intercultural communication skills; better awareness and increased appreciation of other cultures; European identity
- Cosmopolitan friendship networks
- Increased self-efficacy and independence, including budget-management skills
- Employability.

However, while most scholars agree that Erasmus has some positive effects on its participants, there is no agreement on the nature of these effects. Recent studies have suggested, for instance, that participation in Erasmus did not significantly impact the likelihood that students identify as European (Mitchell, 2015). Participation may encourage a form of cosmopolitanism that is in fact exclusive rather than inclusive and may in some cases reinforce stereotypical views of the host country (Cicchelli, 2013; Doerr, 2013).

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Employability has been defined as a key objective of higher education in general and student mobility in particular. Yet the benefits of Erasmus in terms of employability are also contested:

- Large-scale evaluations such as *The Erasmus Impact Study* (EC, 2014) or *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility* (Janson, Schomburg and Teichler, 2009) rely on self-reporting, namely on the impressions of returning students who have not yet sought employment.
- Other studies based on statistical analysis of employment figures link international experience acquired through Erasmus with higher wages and lower risk of unemployment; however, their results are distorted by the fact Erasmus students come from higher socio-economic backgrounds and self-select into the programme.
- Studies of employers' perceptions suggest that employers value international experience, language skills and other skills associated with the Erasmus experience. Again, it is difficult to disentangle the relationship between participation in Erasmus, social class and acquisition of these various soft skills.

In other words, it is unclear to what extent the perceived or actual individual outcomes reflect the effect of participation in the programme, rather than initial socio-economic differences. In addition, it can be argued that the benefits of international mobility are tied to their scarcity. In other words, they allow beneficiaries to secure positional advantage compared to those who did not participate. Therefore, while the social selectivity of exchange programmes may amplify existing class-based differences, it is unclear whether a democratisation of access to Erasmus would have an equalising effect in terms of employability and other individual benefits.

2.5 The state of research in Ireland

Student mobility from Ireland is a significant phenomenon:

- According to the Unesco Institute of Statistics, 19,617 Irish people were studying abroad in 2010 (UIS, 2012: 136).
- In 2012, 12,000 Irish students applied to British universities through UCAS (UK-based University and College Application Service).
- We also know that 25 percent of students who participated in the ISSE survey (Irish Survey of Student Engagement) either had, or were planning to study abroad (HEA, 2013).

Yet much of the academic literature about international student mobility in Ireland focuses on incoming rather than outgoing students. This literature highlights the difficulties international students have in integrating on Irish campuses, both academically and socially, due to cultural differences as well as to institutional barriers (e.g. Sheridan, 2011). This research is tangentially relevant in the sense that it prefigures the difficulties Irish students may have when studying abroad.

Su-Ming Khoo's (2011) work on higher education and development is relevant to the topic of international student mobility as it explores the rationales guiding the internationalisation of Irish universities, from a comparative perspective. In particular, she examines the turn from 'ethical internationalisation' with a focus on aid and development to a more commercial approach focused on generating revenue, with diminished concern for the global impact of Irish higher education activities.

Both Ellen Hazelkorn and Kathleen Lynch explore the impact of international rankings – one aspect of internationalisation – and increased competition on higher education in Ireland and elsewhere (Hazelkorn, 2015; Lynch, 2013). More broadly, an expanding body of literature examines the ‘neo-liberalisation’ and marketisation of Irish higher education (Bruce, 2006; Gallagher, 2012; Holborrow, 2012; Lynch, Grummell and Devine, 2012; Lolich, 2011, Lolich and Lynch, 2016; Mercille and Murphy, 2017; O’Brien and Brancaleone, 2010). These works are located in the critical literature on globalisation and the transformations of higher education, but do not focus specifically on the phenomenon of student mobility. However, they shed light on the changes that have affected the Irish higher education sector in recent years and as such help us understand how the rationale for internationalisation may have shifted over time.

Likewise, recent textbooks and edited works on Irish higher education include very little, if anything, on outgoing student mobility (e.g. Clancy, 2015; Loxley, Seery and Walshe, 2014). When internationalisation is considered, the focus is generally on incoming students and other changes occurring ‘at home’, namely at Irish universities.

Although not focused on international mobility, studies of higher education students conducted at national level indicate that a number of obstacles may limit access to mobility for underprivileged students. Students from lower social classes still experience economic, institutional and cultural obstacles in relation to higher education access and outcomes (McCoy et al., 2009, 2010). We know that geographical distance to college within Ireland is an issue that impacts college choice, mainly due to the costs associated with travel and student accommodation (Cullinan et al., 2013). Similar considerations may also impact decisions to study abroad, in particular for those with limited financial means, those who rely on part-time work and/or who have caring responsibilities. In other words, while more quantitative data would be helpful, the existing literature gives reason to suspect that social class is a significant barrier to participation in study abroad programmes for Irish students, as is the case in other countries.

Irish students are more likely to rely on their families or partners as a source of income, compared to students in other European countries (UIS, 2009). This suggests that Irish students are faced with greater economic constraints compared to their European counterparts, which affect them while they study in their home country. Given the additional cost represented by mobility, this has implications for Irish students’ ability to be internationally mobile. In addition, as found in research conducted in the UK, a high proportion of Irish students enrolled in British universities are from privileged backgrounds (Harmon and Foubert, 2010). This suggests that students from privileged backgrounds, who are already overrepresented in Irish universities, may also predominate among the groups of Irish students who study abroad.

Also worth noting is that unknown numbers of Irish students travel abroad to study medicine, veterinary science or dentistry, often after failing to gain admission to equivalent courses in Ireland. Recruitment agents for foreign universities (whom I approached at a Study Abroad fair in Dublin) are active and allegedly very successful in recruiting such students from Ireland. The phenomenon is so extensive that one student, interviewed as part of the study, reported that several Gaelic Football teams had been set up by Irish students across Eastern Europe. This group is engaged in degree rather than credit mobility, therefore it is not proposed to study it here; however, it is worth mentioning this phenomenon as a signal that degree mobility from Ireland may indeed allow the more privileged students to reinforce their positional advantage (despite insufficient grades) while many others do not have access to such options.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Some of the scholars mentioned above speak to the debate on the marketisation of higher education and the emergence of the 'student-consumer' in an Irish context. British literature suggests that the 'student-consumer' is increasingly instrumental and focused on the material benefits they can derive from higher education (notably in the form of higher salaries in later life). From this perspective, it is argued that international mobility is often envisaged as a way to increase one's human capital and employability rather than as a transformative experience (Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). However, it should be noted that these attitudes are encouraged by institutions as they deploy the discourse of employability (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Moreau and Leathwood, 2006) and made necessary by rising higher education costs and by an uncertain graduate market. Some scholars go so far as to argue that in the present circumstances, students no longer have the luxury to follow their inclinations and feel that they have no choice but to be instrumental (Aronson, 2016). In her Irish study, Lolich proposes a nuanced view of instrumental risk calculations, highlighting how students want stability and emotional security, rather than high salaries per se (Lolich and Lynch, 2016). While again, this study does not include internationally mobile students, it raises questions in relation to students' attitudes to international mobility and the role of cost-benefit calculations in their decisions to study abroad, suggesting decision-making processes may be complex and embedded in broader structures.

Outgoing internationally mobile students are thus largely invisible in works concerned with Irish higher education. They are also absent from the literature on emigration from Ireland. Several researchers have examined recent emigration from Ireland (Gilmartin and White, 2013, 2016; MacÉinrí, Kelly and Glynn, 2013; Wickham et al., 2013; Moriarty et al., 2015). These authors argue that as is the trend elsewhere (Castles, 2002), mobility decisions are not envisaged as irreversible and circular, as well as onward patterns have become commonplace. Student mobility shares commonalities with these new patterns of migration (i.e. temporary rather than permanent). In addition, the line separating internationally mobile students from migrants is sometimes tenuous because international students may in fact decide to stay in their host countries (Robertson, 2011). Yet, internationally mobile students are not explicitly included in these studies of migration from Ireland.

Nonetheless, as some of these works focus on graduates and more broadly young people moving abroad, they are relevant to the present study in what they can tell us about young people's motivations and experiences. Thus, while young Irish emigrants might be critical of the economic circumstances, which led them to seek opportunities abroad, they often have a positive outlook on living abroad (McAleer, 2013). The graduates among them are particularly well positioned to create fulfilling global careers (Moriarty et al., 2015), while the 'returners' view their time abroad positively (Corcoran, 2010). O'Leary and Negra (2016) note that negative views of emigration have largely given way to new cultural configurations that frame the Irish migrant as a self-determined and successful global worker rather than as a victim of economic circumstances.

This body of literature that focuses on 'mobility' rather than 'emigration' is useful as it examines the complexities of belonging and career-building aspirations in a globalising world. Some of it suggests that mobile graduates have often been previously socialised to international mobility; and that work and life experience appear to be of greater importance to mobile graduates than defined professional and life plans (Wickham et al., 2013b, 2013c). This resonates with studies conducted elsewhere on internationally mobile students from developed countries (e.g. Waters, Brooks and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Yet internationally mobile students remain either invisible or subsumed in other groups across these studies and this gap needs to be addressed.

3 ERASMUS AND IRELAND IN NUMBERS

3.1 Statistical information on student flows to and from Ireland

In Ireland, there are two main sources of statistical information on internationally mobile students: the DES (Department of Education and Skills) and the HEA (Higher Education Authority). Only incoming students are accounted for in these statistics. Both data sets are limited. A number of higher education providers outside the state sector are not included (especially in the case of the HEA statistics), part-time students and students in further education are not accounted for, credit and degree mobility are not clearly distinguished, and there is some confusion in the reporting between domiciliary origin and citizenship of students. For the year 2014-15, the HEA data indicate that 18,243 international students were registered in Irish HEIs, namely 10.5 percent of the total student population (13.2 percent for universities only). For the same year, the DES data indicate that 22,678 international students were present, namely 12.4 percent of the total (13.7 percent for universities only).

In addition, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) keeps statistics on visas and residence permissions issued to non-EEA students. This data excludes EU and short-term students but gives an indication of possible numbers enrolled in the language school sector, who are not accounted for elsewhere. The most recent data on student migration is for the period January to end November 2014 and indicate that 49,500 non-EEA nationals were given student visas over this period to study in Ireland 'at degree level and for English language training'. If we add the number of non-EEA students provided by INIS to the number of EEA students provided by the DES (4,801) for the year 2014, the total is close to 50,000 international students (and still excludes EEA students in the language training sector as well as part-time students in HEIs).

Finally, the *International Students in Irish Higher Education* report produced by Education in Ireland included data from independent and private colleges. Students studying on branch campuses overseas or on joint degree programmes were also included. However, this report has been discontinued and the most recent was released in 2012. According to this report 32,132 international students were registered across 45 participating HEIs, including offshore students, Erasmus and short-term students. 15,596 were full-time students of HEIs, which still contrasts with the DES figure of 11,748 for the same year.

The UOE data collection, named after the three organisations that run it (UNESCO Institute for Statistics – UIS, OECD and Eurostat), is one of the main sources of international statistics on education systems. It includes statistical information on international and mobile students enrolled in any given country by country of origin. Officially, the UOE distinguishes between international and mobile students; however, most reporting countries continue to define mobile students on the basis of citizenship. According to the OECD statistics, in 2013, 12,861 international students were studying in Ireland (this is lower than the 14,280 figure reported by the DES).

Outgoing numbers are as follows:

- According to the OECD, 16,121 Irish students were studying abroad in 2013. The vast majority of these (12,579) studied in the UK, followed by 1,108 in the US.²
- According to Eurostat data, in 2012, 25,300 Irish students were studying in other EU28, EEA and candidate countries.³

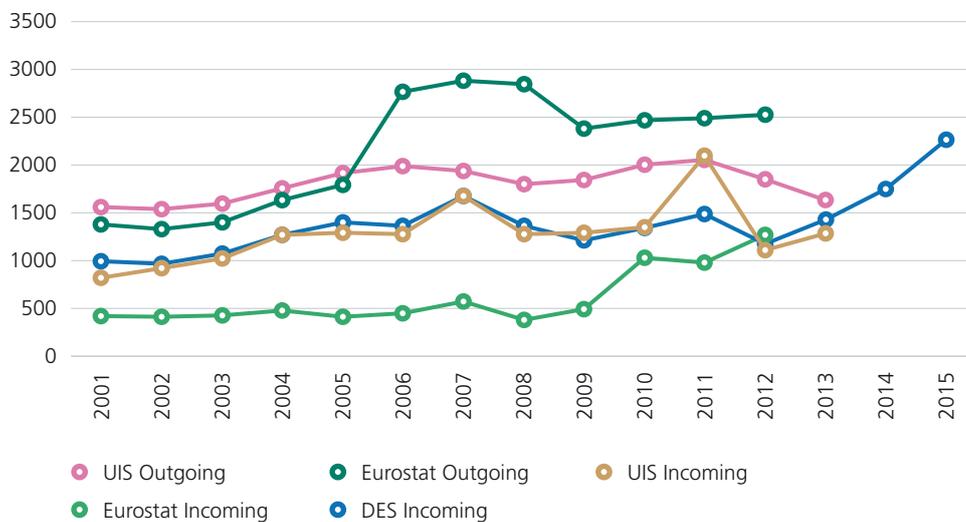
2 http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EAG_ENRL_MOBILES_ORIGIN#

3 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Learning_mobility_statistics

3 ERASMUS AND IRELAND IN NUMBERS

Figure 1 reports on outgoing (blue colour) and incoming mobility flows to Ireland according to UIS, Eurostat and the DES.

FIGURE 1 TRENDS IN STUDENT MOBILITY TO AND FROM IRELAND 2001-2015



Given the disparity between figures reported by the various agencies, and the uncertainties regarding the methodologies used (including their consistent application by each agency), it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions regarding student flows, which is striking given the strategic importance of incoming student mobility to Irish higher education and the Irish economy in general.



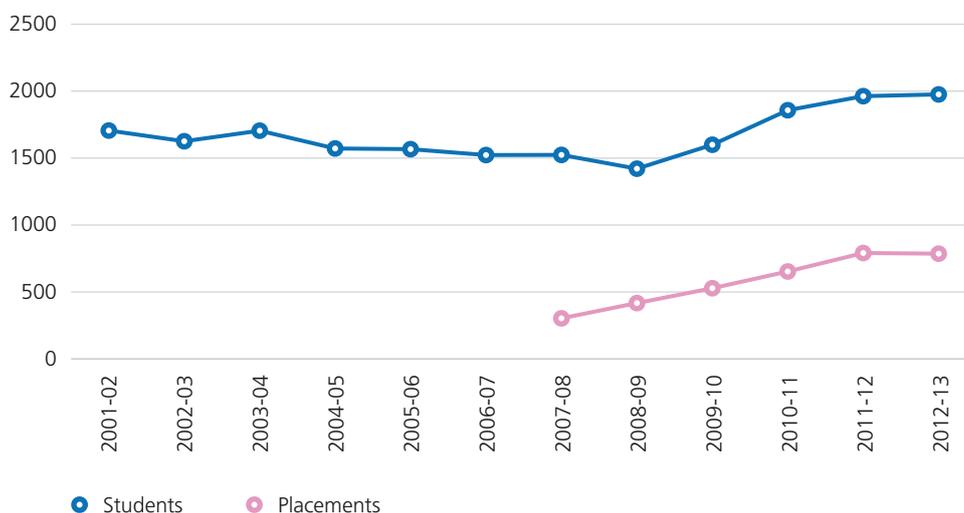
The increase in outgoing numbers from Ireland is largely due to the emergence of Erasmus work placements and the rise of non-traditional destinations.

Provisionally, we can suggest that, once students of further education and language schools are excluded, there may in fact be more Irish students studying abroad than international students studying in Ireland. However, this does not give an adequate indication of the flows of mobile students as it may just reflect broader migration patterns, in particular to the UK. Students counted as internationally mobile by UK institutions may in fact be Irish nationals born in the UK or long-term UK residents. Nonetheless, based on the graph above, we can assume that both incoming and outgoing numbers have increased over time.

3.2 Erasmus flows

Given that reporting is more straightforward, Erasmus statistics are more consistent and reliable. However, they do not differentiate between students taking a term or a full year abroad. Figure 2 is based on Eurostat figures (for both Socrates and Erasmus) for outgoing student mobility from Ireland. It differentiates between the traditional programme of mobility for studies and the Erasmus placement programme.⁴

FIGURE 2 EVOLUTION OF ERASMUS OUTGOING NUMBERS FROM IRELAND 2001-2013



Overall, outgoing figures have increased significantly, in line with the increase observable in other EU countries. Detailed figures available for the period 2002-2003 to 2012-2013 indicate that the increase is partly due to the emergence of Erasmus work placements from the year 2007 onwards, as shown in the figure above. In 2002-2003, 1,626 Irish students participated in Erasmus. They were 2,762 in 2012-13, but this figure included 786 students on work placements. Internships thus accounted for 75 percent of the increase in numbers over the period.

Another interesting change over time is the increased proportion of students from the combined fields of Humanities, Languages and Arts (including Journalism and teacher training) taking part in outgoing mobility through Erasmus, while the proportion of Business students has decreased, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.⁵ The proportion of students from Sciences has also decreased slightly.

⁴ Sources: data compiled from http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/facts-figures_en.pdf for 2012-13
http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/annex-2_en.pdf

⁵ This may be due to a change in the methods used to classify students according to their subject area. Unfortunately no detailed information is available on the methods used. However, the number of students studying business has increased significantly over the period; and this is not reflected in the numbers going abroad relative to other disciplines.

3 ERASMUS AND IRELAND IN NUMBERS

FIGURE 3 OUTGOING ERASMUS STUDENTS BY SUBJECT AREA (2001-2002)

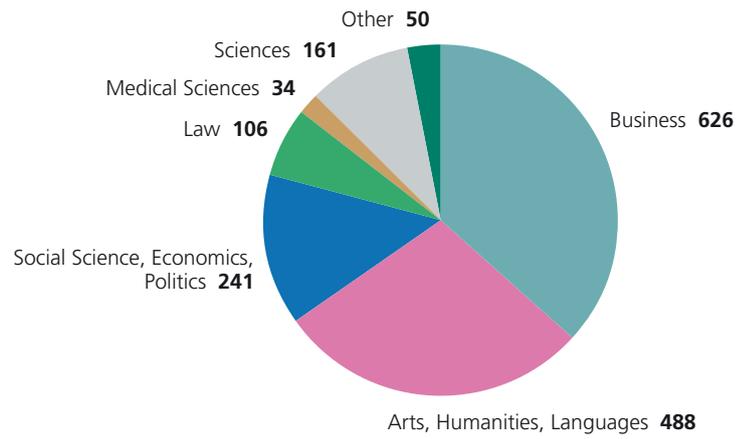
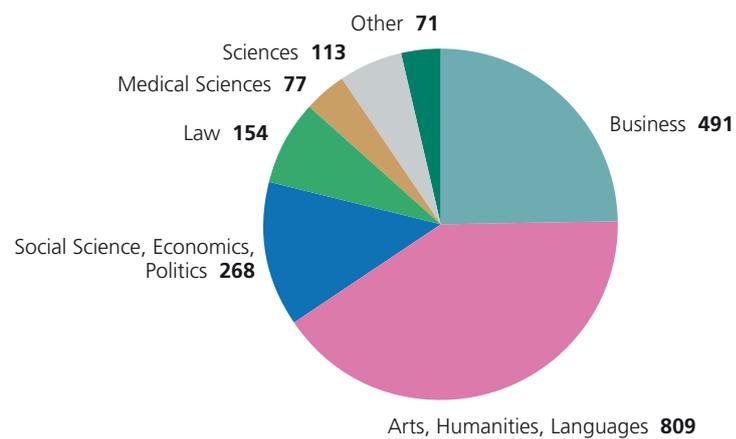
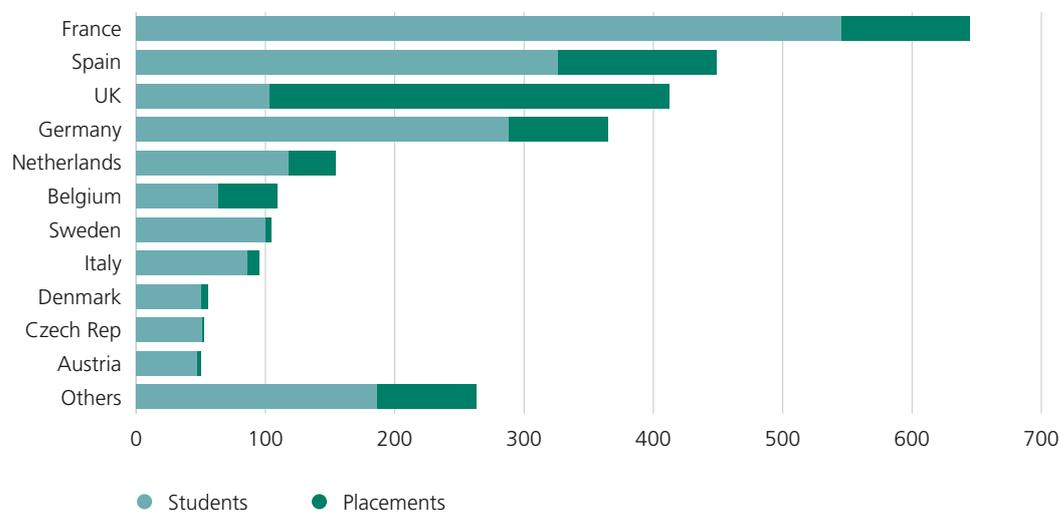


FIGURE 4 OUTGOING ERASMUS STUDENTS BY SUBJECT AREA (2011-2012)



There has been a diversification of destinations over time as well as some changes in relation to Irish students' preferred destinations. Figure 5 shows outgoing numbers by host country for the year 2014:

FIGURE 5 DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR IRISH STUDENTS IN 2014



At European level, the most popular Erasmus destination (for both student exchanges and placements) is Spain followed by Germany, France, the UK and Italy. Italy is less popular for Irish students than the European average, with the Netherlands being far ahead.

Erasmus flows are unbalanced. Irish universities receive more Erasmus students than they send out (7,216 versus 3,029 under the 2014 Erasmus call [EC, 2015b: 22-23]). The situation is reversed with the UK, with Ireland sending more students to the UK than the other way round. In particular, the UK is the top destination for Irish students on Erasmus placements. Over time there has been a rise in the number of Irish students going to the UK, Northern and Eastern Europe, as shown in Table 1.

3 ERASMUS AND IRELAND IN NUMBERS

TABLE 1 CHANGE IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR IRISH STUDENTS 2001-2012

Change in numbers between 2001-02 and 2011-12	Countries
Drop > -21	Germany
Drop -6/-20	Finland, France, Slovenia
Stable -5/+5	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia
Increase +6/+20	Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey
Increase > +21	Denmark, Czech Republic, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, U.K.

It could be the case that students whose families moved to Ireland from Eastern Europe after 2004 are using this opportunity to spend time in their home countries; however, there is no robust evidence that this might be the case (one respondent to the questionnaire, who identified as originally from Eastern Europe, chose to study in Spain). It is more likely that this increase in numbers going to Eastern European countries is connected to the availability of tuition in English in a number of Northern and Eastern-European universities, making them attractive to students who do not speak or study a second language. This is partly confirmed by the figures presented in the next table. In Table 2, destination countries were grouped by language.

TABLE 2 TRENDS BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN DESTINATION COUNTRY

Main language of destination country	Change in numbers between 2001-02 and 2011-12
German	-70
French	-12
Italian	-5
English	+35
Spanish	+56
Other, English spoken by <85%	+82
Other, English spoken by >85%	+151

The increase in overall numbers can also be related to the growing popularity of less usual destinations. The more traditional Erasmus destinations, namely those where languages taught in Irish universities are spoken (Spain, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Portugal) have experienced a slight decrease in numbers of Erasmus students from Ireland. This decline seems to coincide with a lesser emphasis on linguistic and cultural benefits, which will be discussed later. Meanwhile there has been a sharp increase in numbers choosing English-speaking destinations, including countries where English is not the official language but is widely spoken (mainly Scandinavia). In other words, destinations have diversified, with a broader range of destinations, and less obvious connection between destination and language acquisition.

In summary, the following trends are visible:

- A significant growth in outgoing numbers over time
- A sharp increase in the Erasmus internship category
- A relative increase from the fields of Humanities, Arts and Languages
- A low participation of students from the STEM fields
- A diversification of destinations in particular towards Northern and Eastern Europe
- Increased numbers travelling to destinations where English is spoken.

4 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Rationale

The project aimed to address a major gap in the research on internationalisation and student mobility in Ireland. Student mobility is becoming a mass phenomenon and the object of an increasing body of research worldwide. Yet existing literature on Irish students' mobility tends to be quantitative rather than qualitative; to focus on incoming rather than outgoing students; and/or to frame the argument in terms of national economic strategic goals (e.g. DES, 2010, 2013). As such existing research fails to capture Irish students' strategies and experiences of international mobility.

Ireland is an interesting case in its own right. Typically, due to the dominant position of the English language, English-speaking countries receive more students than they send. Internationalisation policy in the UK has long focused on incoming mobility as a source of revenue, but outgoing mobility has recently been incorporated to strategic goals (Brooks, Waters and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). A similar phenomenon is occurring in Ireland, with an increased emphasis on outgoing mobility in the most recent strategic document on internationalisation in higher education (DES, 2016). The preceding strategic document devoted a mere two pages to outgoing mobility (DES, 2010). In these policy documents, the main emphasis is on skill-building and employability. In the 'performance compacts' negotiated between the Higher Education Authority and individual institutions,⁶ targets in terms of incoming and outgoing student mobility are quantitative. In other words, the primary objective is to increase the numbers of students going abroad. From a policy perspective, this immediately raises the question of how this can be achieved. On another level, this also calls for an examination of the potential impact on equality of a strategy based purely on numbers.

4.2 Research questions

The main objective was to gain an understanding of the strategies and motivations of third-level students choosing to study abroad in the broader framework of international education and career trajectories and strategies. Related objectives included:

- To outline a profile and draw a typology of students likely to engage in international mobility;
- To map out institutional practices in relation to outward mobility and to understand their strategies in the context of internationalisation;
- To evaluate the impact of environment and institutional ethos in promoting and encouraging student mobility;
- To evaluate the impact of the internationalisation of higher education on Irish third-level students' strategies;
- To explore the perceived value of international/mobility capital in the Irish context and, if possible, the effective outcomes of student mobility.

6 These can be found on <http://www.heai.ie/en/policy/national-strategy/strategic-dialogue-process>

Other questions and issues emerged as the study progressed, in particular, in relation to the changing nature of student exchange frameworks and the growing 'de-academisation' of the Erasmus programme; specific difficulties encountered by students while abroad including mental health issues; the pressure felt by some to go abroad in order to 'stand out' in a context of increased uncertainty and fear of graduate unemployment and the centrality of cosmopolitan friendships during the year abroad. Some of these themes are only briefly developed in this report and are explored in more depth in published and forthcoming articles.

4.3 Methodology

The chosen methodology was principally qualitative. A first step consisted in analysing available data on student mobility to and from Ireland and how it evolved over time. National and institutional policies in relation to international mobility were analysed in order to better understand the context and the structural forces shaping student mobility. Further, the websites of each university (as well as a number of institutes of technology and third-level colleges) were scrutinised in order to understand the level of resources allocated to internationalisation and mobility, with a particular focus on institutional partnerships for student exchange and how mobility was framed.

The main research instruments were a questionnaire and qualitative interviews with students returning from exchange. The questionnaire was circulated in four HEIs that agreed to participate and received 110 valid responses. The questionnaire included close-ended multiple-choice questions (college, course, destination, whether participation was mandatory or not, sources of finance for the year abroad, nationality of friends), as well as open-ended questions on a broad range of topics. The questionnaire was used primarily as a scoping exercise. Its main goal was to identify trends usually not examined in student surveys and that could be explored in the qualitative interviews. Given that students receive many surveys, a low participation rate was expected. The choice was to make it open rather than closed in order to encourage detailed, reflexive responses from a small number rather than a large number of short responses. The response rate is unknown as the international offices did not communicate the total number of students reached. Based on Erasmus data collected from sending institutions, and removing the respondents on schemes other than Erasmus, the response rate can be estimated at approximately 10 percent, with wide variations (3-60 percent) from one institution to the other. Three other institutions were contacted and declined to participate.

The 22 in-depth interviews were conducted with students returning from a year abroad (face to face) as well as with students who were still abroad at the time (through Skype). They lasted between 45 minutes and three hours. They explored various aspects of the experience abroad (including practical issues, living arrangements, contact with home, friendships, social life, travel, homesickness). Students were also asked about their motivations, previous experiences of mobility,⁷ family background, studying habits, achievements and ambitions and future study, mobility and career plans. These in-depth interviews allowed students to explore their own ideas and reflect on their experiences, producing particularly rich, detailed and reflexive accounts.

7 Carlson (2013) argues for a processual perspective, which views the decision to be internationally mobile as part of a process unravelling over time, as a way to understand not why but 'how' students become internationally mobile – hence the interest in previous experiences of mobility and exposure to culture from the desired destination.

4 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

Student participants were recruited from Ireland's seven universities and across various disciplines and destinations. The sample included students who had participated in an exchange programme voluntarily as well as students for whom participation was 'strongly recommended' or mandatory.

As already indicated, research on the experience of internationally mobile students tends to be quantitative. Surveys give students multiple choices or ask them to rank their experiences on a scale. These surveys indicate that the majority of students report positive experiences. They tend to erase the experiences of those students, who did not have such a positive experience. In addition, international study has become a norm (Petzold and Peter, 2015). It is commonly associated with positive character traits: being adventurous, self-motivated, open-minded, adaptable, and so forth. Therefore, there is a strong normative expectation for students to be enthusiastic about their experience abroad. This makes it difficult for students to speak of negative experiences. The majority of those who agreed to be interviewed were positive about their experience, but more mixed experiences were reported through the anonymous questionnaire, as well as during some of the in-depth interviews.

The notion of 'strategy' is contested in social science. Approaches focusing on students' self-reported motivations have been criticised because choice is not necessarily the product of rational decision-making. It is not based purely on cost-benefits calculations (Carlson, 2013; Findlay, 2011). Economic views of decision-making obscure the social logics at play, ignoring that students are embedded in social structures (class, gender, ethnicity) and that their choices are the products of long-term processes. Recent qualitative research has thus revealed highly complex motivations, that include, for instance, the desire to escape a society perceived as too patriarchal to offer women the choice to study without being judged negatively (Martin, 2017); the invisible barriers faced by underprivileged students in accessing study abroad programmes (Ballatore, 2015); or the unequal treatment of international students based on their ethnicity and the supposed 'immigration risk' they pose (Robertson, 2011). The analysis was therefore attentive to broader social structures in order to achieve a more holistic sociological approach rather than relying on the rational actor model.

In addition, 10 university staff members involved in student mobility programmes in different ways were interviewed. These were recruited through personal and professional channels and included both academic staff ('academic coordinators' at departmental level) and administrative staff working in international offices. The study was particularly interested in the views and experiences of those engaged in interpersonal interactions with students studying abroad or considering to study abroad. For this reason, 'frontline' staff rather than managers were approached. The study was not limited to student strategies as the main agents in mobility decisions. It also paid attention to institutional processes and practices and to the role they play in shaping mobility decisions and experiences.

The research also involved direct observation of open events held at Irish universities to promote study abroad, as well as student fairs, in particular those organised by THE at the Royal Dublin Society, where foreign institutions and recruitment agencies held stalls and gave talks to recruit Irish students.

This study has a number of limitations. As it is largely qualitative in nature, it is not representative in the sense that the views reported are the views of all students. Nevertheless, it provides important indicative data on an under-researched area. Students from STEM disciplines were under-represented in the sample – as they are in the Erasmus contingent in general. Students who reported negative or very negative experiences in their

answers to the questionnaire rarely left contact details for follow-up interviews. Like other studies, it relies on self-reporting and identifies perceptions at a particular moment in time. Therefore it cannot report on the actual effect of study abroad on academic success or employability, or on other long-term consequences. Nonetheless, it constitutes a significant exploratory study and hopes to inform the way educators, higher education managers and policy-makers think about student mobility.

4.4 Profile of respondents

Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 summarise the characteristics (gender, destination country, subject area) of the students who responded to the questionnaire.

TABLE 3 TYPE OF PROGRAMME

Programme	Number
Erasmus Study Abroad	88
Erasmus work placement	6
International (non-EU) Study Abroad	12
International (non-EU) work placement	1
Other or unknown	3
Total	110

TABLE 4 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Number
Male	36
Female	73
Unknown	1
Total	110

68 percent of the respondents were female and 32 percent were male. Typically more young women than men participate in Erasmus: at European level, young women represent 61 percent of participants.⁸ By contrast, the interview sample included more males than females (54 percent).

8 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/facts-figures_en.pdf

4 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

TABLE 5 DESTINATION COUNTRY OF RESPONDENTS

Destination	Number	Destination	Number
Erasmus		Other	
Austria	2	Canada	2
Belgium	2	Hong Kong	1
Bulgaria	3	US	7
Czech Republic	3		
Denmark	2		
France	16		
Germany	18		
Iceland	1		
Italy	2		
Malta	1		
Netherlands	6		
UK	12		
Slovenia	6		
Spain	18		
Sweden	4		



The largest group came from Arts, Languages and Humanities, which is consistent with broader trends.

TABLE 6 SUBJECT AREA OF RESPONDENTS

Subject area	Number
Arts, languages and Humanities	44
Business, Economics, Finance, Management	12
Business/Economics and Humanities	11
Computer science and digital media	6
Engineering and Science	9
Law	5
Nursing and medical science	2
Social Science	11
Other or unknown	8

The largest group came from Arts, Languages and Humanities, which is consistent with broader trends (see previous section, in particular Figure 4).

Questionnaire respondents financed their stay abroad through a combination of sources, including:

- SUSI grant (for 29 percent)
- Erasmus grant (for 78 percent)
- Other grant or scholarship specific to the exchange scheme or host institution (for 5 percent)
- Student loan (for 5 percent)
- Family support (for 68 percent)
- Personal savings (for 61 percent)
- Student job in the destination country (for 15 percent).

In terms of socio-economic background, 29 percent of respondents received student aid in the form of the SUSI grant. This was slightly less than the average across the university sector nationally (36 percent), while the questionnaire was not circulated in Ireland's more 'elite' university (the percentage of students in receipt of state financial assistance may have been lower if this university was included). In the interview sample, which included students from all seven universities and one third-level college, only 22 percent of students received the SUSI grant. This is consistent with trends identified elsewhere. However:

- The sample size is too small to robustly determine whether the population in question is significantly better off compared to the average Irish university student
- The SUSI grant is not a perfect indicator of economic disadvantage. Students on Erasmus remain eligible for the grant and the amount may in fact increase when distance to college is taken into account.

Based on information collected on secondary school attended and occupation of parents, the interviewees came from a range of upper working-class to middle-class backgrounds. Two interviewees had one non-Irish parent and in total four students had at least one parent who travelled frequently for work. On the other hand, many students had no significant international experience. In particular, 41 percent of the questionnaire respondents had not left Ireland for more than two weeks at a time before their study abroad experience. In this sense, the sample is original compared to studies conducted in other countries that suggest that students who study abroad typically have significant prior international experience. This reflects recent endeavours on the part of some Irish institutions to normalise study abroad, as will be examined in Section 6.

41 percent of the questionnaire respondents had not left Ireland for more than two weeks at a time before their study abroad experience.



5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES

This section introduces findings from the research based on questionnaire responses and interviews and as such focuses on students' reported experiences. It provides an indication of the perceived benefits of mobility to students as well as an overview of the areas where the student experience can be improved.

5.1 A positive experience for most

The majority of students felt positively about their experience. Table 7 reports their responses to the multiple-choice question: 'Overall, how do you feel about your experience abroad?'

TABLE 7 OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE EXPERIENCE

	Very positive	Rather positive	Neither positive nor negative	Rather negative	Very negative	Total number
Mandatory or strongly recommended	64%	20%	9%	4%	3%	66
Voluntary	72%	7%	2%	14%	5%	44

Institutional support

Overall, students had a very good rapport with the international administrators who guided them through the application process and were very appreciative of the work of the international office at their institution. They found the frontline staff at the international office supportive, available and knowledgeable.⁹

Accommodation and cost of living

Finding student accommodation is often a key challenge for students settling in a new place. Yet most students in the sample found their accommodation quickly and at a reasonable cost. For students travelling on their own, the international students' residences were a welcome option (46 percent of the questionnaire respondents stayed in student residences). It accelerated their integration by placing them among other international students right away. Where communal spaces existed, these offered a social life, which was always available. In some instances, care was taken by the host institution to manage diversity, by mixing students from different national backgrounds. Some students preferred to rent private accommodation. This was often done with the help of contacts made through international student networks (for instance via Facebook groups). Overall, students were happy with their accommodation arrangements. This contrasts with the difficulties experienced by Irish and international students alike in Irish cities (HEA, 2017).

⁹ As a researcher, I also found staff at international offices very approachable, helpful and enthusiastic.

Some students reported experiencing financial difficulties (which, in at least two cases, severely impacted their lives while abroad). Yet all students interviewed found their destinations more affordable compared to Dublin; this was also the case of some of the questionnaire respondents (the questionnaire did not include a direct question on cost of living but some commented spontaneously). Surprisingly, this was also the case for students who had travelled to Scandinavian countries and to the UK.

Friendships

The responses to the question 'Who would you say you spent the most time with during your stay?' can be broken down as follows:

TABLE 8 STUDENTS' SOCIAL CIRCLES ABROAD

Time mostly spent with	
International students	59%
Students from your college in Ireland	14%
Other Irish students	8%
Local students	7%
Other (e.g. 'all of the above')	12%

For all students interviewed, making friends while on Erasmus was extremely easy. They quickly became embedded in several overlapping or distinct circles of sociability, which they generally navigated with relative ease. Some students went in small groups – in one case, four friends who had been studying and living together in Ireland for two years; others went on their own. Several students stated it was precisely what they wanted: to break away from their environment and meet new people, and in the case of language students, to be 'forced' to speak the language of the destination country rather than relying on Irish acquaintances for company (in practice, this did not always work out).

Students had a tendency to associate with other English-speaking students. 37 of the 110 questionnaire respondents indicated that their best friend or best friends were from Ireland and/or other English-speaking countries. The need for support from friends with a shared language and culture was present in some accounts. Generally speaking, students did not have particular issues or qualms with socialising with Irish or other English-speaking students, especially when improving their language skills was not the primary purpose of their participation in Erasmus. In this, these students contrast with those interviewed by other researchers (Cicchelli, 2012; Murphy-Lejeune, 2005) whose explicit ambition was to socialise with students of other nationalities, sometimes to the point of actively avoiding students from their own countries.

Nonetheless, a number of students made a 'best friend' of a different nationality and language. Students made friends with other international students more easily than they did with local students, although there were some exceptions. Where students became friends with locals, these were generally not college students but rather young people they met through sport or on nights out. In terms of the circumstances in which friendships developed, the Erasmus network meetings and activities on the one hand, and shared student

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES

accommodation on the other, emerged as social spaces central to the constitution of friendships. The Irish pub or local Irish sports team was another. By contrast, the classroom (or more generally, academic life) rarely led to the development of friendships. This resonates with many studies conducted in other countries: visiting students mix easily with other international students but find it difficult to become acquainted with local students. Some students regretted that this was the case, but also reflected that they themselves had not attempted to socialise with international students at their home institution.

Intercultural skills

Due to issues related to self-reporting and normative expectations (among others), it is notoriously difficult to evaluate the gains of internationally mobile students in terms of tolerance, global awareness and intercultural communication skills (Bishop, 2013). However, trends that emerged from other studies were discernible. Thus, while some students reported that their stereotypical views of their host countries had changed, other students did in fact express stereotypical views (for example: 'They are quite inefficient and young people don't work like they do in Ireland' [Spain]; 'The people can come across as quite rude and blunt' [Germany]). This resonates with findings from other studies that indicate that intercultural contact on the year abroad may in some cases reinforce stereotypical views of the host country (Cicchelli, 2013).

A sense of 'feeling European' was articulated by some students in the sample. A less direct but more common expression was the willingness to work for European institutions – although this desire was also underpinned by other motives and representations. Another aspect was a strong sense of attachment to Ireland, which students stated was enhanced by their experience abroad – not through a rejection of the culture of the host country but by reflections on one's own culture when confronted with greater diversity.

One general criticism of the Erasmus scheme is that it does little to bring students in contact with diversity (Teichler, 2004). Beyond language and cultural differences, international students tend to be relatively privileged, in the same age group and all engaged in third-level education. By and large, this was the case for the students in the sample. Students in the sample socialised with other students most of the time. Few had opportunities to interact with people who were not students and/or with people from minority ethnic backgrounds. If they did, these interactions tended to be superficial. However, this is not very different from the university experience in general.

When asked whether they were friends with international students before going abroad, students all said that they were not. The experience abroad made them more aware of the international presence on their Irish campuses and more attuned to the needs of visiting students. One student in particular was determined to be more welcoming to international students and joined his local ESN group on his return.

Self-development

Autonomy and independence featured prominently among the benefits reported by students. For a number of students, the year abroad was their first opportunity to live independently. Those living with their parents in Ireland particularly enjoyed this sense of freedom and autonomy.

Many reported increased self-confidence. Students stated they found it easier to socialise with people they did not know or to try out new activities. For some of these students, this took particular efforts, but on the whole

the openness of international student circles was encouraging and gave them a more positive view of their own ability to make new friends.

The students who were interviewed demonstrated a good ability for self-reflection. They were very amenable to discussing their own prejudices, how the experience had changed them, the mental health difficulties they in some cases experienced, and so forth. It is difficult to tell whether this self-reflexivity was an effect of the year abroad; however, it has been noted elsewhere that it was not uncommon in students returning from abroad (e.g. Chiccelli, 2013).

For many students, the year abroad was also an opportunity to travel and to try new activities. Some aspired to 'challenge themselves' and did so by participating in new (including 'extreme') sports, public performances, etc.

In terms of academic progress, students reported different experiences. However, even if they did not always feel they had learnt much, many of the students interviewed seemed to have acquired more 'academic confidence' in the sense that they had managed to survive in a different academic environment and/or had 'one more year of writing essays'. Those interviewed towards the end of their sojourn manifested a strong motivation to achieve high grades in their final year.

Future mobility

The vast majority of students interviewed considered the possibility of living and working abroad again in the near future. In fact, a majority aspired to future international mobility, and several had already taken steps to make it a reality, by applying for internships, jobs or graduate programmes (one interview was conducted by Skype with a student who had already relocated to the UK).

Yet few were drawn to the city or country where they had completed their year abroad. Instead, students often aspired to travel further and 'try out' other destinations, without excluding the possibility of moving back to Ireland at some point. This resonates strongly with the findings of research on graduate mobility from Ireland (e.g. Moriarty et al., 2015). Across the sample, a view of international mobility as desirable and fluid dominated. However, it was mitigated by desires for financial security and emotional stability, with the wish to eventually settle down, either in Ireland or elsewhere. This resonates with the findings of Luciana Lolich and Kathleen Lynch: while students are 'taught' to aspire to self-reliance and flexibility, the desire for stability remains strong (Lolich and Lynch, 2016).

5.2 Motivations to go abroad: a disconnection between student and institutional strategies?

One of the first questions in the online questionnaire was whether the respondent's participation in Study Abroad was 'entirely voluntary', 'mandatory' or 'not mandatory but strongly recommended'. Separate questions were asked depending on which of the three categories students identified with. Out of the 110 respondents, 44 students indicated that their participation was entirely voluntary. 18 of these were students in Arts, Humanities and/or Social Sciences; 9 were studying Business, Accounting or Finance; 7 were in Science, Engineering and/or Product Design and the other 10 were from a mix of faculties and courses (Digital Media, Nursing, Outdoor Education and Leisure, Law and Irish, etc.).

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES

Out of the 44 students who declared that their participation was entirely voluntary, 12 participated in International (non-EU) Study Abroad, while the other 32 participated in Erasmus Study Abroad. No respondent in this category went on an international placement. With just one exception, all the students who took part in Non-EU exchange were among those for whom the year abroad was voluntary.

Students who had declared their participation was 'entirely voluntary' were asked to identify at least three reasons why they wanted to go on exchange. This question was open-ended; therefore students were not limited to a set list of options and could use their own words to describe their reasons to go. However, the same reasons came up repeatedly and were often phrased in the exact same terms, in particular 'meet new people' and 'experience a new culture'. Many hoped to get out of their 'comfort zone' or 'become more independent', or again 'broaden their horizons', namely to evolve personally.

Motivations that were, broadly speaking, academic, also came up relatively frequently, with students hoping to hear different perspectives on their disciplines, to take modules not available in Ireland, or eager to experience different styles of teaching and learning. In both the questionnaire and the interviews, several students expressed the wish to stay in college longer, either because they did not feel prepared to enter the labour market, or because they felt they needed more time to really be 'on top' of their discipline. Table 9 gives a breakdown of the reasons listed by students in the questionnaire.

TABLE 9 STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO GO ON A YEAR ABROAD

Motivation	Number of Occurrences
Experience a new culture	19
Travel	17
Academic benefits/academic curiosity	16
Meeting new people	15
Self-development	14
Credential/career benefits	14
Taking a break/escaping Ireland	10
Living abroad	8
Extra year in college	5
Improve language skills	5
Other	2

These motivations cited by Irish students are broadly aligned with those that emerged from large-scale studies of Erasmus students (European Commission, 2014: 72). Knowledge of a foreign language was not a key determinant either: a number of students chose destinations even though they had limited or no knowledge of the local language.

A majority of students offered a mix of reasons, which spanned several categories. A particularly reflexive student in Arts and Humanities gave the following reasons:

1. I wanted to push the boundaries and get out of my comfort zone setting myself the challenge of starting fresh in a new country.
2. Additional credits, my degree becomes internationally recognised.
3. A chance to study a vast range of courses that wouldn't usually be offered at my home university.
4. To meet with people with different educational backgrounds

Ensuring students have full agency in their choice of destination may be productive in terms of motivation and personal benefits.



Concerns for future employment prospects were not confined to one HEI or one discipline, neither was the desire to travel or meet new people restricted to any particular sub-group of respondents. However, some connections were sometimes discernible between respondents' area of study and the reasons they gave to go abroad. A sociology student mentioned 'witness the original welfare state' as his first reason to go abroad (to Sweden, specifically); a student of Applied Arts chose Italy for its arts and architecture. In some cases, there were variations in the way students expressed their motivations across disciplines. A student in business wrote 'to make international friends' while a student in anthropology responded 'to meet people from all over the world'.

The sample is too small to draw any major conclusions from these responses, but it may be the case that the culture of their particular disciplines has influenced their aspirations or at least how they present these aspirations. While one international administrator felt students did not necessarily put serious thought into their choice of a destination (and indeed many listed non-academic reasons such as weather or cost of living), students' academic and cultural motivations should not be underestimated.

Thus, students displayed specific 'geographic imaginations' in their accounts of their decision-making processes. Decisions were often very personal, expressing a taste in a particular culture, a 'passion' for a language, a feeling of 'belonging' in a particular culture, and so forth. Some weighted their decisions on the basis of how they perceived a place to be 'international' or 'really Spanish'; big and hectic or small and intimate. For all these reasons, firstly, ensuring students have full agency in their choice of destination may be productive in terms of motivation and personal benefits.

Many have voiced concern that the ongoing marketisation of higher education has altered students' subjectivities and turned students into consumers. Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2009) are critical of students who no longer want to 'be' students but rather want to 'have' the degree that will make them employable. They are therefore less interested in the educational experience itself, unconcerned with the transformative potential of education, indifferent to the content of their subjects and hostile to intellectual effort. Several students did mention their desire to differentiate themselves from others through study abroad, and for some, this was linked directly to employment strategies: networking in the right place; adding relevant experience and acquiring a prestigious credential for employment purposes. However, this was very rarely framed as the main motivation for students. In this context, the current emphasis on employability in the promotion of exchange at institutional level may be misguided and somewhat disconnected from students' actual motivations.

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES

5.3 The effects of mandatory participation

Increasing participation by making it mandatory comes with specific risks. It puts pressure on international offices to find new partners, preferably in countries with a reasonable cost of living and where courses may be taught through English. Resources to monitor the quality of the experience are limited. While Eastern European destinations may offer a lower cost of living, the cost is still high to the student – in particular if they have to give up their student job.

Slightly more than half of the questionnaire respondents in the categories 'mandatory' and 'strongly encouraged' studied a foreign language either as a major or a minor subject. The next table shows the distribution of responses to the question 'how did you feel about this requirement initially?'

TABLE 10 STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE COMPULSORY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ABROAD

	Very positive	Rather positive	Neither positive nor negative	Rather negative	Very negative	Total
Mandatory	18	5	5	4	1	33
Recommended	15	14	2	0	2	33

In total, seven students – over a tenth of the students in the sample for whom study abroad was either mandatory or strongly recommended – stated they were not happy to have to go abroad. Those who explained their dissatisfaction (either directly in the questionnaire or in the follow-up interviews) mentioned a range of issues: personal issues such as health-related or financial issues or fears relating to an inadequate level in the language of the host country:

I didn't want to leave home, my family or my boyfriend. I also had to quit my job which was a lack of income for college. It was also more expensive than living in (town) for the semester (Human Sciences)

Due to health issues I didn't know if I could cope in a foreign country without the support of my family and friends. I even went as far as getting an exemption from Erasmus but in the end decided to go (Human Sciences)

It is more difficult for some than others. My level of Spanish wasn't and still isn't great (Arts and Humanities)

Others queried the academic usefulness of the year abroad, drawing attention to institutional issues rather than to personal circumstances:

I don't think it should be mandatory as we are not required to study a language as part of our course, nor did I study one over there. It was a great experience living abroad but technically useless as I didn't speak the language and my subjects were far from related to my course of study at home (Journalism and Media).

We weren't told it was obligatory in the course outline (Journalism and Media)

I was in a financial situation whereby I could do this year, but other students from poor families may have struggled as the grant was not sufficient for such a long time period (Business).

One student, who refused to go on exchange and was contacted by email, questioned the requirement that students of languages should spend time in the country of their target language. This student argued that not all language students wished to become language teachers and that this requirement was unfair to those who did not wish to pursue a career in language-teaching. He also argued that the year abroad does not necessarily lead to an improvement in language level that could not be achieved through other means at home.

As shown by Table 7, there were no significant differences in how students their overall impression between the two groups. Some of the students who reported being dissatisfied with the mandatory or quasi-mandatory nature of exchange did have a positive experience. Yet issues emerged from their more detailed accounts. Making the exchange mandatory ignores the barriers to mobility that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular, experience. On the other hand, making exchange mandatory helps tackle the issue of self-selection. However, this benefit should be weighed against the risks highlighted above, in particular causing financial hardship and distress for students.

5.4 Limited choice of destinations

Due to institutional limitations explored in Section 6, not all destinations are accessible to all students. While it is important to maintain a healthy diversity in the range of destinations on offer, ideally all destinations should offer a quality experience and be of value to students. However, experiences and outcomes varied widely. To begin, some students felt they had in fact little choice. The range of destinations accessible to them was limited not only by their financial circumstances but also by their institution. In some cases, while the university webpage promised a broad range of destinations, students discovered that these were only available to a limited number of students located in specific faculties. The following examples illustrate how the experience can be affected:

It's a really highly ranked engineering college, and the location is amazing. Wanted to live beside the coast, also Santa Barbara has excellent year round weather and is centrally located in California, allowing for extensive travel (Engineering, US)

This student was lucky to be eligible for an exchange scheme with a particularly prestigious partner in the US. Only two Irish universities are in partnership with this particular destination and a very limited number of places is available. This destination offered all the imaginable benefits that study abroad can offer: prestige, weather and so forth. For students in other higher education institutions and/or other disciplines, the choice may be very limited and unsatisfactory:

Cheap country meant that my grant would cover the entirety of the expenditure, as well as it being located in central Europe (Arts, Czech Republic)

Best out of terrible options (Social Science, Czech Republic)

These are two examples of students who were limited, respectively, by their financial situation and by the offer of destinations at their institution.

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES

5.5 Teaching and learning: unequal experiences and outcomes

Serious issues were reported by students across the sample. Students who were dissatisfied with their term or year abroad often directed their criticism at the academic aspect of the experience. While other issues also came up (difficulties with the language, accommodation issues, financial problems, isolation, boredom), the most frequent problems related to modules and teaching.

- Upon arriving at their destination, some students found that the modules they were supposed to take were not available: either because they were reserved for local students and fee-paying non-EU students or because the host university communicated offerings incorrectly. This specific issue came up repeatedly. It is unlikely that the problem is the outcome of negligence in doing background research on the part of all the students affected. Clearly, there is an issue of clarity about what modules are actually available and to whom, in any given year, on the part of the host institutions.
- Alternatively, modules were delivered as planned, but that they turned out to be at the wrong level for the student: either too easy (in particular, modules set up specifically for Erasmus students, where native English-speakers were at such an advantage that these modules presented no challenge at all) or too difficult (the opposite situation, where Erasmus students were expected to merge with local students and no provision was made for the fact they did not master the local language).
- Several students also reported that the local lecturers were hostile to them, turning them away from lectures or refusing to engage with them.

Such situations caused students anxiety as they were unsure they would be able to meet the academic requirements of their programme.

Students who had managed to secure a place at a US or UK institution (which is much more competitive) tended to report a better educational experience. Mixed experiences were reported mainly by students who went to mainland Europe. What follows is a sample from the answers given by students in response to the questionnaire item on the academic benefits of the year abroad:

Yes, similar content but at a higher standard (US)

Yes. My course in Ireland is very broad so my year abroad helped me to focus specifically on film studies and US literature. The classes are also generally much smaller and topics are explored in more depth (UK)

No it was a joke like doing my junior cert again (Czech Republic)

No. Modules were unrelated to my studies at home, poorly graded and inefficient (Spain)

Many who criticised the educational quality of the year abroad still found it had helped them in some way. This was the case of most language students, but also of a business student who said that he came back 'rested', like after a 'holiday', and ready to take on his final year. But a few students felt that the year abroad was deeply detrimental to their academic progress:

It has not helped me academically. I arrived in [town], and the ... department at the university informed me that no classes were in English. I had to look for classes in other departments, therefore ended up studying subjects I had no knowledge of. Now I will enter my final year at my home university with a year's gap in practice of writing essays, studying my own subjects. (Social Science, Slovenia)

In this sense, the fear of disruption identified by Beerken et al. (2016) as one of the significant barriers to participation, is justified. This other student also had a very negative view of his experience and its lasting consequences:

No. It has made me resent French, and I feel that it will take a long time for me to ever want to use French in my future career. If I could drop French at this stage in my course, I would. However, that is not possible for me, so I will finish studying it until the end of my degree, and then may never use it again (Belgium).

In light of the serious organisational issues described by students across the sample, it seems that such negative experiences, although a minority, should not be dismissed as caused by lack of adaptability or open-mindedness. These experiences have particular resonance when the objective costs of the year abroad are considered:

The grant I was offered covered very little of the stay, because my rent was so expensive, and I had a lot of money worries and stress caused by lack of money.

Although I really enjoyed my time in [UK city] it was a big ask to make it compulsory. It is definitely more expensive than staying in UL and it also meant I had to give up my part-time job which I didn't get back when I was back in Ireland.

5.6 Other issues

Awareness of Erasmus: do institutional channels work?

All interview participants were asked when they had first heard of the possibility to go on Erasmus. Those for whom it was mandatory or quasi-mandatory (students of Modern Languages) were aware of this requirement. From the responses to the questionnaire, it emerged that there were some exceptions as three students reported that the requirement was not made clear to them when they enrolled on their course.

Students who participated voluntarily did not all remember clearly how they were informed that they had this opportunity. Unsurprisingly, students of Modern Languages were strongly encouraged to go abroad. In other faculties, students remembered they heard about the possibility to go abroad from friends who studied on other courses or through personal channels. These influences were more decisive, compared to university communications (peer networks typically play an important role in mobility decisions [Beech, 2014]). In other words, they may have had some awareness of Erasmus, but it was only 'activated' when peers, friends or family members reported their experiences. Among the interviewees, only one student remembered that Erasmus was mentioned to her in her secondary school.

Increasing the visibility of Erasmus on campus (through dedicated events and talks for instance) is useful; however, peer networks remain central to the promotion of the exchange.

Support from faculty: mixed experiences

Some students were critical of the support they got in relation to module choice and other academic matters and perceived these to be the responsibility of faculty rather than staff at the international office. Students also reported that the level of information and encouragement received from their lecturers varied widely. In one particular case, a student felt that his lecturers did not understand the process and caused unnecessary delays in his application. Several students reported that lecturers did not display any particular interest in their experience abroad.

5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION: BALANCING OPPORTUNITIES



There are no formal mechanisms at institutional level to prepare students for their experience or to monitor students' intercultural learning. This is surprising for reflexive diaries and/or group debrief are considered best practice elsewhere for the role they play in facilitating intercultural learning.

Unsurprisingly, there were marked differences across disciplines. Students of Modern Languages were strongly encouraged to go (to the point that some felt they were forced to go and resented it) while students of Social Sciences or Arts felt that their initiative was encouraged by their lecturers. Others felt their lecturers were rather indifferent. Two students reported that their lecturers questioned their choice, suggesting spending a year abroad would not be a productive use of their time.

Lack of recognition of academic coordinators' role

Irish universities opened their International Offices at a relatively late stage, in the 2000s. Today, these are staffed with non-academic staff often with a business, administrative and/or management background. Generally the international office is physically separate from academic departments. Academic departments remain in control of Erasmus exchanges (to varying degrees) while non-European destinations are generally managed by the International Office. The role of academic coordinator often falls to junior staff members in academic departments. It is a demanding role, which adds significantly to lecturers' workloads: sourcing destinations, checking the quality offered abroad, selecting students, answering queries, dealing with issues they might face, and so forth. In NCAD, their role extends as far as travelling to vet the partner colleges and some re-examine their students' work to ensure they were not graded too generously by the partner university. However, the role of academic coordinator carries little career benefit. It is not valued in the same way as other administrative responsibilities in the promotion process. In addition, the academic

coordinator may or may not have an international background; they may or may not value international mobility; they may or may not take their role to heart. Some international administrators expressed disappointment with the lack of involvement on the part of academic staff in some other departments.

Lack of preparation before departure

Another issue is the lack of preparation before departure. Unlike the situation in some US universities, where the exchange is fully integrated into programmes and where there is significant intercultural preparation and goal-setting before departure and guided reflection (in the form of reflexive reports for instance) after the stay; students of Irish universities receive very little guidance. This is problematic in particular where the term or year abroad is not integrated into the programme and where the decision to go abroad is pretty much an individual one. Therefore, there are no formal mechanisms at institutional level to prepare students for their experience or to monitor students' intercultural learning. This is surprising for reflexive diaries and/or group debrief are considered best practice elsewhere for the role they play in facilitating intercultural learning (Anderson, 2012; Helm, 2009; Houghton, 2014). The absence of such learning mechanisms in Irish institutions means that significant pedagogic opportunities may be lost.

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The previous section indicated that the benefits of the year abroad were not equally distributed, with some students having a better experience and outcomes compared to others. Various structural factors play a role in this; in particular, some students have limited financial resources available, which impacts on their ability to take advantage of some opportunities while abroad. However, some institutional factors also need to be examined.

6.1 The policy framework

The national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education (DES, 2010, 2016) is framed mainly in economic terms. The first document, in particular, emphasised the economic impact made by international students through payment of fees and spending in Ireland. It explicitly favoured the recruitment of future elites, namely students who would go back to their home countries with a sense of loyalty to Ireland that would later translate into FDI. The strategy aimed at further maximising the economic impact of international students, both in terms of direct revenue and soft power. The more recent document (DES, 2016) includes sections on 'ethical approach to internationalisation', 'internationalisation of the curriculum' and 'supporting equality and diversity through internationalisation'. However, no specific guidelines or action plans are detailed and the dominant rationale remains an economic one. Outgoing mobility is not central to these internationalisation policy documents.

The UK faces similar difficulties in increasing outgoing student numbers as per European requirements but has set up a specific strategy and action plan to address low participation (UK Higher Education International Unit, 2013). This is not the case in Ireland. Each institution has been assigned specific goals in relation to both outgoing and incoming figures, in particular through the 'performance compacts' established in consultation with the HEA (however, it is unclear whether these quantitative goals are based on evidence and achievable).

In addition, unlike other countries (e.g. Brazil), Ireland does not have a large-scale programme of bursaries for students to study abroad. Institutions may offer such bursaries but these tend to be highly competitive. On the other hand, the student grant system is designed in a way that facilitates study abroad for students within a certain family income bracket. When students go on exchange, their grant is not discontinued and may in fact increase based on distance. But students may fall outside this bracket and not receive further financial assistance, beyond the Erasmus grant.

6.2 Institutional strategies

When it comes to internationalisation strategies, national and institutional rationales and goals may differ and, at times, contradict each other (Knight 2003b). For instance:

- Some institutions may not see enhancing 'soft power' for the country as a strategic priority as far as their own goals are concerned.
- Achieving a high profile internationally (which is encouraged as it lifts the profile of Ireland as a study abroad destination) may lead institutions to divert resources from traditional activities.

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- National guidelines may be more difficult to apply for some institutions, compared to others. Not all higher education institutions have the same capacity to create and implement internationalisation strategies: in particular, not all will appeal to international students.

The Irish higher education sector is relatively small but it is also stratified. It has been described as a 'two-tiered system' (McCoy and Smyth, 2011), with universities on the one hand, and other institutions (Institutes of Technology, colleges) on the other. There are also differences between the seven universities. In particular, TCD and UCD offer more high-point courses compared to the other five universities. In international rankings as well, TCD and UCD are ahead of the others. The methods used by ranking agencies are questionable and not believed to reflect the quality of the education provided (Hazelkorn, 2013). However, rankings are widely perceived to constitute an indicator of prestige. Presumably, they help internationally mobile students in their choice of destination. An examination of HEA figures based on the domiciliary origin of students indicates that the better ranked universities have higher intakes of international students. For instance, the proportion of international full-time students is 16.7 per cent in TCD, 15.1 per cent in UCD and 18.4 per cent in NUIG. By contrast, it is only 5.8 percent across the Institute of Technology sector.

It is only in the late 1990s/early 2000s that Irish higher education institutions began to develop strategic plans focused specifically on internationalisation (Khoo, 2011). International activities are now formalised and centralised, in the form of international offices and centres at each of the seven universities. The most visible centre is the one at UCD. In addition to offices, it includes a spacious 'Global Lounge', which can be used for social events. At the time of writing, according to the UCD website, the centre employed 40 full-time staff. To these can be added an unspecified number of students employed on a part-time and/or short-term basis. 12 of these full-time members of staff are located abroad, where they are in charge of promoting UCD and recruiting international students in key locations, in particular South-East Asia. It is striking that very significant resources are invested into recruiting fee-paying international students, compared to horizontal, reciprocal mobility programmes, scientifically motivated or development-oriented programmes. In addition, this increased concentration of resources suggests that the management of students abroad (both incoming and outgoing) has moved from faculty to administrative and managerial staff. Non-EU programmes, in particular, tend to be managed by international offices.

The role of academic coordinators (faculty members in charge of managing exchange at department level) is focused mainly on intra-European mobility. As it emerged from the interviews, non-EU partnerships are often initiated by senior managers in line with institutional objectives. Traditionally, faculty would have had a greater role in initiating these partnerships and the motivation would have been scientific. This still happens, but issues of viability come into play. A member of staff in an international centre gave an example of an exchange partnership which was suggested by a Professor, based on a long-standing scientific collaboration with the suggested partner. However, this partnership did not materialise because existing partnerships with the country in question did not draw sufficient numbers and the suggested college was not particularly highly ranked. In other words, the institutional rationale for setting up partnerships may, in some cases, conflict with the wishes of faculty. This poses a risk, as it may cause faculty to further disengage with internationalising activities. Research conducted elsewhere suggests that faculty may be wary of international activities, which they perceive as too commercial (Dewey and Duff, 2009; Turner and Robson, 2009). If academics, including those on the frontline of teaching and supporting students, are not consulted or included in internationalisation processes, there is a risk that this divide will widen.

The National College of Art and Design offers a contrasting example. With about 1,000 full-time students, it is a much smaller institution, with fewer resources compared to the bigger universities and Institutes of Technology. NCAD does not have a dedicated international centre. Exchange programmes are managed by a small number of administrative staff, who are also involved in other roles and they work closely with faculty. A number of faculty members are very involved in choosing and 'vetting' partners and it is not unusual that faculty members visit partner colleges in person. NCAD experiences severe capacity issues: most courses are studio-based, which limits the scope for recruiting higher numbers of students. Therefore, outgoing and incoming flows need to be strictly balanced, and courses precisely matched. Recruiting international students for the purpose of increasing revenue is not an option. In this particular case, the ability of the college to comply with some of the national guidelines is limited. On the other hand, this approach ensures that the pedagogic quality of the exchange is maintained. NCAD is also the institution that sends the highest proportion of its undergraduates abroad. However, this highly integrated approach may not be a viable option for the larger institutions managing much larger flows of students.

Sourcing equivalent modules is a difficult task, which requires faculty involvement. It is complicated by the lack of options for students who speak English only.



In several universities, the structure of programmes has been altered at faculty or university level in order to facilitate outgoing mobility. In UL, an additional year has been integrated into a broad range of undergraduate programmes, in particular across the Humanities and Social Sciences. This additional year consists of two elements: an internship in industry in the first semester and study abroad in the second semester. Both are mandatory for the students on these programmes, whether or not they speak a foreign language. Students may choose an industry placement abroad and thus spend the whole academic year outside Ireland.

In both UCD and MU, students may take an additional full year abroad after their second year. If they meet the requirements (which vary), they will be awarded a four-year 'international' degree instead of a three-year degree.

Both these scenarios facilitate the management of the year abroad from an institutional perspective. Whether mandatory or optional, the year (or half-year) abroad is considered as additional to the academic programme. Therefore, students do not 'miss out' on a year of tuition and the courses they take abroad do not need to cover an equivalent content. Sourcing equivalent modules is a difficult task, which requires faculty involvement. It is complicated by the lack of options for students who speak English only. These processes are thus simplified, allowing institutions to encourage outward mobility without investing considerable resources or jeopardising the integrity of their programmes. In addition, traditionally, the Erasmus exchange appealed mainly to students of foreign languages and culture; removing the language requirement as well as the module match requirement allows institutions to promote exchange to monolingual students as well.

Along with the emergence of Erasmus internships and new destinations with tuition in English, these initiatives have certainly helped increase outgoing numbers, with the most dramatic increase visible in UL.

The next two figures show the numbers of outgoing Erasmus students for each institution in 2012 (latest available detailed official figures at the time of writing), Figure 6 in absolute numbers and Figure 7 as a proportion of the total undergraduate enrolment.

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

FIGURE 6 NUMBER OF OUTGOING STUDENTS PER IRISH HEI 2012

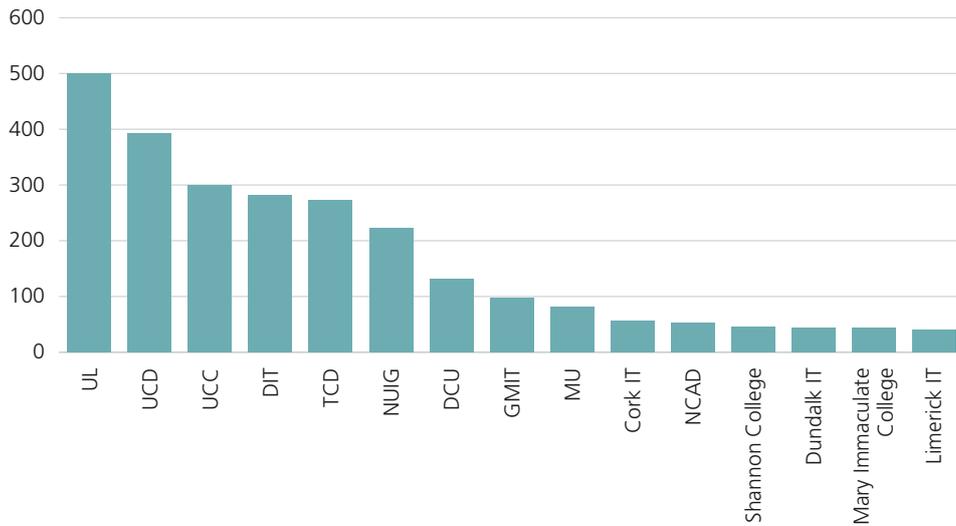
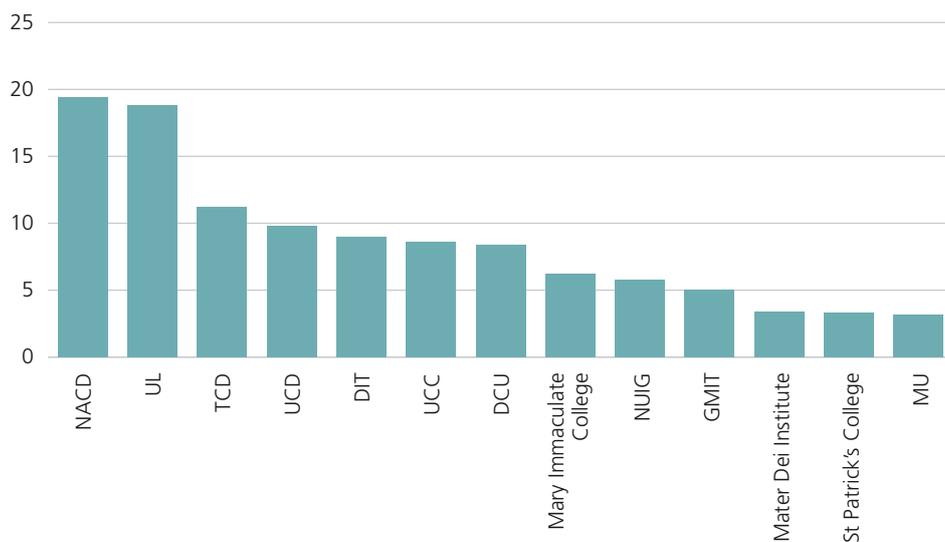


FIGURE 7 OUTGOING ERASMUS STUDENTS AS PERCENTAGE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT POPULATION PER IRISH HEI 2012



UL emerges as the strongest sender of Erasmus students, and the only one which has managed to send as many Erasmus students as it receives. This is due at least in part to the introduction of the mandatory term abroad in some departments. UL also sends a larger proportion of its students to Eastern European destinations.

6.3 Inequalities between institutions: partnerships

Ballatore and Blöss (2008) argue that Erasmus partnerships are established according to ‘selective affinities’. A ‘red-brick’ British university is more likely to partner with an equivalent university, for instance one of the provincial French universities built in the 1980s in order to absorb increased numbers of third-level students. The more prestigious, established universities are more likely to be partnered with institutions of a similar rank abroad. An analysis of partnerships listed on university websites suggests that to some extent, this is the case in Ireland as well.¹⁰

The next two figures make visible the ‘selective affinities’ at play in university partnerships. The 2015 THE (*Times Higher Education*) ranking was used as it gives an indication of the prestige of universities as presented in the public domain. On the vertical axis, Irish universities are ordered by rank in the THE, with the highest ranked at the bottom of the axis. The partner universities displayed on each institutional website were counted, sorted by country and grouped in different categories according to their rank in the THE ranking. The analysis excluded Erasmus destinations other than the UK for two reasons: first, Ireland and the UK are the only English-speaking destinations within the Erasmus programme (and depending on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, Ireland could become the only one). As such, both countries are very popular destinations within the programme and Irish institutions receive many requests for partnerships from other European countries as a result. It is more difficult for Irish institutions to establish partnerships with UK institutions because Irish demand for UK places is much higher than UK demand for Irish places; therefore, it makes little sense for UK universities to enter partnerships which are likely to be very imbalanced. Securing a partnership with a UK university has more significance than securing one with a partner in another EU country. The second reason for excluding non-UK Erasmus destinations from the analysis is that due to biases in the methodology of international rankings, relatively few non-UK European institutions achieve high places; most EU partners are therefore invisible in these rankings.

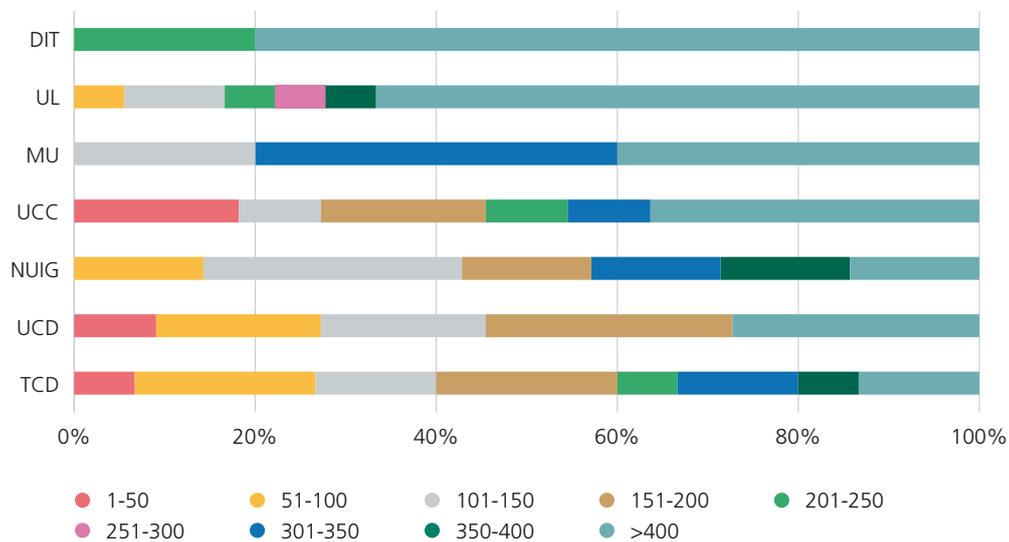
The THE ranking calculations include counts of international students and staff as measurement of internationalisation, which is one of the criteria used to evaluate institutions. Therefore, attracting a higher number of international students allows institutions to improve their scores, which helps gain places and therefore visibility – which in turn, may have an impact on international student recruitment.

10 A more extensive discussion of ‘selective affinities’ and the international partnerships of Irish universities is available in a published chapter (Courtois, 2018).

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Figure 8 displays the proportion of UK partners in each rank bracket. Partner universities which do not appear in the ranking were counted as being in the 'over 400' category. The website of DCU did not include as much information on UK partnerships compared to the others, therefore it was excluded and replaced with DIT.

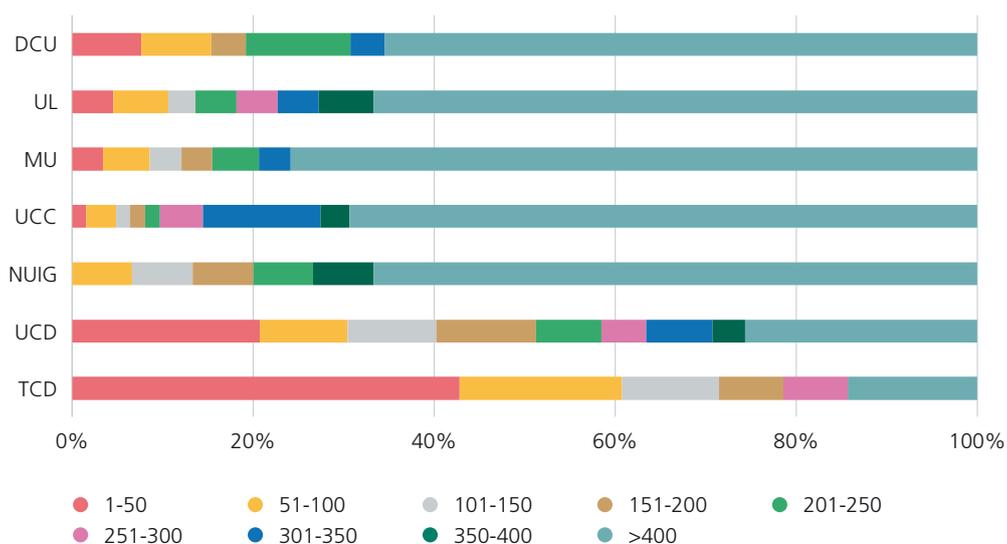
FIGURE 8 UK PARTNERSHIPS BY RANK BRACKET (SOURCE: COURTOIS, 2018A)



The better-ranked Irish HEIs are more likely to secure agreements with well-ranked British universities.

Figure 8 shows that the better-ranked Irish HEIs are more likely to secure agreements with well-ranked British universities. In addition, a number of UK partners are ranked above their partner Irish university. The case of DIT shows that there is a sharp contrast between universities and even the highest ranked institute of technology. Figure 9 examines the case of non-EU partnerships. These are not supported by a regional scheme such as Erasmus and are often negotiated on a case by case basis. All seven universities were included.

FIGURE 9 NON-EU PARTNERSHIPS BY RANK BRACKET (SOURCE: COURTOIS, 2018A)



TCD is not the most internationalised universities in quantitative terms. However, it has the highest proportion of highly ranked partners both in the UK and outside Europe. UCD has fewer highly ranked partners but has a higher number of partners outside the Anglophone world, suggesting greater diversification.

These two figures do not say much about the quality of the experience offered to Irish students taking part in these exchange programmes for two reasons: firstly, as already suggested, the rank of an institution cannot be taken for an indication of the quality of courses provided or the level of support given to students. Secondly, a number of other factors come into play, such as the match between the programme at home and the course followed abroad. In addition, both figures are based on lists displayed on university websites. As revealed by interviewees working in international offices, some partnerships may in fact be inactive. Only a very small number of places may be offered or the exchange may be very unbalanced.

It should be noted that the partnerships displayed on the ‘public faces’ of universities do not reflect the flows of fee-paying incoming students or incoming students supported by Irish or foreign fellowships. For instance, 16 percent of international students are from Africa and the Middle-East,¹¹ but at present there are no mutual exchange partnerships with countries in these regions. Student mobility from countries outside the European, Australasian and North-American regions is significant and brings financial benefits to the institutions. To some extent, these flows (at least from South America and South-East Asia) are also in line with the national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education, which places an emphasis on recruiting students from emerging economies for the purpose of enhancing ‘soft power’ and creating opportunities for future commercial partnerships with these countries. However, these flows are not reciprocal and their visibility on

11 Based on HEA domiciliary origin figures for 2013-2014.

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

university websites is relatively limited. This is problematic given the extent of global imbalances in student flows and what they reflect in terms of the unequal power relationships between the North and the South.

When asked about the lack of partnerships with institutions outside Europe and the Anglophone world, staff explained that it would be very difficult to send Irish students to these destinations or to other sending countries in Asia, Russia or South America. At the same time, among the interviewees, two were disappointed that South American destinations were not on offer. Several others wished there was a broader choice of destinations. Arguably establishing exchange partnerships requires significant resources and in some parts of the world, student security may be more at risk than in others. However, it is worth noting that in all regions, institutions are trying to internationalise and to draw students from other countries. There are opportunities for Irish institutions to extend their portfolios of destinations in a way that rebalances these unequal relationships and opens up possibilities for future academic collaboration with countries in Africa, the Middle-East, South America, Asia. In a way, this would also support the goals set at national level to engage with some of these countries as potential economic partners (DES, 2013, 2016). However, this would require promoting more atypical destinations to Irish students; giving them appropriate support; and shifting away from the focus on revenue-oriented mobility.

6.4 Inequalities between Erasmus and non-EU exchange¹²

It emerged from the research that not all exchange partnerships had the same status within Irish institutions. As suggested in the previous section, some partnerships are important because of the prestige of the partner institution. Others are less prestigious but may help extend the institutional offer for specific disciplinary fields. They may offer tuition in English and be appropriate outlets for students who do not speak or study a foreign language. They may also be located in countries that have a less onerous cost of living and therefore be more affordable to less privileged students. But these, while useful in terms of offering places abroad for larger numbers of students, do not bring the same reputational benefits (they help build up numbers and achieve an international profile but do not allow the institution to display 'prestigious' partners). In addition, if they are reciprocal, there are no direct financial benefits for either institution involved in the partnership. Instead, they may consume resources.

Further, the unbalanced flows between Ireland and the other Erasmus destinations (with the exception of the UK) put pressure on Irish institutions. This imbalance is not new. There was a strong emphasis on languages in the way the Erasmus programme was originally designed, and learning English has always commanded a premium compared to learning other European languages. Ireland has always received about twice as many students as it sent out. However, with the growth in numbers, the imbalance has grown in absolute numbers (for instance, 2,077 'extra' students in 2004-05; versus 4,187 in 2014-2015). Furthermore, Irish higher education institutions have seen their funding cut significantly in recent years and severe capacity issues have emerged as a result; together with an increased emphasis on cost-saving and revenue-generating activities, at the expense of educational and scientific objectives (e.g. Mercille and Murphy, 2017). This also helps explain why imbalanced Erasmus numbers are conceived of as a problem.

12 This section is adapted and expanded from a published article (Courtois 2018a).

The pressure varies from one institution to another. UL has managed to achieve a balance between incoming and outgoing numbers. NCAD monitors these numbers closely because of their programme structures, which require individual studio space and tutoring. Other institutions have more flexibility as they can increase the number of students in lecture halls (and in a more limited way in seminar and tutorial groups) without this having a direct impact on resources. However, when the imbalance is significant and consistent over time, exchange agreements need to be reviewed and in some cases, terminated.

By contrast, in one case, a partnership in China was maintained despite very unbalanced flows (the partner sent students regularly but no Irish student would take up the opportunity to go there) because it happened to be a highly ranked university. In other words, some exchange partnerships may be maintained not because they are used by students, but because they are prestigious. Whether prestige matters may also depend on the subject area: this particular case was a partnership with a Business school. Business school rankings are very influential in defining the 'value' of a degree in the labour market while this is less the case for other subjects. Being able to report a partnership with a highly ranked Business school abroad has reputational benefits for the Irish institution.

Broadly speaking, there is an imbalance in the level of resources allocated to the various types of exchange. For example, in 2015, UCD employed 23 full-time staff for the recruitment of incoming fee-paying international students. Six full-time staff worked on reciprocal non-EU exchange and only two were listed on the website as managing Erasmus. To these can be added academic coordinators, student volunteers and part-time or short-term staff invisible on the website. Still, it suggests the hierarchy between various international activities has an impact on the level of staff resources allocated to each. In two other universities, the physical organisation of the international office also reflected this imbalance, with much more floor space dedicated to non-EU exchange/incoming mobility. In at least one case, social events, orientation tours and other activities are organised separately for Erasmus students and for other incoming students (whether these non-EU students are part of exchange programmes or incoming only, i.e. whether they bring in fees or not). Non-EU students are given access to sports facilities on campus while Erasmus students have to pay. Erasmus students have complained to the international office about what they viewed as unfair treatment but there is no plan to change this approach.

This relative lack of resources affects outgoing students as well. Two staff members, based in separate universities, were unhappy with the lack of resources allocated to the Erasmus section of international activities, which made it difficult to provide appropriate care to both incoming and outgoing Erasmus students. For instance, the university had no hardship fund for students running into difficulties abroad. In addition, the programme was organised in such a way that it did not leave sufficient time to prepare students for the year abroad. As one coordinator explained, Erasmus students are important and valued as they contribute to enhancing the international profile of the institution, but they do not pay fees and in the case of severe imbalances, the programme costs money to the receiving institution. This, according to the interviewee, is the rationale used at university level to justify allocating fewer resources to the management of the Erasmus programme compared to other internationalising activities. This indicates that a commercial rationale dominates institutional decision-making processes in relation to the allocation of resources for different types of student mobility.

6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Other differences emerge in the way the different types of exchange are managed. Non-EU programmes are more selective even when they are not linked to a scholarship. Applications are more complex and need to be submitted earlier in the year. In some cases, the final decision is taken by the host university after a thorough examination of students' applications. Therefore Irish universities may pre-select their strongest students, not only to enhance their chances of being accepted but also to ensure that the students' academic performances and behaviour reflects positively on the Irish partner institution. By contrast, Erasmus may be chosen as a fall-back option for those who did not secure a place on a non-EU programme as well as for those who realise they cannot afford the trip.

6.5 A loosening of the traditional exchange framework¹³

Originally, the Erasmus programme was based on the notion of mutual recognition between European institutions. In its traditional form, the exchange was organised and evaluated as follows:

- Management of the exchange: mainly faculty (programme coordinator and lecturers), supported by administrative team (at departmental and institutional levels).
- Duration and integration to the programme structure: one year in lieu of a year at home university; no change to the duration of the overall programme (a three-year programme remained a three-year programme with or without a year abroad).
- Selection: voluntary (self-selection); different modes of selection or ranking of students but generally based on grades and/or motivation; competitive in some cases.
- Module choice: close fit with the programme (equivalent modules); organised and supervised by faculty, involving direct communication with the host institution (and often facilitated by existing scientific collaboration).
- Academic evaluation: grades obtained abroad taken into account in final grade calculation (with frequent issues relating to students' language level as explained below).

As noted by critics of the ECTS credit system (e.g. Parker and Jarry, 1998), 'equivalence' was never fully achieved. This was due to persisting differences between national systems and academic cultures; as well as to the language barrier, which made it impossible for visiting students to perform to the same standard as local students. Leniency became increasingly commonplace as a result. More flexible approaches to organising (and in particular evaluating) the year abroad emerged.

There are now significant differences in the way the 'year abroad' is organised, managed and evaluated at Irish universities. These differences are visible not only across but also within universities; and at times within faculties or even departments. They fall into five broad categories: differences in relation to who oversees the exchange; duration and integration to the programme structure; differences in the selection processes; programme/module choice; duration of the programme and academic evaluation. The following list gives an indication of these variations across the five categories. It focuses on outward mobility but takes into account all destinations (i.e. Erasmus and international exchange outside the EU).

13 This section is adapted and expanded from a published article (Courtois 2017).

Management of the Exchange
International office only
Or international office in partnership with academic coordinator at department level
Or international office with involvement of faculty (not necessarily in formal coordinator roles)
Or international (administrative staff) coordinator based exclusively in a specific School or Department (e.g. Business; Law faculty)
Or mainly faculty: academic coordinator only
Or mainly faculty: programme coordinator and lecturers
Duration and Integration to the Programme Structure
One semester in lieu of semester at home university (3-year programme)
Or one semester (combined with a one-semester long internship); integrated (4-year programme)
Or one year, integrated (4-year programme)
Or one add-on year, optional (3-year programme becomes 4-year programme: 'BA international')
Selection
Competitive i.e. based on grades
Or competitive i.e. based on grades and a written statement (with possibility of another assessment by staff at the destination university)
Or places are allocated on a first-come first-served basis
Or random selection
Or places are allocated on a discretionary basis or based on criteria unknown to students.
Module Choice
Close fit with the programme; organised by faculty
Or close fit required but organised by students
Or flexible fit/combination e.g. only one module is mandatory; or students may choose to take the course at a lower level (e.g. year 1 instead of year 3); etc.
Or loose fit (e.g. general subject area; or any course provided it is taught in the target language)
Or no specific requirement (students can choose whatever modules they want provided they achieve a given number of credits over the term/year abroad).
Academic Evaluation
Pass/fail only (students need to achieve a minimum number of credits)
Or grades are taken into account in the final grade calculation
Or grades are moderated by the home institution and taken into account in the final grade calculation
Or the work is re-examined and re-graded at home institution (rare).
Students may be given additional assignments at their home institution if they do not have the required amount of credits

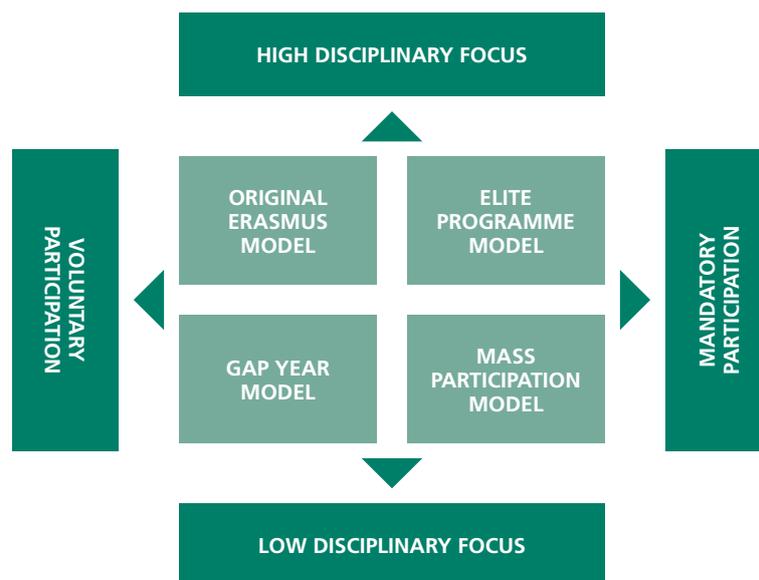
6 THE ORGANISATION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The 'original Erasmus model' described above required significant resources, and posed a number of risks, related in particular to the difficulty in sourcing equivalent modules and to the language barrier. Visiting students assessed according to the same criteria as native speakers were at risk of being penalised by low grades, which counted towards their degree. These issues, amplified by the increase in numbers (and diminishing state funding) have contributed to the emergence of new approaches to managing student exchange programmes.

Several universities have abandoned the principle of module equivalence by making the year abroad additional to – and somehow separate from – the overall degree programme. However, this is applied unevenly across departments. Some programme directors (or in some cases, individual lecturers) may insist that students choose relevant modules even if the year abroad is optional and additional to the programme. The students who participated in the study revealed significant discrepancies in the way their work was assessed abroad, and taken into account once back in Ireland. Practices differed even for students enrolled on the same courses. In addition, the lack of close supervision means that students could, in some cases, decide not to follow the requirements of their course, without any significant consequences.

Figure 10 attempts to 'make sense' of this diversity in practices. While various combinations are possible, four distinct types emerge depending on the level of disciplinary focus (vertical axis) and whether the exchange is mandatory or voluntary (horizontal axis).

FIGURE 10 FOUR TYPES OF EXCHANGE (SOURCE: COURTOIS, 2017)



The 'original Erasmus model' is the closest to the one described previously as the traditional approach to exchange. In this model, modules are closely matched and participation is voluntary. This model requires significant faculty involvement in order to monitor the academic content. Students follow courses abroad for a given period of time and join their own cohort again for the final year of their degree. Typically grades are transferred and taken into account by the home university. The study did not bring up significant evidence that this model was in use in any systematic way, except in NCAD.

The 'elite programme model' is more easily discernible in Ireland. In this model, the year abroad is mandatory and built into the programme. The justification for the year abroad is mainly academic and module choice is closely monitored. Such programmes tend to be four-year programmes with a strong emphasis on international experience. Four-year Business and Languages or Law and Languages degrees are examples of this model in Irish universities.

The 'gap year model' is the one put in place by UCD and MU, although as previously noted, in some departments faculty may be involved in deciding what modules students should take. Participation is voluntary and the modules are loosely matched, or not matched at all – meaning students may choose to take modules that are unrelated to their subjects. It is an add-on year, generally assessed on a pass/fail basis and subject to self-selection. For these reasons, it is similar to 'gap year' common for privileged US students (Snee, 2014), although it has an academic justification.

In the 'mass participation model', participation is mandatory and academic requirements may be as flexible as in the gap year model. For these reasons it makes it easier to increase outgoing numbers.

Some programmes may draw from more than one model. For reasons explained previously, non-EU exchange is more costly and also more closely monitored. Such programmes are more likely to fall into the elite programme or gap year model. There are also grey areas: for language students the exchange may be 'strongly recommended' rather than mandatory.

This diversification makes discernible a trend towards a lesser emphasis on the academic nature of the exchange and a greater emphasis, at institutional level, on lifestyle and employability as justifications for student mobility. Overall, there seems to be a significant shift towards the 'gap year' and the 'mass participation' model. Both make the experience abroad more costly for students as they require an 'add-on' year that students have to finance. The 'gap year' model does not address the issue of self-selection, which has been identified for one of the main reasons why participation in Erasmus remains socially unequal (Ballatore, 2013). The coercive nature of the 'mass participation' model makes it problematic in some respects as well. It does not address inequality in access caused by disabilities, severe financial difficulties or caring responsibilities as ultimately, students affected by such issues will remain excluded. It carries the risk of further dissociating the term or year abroad from the academic content of the programme: not only because students are allowed to choose irrelevant modules, but also because in some cases there is no other choice for students as the offer of courses in English is relatively limited. When the institutional goal is to increase outgoing numbers quantitatively, the quality of the programme may be compromised unless significant resources are invested.

This diversification makes discernible a trend towards a lesser emphasis on the academic nature of the exchange and a greater emphasis, at institutional level, on lifestyle and employability as justifications for student mobility.



7 CONCLUSIONS

In a context where Irish Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to increase outgoing numbers, there is a lack of research on the motivations and experiences of Irish students abroad. This exploratory study has attempted to address this issue. Outgoing numbers have increased relatively steadily (placing Ireland around the average of participating countries in terms of outgoing numbers), with a marked increase in Erasmus internships and destinations in Northern and Eastern Europe. This reflects the fact that Erasmus is no longer considered or promoted solely as a destination for students of Modern Languages, but rather has a potentially much wider reach. Students from the STEM fields are still in the minority in terms of taking up opportunities for international mobility. This suggests that Erasmus continues to be promoted and valued very differently across faculties.

The types of partnerships higher education institutions engage in depend on their own status in the national/global hierarchy. This would not be an issue if all institutions were able to offer a broad range of destinations and if all destinations offered a quality experience. The study suggests that this is not necessarily the case. At institutional level, Erasmus competes with other outgoing mobility programmes. Non-EU programmes are more costly, more competitive and are generally treated as more prestigious (for the student as well as for the university) given that top-ranked universities tend to be located in Anglophone countries. An unequal distribution of resources results in a marked differentiation in the way different types of exchange are managed, with the risk that the gap between Erasmus and other schemes may widen.

As higher education institutions manage an increasing number of outgoing students, the year/term abroad is taking new forms. The traditional exchange format is becoming less common. Instead of being fully integrated into the programme, the year abroad is increasingly offered as an 'add-on' year. This extra year comes at an additional cost to the student. The modules taught abroad are not necessarily relevant to the overall degree programme chosen by the student. This simplifies the organisation and evaluation of the year abroad from an administrative perspective and lessens the workload of faculty. While it suits some students, it is disappointing to those who are more academically oriented. The disconnection between the academic and other aspects of the experience means that pedagogic opportunities are lost – not only in terms of disciplinary knowledge but also in terms of intercultural learning. This particular trend can be contrasted with the organisation of the year/term abroad in Northern America, where the emphasis is on disciplinary and intercultural learning, with significant faculty involvement and integration to the programme. With few exceptions, Irish students were not required to complete learning or reflexive diaries while abroad. There is no institution-led de-brief of such students when they return, which would provide extremely useful information in terms of an ongoing evaluation of the programme. The study has suggested that the strategies and motivations of third-level students choosing to go abroad were relatively varied. While institutions tend to promote the lifestyle aspect and employability benefits of the experience, this may not resonate with students more interested in the cultural and academic (in a broad sense) benefits of the year abroad. This helps explain why, as noted by a coordinator, 'the really top students don't go'.

Experiences are generally positive but also very contrasted, with a significant number of students reporting difficulties (isolation, accommodation issues and in particular, issues with access to chosen modules and quality of modules) and a small number reporting negative experiences and/or detrimental outcomes (financial loss, difficulties 'catching up' academically once back in Ireland). In a sense, credit mobility offers another access to the global higher education market and some of its benefits. It is also an arena where privileged students can deploy specific strategies that will advantage them personally – although this is only accessible to those in some institutions/disciplines and to those with significant resources.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Faculty involvement

Faculty can play an important role in encouraging students to go abroad and in advising them. They can play an advisory role in the choice of university partners and help source partners for disciplines that are not sufficiently covered by existing agreements. Generally speaking it is important to involve faculty in internationalisation processes to avoid the perception that internationalisation is little more than a commercial activity.

- Involve faculty in internationalisation processes
- Ensure information flows between faculty and international office
- Recognise the value of the role of academic coordinators

Student choice

Students may have very different reasons for going abroad, and very specific ideas of where they want to go. The decision to go abroad and the choice of the destination are important elements in the process; diversity and flexibility are very much valued.

- Maintain diversity in destinations, formats, accommodation options etc.
- Ensure students have agency in relation to their choice of destination
- Consider the implications of mandatory participation

Quality

Significant issues have emerged in relation to teaching and learning in some of the partner colleges. While there is little sending institutions can do about other aspects of the experience abroad, academic quality is an area that requires attention.

- Invest resources to monitor the academic quality of the programme
- In particular, ensure that language-learning support is available to students abroad (for instance, for students of French going to France, French as a Foreign Language as opposed to only courses taught in French)
- Collect evidence of quality issues from students and act upon them – Ireland remains in a strong position to do so (and even more so in the context of changes which may occur against the backdrop of Brexit).

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Equality and diversity

Because of the diversification in the types of schemes, destinations and so forth, and because of the issues previously highlighted, significant inequalities have emerged: some students may not afford an additional year of study even in a country where the cost of living is less onerous than in Ireland, and the year abroad may cause significant hardship.

- Reconsider the 'gap year' model currently in place
- Explore funding options for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the context that Irish universities level the educational playing field through their equality and diversity policies
- Consider setting up a hardship fund for students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties abroad
- Monitor the quality of the learning experience abroad in order to ensure that all students benefit from their time abroad regardless of the destination

Outgoing mobility and other internationalisation processes

In order to be meaningful and to deliver ethical outcomes, outgoing mobility needs to be better connected to the educational experience as well as to other facets of internationalisation.

- Consider setting up two-way partnerships with sending countries (with scholarships to encourage Irish students to take up these opportunities)
- Internationalisation at home – value the international presence on Irish campuses; consider ways to internationalise the curriculum across faculties for the benefit of both Irish and international students. Fully integrating international students to classroom and social activities is a useful step in this, and can be encouraged at institutional level.
- Build reflexive diaries into the assessment. This is considered best practice in many jurisdictions and supports intercultural learning.
- Embed preparation to the year abroad in programmes. This may take the shape of dedicated sessions aimed to sensitise students to intercultural learning. It is difficult to implement in situations where students undertake voluntary mobility and are a minority to do so in their year groups, but it is feasible on programmes where the year abroad is mandatory and fully integrated.

REFERENCES

- Agulhon, C.; and B. Convert. 2011. Introduction: La professionalisation des cursus, axe majeur des réformes européennes? [Introduction: The professionalization of higher education programmes as a major aspect of European reforms?] *Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs*, Hors série N° 3: La professionalisation: l'un des vecteurs du processus de Bologne? 5-19.
- Ahmed, S. 2012. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Altbach, P. 2007. *Tradition and Transition: The International Imperative in Higher Education*. Boston: Center for International Higher Education.
- Anderson, J. 2012. Reflective journals as a tool for auto-ethnographic learning: A case study of student experiences with individualized sustainability. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 36 (4): 613-623.
- Aronson, P. 2016. 'I've learned to love what's going to pay me': A culture of despair in higher education during a time of insecurity. *Critical Sociology* 43 (3).
- Atherton, G. 2013. Breaking down the borders? Widening access to higher education and international student mobility. In *Going Global: Identifying Trends and Drivers of International Education*, edited by M. Stiasny and T. Gore, pp. 193-200. Bingley: Emerald Group.
- Ballatore, M. 2011. Échanges internationaux en Europe et apprentissages. L'exemple de la mobilité étudiante institutionnalisée par le programme Erasmus [International exchange within Europe and learning. The example of student mobility institutionalised through the Erasmus programme]. *Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs*, Hors série N° 3: La professionalisation: l'un des vecteurs du processus de Bologne?
- Ballatore, M. 2013. The Erasmus programme in France, Italy and the United Kingdom: Student mobility as a signal of distinction and privilege. *European Educational Research Journal* 12 (4): 525-533.
- Ballatore, M. 2015. The Erasmus programme: Achievements, inequalities and prospects – An overall approach. In *Further Perspectives on Academic Migration and Mobility*, edited by F. Dervin and R. Machart. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ballatore, M.; and T. Blöss. 2008. Le sens caché de la mobilité des étudiants Erasmus [The hidden meaning of the mobility of Erasmus students]. In *Échanges et mobilités académiques: Quel bilan?*, edited by F. Dervin and M. Byram, pp. 17-42. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Beerkens, M; Souto-Otero, M.; de Wit, H.; and J. Huisman. 2016. Similar students and different countries? An analysis of the barriers and drivers for Erasmus participation in seven countries. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 20 (2): 184-204.
- Bishop, S. 2013. The rhetoric of study abroad: Perpetuating expectations and results through technological enframing. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 17 (4): 398-413.
- Brooks, R.; and J. Waters. 2009. A second chance at 'success': UK students and global circuits of higher education. *Sociology* 43 (6): 1085-1102.
- Brooks, R.; and J. Waters. 2014. *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brooks, R.; Waters, J.; and H. Pimlott-Wilson. 2012. International education and the employability of UK students. *British Educational Research Journal* 38 (2): 281-298.

REFERENCES

- Brown, P.; and A. Hesketh. 2004. *The Mismanagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, P.; Lauden, H.; and D. Ashton. 2011. *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs and Income*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruce, V. 2006. Markets and higher education: A regime of truth? *Irish Educational Studies* 25 (2): 141-154.
- Bruno, I.; Clément, P.; and C. Laval. 2010. *La Grande mutation. Néolibéralisme et éducation en Europe*. [The great transformation. Neoliberalism and Education in Europe.] Paris: Syllepse.
- Carlson, S. 2011. How to explain the transnational occupational mobility of former international students? Suggestions for a change in research and theoretical perspectives. In *Analysing the Consequences of Academic Mobility and Migration*, edited by F. Dervin, pp. 115-130. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Carlson, S. 2013. Becoming a mobile student: A processual perspective on German students' degree mobility. *Population, Space and Place*. Special Issue: International Student Migration. 19 (2): 168-180.
- Castles, S. 2002. Migration and community formation under conditions of globalization. *International Migration Review* 36 (4): 1143-1168.
- Cicchelli, V. 2012. *L'esprit cosmopolite. Voyages de formation juvéniles et cultures européennes*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Clancy, P. 2015. *Irish Higher Education: A Comparative Perspective*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- Clark, N. 2009. What defines an international student? A look behind the numbers. *World Education News and Reviews*. Available at <http://wenr.wes.org/2009/09/wenr-september-2009-feature/>
- Collins, F.; Sidhu, R.; Lewis, N.; and B. Yeoh. 2014. Mobility and desire: International students and Asian regionalism in aspirational Singapore. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 35: 661-676.
- Corcoran, M. 2002. The process of migration and the reinvention of self: The experiences of returning Irish emigrants. *Eire Ireland* 37 (1/2): 175-191.
- Council of the European Union. 2011. Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on "Youth on the Move" – Promoting the Mobility of Young People, OJEU C199. Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2011%3A199%3A0001%3A0005%3Aen%3APDF>
- Courtois, A. 2016. Internationalising practices and representations of the 'other' in second-level elite schools in Ireland. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14 (4): 560-576.
- Courtois, A. 2017. "It doesn't really matter which university you attend or which subject you study while abroad": The massification of student mobility programmes and its implications for equality in higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*.
- Courtois, A. 2018a. The global ambitions of Irish universities: Internationalising practices and emerging stratification in the Irish higher education sector. In *The Making of Elite Universities and the Production of Elites*, edited by R. Bloch; A. Mitterle; C. Paradeise and T. Peter. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Courtois, A. 2018b. Commentary to Part IV: Institutional identities in flux: Internationalisation and elite-making in higher education. In *Elite Education and Internationalisation: From the Early Years into Higher Education*, edited by C. Maxwell; U. Deppe; H-H Krüger and W. Helsper. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

DES, Department of Education and Skills. 2010. *Investing in Global Relationships. Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-15*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

DES, Department of Education and Skills. 2013. Review of Ireland's International Education Strategy 2013. Consultation Paper. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

DES, Department of Education and Skills. 2016. *Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2010*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills. Available at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

Dewey, P.; and S. Duff. 2009. Reason before passion: Faculty views on internationalization in higher education. *Higher Education* 58: 491-504.

De Wit, H. 1999. Changing rationales for the internationalization of higher education. *International Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/News15/text1.html

Doerr, Neriko Musha. 2013. Do 'global citizens' need the parochial cultural other? Discourse of immersion in study abroad and learning-by-doing. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 43 (2): 224-243.

Dvir Y.; and M. Yemini. 2017. Mobility as a continuum: European Commission mobility policies for schools and higher education. *Journal of Education Policy* 32 (2): 198-210.

Erlich, V. 2012. *Les Mobilités étudiantes* [Student mobilities]. Paris: La Documentation française.

European Commission. 2010. *Youth on the Move: An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move_EN.pdf

European Commission. 2014. *The Erasmus Impact Study: Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf

European Commission. 2015a. *Methodological manual on learning mobility in tertiary education*. Version of 28 July 2015. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an3.pdf

European Commission. 2015b. Erasmus+ Programme Annual Report 2015, Annex 1. EU Publication Office. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/erasmus-plus-annual-report-2015-annex-1_en.pdf, 9 March 2017.

European Commission. 2016. Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Version 2. Brussels: European Commission. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

Findlay A. 2011. An assessment of supply and demand-side theorizations of international student mobility. *International Migration* 49: 162-190.

REFERENCES

- Foskett, R. 2010. Capacity-building for demography in Southern Africa: International collaboration in action. In *Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives*, edited by F. Maringe and N. Foskett. London: Bloomsbury.
- Gallagher, M. 2012. *Academic Armageddon: An Irish Requiem for Higher Education*. Dublin: The Liffey Press
- Gerhards, J.; and S. Hans. 2013. Transnational human capital, education and social inequality: Analyses of international student exchange. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 42 (2): 99-117.
- Hadfield, A.; and R. Summerby-Murray. 2016. Vocation or vocational? Reviewing European Union education and mobility structures. *European Journal of Higher Education* 6 (3): 237-255.
- HEA, Higher Education Authority. 2013. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) Summary Report. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.
- HEA, Higher Education Authority. 2017. Report on Student Accommodation: Demand and Supply. Dublin: Higher Education Authority. Available at <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/Report-on-Student-Accommodation-Demand-Supply.pdf>
- Hazelkorn, E. 2015. *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Helm, F. 2009. Language and culture in an online context: what can learner diaries tell us about intercultural competence? *Language and Intercultural Communication* 9 (2): 91-104.
- Holborow, M. 2012. Austerity, capitalism and the restructuring of Irish higher education. *Irish Marxist review* 1 (2).
- Houghton, S. A. 2014. Exploring manifestations of curiosity in study abroad as part of intercultural communicative competence. *System* 42: 368-382.
- IAU, International Association of Universities. 2015. 'Glossary'. Available at <http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/glossary>
- ICEF, International Consultants for Education and Fairs. 2015. *The State of International Student Mobility in 2015*. ICEF Monitor report. Available at <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/11/the-state-of-international-student-mobility-in-2015/>
- Janson, K.; Schomburg, H.; and U. Teichler. 2009. *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility*. Bonn: Lemmens Medien GmbH.
- Karady, V. 2002. La migration internationale d'étudiants en Europe, 1890-1940 [International student migration in Europe, 1890-1940]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 145: 47-60.
- Kelo, M.; Teichler, U.; and B. Wachter. 2006. "Eurodata: Student Mobility in European Higher Education." Bonn, Germany: Lemmens Verlag & Mediengesellschaft.
- Khoo, S. 2011. Ethical globalisation or privileged internationalisation? Exploring global citizenship and internationalisation in Irish and Canadian Universities. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* (3-4): 337-353
- Kim, J. 2015. Global cultural capital and global positional competition: International graduate students' transnational occupational trajectories. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 37 (1): 30-50.
- Knight, J. 2003a. Updating the definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education* 33: 2-5.

- Knight, J. 2003b. *Internationalization of Higher Education: Practices and Priorities: 2003 IAU Survey Report*. Paris: International Association of Universities. Available at http://ws4.pucminas.br/imagedb/documento/DOC_DSC_NOME_ARQUI20060214115459.pdf
- Knight, J. 2009. Internationalization: Unintended consequences. *International Higher Education* 54: 8-10.
- Knight, J. 2013. The changing landscape of higher education internationalisation: For better or worse? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 17 (3): 84-90.
- Lee, J. J.; and B. Cantwell. 2012. The global sorting machine: An examination of neoracism among international students and postdoctoral researchers. In *Universities and the Public Sphere: Knowledge Creation and State-Building in the Era of Globalization*, edited by B. Pusser; K. Kempner; S. Marginson and I. Ordorika. New York and London: Routledge.
- Lolich, L. 2011 ... and the market created the student to its image and likening. Neo-liberal governmentality and its effects on pedagogy and course design in higher education in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies* 30 (2): 271-284.
- Lolich, L.; and K. Lynch. 2016. The affective imaginary: Students as affective consumers of risk. *Higher Education Research and Development* 35 (1): 17-30.
- Loxley, A.; Seery, A.; and J. Walshe. 2014. *Higher Education in Ireland: Practices, Policies and Possibilities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lynch, K.; and M. Moran. 2006. Markets, schools and the convertibility of economic capital: The complex dynamics of class choice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 27 (2): 221-235.
- Lynch, K.; Grummel, B.; and D. Devine. 2012. *New Managerialism in Education: Commercialization, carelessness and Gender*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lynch, K. 2013. New managerialism, neoliberalism and rankings. *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics* 13: 141-153.
- MacÉinrí, P.; Kelly, T.; and I. Glynn. 2013. *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity*. Emigre Research Report, Department of Geography, University College Cork.
- McAleer, M-C. 2013. Time to go? A qualitative research study exploring the experience and impact of emigration on Ireland's youth". Research report, National Youth Council of Ireland.
- McCoy, S.; and E. Smyth. 2011. Higher education expansion and differentiation in the Republic of Ireland. *Higher Education* 61: 243-260.
- Maesse, J. 2017. The elitism dispositif: hierarchization, discourses of excellence and organizational change in European economics. *Higher Education* 73 (6): 909-927.
- Marginson, S.; Nyland, C.; Erlenawati, S.; and H. Forbes-Mewett. 2010. *International Student Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Marginson, S. 2013. Equal or others? Mobile students in a nationally bordered world. In *International Students Negotiating Higher Education: Critical Perspectives*, edited by S. Sovic and M. Blythman. London and New York: Routledge.

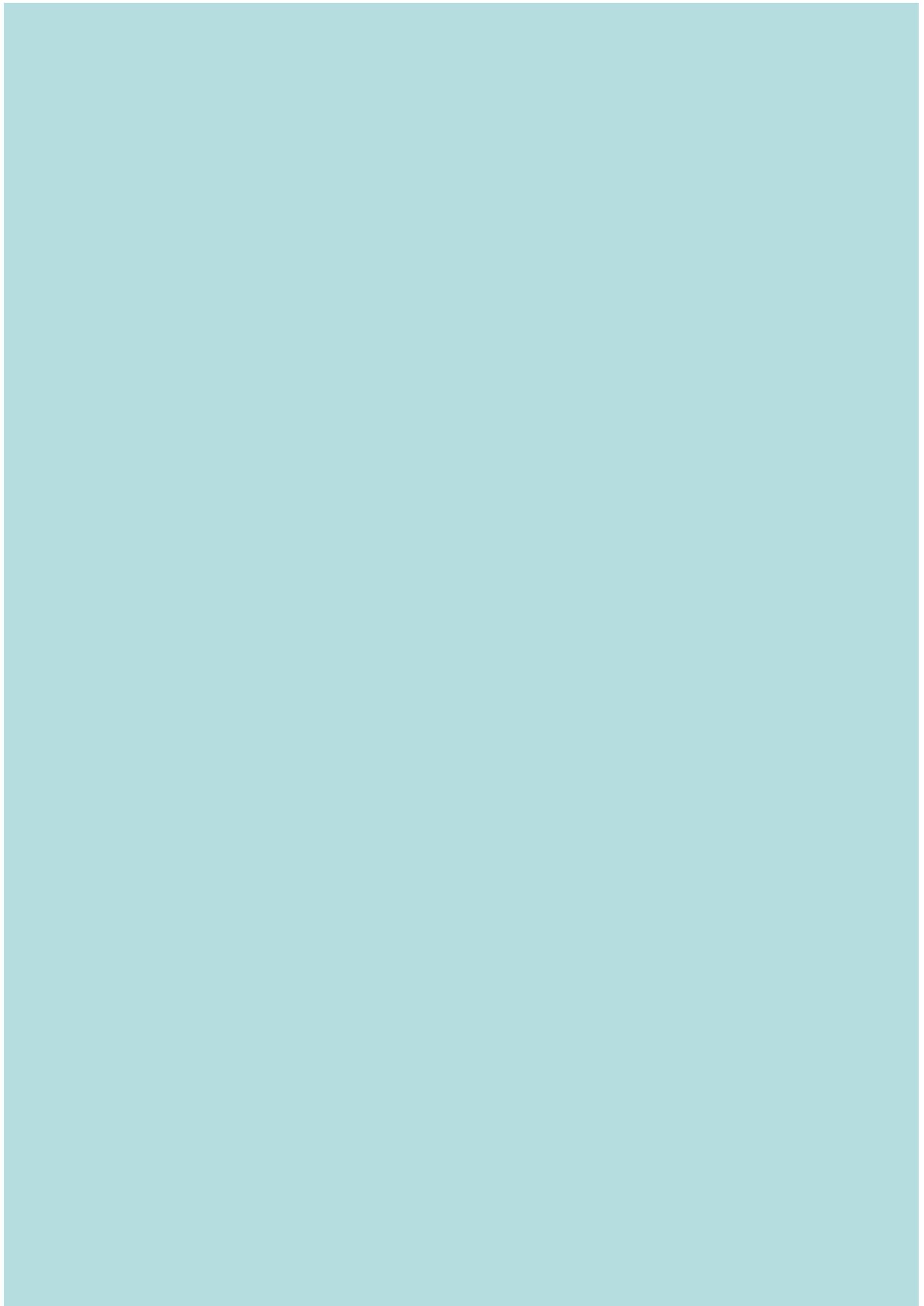
REFERENCES

- Marginson, S. 2016. High participation systems of higher education. *Journal of Higher Education* 87 (2): 243-270.
- Martin, F. 2017. Mobile self-fashioning and gendered risk: Rethinking Chinese students' motivations for overseas education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 15 (5): 706-720.
- McCarthy, C.; and J. Kenway. 2014. Introduction: Understanding the re-articulations of privilege over time and space. *Globalisation, Education and Societies* 12 (2): 165-176.
- Melamed, J. 2011. The spirit of neoliberalism: From racial liberalism to neoliberal multiculturalism. *Social Text Online*. Available at <https://socialtextjournal.org/article/the-spirit-of-neoliberalism-from-racial-liberalism-to-neoliberal-multiculturalism/>
- Mercille, J.; and E. Murphy. 2017. The neoliberalization of Irish higher education under austerity. *Critical Sociology* 43 (3): 371-387.
- Mitchell, K. 2003. Educating the national citizen in neoliberal times: From the multicultural self to the strategic cosmopolitan. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28 (4): 387-403.
- Mitchell, K. 2015. Rethinking the 'ERASMUS effect' on European identity. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (2): 330-348.
- Moreau, M. P.; and C. Leathwood. 2006. Graduates' employment and the discourse of employability: A critical analysis. *Journal of Education and Work* 19 (4): 305-324.
- Moriarty, E.; Wickham, J.; Daly, S.; and A. Bobek. 2015. Graduate emigration from Ireland: Navigating new pathways to familiar places. *Irish Journal of Sociology* 23 (2): 71-92.
- Molesworth, M.; Nixon, E.; and R. Scullion. 2009. Having, being and higher education: The marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. *Teaching in Higher Education* 14 (3): 277-287.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. 2003. *L'Étudiant européen voyageur: Un nouvel étranger* [The travelling European student as a new foreigner]. Paris: Didier.
- Netz, N.; and C. Finger. 2016. New horizontal inequalities in German higher education? Social selectivity of studying abroad between 1991 and 2012. *Sociology of Education* 89 (2): 79-98.
- Nørgaard, T. 2014. Liberal education in the Erasmus programme. In *Internationalisation of Higher Education and Global Mobility*, edited by B. Streiweiser, pp. 99-118. Oxford: Symposium Books.
- O'Brien, S.; and D. Brancaleone. 2010. Evaluating learning outcomes: In search of lost knowledge. *Irish Educational Studies* 30 (1): 5-21.
- O'Leary, E.; and D. Negra. 2016. Emigration, return migration and surprise homecomings in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. *Irish Studies Review* 24 (2): 127-141.
- OECD. 2009. *Education at a Glance*. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/43636332.pdf>
- Ong, A. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Duke University Press.
- Perraton, H. 2014. *A History of Foreign Students in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Petzold, P.; and T. Knut. 2015. The social norm to study abroad: Determinants and effects. *Higher Education* 69 (6): 885-900.
- Rivzi, F. 2011. Theorizing student mobility in an era of globalization. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 17 (6): 693-701.
- Robertson, S. 2011. Cash cows, backdoor migrants, or activist citizens? International students, citizenship and rights in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34 (12): 2192-2211.
- Rodríguez González, C.; Bustillo Mesanza, R.; and P. Mariel. 2011. The determinants of international student mobility flows: An empirical study of the Erasmus programme. *Higher Education* 62 (4): 413-430.
- Sheridan, V. 2011. A holistic approach to international students, institutional habitus and academic literacies in an Irish third-level institution. *Higher Education* 62: 129-140.
- Santiago, P.; Tremblay, K.; Basri, E.; and E. Arnal. 2008. Internationalisation: Shaping Strategies in the National Context. In *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*, edited by P. Santiago; K. Tremblay; E. Basri and E. Arnal, 2 (10). Paris: OECD.
- Sidhu, R. 2009. The "Brand Name" research university goes global. *Higher Education* 57 (2): 125-140.
- Sidhu, R.; and G. Dall'Alba. 2017. A strategy of distinction' unfolds: Unsettling the undergraduate outbound mobility experience. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 38 (4): 468-484.
- Slama, S. 1999 *La Fin de l'étudiant étranger* [The end of the foreign student]. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Snee, H. 2014. *A Cosmopolitan Journey? Difference, Distinction and Identity Work in Gap Year Travel*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Tannock, S. 2013. When the demand for educational equality stops at the border: Wealthy students, international students and the restructuring of higher education in the UK. *Journal of Education Policy* 28 (4): 449-464.
- Teichler, U. 2004. The changing debate on internationalisation in education. *Higher Education* 48: 5-26.
- Tomlinson, M. 2008. "The degree is not enough": Students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29 (1): 49-61.
- Turner, Y.; and S. Robson. 2009. Conceptions of internationalisation and their implications for academic engagement and institutional action: A preliminary case study. In *Internationalising the University: The Chinese Context*, edited by T. Coverdale-Jones and P. Rastall. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- UIS, UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2012. *Global Education Digest 2012. Opportunities Lost: The Impact of Grade Repetition and Early School Leaving*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- UIS, UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2006. *Global Education Digest 2006: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World*. Montréal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Available at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/ged06-en.pdf>
- UK Higher Education International Unit. 2013. *UK Strategy for Outward Mobility*. Available at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2014/UK-strategy-for-outward-mobility.pdf>

REFERENCES

- Van Bouwel, L.; and R. Veugelers. 2013. The determinants of student mobility in Europe: The quality dimension. *European Journal of Higher Education* 3 (2): 172-190.
- Wächter, B. 2014. Recent trends in student mobility in Europe. In *Internationalisation of Higher Education and Global Mobility*, edited by B. Streitwieser, 87-98. Oxford: Symposium Books.
- Wagner, A.-C.; and D. Garcia. 2015. Des investissements internationaux incertains. Les étudiants mexicains en gestion ou en science politique dans les grandes écoles françaises.' [Uncertain international investments. Mexican students in management or political science at French elite schools]. CEESP, *Working Paper no. 3f, June 2015*.
- Waters, J.; and R. Brooks. 2010. Accidental achievers? International higher education, class reproduction and privilege in the experiences of UK students overseas. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 31 (2): 217-228.
- Waters J.; Brooks, R.; and H. Pimlott-Wilson. 2011. Youthful escapes? British students, overseas education and the pursuit of happiness. *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (5): 455-469.
- Wickham, J.; Bobek, A.; Daly, S.; Krings, T.; Moriarty, E.; and J. Salamonska. 2013a. Learning from Poland? What recent mass immigration to Ireland tells us about contemporary Irish migration. In *Enacting Globalization: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on International Integration*, edited by L. Brennan, pp. 146-155. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wickham, J.; Moriarty, E.; Daly, S.; and A. Bobek. 2013b. Wanderlust, 'a surf at lunchtime' and graduate mobility. *Employment Research Centre Newsletter* 2 (March).
- Wickham, J.; Moriarty, E.; Daly, S.; and A. Bobek. 2013c. Walking the line between 'there' and 'here' (with a suitcase at the ready). *Employment Research Centre Newsletter* 3 (August).
- Wiers-Jensse, J. 2008. Does higher education attained abroad lead to international jobs? *Journal of Studies in International Education* 12 (2): 101-130.
- Woodfield, S. 2012. Key trends and emerging issues in international student mobility (ISM). In *Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives*, edited by F. Maringe and N. Foskett. London: Continuum.





Ollscoil na hÉireann
49 Cearnóg Mhuirfean
Baile Átha Cliath 2
D02 V583

National University of Ireland
49 Merrion Square
Dublin 2
D02 V583

TEIL / TEL +353 1 439 2424

FACS / FAX +353 1 439 2466

RPHOST / EMAIL awards@nui.ie

www.nui.ie



National University of Ireland



@NUI MerrionSq

